Hiding the Alpha's Twins His Wolfless Luna

Chapter 1: Chapter 1

Samantha's POV

"Damn, you're f*cking tight, Samantha," Dominic muttered as he pushed his cock further in. I gripped his shoulders, a shock of pain jolting through me as he continued, he looked focused but detached.

I looked up at him, trying to see something, anything, that would make this feel real, feel like more than a marital duty. His sharp jaw, the dark stubble that lined it, his deep, almost dangerous eyes. He had tanned skin and long, thick lashes that framed those intense eyes, a face that could draw anyone in without a word. He was everything a she-wolf could want, including me, and he knew it.

This was the man I'd loved for years, the Alpha everyone admired, the one who made every other girl in the pack watch him with a mix of awe and longing, wanting, craving his attention, his touch, and everything of him. And now, here he was—my husband. I should have felt like the luckiest woman alive. But with every thrust, it was painfully clear that to him, I was just someone to use, a toy to play with anytime he needed.

He didn't look at me as a man looks at his mate, not with warmth, not with love. For him, I was just an object to toy with. His movements were rough, devoid of any real connection. He held my hips firmly, but there was no tenderness in his touch—just the persistent push and pull, it was not intimate.

I wanted to tell him it was my first time, but before I could say anything, he pushed harder, filling me with a sudden pressure that made me gasp. I bit my lip to stifle a scream, tears pricking my eyes. He didn't pause or seem to notice. Or if he did, he didn't care.

This was supposed to be everything I'd ever dreamed of, and for years, I had wanted him, every part of me craving a life with him, believing that one day, he'd see me. He'd truly see me... and love me.

But now, all I could feel was the hollow space between us, the cold stare despite the warmth of his body, the detached look despite how close we were, the distance that seemed to separate us despite being skin-to-skin. I bit my lip to hold back the tears, refusing to let him see the way this tore me apart. He leaned down, his dark hair falling across his brow, close enough that I could catch the faint scent of cedar and smoke clinging to his skin—a scent that once filled my fantasies, but now only reminded me of how unreachable he was.

I see him as my everything, yet he looked at me as if I were nothing, and this affair, as if he were just performing some unavoidable duty. However, for me, it was more than just a duty.

“Relax, you wanted this,” he whispered to my ear, almost impatiently, his hands pinning down my hips, steadying as he stretched my pussy, tearing my hymen as he thrust deeper.

Dominic’s movements quickened, each thrust driving me closer to the edge, a place where pain and desire blurred together. His lips brushed my neck, and I thought, hoped, for a moment he might mark me, that he might claim me as his. But instead, he pulled back, his lips curling into a smirk as he watched me writhe beneath him.

“Look at you, such a slut,” he muttered with disdain. “This is what you wanted, isn’t it? To be used like this?” he thrust with a mocking tone.

“No,” I whispered, my voice barely audible, caught between shame and the humiliating pleasure he forced me to feel.

He tightened his grip, thrusting even harder. “Don’t lie. You wanted this marriage. You wanted me.” His eyes bore into mine, challenging, daring me to deny it.

“Dominic,” I implored, feeling the build-up in my core. I clenched around his cock as he banged me nonstop, “f*ck,” he grunted, gripping my hips tightly enough to leave bruises.

The tension continued to build inside me, needing to be released, yet I couldn't climb the high without him taunting me with every hard thrust and withdrawal, denying me the release that I craved.

He rubbed his fingers onto my clit, sending me in another maddening spiral, he pinched and circled, and my back arched, aching for more pressure as he continued to fill me with his cock, "Don't stop," I moaned.

The shame burned through me, but the sensations overwhelmed everything else. I was caught in his spell, trapped between my own desires, and my own helpless love for a man who saw me as an object.

"Yes. Ah!" I rolled my hips meeting his thrust, closing my eyes, drunk in the sensation that burned my body, pushing me to the edge. The shock of electricity coursing through me every time he deliberately hit my G-spot in a harder yet more pleasuring way was unbearable, teetering me to the brink of collapse.

"You want more, huh?" he teased, a wicked grin spreading across his face as he watched me squirm beneath him. "Tell me how much you want it, Samantha."

"No," I whimpered, catching my breath while our body rocked in every thrust he made.

"Liar." He slammed and I yelped. "Your tight pussy is choking my cock, Samantha. Lie, I dare you," he threatened as he stopped moving, denying me what I needed.

"I want you," I breathed, feeling the heat rise in my cheeks. "I need you."

"Beg," he commanded, pausing, his breath heavy against my skin. "Beg for it, Samantha. Show me how much you want this."

"Please..." I whispered, my voice hoarse, defeated.

"Please what?" He teased, eyes narrowing, savoring every moment of my submission.

“Please, Dominic... I need you.”

A dark satisfaction lit his eyes as he resumed his rhythm, harder, faster, each thrust sending me spiraling toward the release I both dreaded and craved. I gripped the sheets, my body arching toward him as he filled me completely.

“god, you feel amazing,” he groaned, his hands roaming over my body. I could feel his fingers digging into my thighs, holding me in place as he drove deeper, harder, claiming me in a way I had only fantasized about.

“Don’t stop,” I gasped, my breath hitching with every powerful thrust.

The way he said it made my heart race, and my core throbbed, sensing the impending release. The tension coiled tightly within, each thrust pushing me closer to that edge.

“That’s it,” he encouraged, grunting as he chased his own high. “I want to see you fall apart for me.” He thrust harder, and I felt that overwhelming wave crashing down, pulling me under.

“Oh god, I’m—” The tension built inside me, coiling tighter and tighter until I could no longer hold back. With one final, brutal thrust, he pushed me over the edge, and I shattered, the pleasure wracking my body in waves that left me breathless.

He drove into me one last time, harder, more desperate, riding my climax, and filling me completely as I lost myself in the sensation.

“Fuck,” he groaned, his body tightening as he released his load inside me, spurting, filling my cunt.

I remained still, trembling from the aftershocks, he pulled away, leaving me cold and exposed. I watched as he stood, reaching for his clothes with a casual indifference that felt like a slap.

He barely glanced at me, as if I were already forgotten.

“Where are you going?” I managed to ask.

“Don’t overthink it,” he replied, pulling on his shirt. “It’s just sex, nothing more.”

“But... you didn’t mark me,” I stammered, the realization hitting me like a punch to the gut. My heart sank at the thought, that even though I gave him myself, he still couldn’t love me.

He paused, looking back at me with a hint of annoyance. “Mark you? Why would I do that? This was an arranged marriage, Samantha. Don’t fool yourself into thinking it means anything to me.”

“Dominic... we’re married,” I tried to remind him, desperation clawing at my voice.

He laughed coldly, mocking, and indifferent. “Marriage is just a contract, Samantha. You’re nothing more than a Luna with no wolf, an obligation I’m bound to. Don’t read more into it than that.”

As I lay there alone, memories of our wedding flooded my mind.

The sun streamed through the bridal suite as I stood before the mirror in my wedding dress. Lena, my soon to be mother in law, entered and gasped. “Oh, Samantha, you look absolutely stunning!”

“If only your mother could see you in this dress,” she said, her voice tinged with sadness.

I forced a smile. “She would have loved it. But I’m lucky to have you, Lena. You’ve been like a mother to me.”

Lena beamed, pride shining through her tears. “You’re going to be a beautiful Luna. Dominic is so lucky to have you.”

Just then, the door swung open, and Dominic strode in. The moment he saw me, his expression soured. “What’s all this? A wolfless Luna in a fancy dress? How quaint,” he mocked.

Lena stepped between us, glaring. “Dominic, that’s enough. Samantha is going to be your wife. She doesn’t need to have a wolf to be a Luna.”

“Really?” he scoffed. “You think that’s enough? This is ridiculous.”

Lena’s eyes narrowed. “It’s considered unlucky for the bride and groom to see each other before the wedding. You need to leave.”

“Unlucky?” Dominic laughed. “What does that even matter? I’m unlucky enough to be marrying Samantha as it is.”

His words cut deep. I swallowed hard, trying not to cry. I had hoped for kindness from him today, but instead, he served me disdain.

“Get out, Dominic,” Lena said firmly. “Let her have this moment. Go find something to occupy your time.”

Dominic glared but eventually shrugged, turning to leave. “Whatever. Don’t fool yourself into thinking I’ll ever play the doting husband. You’re just a wolfless Luna to be used.”

Chapter 2

Samantha’s POV

“Where’s Dominic?” I asked one of the gammas as I made my way toward the pack house, keeping my tone as casual as I could, burying any suspicion in my chest.

“He’s... having lunch with Olivia,” he replied, his gaze flicking away as if the very mention of her name would spark a fire.

Last night, Dominic never returned after our heated affair. I expected that he would at least still be in the house by the time I woke up but he was not around. I brushed it off and thought about earning his attention, that perhaps if I did well as a Luna, he'd learn to acknowledge me—love me.

So this morning I reviewed reports and visited the farms, hoping that he'd appreciate my efforts, and hoping to encounter him along the way. But we didn't. Only to find out now that he had been with Olivia.

A bitter smile tugged at my lips, and a trace of sarcasm slipped into my voice before I could stop it. "He never eats lunch with me."

The gamma shifted awkwardly, giving a small shrug. "Alpha has his priorities."

"Right," I muttered, turning away as anger flared up. I wanted to scream, to demand answers, but the fury only made me feel smaller. How could he just disregard me like this?

As I entered the dining room, Olivia's gaze zeroed in on me, a smug smile playing on her lips. She was seated beside Dominic, a little too comfortably close, as if trying to stake a claim. Dominic, as usual, ignored me completely, his attention focused on his food. I took a seat across from them, asserting my position as the Luna of the pack.

"Well, well, decided to finally join us?" Olivia mocked.

"Is there a problem with that?" I retorted, meeting her gaze.

She laughed softly, a sound that held no warmth. "I just find it amusing that the 'perfect Luna' can't even keep her husband's interest."

I clenched my jaw, choosing to ignore her taunt. I reached my plate from the omega serving me, and Olivia continued.

"Oh, come on, Samantha," she pressed with a vicious edge to her smile. "You know he doesn't care, right? You're just... convenient."

Dominic glanced at me briefly before turning back to his meal, leaving me to fend for myself.

I took a deep breath, refusing to give her the satisfaction of a reaction. “Convenience is something you wouldn’t understand, Olivia,” I replied smoothly. “After all, desperation hardly allows for it.”

Her smile faltered for a brief second, before she leaned forward, her voice barely above a whisper but dripping with venom. “You think you’re so untouchable, but you’re nothing more than a placeholder, Samantha. Eventually, Dominic will realize he deserves more.”

I met her stare and didn’t back down. “Funny, I was just thinking that you might want to be careful. Temporary pleasures don’t always end in permanent rewards.”

A flicker of annoyance crossed her face, but she quickly recovered, flashing a fake sweet smile. “You’re so not sure about that,” she sneered, rubbing her palm on Dominic’s shoulder, displaying that this time, he had chosen her.

I glared at her yet she was only pleased by my anger, knowing that Dominic would take her side.

He finally looked up, glancing briefly between us before settling on Olivia. “Are you done?” he asked her, his tone impatient.

I watched as Olivia shifted, obviously irritated by his lack of attention toward her. But the satisfaction was short-lived as Dominic turned to me with his eyes cold.

“Don’t you have something to be doing?” he asked bluntly, clearly dismissing my presence.

I swallowed, feeling the sting of his words. “Right. I’ll be going,” I replied, standing up, my hands trembling slightly as I forced myself to walk away, leaving them both to whatever twisted satisfaction they found in belittling me.

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I didn't get far before I heard footsteps behind me. I turned to see Lena hurrying to catch up, a mixture of concern and guilt was etched on her face.

"Samantha," she called softly. "I'm so sorry. I had no idea Dominic would be like that. He just... he needs time, I promise you that." Lena must've witnessed what happened in the dining room, as she immediately came to me.

"Time," I murmured, my voice laced with a bitterness I could not mask. "I've given him all the time I could. And last night... I thought maybe things had changed. But..."

"Samantha, darling, he's never been in love before. You're the first person he's let into his life in this way. I know it doesn't seem like it now, but he'll come around. Last night... was a good start, wasn't it?"

I looked away, feeling the heat rise to my cheeks. "Maybe," I whispered. "But it's hard to see that when he acts like this."

Lena gave my hand a reassuring squeeze. "Trust me. He just needs to realize what he has in you. Give him time for now. He'll eventually come around."

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A month passed, and Dominic barely came home, always giving some excuse—pack business, work, duties. When he wasn't "busy," I'd hear rumors of him out with Olivia, their lunches, their meetings, all private moments he never bothered to share with me.

Lena's advice repeated in my mind like a mantra. "Give him time." And so I tried. I smiled, stayed patient, and performed my duties, hoping that one day Dominic would give me attention.

Maybe, I needed to be the one to make the first move. I couldn't just keep waiting for him to see me. I had to show him I was here.

After all, if I truly loved him, shouldn't I be the one to reach out?

The door to Dominic's office was slightly open, and what I thought were murmured discussions turned out to be something far worse.

I froze, staring through the narrow gap.

Dominic had Olivia pressed against the wall, her legs around his waist, his lips trailing down her neck. Her eyes fluttered closed, and she tilted her head back, whispering, "Yes, Dominic. I'm yours."

The way he held her sent a stabbing pain through my chest, twisting deep and sharp. I wanted to look away, to run, but I was frozen to my feet, forced to watch as he held her intimately, kissing the most sensitive spot on her neck, making her frown and tremble in ecstasy as a soft moan escaped her lips.

I backed away quietly, my vision blurring from the tears. Maybe Olivia was his fated mate that's why he was so willing to give her everything, especially what I had desperately wanted, and needed as his wife.

Chapter 3

Samantha's POV

"I'm so glad you're finally here, Samantha," Lena called out from the dining as I walked downstairs after I woke up. Surprisingly, Dominic's back home, seated beside Olivia who was laughing at something he said.

They looked more like a family than I ever did with him.

"Samantha, come sit," Lena gestured to the seat across from Dominic. I forced a smile, swallowing the knot in my throat, and took my place at the

table. I couldn't bear to look at Dominic and Olivia, shame and pain coursing through me after what I witnessed in his office.

As I settled into my seat, I caught a glimpse of the small band-aid on Olivia's neck—the same spot where Dominic had been. Her fingers drifted to it, a soft, smug smile playing on her lips, almost as if she wanted me to see it, reminding me of their intimate affair in his office. I couldn't tear my eyes away from that band-aid, and I felt the sting of betrayal burn deeper.

"Are you all right, Samantha?" Lena's voice broke through my thoughts.

"Fine," I replied quickly, forcing my gaze back to my untouched plate. The food looked appetizing, but my appetite had vanished the moment I saw Olivia.

Halfway through breakfast, Dominic glanced over at me with an indifferent stare. He didn't offer a word, no hint of acknowledgment of what we once shared—or what I thought we did. To him, I was invisible. And I couldn't ignore the painful truth sinking in: he had already replaced me.

Later that morning, I headed to my office, hoping to lose myself with work and divert my thoughts. However, when I looked over the tasks for the day, I noticed that my list was far shorter than usual. Confusion crept in, and I went to find Cora, a trusted gamma who'd been by my side for years.

"Cora," I called, luckily spotting her in the hallway.

She turned to my direction, "Yes, Luna?"

"I noticed my workload is... lighter than usual," I began, "Have they reassigned some of my duties?"

She scratched the back of her head, an awkward smile tugging at her lips. "Isn't it nice to have a bit less to do? You deserve it, Samantha. All the work you've done these past few years, maybe this is the Alpha's way of easing your burden."

“Cora,” I pressed, sensing she was keeping something from me. “How long has this been going on?”

She shifted, looking at the floor before finally meeting my gaze. “The Alpha has... well, he’s given a lot of your Luna duties to Olivia over the past month.”

A sick feeling washed over me. “Since last month?”

She nodded, “I’m sorry, Luna. I didn’t think it was my place to say anything.”

I clenched my fists, trembling in anger, and pain as I realized, that gradually, I was being replaced. “Thank you, Cora. I... I appreciate your honesty.”

Turning on my heel, I marched straight to Dominic’s office. He hadn’t just dismissed me as his wife—he was stripping me of my role as Luna, too. I clenched my fist in fury, my head throbbing trying to contain myself from going out of control.

When I reached his office door, Olivia was already there, standing guard as if she had the right to be. She straightened when she saw me, her lips curving into a smug smile.

“I’m sorry, Luna, but Dominic’s busy right now,” she said smoothly, blocking my path.

“I am still the Luna of this pack,” I uttered firmly, “and you’ll obey me.” I hissed, threatening her, knowing that if Dominic wouldn’t intervene, I could throw her in the dungeon. “Step aside, Olivia.”

For a moment, she hesitated, but my authority won out. With a mocking shrug, she moved aside, watching me with a smirk as I opened the door and stepped in.

Dominic barely looked up from his paperwork. “What do you need, Samantha?”

The casual dismissal in his tone made my stomach twist, but I held my ground. “Why did you reassign my Luna duties to Olivia?” I questioned, fiercely. He’d crossed the line. I already held back from his cheating, and yet he had to meddle with my duties. This, I won’t tolerate.

He looked up, removing his eyeglasses and leaning back to his chair. “It’s for your own good, Samantha. You’ve been overworking. Now you’ll have more time to focus on yourself.”

“Focus on myself?” I repeated, struggling to keep the bitterness out of my voice. “Is that what you think I want?”

His face was impassive, as though my pain was a trivial inconvenience. “It’s done, Samantha. You can rest now, focus on other things.”

“What?” I scoffed in disbelief. He didn’t even care to ask me—he just took away the one thing that gave me purpose, that connected me to the pack. He had reduced me to nothing more than a spectator in my own life. And soon, what would I be left with if everything I have and everything that I am was being taken for Olivia?

“You didn’t even ask me,” I retorted. “You just... handed it over to her, as if I meant nothing.”

“It’s for the best,” he repeated coldly, already turning his attention back to his work. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have other matters to attend to.”

“Dominic, this is not right. I am the Luna!” I argued but he dismissively uttered, “Leave now, I’m busy.”

I grunted in frustration and turned without another word, leaving his office, realizing I had no place here—not as his wife, and now, not even as Luna.

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I went back home, locking myself in the room, and as the door closed, I let the tears fall, and my anger, and pain, all rushed out as I dropped on the floor.

I had given him everything—my heart, my loyalty, my life—and he'd discarded it all without a second thought. I loved him, so much, and this is what I get for loving him too much. I should've known, I should've prepared myself for this pain... but I hoped. I clung to my prayers that someday he would learn to acknowledge me, choose me, and love me.

But because of Olivia, he was giving her everything that I own—himself, my position, my honor, and dignity as the Luna of the pack.

He might even discard me, soon, to completely vanish from this earth.

I cupped my mouth when I suddenly felt nauseous. Immediately, I stumbled into the bathroom, gripping the sink, and supporting myself as I took deep breaths, calming down.

My stomach churned, and just as I thought the bile had subsided, I lunged at the toilet and threw up, mostly water and the bagel I had eaten earlier. I sat on the floor, wiping my tears as the nausea lingered, clutching my stomach. The sudden wave of sickness made no sense—why now?

I held the toilet bowl as I vomited again, my head spinning, my body heavy with a sickness I couldn't explain. As I rubbed my temple and instinctively clutched my belly in an attempt to ease the nausea, a shiver ran down my spine. A thought, one I didn't want to entertain, crept into my mind.

No. It can't be...

Taking a deep breath, I moved quickly, packing my things into a duffel bag. This pack, this place—I could no longer call it home. With that realization, I knew I had to leave.

With the bag slung over my shoulder, I slipped out of the house and ran, leaving behind everything that had once been my life.

Chapter 4

Samantha’s POV

6 years later

"Devon, remember what I told you about picking fights," I reminded my son firmly as I knelt in front of him because I knew how much of a troublemaker he was. His dark eyes were so much like mine but held a mischievous glint as he shifted his weight from one foot to the other. Beside him was his twin—Diana, trying to fasten the straps on her tiny backpack with her tongue poking out in concentration. She looked up at me, her eyes wide and full of innocent excitement as she spoke.\

"Mommy, we will be good!" Diana promised, her curls bouncing as she nodded fervently.

"That’s what you said last time," I reminded them, eyeing Devon especially. He had a habit of protecting his sister, even when she did not need it, which had led to a few incidents in the past. "And no running too far in the park. Stay close, and listen to Annie,” I said.

Devon puffed out his chest. "I will protect Diana," he declared, and for a moment, I could not help but smile. He might only be five, but his instincts were strong, too strong for his age. It was something I tried not to dwell on.

I sighed, running a hand through Devon’s unruly hair. "I know you will, but listen to Annie, okay?" My gaze softened as I turned to their human nanny, Annie, who was watching our interaction with a patient smile. Her presence was helpful in taking care of the kids, even if it made me nervous that she was not a werewolf. She had proven herself reliable time and time again, and the twins adored her.

"Don’t worry, Samantha," Annie said, adjusting Diana’s backpack straps. "We will have a great time, won’t we?"

Diana clapped her hands, her face lighting up. "Yes! We will be perfect little angels!" Her words made Annie chuckle, and I tried to ease the tension knotted in my chest. Diana's enthusiasm had a way of brightening even the worrying moments. But I could not shake the uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach. They were still so young, but I knew well enough that age did not always matter when it came to getting their own wolves and shifting. I could only hope that whatever instincts they had—whatever potential they had not yet tapped into—would stay dormant, at least for a little longer.

"Okay," I exhaled, more to myself than anyone else. "Annie has my number if there is any trouble. And you two," I added, my voice stern but loving to my twins, "behave."

With final kisses pressed to their cheeks, I turned to leave. The moment I stepped outside, the crisp autumn air bit at my skin, making me pull my jacket tighter around me. The leaves crunched underfoot as I walked down the front steps, and there he was — Killian.

Killian was leaning against the sleek black SUV, arms crossed over his chest, exuding the effortless confidence of a true Alpha. His eyes lit up when he saw me, and his lips curved into a teasing grin.

"Samantha," he drawled, "took you long enough. I was beginning to think you had changed your mind about spending the weekend with me."

I rolled my eyes but could not help the smile that tugged at my lips. "Dream on, Killian," I replied, climbing into the passenger seat as he held the door open. Killian was hard to ignore—he was a huge guy, broad-shouldered and tall, with a presence that demanded attention. His dark hair was always a bit unruly, a perfect contrast to his sharp jawline and intense green eyes. His left arm was covered in a sleeve tattoo, the ink swirling down his arm in an intricate design—black lines, shaded geometric patterns, and symbols that I could not fully make sense of but seemed to tell a story of strength and loyalty. The tattoo only accentuated the muscle in his arm, making him look even more intimidating.

His smile was cocky, yet somehow it made me feel comfortable, like I could trust him with anything. Even though his flirtatious comments always kept

me on my toes. Since the day I ran away from Silver Crescent Pack, he had always been by my side, helping and supporting me in any way he could, until I became his right-hand woman in his pack—Moonstone. In all the years we were together, we had been inseparable in our work. He was a great partner and Alpha.

Killian rounded the car and slid into the driver's seat, the vehicle roaring to life as he pulled away from my home. We drove in a comfortable silence for a while, the cityscape giving way to rolling fields and thick forests. My mind wandered back to the twins, a pang of worry gnawing at me. Would they really be okay without me? It was not just the typical concern of a mother; it was something deeper, something instinctual.

Killian glanced over, his sharp eyes taking in my expression as if he could read my mind. "They'll be fine," he assured, his tone surprisingly gentle. "Annie's good at what she does."

I knew he was right, but it did not stop the concern twisting in my gut. "I know," I murmured, pressing my hands together to still their fidgeting. "It's just... they are my world, you know?" I said.

His gaze softened briefly, and he nodded. "Yeah, I get it. But you have raised them well, Samantha. They are tougher than they look."

The rest of the drive passed quickly, and soon we arrived at the meeting venue, a grand estate tucked deep within a neutral territory. Representatives from various packs had already gathered, and the air was already buzzing with anticipation and the low hum of conversations around.

Killian led the way, his hand resting casually on the small of my back, a gesture that made my heart beat faster. Not from attraction, but from the sense of security he provided. It was easy to forget my past when he was near, but today, that illusion shattered all too quickly.

I scanned the list of attending packs on the invitation, my eyes skimming over the names until one in particular made my breath catch: Silver Crescent Pack. My vision blurred for a moment, and my body went cold. It had been six years since I'd left, and I had done everything I could to

distance myself from that part of my life. But now, here it was, staring me in the face.

"Samantha?" Killian's voice pulled me back to the present, his brows knitted in concern. "You okay? You look like you've seen a ghost."

I tried to swallow, but my throat felt tight. "I'm fine," I lied, plastering on a smile that felt all wrong. And before I could say anything else, the crowd parted, and there he was, revealing the man I escaped from.

Alpha Dominic.

Time seemed to slow as our eyes met. He looked almost the same—commanding, with that same sharp jaw and piercing eyes. But there was something different about him now, something harder, as if the years had carved out pieces of him.

He stopped in his tracks when he saw me, and his gaze flicked to Killian beside me, then back to me. His frown deepened, and the tension between us was almost suffocating. I gripped the invitation letter tighter, crumpling the paper in the process as I tried to steady myself and not cower under his intense stare.

I had run so far. I had hidden so well.

And yet, as Dominic's eyes fixed on mine, unyielding and full of questions, the terrifying realization struck like lightning: nowhere had ever truly been far enough.

Chapter 5

Samantha's POV

Was he here because of the twins? The thought struck me like a physical blow, and I gripped the glass in my hand so tightly that it almost shattered. I couldn't breathe, couldn't think.

Had Dominic found out? My gaze locked onto him, and everything around me blurred into an indistinct haze of panic. He stood near the entrance, exuding authority and undeniable power, and yet I felt stripped bare under his stare, as if he could see right through every carefully constructed lie I had built around my life.

I swallowed hard, trying to push down the terror rising inside me. It's impossible, I told myself desperately. There was no way he knew. I had gone to such lengths to protect my children—to hide our identities. I had changed my last name, changed their last names, and buried every trace of our past. Even to the twins, Dominic was nothing more than a ghost, a father I had lied about, saying he was dead.

But why was he here? Why now? The meeting was not supposed to include the Silver Crescent Pack. I had checked the guest list a dozen times, and made sure he was not meant to be anywhere near me before the printout of invitations.

And yet, there he was, looking more commanding, more... devastatingly handsome than I remembered. My wolf stirred uneasily inside me, a traitorous whisper of longing and need that I immediately silenced. 'No. I will not fall for that again.' I reminded my wolf whom I had just received when I gave birth to my twins.

Seeing Dominic today, he seemed taller somehow, more mature, like the years had added something I had not anticipated. I hated myself for even noticing. Anger and resentment twisted in my gut, but there was something else too—an attraction I could not ignore, an attraction that had only grown stronger since I gained my wolf. It was confusing, maddening even, to feel this pull, and I shoved it away, focusing instead on the rage that had sustained me for years.

He tore his gaze at me and they landed on Killian again, who stood close beside me. I watched as Dominic's eyes narrowed, darkening in a way that made my breath hitch.

Was he assuming that Killian and I were together now?

The idea sent a jolt through me, and I instinctively tried to inch away, even though I knew how it might look.

However, Killian leaned in, closer, his breath warm against my ear as he whispered something about the incoming guests and the significance of tonight's alliances. But I could not focus on a single word he was saying. Every cell in my body was hyper-aware of Dominic's presence, the way his attention seemed to latch onto us.

Until I saw Olivia lingering behind Dominic. She had changed, too. Her poised demeanor and the way she hovered at his side made it clear she had become his right-hand woman, a position that did not sit well with me. She was different, colder, and more assured as if the years had made her just as dangerous as him. But it didn't change the fact that she was just a filthy mistress who clung to him, and it still didn't change that I would want to tear her smirking face.

I could feel my heart pounding harder as I forced a smile, hoping Killian would not notice my distraction. His hand briefly touched my elbow, and I struggled to nod in agreement with whatever point he was making. Dominic's gaze turned to me, his hazel eyes darkening dangerously, like a warning, making my wolf stir uncomfortably inside and I brushed it off.

Then Killian finally straightened, excusing himself to greet another Alpha who had just arrived. And once he was out of the picture, that was when Dominic made his move. He crossed the room, with each step heavily fueled with threat, and I felt my heart hammering in my chest. My instincts screamed at me to run, to get away from him before he unraveled everything. But I held my ground, lifting my chin and trying to project the confidence I did not feel.

"Samantha," he uttered, his voice was smooth, almost deceptively calm, but there was a dangerous undertone that made my stomach twist. "I didn't realize you'd stoop this low for attention."

I blinked, momentarily stunned. "Excuse me?"

He arched an eyebrow, his eyes narrowing. “Parading around with Alphas like Killian. Is that supposed to make me jealous?”

I clenched my jaw, my anger sparking to life. “There are plenty of Alphas here,” I shot back coldly, not bearing his insult. “I’m not here for you, Dominic.”

He tilted his head, studying me. “Then why are you here?” His words felt like a challenge, one that made my pulse race. Did he know? Was this his way of trapping me, of trying to get me to slip up?

“I don’t owe you an explanation,” I replied, masking the slight tremble of my voice. I hated that he could still do this to me, that he could make me feel so small, so vulnerable.

“We’re not—” My voice caught, and I forced myself to continue. “We’re nothing to each other anymore.” It had been six years, I should be able to stand on my own now and not submit to his presence, although undeniably, he still affected me. I hate it. I hate that after all these years, he could still hurt me. And I hate it even more that I might still allow him to.

But before he could respond, the room shifted as someone called for my attention. Relief flooded me, and I took the chance to step away, trying to collect myself before it was my turn to speak.

I moved to the front, hands shaking as I clutched the notes I had prepared. But as I looked out over the crowd, I steadied myself. You’re not the same person you were six years ago, I reminded myself. You’re stronger now. You’ve built a new life.

I cleared my throat and began my speech. “Thank you all for gathering here today,” I started. “This meeting is about more than just alliances. It’s about unity, about standing together in the face of whatever threats may come. We have each fought our own battles, and overcome our own struggles, and today, we stand here not as separate packs but as a collective force. Stronger together...”

The words came easier as I spoke, and I could feel the impact they were having. Even Dominic seemed fascinated, his eyes locked on me with an intensity I tried to ignore. And Killian, too, looked proud, nodding with a small smile playing on his lips.

When I finished, the applause was genuine, and for a moment, I felt a touch of pride. I had come so far, and no one— not even Dominic —could take that away from me.

But my relief was short-lived. Needing a moment to breathe, I slipped away, heading toward the washroom. I splashed water on my face, trying to calm down when a cold voice from behind sent a shiver down my spine.

“Fancy seeing you here, runaway Luna.” I turned to find Olivia leaning against the wall, glaring at me with disdain.

I forced myself to stay calm, shaking my head. “I think you’ve got the wrong person,” I replied, dismissively.

Olivia’s eyes narrowed, her frown deepening. “Stay away from Dominic,” she warned. “You left for a reason. Don’t think you can just waltz back into his life.”

I crossed my arms in defiance, making my point crystal clear. “I’m not here for him,” I shot back. “And like I said, you have the wrong person.”

Olivia pushed off the wall, stepping closer until the air between us was electrified in the most suffocating way.

“Oh, I know exactly who you are,” she hissed, her tone dripping with certainty. “But you’d do well to remember your place,” she spat and turned.

She strode out of the door and left me feeling shaken and angry. I took a moment to collect myself before I stepped out, following her and I paused when I noticed Olivia’s neck.

There was no bite mark. No sign that Dominic had ever claimed her.

I stopped. My heart thundered, and confusion swirled in my mind. Six years ago, I had thought he had marked her, that he had found his mate and had chosen her over me.

But... had I been wrong?

Chapter 6
Samantha's POV

A low rustle came from the trees, and every nerve in my body went on high alert. I skidded to a stop, my paws digging into the earth as my senses sharpened. Someone was out here. I could feel it, the prickling awareness crawling along my spine.

A soft breeze carried a familiar scent, unmistakable, I could guess who it belonged to. Dominic. My wolf bristled at the recognition, and without hesitation, I shifted back into human form, hurriedly pulling on the clothes I had stashed behind a thick oak earlier before I went for a run.

I barely had a moment to catch my breath before Dominic emerged from the shadows, stepping into the silvery moonlight that was just rising in the sky. He was shirtless, sweat glistening on his skin, his chest rising and falling with each labored breath. His muscles were carved like hard sculptures, displaying power and strength. His body was forged through years of battle and discipline. Every inch of him exuded dominance—his broad shoulders, the taut expanse of his chest, the strength in his arms that spoke of untold years of training, he was like a warrior who had stepped out of my worst nightmares and deepest desires.And god, how it affected me. My body reacted to him before my mind could even catch up, every nerve in me had begun lighting up like a live wire, sending more shivers down my spine. His presence was suffocating, yet highly addictive, and intoxicating, like a poisonous aphrodisiac that I would be willing to drink. I wanted to step back, to regain control, but I couldn't. The heat from his body pulled me in like a magnet, the scent of him—wood, sweat, and something darker, something only I knew—flooded my senses. My pulse raced, blood rushing to places I hadn't even realized had been dormant for years.

The memory of him, the feel of his body against mine, and the way he made me feel so alive, all came rushing back, crashing into me like a tidal wave.

Every inch of him reminded me of everything I had lost and everything I still craved. His eyes, dark and fierce, locked onto mine, and I felt like I was drowning in the depths of them. His lips, slightly parted, were a cruel invitation, and I found myself wanting, no — needing — him in a way I could not fight.

“Running away again, Samantha?” His voice was a low rumble, deep and husky, and the way he looked at me, with those stormy eyes that seemed to pierce through every defense I had built over the years, sent a wave of conflicting emotions crashing over me.

I swallowed hard, forcing myself to stay calm, though my heart beat wildly.

“I wasn’t running away,” I shot back, and my voice was surprisingly even steadier than I felt. “I was... blowing off steam.”

I saw his eyes darken even more as he scanned my disheveled dress, his gaze landing on one strap that fell off my shoulder. I followed his gaze and I immediately fixed my dress as well as tried to cover up the trace of my erect nipple on the thin fabric with my long hair. I heard a growl rumble in his chest— in disapproval at what I did.

He took a step closer, like a predator claiming its prey, but I stepped back, stepping on a twig, it snapped and made me jolt in surprise. He was focused on me, not tearing his gaze from watching, assessing me. Even after all these years, his proximity had a way of stripping away my armor. I cursed myself for it, for the weakness that twisted my insides and made my pulse race.

Dominic’s gaze roamed over me, intense and searching. “Blowing off steam?” he repeated, his eyes narrowing slightly, suspiciously. “Since when did you like to run at nightfall? Alone?” he asked, and I could sense what he was trying to know.

In human-saturated places, werewolves prefer to take runs at nightfall, when it is dark, and can easily conceal themselves and shift back to human forms. And with my current look, I knew he was suspicious of me, of what I could be doing out here in the forest behind the hotel. I did not know that he was also staying in the same hotel. Killian and I had decided to check in after the event since we will be having another meeting tomorrow with the allied packs.

“A lot has changed in six years.” I replied, trying to sound indifferent, but my voice betrayed me with a slight quiver, fearing what he knew and what he might find out.

Silence hung heavily between us, containing everything that was unspoken. My chest tightened as the memories flooded back into my mind, although most of it consisted of the painful scenes I had witnessed, I still relished on the several occasions that he had spared me some time. Despite the years that I was not with him, the feelings that I thought I had perfectly buried to death did not dampen the way I reacted to him. If anything, the years apart had intensified the longing, the unfulfilled need.

I finally broke the silence. “Why are you here, Dominic? You’re not supposed to be at this meeting.”

He took another step closer, his jaw clenching. “Maybe I needed to see for myself,” he muttered, his gaze flicking over me, lingering on my lips. “See if you were really here.”

The space between us seemed to have vanished, and I found myself trapped in the intensity of his stare while he towered over me, closer than I would have wanted, or what I had always wanted. The heat that simmered within was familiar, dangerous, and utterly irresistible. My mind screamed at me to back away, to run before I fell apart, but my body betrayed me, drawn to him like a moth to flame.

“Dominic,” I spoke, barely audible, a whisper that sounded more like a plea than a warning.

He reached out, his fingers grazing my jaw, and the simple touch sent fire racing through my veins.

“Still so beautiful,” he murmured, his voice filled with an emotion that felt both tender and feral. “Still the only one who ever made me feel... like this.”

I should have pushed him away. I should have screamed at him, and told him to leave, but instead, I melted into his touch. Years of longing and heartache surged to the surface, breaking through every barricade I surrounded myself with.

And before I knew it, he was already pulling me closer, his hand threading into my hair, possessively, while his other hand traveled all over my waist, to my back, to my hips, leaving trails of fire under his fingertips.

The moment our lips met, it was a collision— fierce, hungry, wild. His mouth claimed mine with a brutal haste, and I kissed him back with everything I had kept locked away, the anger, the desire, the raw, unfulfilled need that had haunted me for years. I could not control myself as my mind refused to think rationally while I succumbed to his embrace. His warm hands roamed over my body, desperate and possessive, as if trying to memorize every curve and contour he had missed. It was never like this. He was never like this to me. And I would say I was on cloud nine to feel him this way for me. It was all I had ever wanted, desired, and wished for years.

He pressed me back against the rough bark of a tree, his hands sliding beneath my dress, skin meeting skin and I gasped at his heat. The sensation was electric, and I shivered under his touch, gasping against his lips.

“Dominic,” I moaned, desperately, a plea and a curse all in one.

He groaned, his body pressing harder against mine, and I felt his hard cock straining beneath his shorts. It mirrored the need pulsing in my core, sensitive and uncontrollable. His hands explored with undeniable urgency, sliding over my waist, up my back, claiming every inch of skin he could

touch. And the fact that I was not wearing any underwear made me more exposed, and hot, the lust fanning over the sparking fire.

The world around us seemed to have blurred, the rustling leaves, the whisper of the wind— all of it drowned out by the desire that roared between us.

“Do you know how many times I’ve dreamed of this?” he whispered as he kissed my neck, his teeth grazing the sensitive skin sent me another wave of electric shock that sent a new trail of shiver down my spine, igniting something deeper and uncontrollable inside me. His lips trailed down, leaving a searing path, and I arched into him, exposing my neck more for his assaults, baring myself to surrender under his touch.

He tugged at my clothes, the cool night air rushing over my skin, but it did nothing to cool the fever that burned between us. I helped him, hands fumbling and desperate, until there was nothing left between us. We were skin to skin, a tangle of limbs and yearning, and I could not stop the way I gasped as he pressed me down onto the forest floor, the dried leaves crunching beneath our bodies as they cradled us from dirt.

His mouth found mine again, and we kissed like we were starving for each other, like every moment apart had left a void that only this could fill. Our lips collided fiercely, nipping, biting, and his tongue dancing in sync with my in my mouth. It was a clash of desire and desperation, and I was losing myself in the process of tasting him. His hands tightened around my hips, pulling me closer as he aligned himself to my entrance. He dipped, pushing harder and I gasp at every inch of his cock that entered me.

“After all these years,” he groaned, “You’re still so tight, Samantha.” There was a mix of surprise and something primal in his words, a disbelief yet filled with possessiveness. His grip went tighter as I clenched around his cock, relishing the feeling of him inside me.

years.

I had been away for six years, the desire built up, and to see him again, feel him, every touch, every thrust, it was like I would not want to let him go.

It was an intoxicating blend of gentleness and primal need, a dance between yearning and lust, leaving me breathless, and lost in the rhythm of our bodies.

His lips brushed against my neck, trailing down to my collarbone as he buried himself deeper, and I could not help the moan that escaped me. My fingers clutched at his back, feeling the hard muscles shift beneath my touch, I scratched, unconsciously leaving my marks, but thinking about it, I like that was staking my claim, surprisingly, I did not expect myself to be this possessive after everything.

Dominic's gaze found mine, and he stilled, his brow furrowed as if he was fighting a war inside himself. His eyes, dark with desire but shadowed by something I could not quite name, searched min. His hand came up, fingers tracing along my jaw, his thumb brushing over my trembling lips.

"Please," I pleaded, feeling my insides throbbing against his hardened shaft, begging him to continue. Both our chests rose and fell, catching our breaths as I chased my high and he, controlling himself, denying me of what I wanted.

"Tell me... has there been anyone else?" he asked, his voice was strained and controlled, yet almost vulnerable, with his grip tightening on me as if it could ground him for whatever the answer to his question was.

I wondered why he had asked, why would it matter to him, when in the past years he did not seem to care about us.

"Dominic!" I yelped when he thrust once, harder, hitting my cervix.

"Answer me, Samantha," he growled, a warning from his voice yet his eyes showed something else— hope, lust, possessiveness, and need. He moved, slowly, drawing out an answer.

"No," I gasped, the word escaping before I could think to hold it back. My voice trembled, carrying more than just passion, but more of an ache, a longing, a truth that stripped me bare.

“Only you,” I whispered as I felt him grow harder and faster, stroking the walls inside me.

His eyes darkened, the possessiveness in his gaze seemed triumphant at my response. His fingers threaded into my hair, tilting my head as he captured my lips in a consuming and desperate kiss. My body arched into his, responding to him with a desperation that bordered on madness.

“You’re mine, Samantha,” he groaned tracing my jaw with his lips. “Always.”

I held on tight, my fingers digging into his back as if he might disappear if I let go. The pleasure built up fast, intense, and impossible to contain, crashing over me in waves that stole my breath. Everything around us faded away until it was just the two of us, tangled up in the kind of passion that had always been there, even when we tried to forget it. My heart raced, pounding in my ears, and the tension coiled tighter, pushing me closer to the edge.

When it finally broke, it took us both by surprise, stealing the air from my lungs and leaving me trembling. We shattered together, our cries and gasps blending and echoing through the quiet forest, carried away by the night. I could feel his cum inside me, warm, and exploding, his cock pulsing as I milked him to empty. The rush of heat inside me brought everything crashing back— the years apart, the aching longing, and the raw reality of what this reunion meant.

But as reality crept back in, so did the fear, coiling in my stomach like a snake. I pushed him away, gathering my dress as I thought of the terrifying possibility that history could repeat itself. He came inside me, without any protection. And the last time we had done it, with just one night, I conceived the twins. I would not want that to happen again.

But before I could gather my thoughts, my phone rang.

Panic surged as I scrambled to take it out of my dress’ pocket, and without thinking, I answered. The sound of a familiar, sweet voice came through, clear as day, yet it poured like a bucket of ice onto my head.

“Mommy?”

My heart stopped. It was Devon.

I looked up at Dominic, dread coursing through me as his eyes narrowed with suspicion flaring in them. Did he hear him?

Chapter 7
Samantha’s POV

The call from the twins brought me back to reality, clearing my head from the highs. Devon’s voice still rang in my ears, and I had to cut this trip short and get home to them as soon as possible. Whatever was going on here with Dominic could not compare to the urgency of being there for my twins.

My fingers tightened around the phone, and a wave of realization hit me so hard that I felt my knees weaken.

Dominic was my mate.

My wolf had confirmed it, the strong attraction, the pull drawing me closer to him, it was the mate bond tugging, aching to be fulfilled.

It felt like fate had reached out to mock me, ripping away any sense of control I thought I had. All those years of trying to move on, of telling myself I was strong enough to build a life without him, now felt like a cruel lie.

Why did I have to suffer his betrayal and neglect first before I was made to realize that we were fated to each other? Why did fate have to play dirty on me? It’s unfair! Now that I had my resolve, a new life with my twins and without Dominic. I was already happy. But why did it have to be this way?

Anger bubbled up, boiling in my blood and rushing to my head. It was not just frustration at the universe or the unfairness of it all. It was anger at myself, too, for still feeling something when I looked at him. No matter how hard I tried to push it away, he still had this hold over me, and that made

me feel even more trapped. The mate bond was unbreakable, something I could not change or escape from, no matter how much I wished I could. It was not fair.

But I could not afford to let these feelings consume me. Right now, my kids needed me. Devon and Diana's call reminded me of my real priorities. My twins were my everything. They had to come first, above my own hurt, above whatever Dominic and I were supposed to be. It was not about me or him anymore. It was about them. They are my life now. I was done with Dominic.

Taking a deep breath, I forced myself to calm down, even as my heart raced and my emotions swirled. Falling apart was not an option, not now. I had too much to protect, too much depending on me.

I swallowed back the ache in my chest and steadied myself before turning away until Dominic's voice cut in before I could take another step.

"Leaving already?" he asked. His brow was knitted, eyes filled with frustration, and his jaw clenched as he focused his gaze on me. It bothered him that I was walking away after everything that had just happened between us. But I could not deal with it. Not right now. My twins needed me more. But he did not have to know that.

"Yes," I simply replied, without giving any more explanation nor the reason why. He was welcome to take any guess, but I would never tell him about Devon and Diana. He betrayed me, neglected me, he had chosen another woman. He did not deserve to be part of my twin's life.

He stepped forward and reached for my hand, stopping me as he spoke. "So, that's it?" He sounded frustrated, maybe even hurt, his eyes searching mine for something, an emotion that I had given him six years ago but I had learned to bury it.

"After everything, you're just going to leave?" he added, and unmistakably there was a tinge of betrayal in his voice that he tried to mask.

I remembered myself six years ago, I was like that too, frustrated, hurt, and begging for his attention. But he made his choice to ignore me as if I was only a chore.

I pulled my hand back and retorted. “I have responsibilities.”

“To Killian?” he taunted, and there was a sharp accusation in his tone.

I did not answer him. I did not owe him an explanation.

His hands clenched at his sides, frustration building evidently, painting across his face.

“Tell me the truth, Samantha,” he demanded. “Are you going back to him?”

The question hit me like a punch. He was wrong, so wrong. But the last thing I wanted was to explain, to get into all of that right now.

“It doesn’t matter,” I replied firmly.

“It matters to me,” he insisted, his jaw clenching as he controlled the fury and perhaps a flicker of jealousy that I saw cross his eyes.

I took a deep breath, pushing the thoughts of the mate bond out of my mind. I could not afford to care. “It doesn’t,” I replied. “We have nothing to talk about, Dominic.”

“Nothing?” he uttered in disbelief as his eyes darkened his anger simmering on the surface demanding an answer. “After all this, you’re really going to stand there and say that?”

“I have no reason to stay here with you, Dominic. I am leaving.”

“That’s it?” he scoffed.

“It was just sex, Dominic. Don’t read too much into it,” I recited the same words he had thrown at me six years ago when I was the one who wanted

him to stay. And with my words, his eyes widened in recognition to the same phrase he had uttered before.

He was silent for a second, and when I thought he was done, he spoke, “Why are you so determined to leave?” he asked, a softness in his voice, as if he had just realized the cruelty of his words that were now stabbing him back. The pain in his eyes twisted something inside me as if I could feel the same, because, in the first place, I knew how it felt like to be treated like nothing. But I held my ground.

“Because some things are better left in the past,” I managed to say, even though it felt like a lie. The bond between us was still there, thrumming like a strummed guitar string, pulling me in, but I could not let myself give in to it.

I took a step back, knowing I had to be the one to break free. “I have to go,” I said, my voice was barely above a whisper.

As I turned away, the thought about Olivia had crossed my mind, the woman I thought he had chosen and cared for due to a mate bond between them— but I was wrong, knowing now that I was the one who was fated to him.

I couldn’t stop myself from asking...

“Do you still want to find your fated mate?” the words slipped out before I could stop them, so I continued. “What would you do if you found her?”

Dominic’s expression froze, the question hitting him harder than I expected. But I did not wait for his answer. I couldn’t. If I stayed any longer, I might break, and I couldn’t let that happen.

I turned and walked away, each step taking me further from him, from the pull it was getting harder to ignore.

Chapter 8

Dominic’s POV

I stood there, stunned, long after Samantha's figure disappeared, leaving her words echoing in my head. "Do you still want to find your fated mate?" I had not been prepared for the sharp edge of that question or the way her voice had almost cracked when she said it, like she was keeping something inside, something she did not want me to see.

My mind spun, grasping for answers, but none of it made sense. Samantha had never shown any sign of being my mate before. She had never had a wolf, and even when I had searched for my fated mate years ago, there was nothing about her that set off that primal connection.

My wolf stirred restlessly, more agitated than I had felt in years.

'She can't be our mate,' I told him, a denial that sounded weaker by the second. Yet the pull was there, so intense and undeniable, clawing at the edges of my control, wanting to be freed, to be fulfilled. There was something in me that ached to be satisfied, a longing for a mate that had been sitting deep in my chest.

'Are you sure?' my wolf questioned, a growl rumbling through my mind. His usual confidence was gone, replaced by uncertainty that put me even more on edge. 'I felt something back there. I know you did too,' he added, but he was not sure either.

'She never had a wolf,' I countered, pushing against his doubts, 'It doesn't add up.' Samantha had always been wolfless. That was why I had justified treating her the way I did, why I told myself she could never be mine, she was never strong enough to stand by my side. She was not meant to be the Luna of the pack. She couldn't. The responsibilities of a Luna were too much for her even though she wanted to carry them, even though she was trained by my mother, she was too weak— wolfless, so it would be impossible if she was my mate. I couldn't be fated with someone without a wolf. The power imbalance would negatively affect the pack's energy and morale.

My wolf hesitated, his instincts warring with reason.

‘There’s only one way to know for sure,’ he finally said, frustration seeping into his voice. ‘We need more time with her. We need to feel her again.’

I clenched my fists, irritation boiling over. Time was the last thing I had with Samantha. She was already slipping away, always a step ahead, hiding more than she revealed. Even when she had stood right in front of me, I had felt like she was miles away— so near yet so far to reach.

“Damn it,” I muttered, raking a hand through my hair out of frustration. How could this be happening now, when everything was so close to falling apart? The alliance meeting, the rogue threat, the precarious peace I had fought to maintain— it was all hanging by a thread. And now, Samantha was back, ripping open old wounds and dragging emotions I had buried long ago. That day when she just suddenly vanished without a trace simply because I took some loads off her shoulders since I knew that she had been exhausting herself, burying herself to work while she had no wolf to help her and aid her for more strength. She always tried to appear strong, like impossible to crumble, but I had seen the vitamins and supplements, and several medications she kept hidden in her cabinet.

And now, it was like she was hiding something far more than what I had known in the past years, and this confusion was about to drive me insane.

I reached for my phone and dialed my Beta, Liam. The line barely rang twice before he answered.

“Alpha,” Liam’s voice was collected, professional, the tone of a man who knew not to question me even when the situation was far from typical.

“I found her,” I stated. The relief I had expected to feel at those words was drowned out by something else, a restless, gnawing sensation that left me uneasy. “Samantha,” I clarified.

He was silent for a moment, perhaps figuring out what I wanted to be done, then, “Do you want me to bring her in?” he asked.

“No,” I replied sharply, the thought of dragging her back against her will had sparked something possessive and dangerous inside me. She had already tried to run once, and forcing her would only push her further away.

And... I don’t want that.

“But I need you to find out everything you can about her. Where she’s been, who she’s been with. If there’s... anyone serious in her life.” My jaw tightened, hating the way the words tasted, and hating it more the thought that came with it— her, with another man. It can’t be.

Liam hesitated, and I knew he was piecing together the strangeness of my request. However, he did not ask too much, he did not prod, and that was one thing I respect about him. He did not pry into my life, he knew his boundaries and his responsibilities. Even though we were friends, there were certain things that we could not openly discuss especially when personal interests overlapped with the duties and best interests of the pack.

“Understood,” he said finally. “I’ll get on it right away.”

“Good.” I hung up, the line going dead with a finality that felt too close to the tension that twisted inside me. If Samantha had moved on, if there was someone else in her life... No. The thought was like a blade twisting in my gut. But I had to know. I needed to understand why she was running away, and as to why she had this hold over me that made no damn sense.

My wolf stirred and spoke in my head. ‘If she’s ours,’ he growled, ‘we can’t let her go.’

If she’s ours. The words haunted me, a hope I hadn’t even realized was still alive somewhere deep in the shadows of my heart. But I couldn’t let hope blind me. Not again. The pain of the past still throbbed like a fresh wound that refused to heal. Six years ago, I waited for her to return, thinking that she was just having the space she needed, cooling off, but then, days passed, and turned into weeks, and months. I believed, I hoped, because she said she loved me, wanted me, but then, she never came back. She was gone. She left, for good.

I convinced myself that it was a good riddance, that she was a thorn in my side that needed to be plucked out, so I buried myself with work, alcohol, and pleasure, until I realized that I was just fooling myself because deep down inside, I still continued to wonder where she was, and if she was doing well with her life.

I forced myself to move, shoving aside the thoughts that were in my head. The alliance meeting was about to start, and I couldn't afford to show any weakness. As Alpha, I needed to lead with strength, with clarity, even if everything inside me felt like it was shattering.

When I stepped into the conference hall, I scanned the room automatically, searching for that lovely familiar face, but Samantha was nowhere to be seen. The other Alphas and their entourages were settling in, yet my focus was divided, half of it was tethered to the empty chair that should have been Samantha's.

"Alpha Dominic," a voice interrupted my thoughts, and I turned to see Killian. He acknowledged me with a nod before moving to his own place, his eyes lingering on the empty spot as well.

'She's not with him? Then where is she?'

I was about to sit down when one of the guards entered hastily with an urgent look. "We have a report," he said. "There's a rogue in the building, but... something's not right about it. It's unusual."

Chapter 9

Samantha's POV

I barely managed to push the door shut behind me before my knees trembled and I dropped on the floor. The room was quiet, too quiet, and for a moment, all I could hear was the pounding of my heart in my ears. I pressed my back against the door, closing my eyes and trying to steady my breathing.

Dominic's presence had a way of ripping scars and opening old wounds, making everything feel raw again. But I could not let that get to me. I had to stay focused, to keep my head on straight for Devon and Diana.

My phone buzzed in my pocket, yanking me out of my thoughts. I pulled it out, and my breath caught when I saw the caller ID: Annie - Home.

Panic twisted in my chest as I quickly answered. "Annie? Is everything okay?" I tried to keep my voice steady, pushing my worries away, but my nerves were on edge.

"Samantha," Annie, the human nanny I had trusted to care for my twins, spoke in a soft tone. "Sorry to bother you, but the twins called you earlier, yeah? I noticed this on the call log. Everything is fine here. Maybe it was just a quick dial I guess. Well, they had been asking for you. But they are asleep now, when will you return?"

Guilt knifed through me as I think of the kids back home. "Maybe tomorrow? Or the next day. I am not quite sure yet. We are pretty busy here. But... is everything okay there? I mean the kids calling me instantly, I was worried that something might be wrong." I said. I should have been there, not across the country dealing with pack politics and a past that refused to let me go.

Annie was quiet for a moment and I waited. I could hear the uneasiness and confusion in her voice.

"Actually... there is one more thing," she said. "I found... well, it is probably nothing, but I found some silver hair in the living room. At first, I thought maybe an animal got in, but the doors and windows were locked. It's odd, don't you think?"

My stomach dropped. Silver hair. The only explanation was Devon and Diana. They must have inherited the hair of Dominic's wolf— the rare silver hue, a mark of the Silver Crescent Pack's bloodline. I clenched the phone tightly, trying to calm the sudden rush of fear. If Annie suspected anything, if she connected the dots... she was a human and she might panic and

report to human authorities about this, or worse, she might do something to the kids if she gets scared.

However, there was one more thing that I dreaded— the twins carrying a very distinctive feature from the Silver Crescent's bloodline— from Dominic. If he sees their wolves, he would recognize them as his.

"It's probably from their toys," I lied smoothly, praying she would not question it. "The kids were probably playing with their stuffed toys. You know how they are, always making a mess." I chuckled, masking the nervousness that drummed in my chest.

Annie let out a relieved laugh. "Oh, of course! That makes sense. I must have imagined the whole animal thing. I just did not want to take any chances."

"Thank you for being so careful," I said, forcing my voice to stay light. "I will be back as soon as I can. Please let me know if anything else comes up."

"Will do," she replied, and I could almost hear her smile. "Take care, Samantha."

I ended the call and sank onto the edge of the bed, running a hand through my hair. I hated lying to Annie, but there was no other way. The truth about the twins' and their heritage had to stay hidden. If anyone from Dominic's pack discovered them... I could not let myself think about that. I had fought too hard to protect them, to keep them safe from a world that would not understand.

A knock sounded at the door, breaking through my spiraling thoughts. I jumped to my feet and approached cautiously.

"Who is it?" I called.

"It's me," Killian's familiar voice answered. Relief washed over me, but it was short lived. Killian being here meant something had happened, and in my experience, it was never good news.

I opened the door to find him standing there in a casual suit with his usual composed expression, but there was a seriousness in them that I had only seen whenever there was something urgent.

“Samantha, I know you initially told me you would not be attending, and I understood that,” he began. “But something has happened. We have received a report about an unusual rogue, and they have brought it in.”

I paused, my hands still on the jacket I had just worn.

“A rogue?” My brows knitted together. “What do you mean, unusual?” Rogues were always dangerous, driven by primal needs and a lack of resources to sustain life so they had to force their chances to obtain whatever they could have. They were filled with greed and thirst for blood. But it was their way of living lawlessly that put them in such a situation which turned them into a... monster.

Killian took a step inside, closing the door partway behind him. “We can’t understand what’s wrong, but it was acting unusual,” he explained.

“It’s acting erratic, and there are signs that it’s... not like anything we have encountered before. This could affect the pack alliances, and tensions are already high and this rogue might increase the doubts and wariness against each pack. This is threatening the trust that we are here to strengthen for everyone. Your knowledge about rogues could be useful in this. You need to see it for yourself.”

I hesitated. I had done extensive research on rogues, memorizing everything I could when I was still being trained as Luna by Dominic’s mother, Lena. Because even back then, I had wanted to prove myself useful, to be prepared for anything. But facing a room full of Alphas— and Dominic— was not something I wanted to do right now.

Killian’s voice softened. “Please. Your insight might make a difference. If doubts arise about the security of our alliances, it would threaten the packs’ treaty.”

I took a deep breath and sighed. As much as I wanted to avoid this meeting, my instincts told me I could not.

“All right,” I agreed, “Just give me a moment.”

Chapter 10

Samantha’s POV

I stepped into the conference hall, and I immediately felt the heavy atmosphere. It was suffocating for someone like me. The aura of the Alphas and Betas from different packs filled the space, it felt powerful, intimidating, as if it was trying to force me to cower in fear and bow my head in submission. Yesterday was different since there were more lower ranks in the event hall, serving us, but now, only the heads, right hands, and trusted advisors of the Alphas were present. My eyes immediately sought out Dominic, a compulsion I could not seem to shake. He stood near the front, exuding authority and power, and his presence seemed to be dominating the room as if he were born to command it. Even from here, I could feel the pull, the undeniable draw that I hated and craved in equal measure.

But before I could dwell on it, my gaze shifted. The rogue stood in the center of the room, restrained and surrounded by soldiers. The sight of him made my skin crawl, like little spiders crawling beneath my skin. He was a mess, a man twisted in ways that defied understanding. His eyes glowed an unnatural, hellish red, the kind of crimson that seemed to pierce through flesh and bone, and they darted around wildly, never settling, as if haunted by unseen horrors. He trembled continuously, his muscles spasming and jerking, a marionette pulled by invisible strings. Sweat poured off his pale, almost translucent skin, which was marred by veins that pulsed and writhed like snakes under the surface. They were an unnatural, sickly blue-black, spreading in chaotic patterns that made my stomach churn, a grotesque web that looked ready to burst.

His jaw twitched as though he was fighting the urge to bite or scream, and his lips were chapped, dry, cracked, and flecked with a strange dark residue. Even his hair, once thick and likely dark, had become patchy,

clumps of it torn away, leaving raw patches of irritated skin. His fingernails were jagged and broken, caked with dirt and blood, as if he had clawed his way out of some inescapable prison. There was a stench, too, a vile mixture of rot and something metallic, something that made it difficult to breathe.

“This is the rogue we found near the perimeter,” one of the soldiers announced. “He was acting erratic, and we had to use silver chains to subdue him.”

The rogue’s head snapped up, and he snarled, baring elongated, jagged teeth. My heart skipped a beat. There was something... wrong, something off about him. He did not look like a normal rogue wolf. There was an unnatural wildness in his eyes, a madness that felt almost... otherworldly.

Dominic stepped forward, his expression hard as he assessed the threat.

“What are you?” he demanded, a command that reverberated through the hall.

The rogue laughed, a broken, grating sound that made the hair on my arms stand up.

“What am I?” he repeated, his words slurring. “I am what happens when your kind and theirs play gods.” He spat the last word, as if in disdain, a loathing that was caused by a torture he had undergone.

A shiver ran through me. His kind and ‘theirs’. I stepped forward, drawing the attention of a few Alphas, but I did not care anymore, there was a crucial matter at hand.

“You mean a hybrid,” I said, and the room fell silent.

The rogue’s eyes flicked to mine, and for a moment, something almost human passed over his expression before it twisted back into a snarl.

“Smart little wolf,” he crooned, his voice mocking. “A mix of blood, cursed by both worlds.”

The murmuring picked up again, a wave of disbelief and fear spreading through the crowd. A vampire-werewolf hybrid was a nightmare, a creature that should not exist. But here he was, a living, breathing abomination.

Killian moved to stand beside me. “We need to figure out how this happened,” he said quietly, his eyes narrowing at the rogue. “If there are more like him...”

I nodded. If hybrids were being created, it could destabilize everything. An imbalance of two worlds, colliding and becoming one would pose a great risk to both races. Someone could be behind this. Whoever had done this was disrupting the natural laws. There were stories, legends, and myths far buried in history and tales, but for it to be witnessed now, in reality, I could not imagine what it would bring.

But as I processed the implications, I caught a movement out of the corner of my eye.

Olivia. She was standing too close to Dominic, leaning in as if she had every right to be in his space. Her hand brushed his arm, and he did not move away. My stomach twisted, a sick feeling spreading through me that had nothing to do with the rogue or the threat he posed.

Jealousy.

After all these years, I was still vulnerable to it, still helpless against the hurt that spread when I saw them together. I thought I had moved on, but I guess I was wrong. Especially now that the mate bond had learned to entangle with his heart, pulling me in, drawing me close, yet I had to hold back. I couldn’t let fate drag me back to the situation that I had already escaped from six years ago.

I clenched my fists, forcing myself to look away.

‘It doesn’t matter’, I told myself. Dominic had never been mine, not really, and he never would be. But the jealousy burned so maddening that I had to

remind my wolf to calm down. She was a possessive one, but she also understood that with Dominic, it's complicated.

The rogue's laughter broke through my thoughts.

"You think you can stop what's coming?" he taunted, his body jerking against the chains. "You are all doomed. The balance has already shattered, tipping forward to a force you would never expect," he spat, a dark, sinister chuckle followed.

Dominic's eyes narrowed, and for a brief moment, his gaze flickered to me. It was a split second, barely enough to process before he turned back to the rogue.

"Who sent you?" Dominic demanded coldly. "Who's behind this?"

The rogue's laughter died, and his expression twisted into something almost pitiful.

"They are coming," he whispered, his voice cracking, and almost choking. "You can't stop them. No one can," he warned.

Before anyone could react, the rogue's body shook, his muscles convulsing violently. The chains rattled as he thrashed, and a dark, oily substance began to leak from his mouth. I stepped back, horror washing over me as the rogue's body contorted in unnatural ways.

"Get back!" someone shouted, and soldiers rushed forward to aid, but it was too late. The rogue let out a final, guttural scream before collapsing, his body going still, and the silence that followed was deafening.

He was dead, keeping with him the secrets he had witnessed.

"What the hell was that?" one of the Alphas muttered, breaking the stunned silence.

The rogue's dying words repeated in my mind. 'They are coming.' Whatever this was, whoever they were, they were bringing something that

should have been left in the histories of the past or legends and myths of the old.

Deep down, I knew that our world was about to change in ways we could not begin to comprehend.

I glanced at Dominic, and his gaze was already set on me...

Chapter 11
Samantha's POV

"The Alpine Bar is just down the street," one of the Alphas recommended but the others refused, uttering bad experiences in the said establishment.

I had not expected the meeting to end on such a strange note. The moment the rogue incident was resolved, the Alphas and Betas seemed eager to blow off steam as they planned to go to one of the nearest bars in the area. Jokes were shared, and a few of them were already laughing, the threat of the hybrid seemed to have been pushed aside for a temporary escape.

We all left the conference hall once they had decided on a place, but I was not in the mood for a drink.

"Sam!" Killian called, jogging up to me with a mischievous grin. "Come with us. We could use a little distraction, right?" he convinced.

I folded my arms, already shaking my head. "Thanks, but I'll pass. I think I've had enough excitement for one day."

Killian groaned dramatically, his hand over his heart. "You're no fun," he teased, acting like he had been hurt by my refusal.

"I'm plenty of fun," I shot back, managing a small smile. "But I would rather have all my wits about me, especially with everything that is happening."

He gave a resigned sigh, though his eyes glinted with humor. "Fine, your loss. But don't blame me if you miss out on seeing some truly

embarrassing drunk Alpha moments," he joked, although that would have been too hilarious to witness— the Alpha's getting out of control because of alcohol.

"I'll survive," I promised.

Killian wandered off, joining the others as they headed out, and I made my way back to my hotel room. The hallways were quiet, almost eerily so, and the adrenaline from the meeting had left me feeling jittery. As soon as I reached my room, I went into the bathroom and showered, then I collapsed onto the bed after changing into my nightgown, hoping for a peaceful sleep.

But peace never seemed to last long.

Just as I was dozing off to slumber, the quietness of my room was pierced by the shrill ringing of my phone, I immediately grabbed it thinking that it might probably be Annie, calling about the twins. But when I saw the caller ID, I braced myself, thinking that something might have gone wrong.

"Hello?"

"Samantha?" It was Alpha Baron. "You need to come pick up Killian."

"What?" I sat up, frowning. "Why? What happened?"

"He's really drunk. Like, dangerously drunk," the Alpha explained, sounding exasperated. "He's making a scene, and we can't handle him. You're probably the only one he will listen to."

I ran a hand over my face. Killian never got that drunk, not without a reason. "Fine. Where are you?"

The Alpha rattled off the name of the bar, and I reluctantly got to my feet. So much for taking it easy. I slipped into a silk night robe and slippers in irritation at the disturbed sleep that I could have had, but thinking about Killian, whatever had gotten into him, it must have been bad.

When I arrived at the bar, I even had to argue with the security for not being “properly dressed”, but I did not care, I was not going to flip my luggage and search for an appropriate one just to pick up a drunk man, I was already annoyed that I had to delay my sleep. Well, eventually, after showing him how frustrated I was that I had to come and pick up a drunk man in the middle of the night, he assumed that I was there to get my drunk husband so he let me in, saying that he had witnessed some incidents before. Inside the place was a noisy mess. Music thumped, voices shouted over each other, and the smell of alcohol was overwhelming. I spotted Killian almost immediately, slumped over a table with a half-empty glass in hand. His normally composed demeanor was shattered, and he looked... defeated.

“Killian,” I called, making my way over to him.

He lifted his head, his eyes glazed but lighting up when he saw me. “Sam!” he slurred, his grin sloppy as he raised his hand as if to wave at my presence. “You came to rescue me.”

“More like babysit,” I muttered, folding my arms. “What the hell happened?”

Killian laughed, the sound bitter. “Had a little competition with the mighty Alpha Dominic.” He gestured wildly, nearly knocking over his drink. “And the prize was you.”

I rolled my eyes, feeling a surge of annoyance. “You used me as some kind of pissing contest?”

He looked sheepish but unrepentant. “It was supposed to be fun. But he... he took it too seriously.” His expression darkened, and he mumbled something I could not catch.

Before I could process that prickling awareness at the back of my neck, I turned— and there he was. Dominic stood a few feet away, his tall frame was rigid, his fist was curled and his jaw clenched. Beside him, Olivia practically draped herself over his arm, her fingers curling around his bicep, as if trying to stake a claim. The sight of them together twisted something painfully deep inside me, and I hated that I cared.

I tugged my silk robe tighter around myself, acutely aware of how my thin nightgown clung to my skin beneath. I had been in such a rush and annoyed to get here that I had not bothered about changing, and now, with Dominic's eyes locked on me, the heat of his gaze and the memory of an earlier encounter in the forest made my cheeks burn.

His dark eyes swept over me and noticed every detail, taking in the way the silk robe barely covered my legs, and the way my hair spilled loose around my shoulders, his eyes darkened. A flash of something primal and raw crossed his face— jealousy, clear and unmistakable. His fists clenched tighter at his sides, and a muscle ticked in his jaw as he fought to control himself.

Olivia, oblivious or perhaps choosing to ignore the change in his demeanor, leaned closer, her lips brushing against his ear as she whispered something. But Dominic did not even flinch. He shrugged her off, pushing her hand away with a force that bordered on a rough gesture. Olivia's eyes widened, hurt and confusion flashing across her face, but he did not spare her a single glance. His focus was solely on me and my hand that rested on Killian's shoulder.

Confusion clouded my thoughts. 'What was he doing?' If he and Olivia were a couple, why act like that? It did not make sense. None of this made sense.

I turned to Killian and helped him up, my arm around his waist and his around my shoulder.

Dominic's eyes darkened, his gaze narrowing as it dropped to where Killian's arm draped across my shoulders. His lips curled slightly, a silent snarl that revealed the barest flash of his canines. It was a reaction I had seen before, one that screamed of envy, of a territorial instinct that he could not suppress even if he wanted to.

He took a step forward, but Olivia grabbed his arm again, trying to pull him back. "Dominic," she hissed heavily with frustration. "What's wrong with you?"

Dominic ignored her completely, his entire body tensed as he watched me struggle to support Killian's weight.

I could feel his gaze searing into me, but I refused to let it affect me. He did not get to act possessive now, not after everything he had put me through in the past. And besides, there's Olivia.

Dominic took another step, and I thought he might come over, might do something reckless. His eyes locked onto mine, and his lips parted, as if he was about to say something. But then he stopped himself, his hands curling into fists. He was fighting a battle I could not understand, and the conflict in his expression made my heart pound in ways I wished it wouldn't.

"Come on, Killian," I muttered as he swayed dangerously, and I struggled to keep him steady. "We're leaving."

"Leaving already?" Dominic's uttered with a challenging tone.

"Yeah," I shot back, "some of us have responsibilities."

Killian snorted, his head lolling. "She's got better things to do than deal with your possessive ass, Dominic."

That got a reaction. Dominic stepped forward, and for a split second, I thought he might actually start something. His eyes narrowed in barely restrained anger, and I braced myself. But instead of lashing out, he stopped, his fists clenching.

Olivia tried to tug him back, her patience clearly fraying. "Dominic, let's go. You don't need to waste time on—"

"Enough," he snapped, his voice cutting her off. Olivia's mouth fell open, stunned, and he turned back to me. "Samantha," he said, almost like a command.

I refused to look at him and only left with a word. "Goodnight, Dominic."

With that, I guided Killian out of the bar. Dominic's behavior was spinning my thoughts in circles. He acted jealous and protective, but it did not line up with the image I had of him and Olivia. I thought they were a couple, and yet...

Once we stumbled into the parking lot, Killian slumped against my car, groaning. "He's an idiot, you know," he mumbled. "Dominic."

I bit back a sigh. "You both are."

Killian let out a dry laugh, but it quickly faded. "He still cares about you, Sam. Even if he doesn't deserve you."

I did not want to think about that, not now. "Come on, get in the car," I said, opening the door.

But as I helped Killian in, I could not shake the feeling of Dominic's eyes on me, even as the bar faded behind us.

Chapter 12

Samantha's POV

Why did he do that? Dominic had kept Olivia by his side after all these years, for sure, there must be going on between them. But, why did he push her away, ignore her? and the way he stared at me intensely as if he wanted me to hold him instead of Killian.

Though he never asked... I should stop being delusional and acknowledge the fact that he could not let go of Olivia. Because if he really wanted me instead of her, he would have left her long ago. But he did not.

Killian slumped in the passenger seat, groaning softly as I buckled him in. His head lolled against the window, and his eyes were barely open. I slid behind the wheel, and started the car, the engine purring to life. II gripped the steering wheel, trying to focus on getting Killian back safely, but my thoughts wouldn't stop racing.

Dominic. The way he acted... did not fit the image I had of him. He had always kept me at a distance, cold and uninterested. But tonight, his behavior had been anything but detached. He had been jealous. Possessive. And something else was nagging at me.

I inhaled deeply as the memory of his scent flooded my senses. I had not noticed it before, but tonight, it struck me. Dominic smelled... unmated. There was no trace of a bond mark, no lingering scent of Olivia on his skin. How had I missed that? And where was Olivia's mate mark? If they were really a couple, there should have been evidence, a sign of their connection. But there wasn't.

But why can't he let her go? I was frustrated in my mind.

"Get a grip, Sam," I muttered to myself.

Outside, the rain had started to fall in a light, persistent drizzle, streaking the windshield. The wipers struggled to keep up as the downpour began to intensify, casting the streetlights in a hazy glow. The roads glistened with water, and every passing shadow seemed darker, more sinister, more threatening.

I drove through the quiet streets, the city lights fading as we neared the outskirts of town. Killian stirred beside me, mumbling incoherently, and I stole a glance at him.

"You better not throw up in here," I warned, but he was too out of it to respond.

Then, out of nowhere, I felt it. A shift in the air. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up, and a chill swept through me. My grip on the wheel tightened, and I instinctively slowed down, scanning the road ahead. The shadows seemed to move, writhing and twisting, and my pulse spiked.

Something was not right.

I barely had time to react. A blur of movement shot out from the darkness, slamming into the front of the car. The impact sent a brutal jolt through the vehicle, and I screamed as the car skidded, tires screeching against the slick, rain-soaked road while I continued stepping on the brakes. The downpour hammered against the windshield, reducing visibility to nearly nothing. I fought for control, gripping the steering wheel with trembling hands, but the car spun wildly before crashing into a muddy ditch with a sickening thud.

“Killian!” I shouted, my voice raw as I twisted to check on him. He was out cold, head lolling, completely unaware of the danger. Panic surged through me, but I shoved it down, unbuckling my seatbelt with shaking hands.

The shadows moved again, and I understood. Rogues. They surrounded the car with eyes gleaming with a predatory hunger that sought to be quenched.

Damn it. I glanced at Killian again and even though he was conscious, he seemed to be barely registering what was happening. I doubt if he could fight like this, heavily drunk.

The rain poured harder and steadily, without any sign of stopping soon. Cold droplets lashed against my face as I shoved open the driver’s door, stumbling out into the storm. My feet sank into the muddy ground, and my breath hitched as I caught movement from the corner of my eye. I squinted through the heavy rain, and it was then the first rogue lunged at me, its claws slashing through the downpour. I ducked just in time, rolling through the muddy ground and springing back to my feet. The rain was persistent, drenching me to the bone and making every movement heavier, and harder. My hair clung to my face as I focused on my attackers.

“You picked the wrong night,” I spat, my voice steady despite the fear thrumming in my veins. The rogue snarled, circling me, but I held my ground.

Another rogue charged from the side, its snarls drowned by the pounding rain. I twisted, driving my elbow into its ribcage with all the force I could

muster. The rogue staggered, but I had no time to recover as two more closed in, flanking me.

They came at me in perfect synchronization, their claws gleaming even through the haze of rain. I sidestepped one, managing to grab its arm and twist, the satisfying crack of bone breaking through the storm. But the second rogue was faster, its claws raking across my arm.

I whimpered as the pain erupted, white-hot and searing. Blood mixed with the rain, dripping down my arm as I stumbled back. The wound burned like fire, and I knew immediately — poison.

I hissed through gritted teeth, my breath coming in ragged gasps. My healing was not kicking in, and the realization sent a jolt of panic through me. The rogues were not just after bloody fight; they were here to kill.

“Killian!” I shouted again, my voice nearly drowned by the storm. But when I turned this time, the passenger seat was empty. My heart lurched, and I spun around, catching sight of him outside the car. He was on his feet, swaying slightly but awake, fists clenched as he squared off against a rogue that had broken away toward him.

His disheveled state was gone, replaced by his sober Alpha self as he threw a hard punch, knocking the rogue back. Another came at him, and he sidestepped, delivering a blow that sent it sprawling into the mud. Rain streamed down his face as he kept fighting, another rogue lunged and he bared his claws and slashed the rogue’s face, sending droplets of blood into the air.

Relief mixed with worry surged through me, but I could not afford to get distracted. My own fight was not over. Another rogue lunged at me from behind, and I twisted just in time, delivering a kick that sent it staggering.

“Stay down!” I growled, but it was futile. The rogues were ruthless, their snarls mingled with the pounding rain. One of them circled me, feinting left before striking from the right. Its claws caught my arm, sending another searing pain slicing through me.

I lashed out, swinging an elbow into its face, but another rogue was already rushing at me. Mud splattered as I fell back into the slippery ground, barely managing to roll away before its claws struck where I had been a second ago.

Pain exploded in my chest as I hit the ground, gasping for air. The rogue pinned me down, its claws digging into my sides. I struggled, summoning the last of my strength to shove it off, but my limbs were growing weaker as the poison began taking its toll.

I struggled to get away, forcing myself to fight through the haze. My knuckles connected with the rogue's jaw, and it fell back with a snarl. Gritting my teeth, I staggered to my feet and I felt the world tilting dangerously around me.

My vision swam, my eyes blurred by the rain, and another rogue struck, and I barely blocked it. The impact sent me stumbling backward, my legs giving out as the poison worked its way deeper into my system. I collapsed onto my knees, gasping for breath.

"Killian..." I whispered, forcing my head up. But when I looked toward where I had last seen him, he was not there anymore.

My chest tightened in panic. "No!" I rasped, my voice cracking. Where was he?

I tried to push myself up again, but my body refused to cooperate. Darkness crept at the edges of my vision, and I cursed under my breath, clawing at the mud to stay upright. The rain poured harder, the icy droplets stinging my skin as I fought to stay conscious.

The rogues closed in, their snarls growing louder, but their movements blurred. I swung out weakly, hitting nothing but air. My strength was gone, my body betraying me as I crumpled to the ground.

"Killian..." I choked out one last time, my voice lost in the storm.

One of the rogues stepped forward, a twisted grin on his face.

“Goodnight princess,” he sneered, raising his claws for the final blow, and the darkness swirled, consuming me as I felt myself slipping under — and everything turning black.

Chapter 13
Dominic’s POV

Samantha had always been a mystery to me, but lately, she was something else entirely. After six years since she vanished, she returned like a very different person— fiercer and more outspoken.

I could not stop thinking about her. Everything about tonight, about her, felt off. She was no longer the Samantha I remembered. The shy girl who used to blush every time I so much as glanced her way had vanished. This Samantha did not shrink back. She met my eyes, fired back sharp words during our encounters, and held her ground like she did not care what I thought of her anymore.

And it threw me off.

It was not just her attitude that had changed; it was her whole presence. She walked into a room like she belonged there, like she did not need anyone to grant her a place. The way she carried herself now— it made me see her differently, and I hated that it made me question things I had always thought I knew.

For years, I had convinced myself that Samantha had somehow planned our arrangement. A wolfless Luna? The thought had been ridiculous. My mother must have had her reasons, but I was certain Samantha had a hand in it. She had to. Why else would someone like her be paired with someone like me?

But tonight, for the first time, I started to wonder if I had been wrong.

Then there was Killian. That bastard.

The way he hovered around her tonight grated on my nerves more than it should have. He liked her. It was obvious in the way he looked at her, in the way he held her, in the way he spoke to her. He adored her so much that it made me contemplate my decisions in life.

And when Samantha walked out of that meeting with him, wearing that silk nightgown that clung to her like a second skin, my thoughts spiraled into darker places. What the hell was she doing dressed like that around him? It was not just the way she looked, though that alone had been enough to make my blood simmer. It was the way Killian's arm had slid freely around her shoulders as if he had every right to touch her, to claim her.

I could not stand to see her with him.

My mind betrayed me, conjuring up images of what might happen between them once they were alone. Would she let him get close? Would she let him see her the way she used to blush and look away from me? My wolf snarled at the thought, the sharp edge of jealousy cutting deeper than I wanted to admit.

It should not have mattered. And yet, the idea of her with Killian— or anyone else, for that matter— made something raw and primal rise to the surface.

I clenched my fists, the phantom image of Killian pulling her closer burning in my mind. My wolf paced restlessly, agitated by thoughts I had no business entertaining. Whatever was going on between them, it was none of my concern. But that did not stop me from wanting to put an end to it.

What the hell was wrong with me?

But I did not see a mark on her, that means he had not claimed her, and that knowledge, at least gave me a twisted sense of satisfaction.

The bar was quiet now, most of the patrons gone. I had stayed longer than I should have, nursing drinks that dulled my senses but not my thoughts.

“Dominic.” A voice pulled me from my spiral, and I glanced up to see Olivia approaching. She smiled, her polished demeanor was still intact despite the late hour.

“I figured you would still be here,” she said, sliding into the seat across from me.

“What do you want?” I asked, my tone sharper than I intended.

She raised an eyebrow, unbothered by my attitude. “You look like you need a ride.”

“I’m fine.”

“Are you?” she countered, gesturing in front of me to the empty bottle of rum that I had taken from the bartender.

I glared at her, but I knew she was right. There was no way I could drive myself home like this. The alcohol had settled heavily in my system, and the thought of getting behind the wheel was foolish.

“Whatever,” I muttered, standing unsteadily.

Olivia did not say anything as she led the way out of the bar, her heels clicking softly against the floor. The cool night air hit me like a slap when we stepped outside, the faint drizzle from earlier turned into a steady downpour. I barely noticed.

The car ride was a blur. I leaned back in the seat, closing my eyes against the spinning world. My thoughts, as always, drifted to Samantha. Her face, her scent, the way she had walked out of the meeting tonight like she did not care what anyone thought. I groaned, feeling myself hardened at her image.

My head lolled to the side, my vision blurry as I forced myself to stay awake with my eyes barely open, and for a moment, I caught a familiar scent.

Samantha?

I blinked, trying to focus, but the rain outside blurred everything. The scent surrounded me, comforting and infuriating all at once. My fingers twitched, reaching out instinctively.

The world tilted dangerously as I tried to make sense of the situation. My thoughts felt sluggish and my body heavier with each passing second.

“Samantha,” I murmured, my voice barely above a whisper.

A soft giggle answered me while a hand roamed at my chest and my muddled mind relished at Samantha’s touch. I blinked, struggling to focus. My head was spinning but the faint scent of her— of Samantha— was all I could cling to.

She leaned closer, the warmth of her breath brushing against my skin. A pair of hands cupped my face, trailing my jaw, and placing kisses at my neck.

How did we end up here?

I could not remember. But I did not care anymore, Samantha was here, and that’s all that matters.

Her lips crashed onto mine, and I held her waist, firmly, pulling her closer. “Samantha,” I whispered, her name tasting bittersweet on my tongue.

Chapter 14

Dominic’s POV

The taste of her name still lingered on my lips as I opened my eyes fully. And then, everything shattered.

It was not Samantha.

My heart plummeted like a stone as reality hit me with the force of a punch. My vision cleared just enough to see Olivia’s face inches from mine, her

lips swollen, her expression smug and satisfied. A wave of nausea hit me and cutting through the haze of alcohol.

“What the hell?” I growled, my voice rough. I shoved her off me with more force than I intended, and she stumbled back, her smirk replaced with a pout.

“Dominic, what’s wrong with you?” she whined, her voice dripping with feigned innocence. “You were the one—”

“That’s enough,” I snapped, sitting up unsteadily. “What do you think you’re doing?”

Her pout deepened, her lower lip jutting out as if that could undo what had just happened. “What do you mean? I thought...”

“You thought what? That I wanted this?” My head throbbed, anger replacing the drunken fog. “We are nothing, Olivia. Nothing. So do not ever pull this stunt again.”

Her eyes flashed with something — hurt, maybe, or disbelief — but I did not care. Not now. She crossed her arms over her chest, trying to regain control of the situation.

“That’s not true,” she said, her tone petulant. “We’ve had something, Dominic. You’ve let me stay by your side, let me hope. But now Samantha’s back, and suddenly, I don’t matter anymore?”

My jaw tightened. “You never mattered in that way, Olivia. I tolerated you out of respect for your father, but don’t mistake that for something it’s not.”

Her face twisted, a mixture of desperation and fury. “It’s because of her, isn’t it?” she accused, her voice rising. “You were finally warming up to me, but now that she’s here, everything’s changed!”

“It wouldn’t matter if Samantha were here or not,” I cut her off coldly. “There will never be anything between us. Do you understand?”

The weight of my words seemed to land like a blow, and for a moment, she looked truly devastated. But then her expression hardened, her pride kicking in. “You think she’ll forgive you?” she spat, venom in her tone. “She’s moved on, Dominic. She’s with Killian now. She doesn’t need you.”

Her words were meant to sting, but they only fueled the storm brewing inside me. I did not have the patience for her jealousy or her schemes. “This isn’t about Samantha,” I said evenly, though my clenched fists told another story. “This is about respect. She is still your Luna, whether you like it or not. You will treat her as such.”

Olivia’s lips trembled, but she didn’t argue. Instead, she turned and stormed out, slamming the door behind her.

The silence that followed was deafening. My thoughts raced, spinning between anger at Olivia, regret for letting things spiral this far, and the lingering ache Samantha’s absence always left behind.

And then, the mind-link hit me like a lightning strike.

‘Alpha! Rogues attacked Samantha and Killian.’

The words sent a chill through my entire body, sobering me in an instant.

My wolf howled, the primal sound reverberating through my mind. Samantha. My vision blurred, this time not from alcohol but from the pure rage and fear coursing through my veins.

She better be fine. The thought was a mantra, a desperate plea. If anything happened to her...

I grabbed my jacket, barely registering the frantic way my hands shook. My heart pounded as I sprinted to the location, the world around me fading into insignificance as I cut through the woods just to get where she was.

Killian. He was supposed to protect her. If he failed — if she was hurt — I didn’t know what I’d do.

When I arrived, chaos greeted me. Several warriors were tending to the aftermath, and the sharp scent of blood and rain hung heavy in the air. My eyes scanned the crowd desperately, searching for her.

“Where is she?” I barked, my voice carrying over the commotion.

Killian stepped forward, his clothes torn and blood streaked, but he was very much alive. Relief warred with my anger as I stalked toward him.

“She’s safe,” he said, his tone clipped, but his body language betrayed the tension between us.

“Take me to her,” I demanded.

Killian did not move. Instead, his eyes flicked over me, narrowing as they landed on the telltale marks scattered across my neck. Hickies. Olivia’s handiwork.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” he uttered with disgust.

I stiffened. “What are you talking about?”

“You reek of her,” he snarled, sharp enough to draw attention from the nearby warriors. “You just came from her bed, didn’t you? And now you’re here, acting like you care about Samantha?”

My wolf growled, but I forced myself to stay calm. “This isn’t about Olivia,” I said evenly, though the accusation stung more than I cared to admit. “Where is Samantha?”

Killian stepped closer, his face inches from mine. “Do you even hear yourself? You expect me to believe you care about her when you’ve got another woman’s scent all over you?”

“This isn’t your call,” I snapped, my patience wearing thin. “I don’t owe you an explanation. Now take me to her.”

“She doesn’t need you,” he shot back. “She’s already been through enough without you making it worse.”

Something inside me snapped. I grabbed him by the collar, my wolf pushing dangerously close to the surface. “Don’t test me, Killian,” I warned, my voice a growl. “I will deal with you later. Right now, I need to see her.”

For a moment, he did not move, his jaw clenched and his gaze defiant. But then he gestured toward the doctor’s tent.

“She’s in there,” he said coldly. “But if you upset her, Dominic, I swear—”

I didn’t wait for him to finish. My focus was on seeing Samantha as I strode toward the tent and Killian followed closely like Samantha’s guard dog. The image of Samantha’s defiant gaze flashed in my mind, followed by the way she had walked out with Killian earlier tonight. The thought of her hurt, of her suffering because I was not there to protect her, gnawed at me.

I pushed open the tent flap and my heart pounded as I stepped inside.

And then I saw her.

Chapter 15
Samantha’s POV

The first thing I felt was the sharp sting in my arm. My eyes fluttered open and met with the dim glow of the tent’s lanterns, the fabric walls swaying faintly in the cool night breeze. Everything smelled of herbs and antiseptic, which was far different from the chaos that reeked with blood and stench of rogues.

I blinked, trying to sit up, but a voice stopped me.

“Easy there,” the doctor said softly, placing a hand on my shoulder. Her face was lined with worry, though her tone was calm. “You have been through quite a lot.”

“Killian?” I croaked, my throat dry.

The doctor smiled reassuringly. “He is fine. A few scratches, but nothing serious. He has been pacing outside, demanding updates every few minutes.”

Relief washed over me like a wave, loosening the knot of tension in my chest. Killian was safe. That was all that mattered.

“What happened?” I asked, my voice steadier now as I tried to recall the night.

The doctor’s expression darkened as she set a bottle of medicine aside. “You were attacked by a rogue. But there is something strange about it...” She hesitated, as if debating whether to continue.

“Strange how?” I pressed.

She sighed, pulling up a small vial of crimson liquid. “We tested the rogue’s blood. It was poisoned. It was laced with something that should not be in a werewolf’s system. The poison is designed to destroy us from the inside out, to weaken us, to make us...” She trailed off, her brow furrowing. “Rabid.”

Rabid. The word sent a shiver down my spine. “And the claw,” she added, gesturing toward my bandaged arm. “A piece of it was lodged in your wound. That is why it would not heal properly earlier.”

I looked at the neatly wrapped bandage, the faint sting of pain reminded me of how close things had been. I thought it was going to be my end. But I was alive. My wolf stirred inside me, restless but alert.

“Is the poison...” I began, but the doctor cut me off.

“That’s what’s strange,” she said, leaning closer. “You should be bedridden. Barely able to move. This poison — it’s strong. It’s meant to shut down a werewolf’s entire system for days, if not kill them outright. And yet, here you are, already awake and doing well except for the wounds.”

Her eyes searched mine, curious and a little unnerved as if there was something... wrong, or unusual.

“I’m fine,” I said, brushing her off. My wolf rumbled in agreement, both of us impatient with the scrutiny.

The doctor did not look convinced. “You should not be fine,” she murmured, almost to herself and she seemed to be having conflicting thoughts in her head. “The poison should be affecting your system, and yet...” she could not find the right words as though she was also wondering how I was doing this.

I swung my legs off the cot, wincing slightly as my body protested. “Well, I am,” I said firmly. “And I have things to do.”

And before she could protest, the tent flap opened, and Killian walked in, his face tight with concern. Dominic followed close behind him with a dark and unreadable expression.

Killian was at my side in an instant. “Samantha,” he called, surprised that I was already awake and he reached out to touch my forehead.

But before he could, Dominic grabbed his wrist mid air with an ironclad grip. “Don’t touch her,” Dominic growled.

Killian’s head snapped toward him, his jaw tightening. “What’s your problem?”

“My problem,” Dominic spoke sharply, “is that you think you have any right to lay a hand on her.”

Killian yanked his arm free, his gaze locking with Dominic’s in a silent challenge. “Unlike you, I actually care about her,” he shot back.

“Oh, really? You care so much you let her get attacked?” Dominic retorted, stepping closer, asserting dominance. Two Alphas, it’s really not a good idea to have them both in one place at a time. They’d always clash when they did not like each other.

“I wasn’t the one distracted tonight,” Killian fired back, his eyes flicking pointedly to the marks on Dominic’s neck, and my heart twisted at the sight. His neck was painted with love bites, and it would not take a genius to guess who had done those on him. Olivia.

I groaned, pinching the bridge of my nose as they began hurling insults at each other.

“Distracted? Do not put this on me. You were with her, and yet, she ended up in that situation,” Dominic growled.

“You’re unbelievable. Maybe if you were not too busy chasing ghosts of a past you ruined—”

“That’s enough!” I snapped, cutting through their bickering. Both men turned to look at me, startled.

“I don’t have time for this,” I said, glaring at both of them. “You want to fight about who’s more incompetent? Do it somewhere else.”

They both looked like chastened pups, though neither backed down entirely.

I sighed, running a hand through my hair. “This attack might not have been planned,” I continued, forcing calm into my voice. “The rogues were poisoned. Whatever did this to them made them lose control. It is the same as that rogue we found earlier in the meeting.”

They exchanged a glance as the gravity of my words sank in their heads.

“Poison?” Killian asked, frowning.

“Yes,” I said. “The doctor said it was designed to make werewolves weak, to destroy us from the inside. But it also... changes them. Makes them rabid.”

Dominic's expression darkened. "We need to find out who's behind this," he said with a low threatening voice. "And why they are doing it."

"We will," Killian seconded, his fist curling at his side.

The tension between them was still evident despite their silence under my order, but I did not have the energy to deal with it anymore. "I'm tired," I said, rubbing my temples. "You both need to leave."

Killian hesitated, but Dominic did not. He gave Killian a smug look as he turned to go.

"Now," I added, glaring at Dominic, making him understand that he was included in my order for them both to leave.

To my surprise, he left without argument, though his pace was slower than necessary. Killian followed reluctantly, throwing one last concerned glance over his shoulder before disappearing through the tent flap.

Finally, silence. I sank back onto the cot, exhaling deeply while my head swam with everything that had happened, but for now, I just wanted to rest, the thinking would come on later.

But, of course, Dominic was not done.

The sound of the tent flap on the other side sliding open was my first clue.

"You've got to be kidding me," I muttered, sitting up as Dominic stepped in quietly and unhurried as if he had not just been kicked out.

"Couldn't stay away," he uttered, a rumble in his chest as he spoke and stepped closer to my side.

I glared at him, but he did not stop. His eyes roamed over me, taking in every detail, and the intensity of his gaze sent a shiver down my spine.

"You're supposed to be gone," I warned, reminding him that I just asked him to leave not even a minute ago.

“I couldn’t wait,” he said, his tone softer now. “Not after seeing you like that.”

My heart raced as his hand reached out, brushing a strand of hair from my face while he gazed at me with longing and desire dancing in his eyes.

“Dominic,” I began, but he cut me off, his voice a whisper.

“I need to feel you again.”

Chapter 16
Devon’s POV

The house was too quiet without Mom. The kind of quiet that made my stomach feel funny, like when I ate too much candy and got caught. Diana was lying on her bed, staring at the ceiling with her “thinking face,” the one where her nose scrunched up like she smelled something bad.

“I can’t sleep,” I whispered, even though I did not have to.

“I know,” Diana said, rolling over to look at me. “Me neither. It is because Mommy’s not here. She always kisses our foreheads before we sleep. It’s magic or something.”

I nodded, hugging Mr. Snuffles, my stuffed wolf, closer. “Maybe she is fighting bad guys again.”

“Or maybe she’s with him,” Diana said, her voice all huffy, likely jealous of the attention.

I knew who she meant. Killian. The big, funny Alpha who kept looking at Mom like she was chocolate cake. I like him so much, he was like a Daddy to us.

“Let’s go find her,” I said suddenly, sitting up in bed.

Diana blinked at me. “How?”

“We will drive,” I said, puffing up my chest. “I watched Mommy do it a hundred times. It’s easy.”

She sat up too, her eyes wide with excitement. “We are not allowed, though.”

I grinned. “That’s why it’s a secret mission.”

We snuck downstairs like ninjas, tiptoeing past the big grandfather clock that always made creepy ticking noises. The car keys were on the counter, right where Mom left them. Diana grabbed them before I could, shaking them like she just found treasure.

“I’m the driver,” she announced.

“No way!” I whispered back, snatching them from her. “I said the plan, so I drive.”

“But I’m older!” she argued.

“By two minutes!” I shot back. I did not like it when she acted like that yet she still cried like a little baby when get hurt. That’s why I always look after her.

She crossed her arms. “Two minutes is two minutes, Devon.”

“Fine. We both drive,” I said, pushing open the door to the garage.

Diana’s eyes lit up. “Co-pilots!” she excitedly cheered but I hushed her not to be too noisy because we might get caught by Annie, the nanny jumping like a bunny.

The car was shiny and black, and it smelled like Mom’s perfume inside. I climbed into the driver’s seat while Diana scrambled in next to me.

“Where’s the start button?” I whispered, pressing random things.

Diana pointed. “There! Push it!”

The engine roared to life, and we both squealed, covering our ears. “It’s so loud!” Diana yelled.

I adjusted the seat like I had seen Mom do, except my feet did not reach the pedals. Diana smacked her forehead dramatically. “You are too short. This is a disaster.”

“Am not,” I argued, trying to sit taller. “I’ll use a stick or something.”

“You’re gonna crash us.”

“No, I’m not!”

Spoiler alert: I did.

We did not even make it out of the driveway, when I lost control of the steering wheel and the car jerked forward, smashing into the mailbox with a horrible crunch.

“Oh no!” Diana shouted, her hands flying to her face.

“Don’t tell me ‘oh no’! You’re the one who said to push the button and was pushing the stick on the gas!”

“Yeah, but you are the one who hit the mailbox, genius!”

I threw the car keys on the floor, panic bubbling up in my chest. “What do we do?!”

Diana climbed out of the car, her hands on her hips like Mom did when she was mad. “We leave it,” she said, all serious. “No one will know it was us.”

I frowned. “What about the big dent?”

She shrugged. “Mailboxes fall over all the time. Duh.”

“Fine,” I muttered, grabbing Mr. Snuffles before following her outside. “But now what?”

“We walk,” she declared.

“Walk? Like, walk-walk?”

“Unless you wanna stay here and wait for Mom to come back and find out we broke her car, or get caught by Annie bunny?”

That shut me up really fast.

We walked for a long time with the cool night air nipping at my cheeks. The woods were dark, the trees making weird shadow shapes on the ground. I held Mr. Snuffles tight, glancing at Diana every few seconds to make sure she was still there.

“Do you think there are bears?” I whispered.

“No,” she said, but then she looked around like maybe there could be. “But if there are, I’ll scare them away.”

“With what? Your big mouth?”

She stuck her tongue out at me. “No, with this.” She picked up a stick, waving it like a sword.

“That’s not scary,” I said, but I grabbed a stick too. Just in case.

The night felt forever long, and my legs started to ache. Diana yawned, rubbing her eyes.

“Maybe we should stop,” she said finally, dropping her stick.

“But we haven’t found Mommy yet,” I argued.

“I know, but...” She plopped down on the ground, crossing her legs. “I’m sleepy.”

I sat next to her, leaning against a tree. The forest smelled like dirt and leaves and a little bit like a wet dog. “Okay. We’ll rest. Just for a little bit.”

“Promise you won’t let the bears get me?” she mumbled, her head already drooping onto my shoulder.

“Promise,” I said, even though I was not totally sure I could keep it.

~

The morning came too fast. The sun peeked through the trees, waking me up with its bright, annoying light. Diana was still snoring softly next to me and her hair was all tangled like a bird’s nest.

“Wake up,” I whispered, nudging her.

She groaned, swatting at me. “Five more minutes.”

“Nope. We have to keep going.”

She sat up, rubbing her eyes and yawning like a cat. “Fine. But you owe me pancakes after this.”

We walked until the woods started thinning out and the sound of cars in the distance made my heart jump.

“Do you hear that?” I asked, grabbing Diana’s arm.

“Yeah. Maybe it’s Mommy!”

We ran toward the noise, bursting out of the trees and onto the road. Cars zoomed past, their horns blaring like angry geese.

“Should we wave?” Diana asked, her tiny hand shielding her eyes from the sun.

Before I could answer, a big, black SUV slowed down, its tires crunching on the gravel. The window rolled down, and a man with sunglasses leaned out.

“Hey, kids,” he said, his voice was smooth but weird. “You lost?”

Diana glanced at me, then back at him. “Maybe.”

“Where’s your mom?”

“We are looking for her,” I said, stepping closer to Diana, just in case the guy do something really bad.

The man smiled, but it did not reach his eyes. “Hop in. We will help you find her.”

Diana tugged on my sleeve. “Devon...”

“I don’t think—” I started, but the man opened the door, cutting me off, offering us a ride. I hesitated, what if he was a bad guy?

“Come on,” he said, his smile growing wider. “It’s not safe out here.”

Chapter 17
Samantha’s POV

His hand trailed at my exposed knees, brushing softly, and gently at my skin, treating me like a fragile glass that might break if he gripped me too hard. “Dominic, what the hell do you think you are doing?” I uttered as I shifted on the bed ignoring the whimpers of my wolf that was so much willing to surrender in his touch, relishing in his close presence at my side.

I would not deny that his touches felt so warm and comforting, like what I would honestly need especially in my situation right now. But I can’t give in again.

His lips curled into a half smile that might have been charming if I was not already irritated and tired. Right now, I just wanted to rest. “I just wanted to see you, so I came back, Samantha.”

“You are seeing me. Now leave,” I dismissed but apparently, my wolf stirred in disapproval at my action and clearly unimpressed with my tone towards him. She was far too interested in his presence. I could feel her warmth spread through me despite the cold wall I was desperately trying to maintain. She was too giddy, excited to be with him again, but no, I fought her and scolded her in my head, but she was a stubborn little wolf.

“You are stronger now,” Dominic said, his eyes scanning me like he was trying to memorize every inch. “So different,” he added.

“Don’t act like you suddenly care,” I shot back, pushing myself up on the bed. My muscles still ached, but I was not about to let him know that. “You have made it clear I am not worth your time unless something has changed.”

His jaw tightened. “Do you already have your wolf?” he asked, his eyes narrowing slightly as he searched my eyes for answers, but I remained firm with my decision to keep this to myself despite the disapproval of my wolf. He had already hurt me before and I would not allow that again knowing that if he found out about my wolf, I would be more acceptable for him, more ‘Luna material’. And I disagree. He can’t just try to waltz back in to my life after disregarding me when I was still wolfless. It was unacceptable that he would only want me at my best when he practically ignored me for the rest of my years with him when I was at my worst.

And besides, I have my twins now, and I did not want them to know about Dominic. I did not trust him anymore, especially seeing that he was just with Olivia hours earlier.

When I did not answer him immediately his eyes lit up like an excited pup as if his guesses were right, “Can you shift? When did you have it?” he chanted with a look of anticipation, but I shut it down almost immediately.

“No. I still don’t have it,” I lied, looking away because I could not bear the dismay that flashed in his eyes as if his hopes were all crushed. “But why does it matter? I am no longer your Luna.”

“You are still my wife, and Luna, Samantha,” he replied, his fingers trailing the side of my hand, wanting to touch me again, to feel the sparks that seemed to ignite into a stronger flame whenever our skin brushed each other. It was addictive, hypnotizing even that if I would not be careful, I would fall for his trap again, and end up moaning beneath his strong body.

He moved closer, and my pulse betrayed me by quickening, drumming in my chest. My wolf all but purred at his proximity, and I clenched my fists to drown her out.

“And I just felt like you already have a wolf, because you were so strong to fight the rogues and...” he trailed, as his fingers brushed again on my skin and I saw him breathe deep, the pupils of his eyes dilating at the sensation, and I knew he felt it too, every pleasurable spark that shot through our bodies. But I pretended like I felt nothing. “You feel different, Samantha.”

“Stop.” I raised a hand, “Don’t act like this. It does not matter whether I have a wolf.”

His mouth opened, but I did not give him the chance to speak.

“You did not want me when I had no wolf,” I continued, my voice steady despite the storm building in my chest. “You made it perfectly clear where I stood with you. And now, suddenly, you are here, acting like — like this?” I gestured to him, sitting far too close to me, and gesturing his hand placements on my body.

“I was wrong,” he admitted, his voice softer than I had ever heard it.

And those three words made my chest tighten, but I refused to let it show. “Wrong?” I let out a hollow laugh. “You do not get to say that and expect everything to be fine.”

“I am not expecting that,” he said, his tone defensive. “But I can’t ignore this anymore. I feel something in you, I just needed to confirm.”

“Feel what, Dominic? If you are still so hellbent on finding your mate, well let me tell you, I am not your mate. So whatever you are feeling now is just your head messing with your sanity. Leave now, I need to rest.”

For a moment, he said nothing as he just stared at me and I looked away I could not bear the hurt in his eyes as I insisted he leave. His hand that was brushing on mine, craving to hold me, now curled into a tight fist, withdrawing any contact, and I hated how it made my stomach flip, how I wanted to reach it back, to hold on to that lingering touch.

“Why are you like this? I just wanted to...” he paused, a growl rumbling in his chest. “You are doing this on purpose. Playing hard to get.”

I laughed, the sound bitter and hollow. “You really think this is about you? I am not here for you, Dominic. I am here because I was attacked, remember? Not everything revolves around your ego,” I shot back and pushed him off the bed.

His jaw clenched, and for a moment, I thought he might argue. Instead, he took a step back, his gaze burning into mine.

“You are stronger than you were before,” he remarked, still suspiciously, not believing my lies. “But you are still the same stubborn, infuriating woman I’ve ever met.”

“And you are still the same arrogant, self centered Alpha,” I shot back.

He smirked, the corner of his mouth quirking up in that infuriating way. “We’ll see about that.”

Before I could respond, he turned and walked to the tent’s exit. I expected him to leave immediately, but instead, he stopped, looking over his shoulder.

“You can keep lying to yourself, Samantha,” he said, his words were a mix of challenge and a promise. “But I am not going anywhere.”

With that, stepped out and disappeared into the night.

I let out a shaky breath, calming myself because I admit, he still had a pleasurable effect on me. I hated it. Then I heard a beep on my phone so I reached out for it on a table beside me, my hands trembling as I held it with a text notification lighting up the screen, and for a moment, my heart leaped, thinking it might be Annie.

Chapter 18
Devon’s POV

The car was weird. It smelled like old leather and something spicy that made my nose twitch. Diana sat beside me, her legs too short to touch the floor, swinging them back and forth as she stared out the window. I could tell she did not trust these guys any more than I did.

The driver kept glancing at us through the mirror. He had dark hair and a beard that made him look kind of like one of the bad guys from the cartoons we were not supposed to watch. His friend, sitting in the passenger seat, was older, with white hair and a face that scrunched up like he was always thinking too hard.

“So,” Beard Guy started, his voice a little too cheerful, as if trying to be less suspicious, acting so likeable to a children. “What are your names, kids?”

Diana and I exchanged a look. Mom always said not to talk to strangers. Diana gave him her best unimpressed face and said, “We are not supposed to tell strangers our names.”

I nodded, crossing my arms. “Yeah. And we do not know you.”

Beard Guy chuckled like we had said something funny. “That’s fair. You’re smart kids. But you’re sitting in my car, so maybe we are not strangers anymore.”

“We are not friends either,” Diana shot back, her nose wrinkling like she smelled something bad.

White Hair Guy laughed, turning around to look at us. His eyes crinkled at the corners like he wanted to be nice, but I did not trust him. “I’m Mr. Bennett, and this is my friend Ethan. Better?”

Diana shrugged, not answering.

“What are you kids doing out here, anyway?” Ethan asked, his voice softer now.

I looked at Diana, and she looked at me. It was like we could talk without saying anything. We had been practicing that. Finally, I said, “We are looking for our mom.”

Ethan raised an eyebrow. “Your mom? Out here?”

“Yep,” Diana said, her chin lifting. “She is at a meeting thing. We are going to find her.”

“What meeting thing?” Mr. Bennett asked, turning fully in his seat now. “ So we could take you there instead.”

“Um...” I hesitated, trying to remember. “Mom said it was important. Something about packs.”

Diana perked up. “Yeah! It’s called...” She scrunched her face like she was thinking real hard. “Oh! The Alpha Summit! That’s it.”

Mr. Bennett and Ethan exchanged a look. It was quick, but I saw it. Adults always thought kids did not notice stuff, but we did.

“Well, you are in luck,” Ethan said, his smile not reaching his eyes. “We are headed there too. We can take you to her.”

Diana leaned toward me, her voice low. “Dev, I do not trust them.”

I nodded. “Me neither.”

“We can hear you,” Mr. Bennett said, sounding amused.

Diana stuck her tongue out at him, making me snicker. “We did not ask you to,” she said.

“You two are really something,” Ethan said, shaking his head. “Don’t worry. We will get you to your mom safe and sound.”

I leaned back against the seat, trying to figure them out. Ethan kept looking at us, his eyes flicking between Diana and me like he was trying to solve a puzzle. It was annoying.

“What?” Diana finally asked, her voice sharp.

“You two just... remind me of someone,” Ethan said slowly.

“Who?” I asked, even though I did not really care.

Ethan hesitated, then shook his head. “No one. Never mind.”

Diana narrowed her eyes at him, but she did not say anything else. She was probably thinking the same thing I was: These guys were weird.

The hotel where the meeting was happening was huge. Bigger than any place I had ever seen. The car pulled up in front, and my mouth dropped open as I stared at the fancy glass doors and the shiny cars parked outside.

Diana elbowed me. “Stop gawking. You look like a fish.”

I snapped my mouth shut, giving her a glare. “You are gawking too.”

“No, I am not.”

“Yes, you are.”

“Am not.”

“Are too.”

“Okay, okay,” Mr. Bennett interrupted, sounding exasperated. “Let’s get inside. Come on, kids.”

Ethan held out a hand, but Diana ignored it, hopping out of the car on her own. I followed her lead, keeping close to her side.

The inside of the hotel was even fancier than the outside. The floors were so shiny I could see my reflection in them, and the air smelled like flowers and something else I could not name, like newly laundry sheets perhaps?

Ethan made us sit on one of the couches in the lobby, and knelt in front of us, his eyes were serious. “Stay here, okay? We will find your mom and bring her to you.”

Diana crossed her arms. “What if you do not find her? You do not even know her.”

“We will,” Mr. Bennett said firmly. “Just stay put.”

I frowned, glancing at Diana. She did not look convinced, and honestly, neither was I. But before we could argue, the two men disappeared into the crowd of people moving through the lobby.

“I do not like this,” Diana said, her voice low.

“Me neither.” I tried to mind-link Mom, just like we always did when we needed her, but I could not reach her. It was like she was just out of range. “Can you feel her?”

Diana closed her eyes for a second, then nodded. “Yeah. She is here. I can feel her.”

“Then let’s find her,” I said, grabbing her hand.

We slipped through the crowd, dodging around adults who were too busy talking to notice us. The further we went, the stronger the pull felt, like a string tugging us in the right direction.

“Dev, slow down,” Diana whispered, stumbling as I dragged her along.

“We have to find her before they come back,” I whispered back.

We turned a corner, and the hallway was quieter here, the noise from the lobby was fading away. I could feel my heart beating fast, but I did not know if it was because we were close to finding Mom or because we were doing something we definitely were not supposed to.

And then a voice behind us made us freeze. The guards?

“Well, who are you two little guys?” the man asked and I turned slowly to look at the man standing at a corner that seemed connected to another hallway. He was tall, with broad shoulders and eyes that looked deep and scary, like he could look right through me.

Diana squeezed my hand, her grip tight. I did not know who he was, but something about him felt... big. Important.

“We are...” I hesitated, my mouth suddenly dry.

“What are you doing here?” he asked, his tone was curious but not unkind.

Diana tilted her head, her eyes narrowing. “Who are you?” she asked.

The man’s lips twitched like he wanted to smile. “I asked first.”

I glanced at Diana, and she glanced at me. We did not say anything, but I could tell we were both thinking the same thing. Whoever this guy was, he was not someone we could ignore.

But we did not have to answer him either.

“We are looking for someone,” I said finally.

The man’s eyes shifted between me and Diana. “Someone?” he repeated.

“Yeah,” Diana said, stepping forward like she was not even a little scared. “Our mommy.”

The man’s expression did not change, but I could tell he was thinking hard about something.

“And what is your mom’s name?” he asked.

I hesitated, my stomach twisting in nervousness and also hunger. This man right here, something about him made me want to tell the truth, he seemed weirdly convincing, different, but at the same time, I did not trust him.

Diana’s hand slipped into mine again, her grip tight. “We do not have to tell you,” she said defiantly.

The man’s lips quirked again, but this time it looked more like a smirk. “Fair enough,” he remarked. “But you two should not be wandering around here on your own. It is dangerous.”

“We are not scared,” I said quickly, lifting my chin, acting tough to square him.

“Maybe you should be,” he said, his tone dropping slightly.

For a second, I thought he was mad, but then his eyes softened, and I could not figure out what he was thinking.

Chapter 19
Samantha’s POV

I immediately connected my charger as I settled on a chair in my hotel room after I was transferred here. Annie’s name glowed on the screen, followed by a string of messages that I was not able to access earlier since my phone immediately died.

The first one brought a smile to my lips:“The twins wanted to stay up late, but don’t worry, I tucked them in on time. Devon tried to convince me otherwise, though!”

Scrolling through the others, I could almost hear Annie’s cheerful voice narrating their antics: ‘Diana refusing to eat her carrots, Devon pretending to be a superhero, both of them begging for bedtime stories about wolves.’

But it was her last message that made my heart clench:“They’ve been asking for you all day, Samantha. Devon said he missed your hugs, and Diana said she did not like how long you are gone.”

I stared at the words, blinking hard. For a moment, the chaotic events from the day melted away, leaving only the ache in my chest, to see my twins again. They were my family now, my reason to fight, to survive, to keep moving forward, and this was the first time I had been away from them for too long.

I brushed away a tear threatening to fall and took a deep breath, trying to push aside the lingering thoughts of Dominic and focus on my twins. My phone buzzed again — this time, a video call from Annie.

The screen lit up with her smiling face. “Hey, Samantha! I thought you would want to say goodnight to the kiddos. Let me grab them.”

Relief washed over me. “Thanks, Annie. You are a lifesaver.”

She stepped away, calling for the twins in the background. But then, something shifted. Her voice grew louder, sharper, more... urgent. “Devon? Diana? Where are you?”

I straightened in my chair as the relief evaporated in the air and was replaced with worry. “Annie? What’s wrong?” I asked.

Annie’s face appeared again and I could clearly see the worry etched into her features. “They are not here. They were in their room a few minutes ago... wait, what’s this?”

The screen tilted as Annie bent down, picking something up. Her face went pale as she read whatever it was.

“Annie, talk to me!” My voice came out harsher than I intended as panic bubbled in my chest.

“It’s... a note. From the twins.” Annie’s voice shook. “They said... they said they are going to find you.”

My heart dropped. “What?!” I exclaimed.

“I — I swear I did not hear them leave! I was just in the other room — oh my God, Samantha, I’m so sorry!”

My grip tightened on the phone as I hurriedly looked for my clothes. “Call the cops. Right now. I will figure something out on my end.”

Annie nodded frantically, already dialing. I ended the call and quickly removed my bathrobe to put on my clothes. My hands shook as I scrolled through my contacts. I needed help. I could not do this alone. And it was not that hard to know who to call if not the only person who had always been on my side no matter the case.

Killian.

He picked up on the first ring. “Sam? What’s wrong?”

“I need you,” I blurted out, pacing the small room. “The twins, they are gone. They left a note saying they are coming to find me.”

“What?!” he exclaimed, surprised, and at the same time, I could hear him alarmed. “Where are you right now?”

“I am still in my room at the hotel. Please, Killian, I need you here.”

“I’m on my way.”

Killian arrived within minutes, mirroring the same worried expression that I had on my face.

“What happened?” he demanded.

I told him about Annie’s call and that the twins were not in the house. “They are gone, Killian. I don’t know how far they could have gotten or where they might be.”

His hand went on my shoulder, comfortingly firm as he reassured me, “Don’t worry, we will find them. I promise you that.”

I nodded, swallowing hard. “There is one more thing...” I trailed, my eyes going to the view outside the glass walls of my room as I made a decision.

His eyes met mine, and I hesitated before speaking. “Killian... Dominic is here at the Summit and I can’t... He can’t know about the twins.”

Killian froze for a moment, his eyes narrowing. “Why? Has the twins’ father attended the Summit?”

“Just... he can’t know about them. I do not want him to find out about them.”

Killian nodded slowly despite her questioning gaze. “Alright. We will keep it that way. Regardless of the father, I would help you find the twins.”

I nodded. I have always been grateful for everything with Killian, he had never failed to be there for me and the twins, treating them as if his own. His loyalty was overwhelming, but it only made the situation more complicated. “Thank you, Killian.”

“Sam,” he held my gaze with pure sincerity in his eyes as he spoke, “I want you to know that I do not care who their father is,” he uttered firmly. “But if you will let me, I am more than willing to be their dad. They deserve someone who is there for them.”

“Killian...”

He shook his head. “I mean it, Sam.”

“Killian, I... I don’t know yet. For now, we should focus on finding them.”

Killian nodded in understanding, squeezing my shoulder, “You are right. Let’s start with alerting the staff if ever the twins found their way here.”

We scoured the hotel, questioning staff members and checking every hallway and corner and my panic grew with every passing minute. The twins were smart, but they were still just kids. Anything could happen. Killian had also alerted his men to investigate, following the twins’ trail from the house, to where they could have been if they had not reached the hotel.

Killian stayed close to me, reassuring me as he received updates and kept tabs on his men’s progress in tracing their twins’ route. “We will find them, Sam. They are strong, and smart, just like their mom. They will be fine.”

His words were meant to comfort me, but they only reminded me how much I had failed them. I should have been there. I should not have left them alone for too long.

The front desk called our attention again after asking their other associates if they had seen two kids that entered the hotel, and the receptionist confirmed that two children matching their description had been seen earlier in the lobby, but they had gone quickly afterward. My heart leaped and sank at the same time.

I closed my eyes, trying to feel their presence if they were around. “They are here,” I whispered, I felt it, the pull of their presence, but it was faint, too weak to reach them.

“But I can’t reach them, Killian. We need to find them before... something happens,” I said. I was scared that there might be rogues around the hotel just like last time, and hurt my twins. But one more thing I feared, was for them to be found out by Dominic.

Killian nodded, his hand resting lightly on my back as he agreed, “Then let’s go find them quick.”

Chapter 20
Dominic's POV

"They are gone," Mr. Bennett said with frustration clearly visible on his face as he stood in front of me.

"What the hell do you mean, gone?" I asked making both him and Ethan turn to me. They had been talking about two kids they had picked up on the road and brought here to the hotel for the Summit.

"We found them near the western border," Ethan interjected with a defensive tone. "Two kids, twins. They looked scared and hungry, so we brought them back here to figure out who they belonged to."

"And?" I prompted, already feeling my patience thinning.

"They slipped away," Mr. Bennett admitted, his jaw tightening. "Smart little ones, too. Gave us the slip before we could get any answers."

I folded my arms, my irritation simmering just below the surface because they had brought their kids which means they were our responsibility, and these were my men, members of my pack. I would not want any rumors about our pack members picking kids from the road and having them disappear. That would surely taint my name and my pack's reputation. Worst, we are in a conference with other packs. What if they heard about this incident?

"You're telling me two kids managed to outwit two grown men? People would talk if they found out about how reckless we are, or worse, they might spin a story that we made two kids disappear. Imagine how this incident would affect the pack."

"Then we just have to find them," Mr. Bennett replied nonchalantly.

Then Ethan interjected, frowning and his eyes were looking at nothing in the distance as if thinking too deeply, reminiscing of something he had yet let out.

“They are not ordinary kids,” Ethan muttered, rubbing the back of his neck. “You should have seen their eyes, Dominic. They looked...” He trailed off, shaking his head.

“Looked like what?” I snapped.

“Familiar,” he said finally, meeting my gaze. “You will understand if you see them.”

My chest tightened at his words, though I did not fully understand why. “Then go find them,” I ordered.

Ethan nodded quickly, but I did not give them a chance to leave when I caught a faint scent in the air, so similar to Samantha’s, but more... subtle. I turned toward the opened door and my wolf stirred restlessly just the thought of her.

“I’ll handle this,” I uttered to them as I left.

—

It did not take long to find them. As I rounded a corner, I found them: two small figures, a boy and a girl, standing close together and whispering.

“Well, who are you two little guys?” I uttered, gaining their attention

The boy turned, and for a moment, his ocean blue eyes locked onto mine. And then recognition hit me like a punch to the gut, they looked like they were Samantha’s eyes, staring back at me from this child’s face.

The girl froze a few steps away, her wide eyes darting between me and her twin brother. Despite the hesitance and wariness in her eyes, her chin was lifted with a boldness that sent a pang through my chest. She reminded me

of Samantha, fierce, yet... pure and innocent, those eyes similar to her twin...

The girl spoke with her small voice high pitched voice. “Who are you?” she asked curiously but guarded, clearly wary of my presence.

I raised a brow at her. “I asked first.”

She did not back down. “We’re not telling you anything,” she said, her chin jutting out stubbornly.

Her defiance brought a flicker of amusement to my lips. These kids were not ordinary indeed. They had a fire burning in their eyes. Defiance and stubbornness — they remind me of something, someone...

My eyes shifted to the boy, who was still glaring at me. “We are looking for someone,” he finally said.

The girl stepped forward, placing herself between me and her brother. “Yeah,” she said, “Our Mommy.”

“And what is your mom’s name?”

“We do not have to tell you,” the girl defiantly replied.

“Fair enough,” I commented. Smart kids. “But you two should not be wandering around here on your own. It is dangerous.”

“We are not scared,” the boy quickly replied, lifting his chin, and trying to act tough.

“Maybe you should be,” I teased.

But then their stomachs growled loudly, breaking the tense moment. The boy flushed, and the girl’s eyes flicked toward the bustling restaurant visible through the hallway’s archway.

I sighed, stepping back. “You two are hungry.”

They did not answer, but their gaze lingered on the trays of food being carried out.

“Go ahead,” I said, gesturing toward the restaurant. “Eat. I’ll be right behind you.”

They exchanged a wary glance before moving cautiously toward the restaurant as if scared that they might break a thing if they acted too wild. I followed at a distance with my head whirring about their existence and how much they resembled Samantha. But perhaps... I was just imagining things. It’s impossible.

When they reached the table, they did not dive into the buffet as I expected. Instead, they sat neatly with their small hands folded on the table as they waited for a waiter to approach. The boy whispered something to the girl, who nodded before speaking politely to the server who went to ask for what they wanted.

I watched surprised and amazed at how they were remarkably well behaved for children so young in this place. I expected them to go rowdy and take food at the buffet table, and yet, here they were, sitting tight and with the napkins on their laps as if they had been taught well how to behave in this kind of place. One thing I was certain of was, that they had been being raised right. I gestured for the server to give them whatever they wanted when she was hesitant and began asking where their parents were. When she confirmed an adult’s supervision of the twins, she immediately went to carry on their food.

Since they had taken a table for two, I took a place on another table to wait for them, and as I looked around the place a thought suddenly crept into my mind, unbidden — what would it have been like if Samantha and I had children?

The idea unfolded in my mind the thoughts of having children with Samantha. I imagined her body soft and warm beneath mine as I rammed into her, hard and nonstop, chasing our highs until her tight pussy was filled with my cum, and if it leaked out, I would push it all the way in, without

wasting a single drop, and her greedy pussy would have to clench harder, milking my cock for every drop, while we do it over and over again. And my wolf rumbled in agreement, the territorial, primal side of me demanding to claim her in every way imaginable.

Fuck. I could picture the way her cheeks would flush as she would beg for more, how her moans sounded, and the way her body trembled when she climaxed, it was taking me back to the nights we had shared before.

I felt my cock twitch at the thought of getting her pregnant, filling her womb with my seed, and seeing her belly rounding, and carrying my child. The thought sent a surge of desire and possessiveness through me, and god knows how much I would gamble just to see this in my reality.

But it was not just the idea of having children; it was the thought of creating life with her, of knowing she was bound to me in a way that no one else ever could be. And my mind then drifted to the image of her holding our child, and her, glowing with strength and beauty that was uniquely hers.

I shook the thought away, and forced myself to focus on the matter at hand.

When the food arrived, they dug in with so much focus as if it was all that matter to them, and that made me chuckle.

I leaned back in my seat, watching them closely. There was something about the way they moved, the way they interacted, that tugged at a part of me I did not fully understand, as if they were somehow distantly familiar, like I have known them for so long, yet I have never known them before. It unsettled me, but at the same time, there was something calming to be in their presence, like there was nothing else that mattered but them.

“Where are you from?” I asked after a while.

The boy ignored me, shoving another bite of food into his mouth.

“Moonstone Pack” the girl said quietly, her voice barely above a whisper.

My jaw tightened at the mention of Moonstone Pack. The thought of Killian having anything to do with these kids made my wolf snarl in the back of my mind. It can't be. They can't be his...

I tried mind linking Samantha, but as usual, the connection was blocked. My frustration grew as I turned to the next best option even though I felt that I should not be handing them to him.

"Killian," I said through the link, not bothering to hide the disdain in my voice. "Are you missing two kids?"

There was a long pause before he answered. "Why?" he asked.

"Because they're with me."

I glanced back at the twins, who were watching me warily from the other table. They did not trust me — not yet. But there was no denying the strange attachment I felt toward them.

Chapter 21
Dominic's POV

"You'd better not move an inch, Dominic. I'll be there in a few minutes," Killian snapped through the mind link. How ungrateful, I found the kids yet he did not even sound grateful for it. If I would have the choice, I could take these twins on my own and not return them to him.

I bit back the urge to argue, my jaw tightening as I paced in place and ended the call. My eyes flicked toward the twins again and saw the boy whispered something to his sister, his tone too soft and quiet for me to catch. The girl smirked, her ocean blue eyes darting toward me, and muttered something back that made the boy chuckle.

They did not seem wary anymore. If anything, they were oddly calm, like they knew they were untouchable. Or maybe it was because Killian was coming, and they trusted him. The thought sent a sharp pang of jealousy

through my chest, which was odd. I should not feel anything about these kids, and yet...

My wolf stirred uneasily. They look like her, he murmured, a growl underlining his words.

I clenched my fists, shoving the thought away. But it would not leave. Those eyes, the girl's boldness, even the way the boy seemed to observe everything silently — it was all too familiar. Too much like Samantha.

No. It was not possible. It couldn't be.

"Hey," I said abruptly, breaking the silence. The twins both turned to me with a curious look in their eyes. I cleared my throat to keep my voice even. I had to ask them before Killian come to take them.

"How old are you?"

The girl tilted her head, clearly enjoying the attention. "Old enough," she repled with her playful tone, teasing even.

"Don't play games with me," I snapped, harsher than I intended. "Answer the question."

Her smirk faltered, and for a moment, I regretted the edge in my voice. She exchanged a glance with her brother, who shrugged like he did not care either way.

"We're—"

"Never mind," I cut in quickly, raising a hand to stop her. My chest tightened as if bracing for a blow I did not want to take. I thought I wanted to know, but then, I realized I couldn't as doubts and what ifs whirled in my mind. I was not prepared to hear the worst.

The girl's brow furrowed, confusion flickering across her face before she shrugged it off. "Okay, weirdo," she muttered, leaning closer to her brother and whispering something that made him snicker again.

I forced myself to look away, pacing a few steps to the side. My wolf was restless, his instincts were screaming at me to put the pieces together. But I couldn't. I didn't want to. If they were hers — if they were Samantha's — it would mean she had moved on. That she had built a life with someone else while I...

I swallowed hard, shaking the thought away.

Then from a distance I saw Killian entering the restaurant and immediately, I felt irritated. I hated seeing him, especially close to those who mattered to me. His eyes immediately sought out the twins and when he found them just nearly behind me, his expression softened and strode towards them as I did not exist..

"There you two are," he called to them, warmly, in a way that made my wolf growl low in my chest. Somehow, my wolf had grown possessive over the kids, as if it was his own pup.

The girl shot to her feet, running to him without hesitation. "Killian!" she called, throwing her arms around his waist. The boy followed more cautiously, but his relief was just as evident.

Killian crouched down, ruffling the boy's hair before pulling the girl into a quick hug. "You scared everyone, you know that?" he scolded yet in an affectionate way.

"Sorry," the girl mumbled, though she did not look sorry at all.

The boy just shrugged, "We were not lost," he replied simply.

Killian sighed, straightening as he glanced at me. "Thanks for keeping an eye on them," he uttered out of politeness, though his tone suggested he was not thrilled I had been the one to find them. I could see it in his eyes the indifference of what he truly thought at the matter.

I crossed my arms, refusing to let him see how much the moment bothered me. "They did not give me much of a choice."

Killian's gaze lingered on me for a moment before shifting back to the twins. "Alright, let's get you two back. Your mom's probably losing her mind by now."

"Wait," I said, stepping forward. Killian tensed, but I ignored him, focusing on the twins. "Where's your father?" I asked the twins and the question hung in the air like a challenge.

The twins exchanged another look, the girl biting her lip thoughtfully, but it was the boy who answered this time. "Mom says we don't have a father."

My jaw twitched at his reply and I felt something in me stirred — hope... But it was one that scared me, one that I did not think I was prepared to realize.

Of course, Samantha would say something like that. She had always been fiercely independent, almost to a fault. But to raise kids without a father, to—

What if they're yours? my wolf whispered, insistent.

Killian stepped between us with clear establishment of boundaries. With his stern reaction, I knew he did not like me talking to the kids. "That's enough," he uttered firmly. "They are kids, Dominic. Stop interrogating them."

"I just want to know—"

"Don't," Killian sharply cutting me off, and I could sense that if we were not just in front of the kids, he would have snarled and bared his canines to challenge me. And I would not have backed down. But since the kids were watching, I could not show them blood. They were not ready for that. "Let it go, Dominic," it sounded like a warning. I wanted to challenge him, to know more about the twins, but I held back as I glanced at the kids and they were looking at me with a frown, as if it was a crime to even talk back to Killian whom they looked up to.

I clenched my jaw, but the frustration simmering inside me was too much to contain. “Fine. Then tell me where she is.”

Killian’s eyes narrowed and the way his eyes shifted, I could sense his wolf flashing behind them. “That’s not your business,” he sneered.

I took a step closer, lowering my voice. “It is if she’s the one who brought them here.”

The tension sparked between us, but Killian did not back down. “Get over yourself, Dominic. This is not about you.”

Before I could respond, Ethan and Richard Bennett appeared looking relieved when they spotted the twins.

“Finally,” Ethan said, his gaze landing on the twins. “Do you have any idea how much trouble you have caused?”

The girl tilted her head, looking entirely unbothered. “We did not mean to cause trouble,” she said sweetly, batting her lashes.

Ethan sighed, running a hand through his hair. “Dominic, thank you for finding them.”

“They are fine,” I said curtly, jerking my head toward Killian. “He is taking them back to their guardian.”

Richard stepped closer, his eyes narrowing as he studied the twins. “They look... familiar, aren’t they,” he suspiciously remarked.

Ethan nodded, crouching slightly to get a better look. “Those eyes,” he murmured. “They are just like—”

“Samantha’s,” Richard finished with utmost certainty.

The atmosphere became heavier, and I saw how Killian’s demeanor became more stiff and protective. I knew that look, territorial and possessive.

“They do, don’t they?” Ethan mused, his gaze lingering on the twins. He smiled softly. “It is like looking at her when she was younger.”

The twins did not seem fazed by the attention. If anything, the girl looked smug.

“They are cute, aren’t they?” I said, the words slipping out before I could stop them. I meant what I said, but I also did to stir Killian more, to see him break. I wanted answers, exact answers.

Richard turned to me, his lips curling into a sly grin. “Well, well. Dominic likes kids now? Should I tell Olivia to start planning for a nursery?”

My jaw tightened, heat rising to my face. “Not funny,” I muttered, brushing past him and ignoring the implicit suggestion about Olivia having kids... with me. No. Not going to happen.

It was Samantha that I wanted.

Before anyone could say more, Olivia came, joining in, her gaze sweeping over the scene. “What’s going on?” she asked, her eyes narrowing slightly.

Ethan straightened, clearing his throat. “The kids said they were here looking for their mother.”

The realization hit me like a blow to the chest when I realized...

Except for Olivia, Samantha was the only female attending the Summit, and the twins said they were looking for their mother.

My wolf growled in agreement. ‘It’s her. You know it’s her,’ he chanted in my head, but I had to be sure, and Killian was not confirming a thing, neither the twins.

I glanced at Killian, who was already ushering the twins away. “Where is she?” I demanded.

Killian did not even turn around as he spoke. “Drop it, Dominic.”

But I could not drop it. Not now.

Chapter 22
Killian’s POV

I kept my hand resting lightly on Diana’s shoulder as we walked through the corridor, ensuring she stayed close. She was a handful, that much was clear, but there was something charming about her boldness and quick wit. Beside her, Devon trailed behind quietly, his gaze darting around as if committing every detail to memory. He had always been so keen and attentive.

I glanced at them, then shook my head to clear my thoughts. I could not stop replaying the scene back in the restaurant. Dominic had acted so... at ease around them. It grated on me, how natural he seemed with the twins, like he belonged there, and as if the twins belonged to him.

A flicker of doubt gnawed at me. What if Dominic...?

No. Samantha would have told me if—

But would she?

She had always been secretive about the twins’ father, and I respected her decision to keep it from everyone else. But not that Dominic was coming into the picture and how she did not want him to find out about them, I can’t help but wonder.

Diana tugged at my hand, breaking me from my thoughts. “Are you sure we are not in trouble?” she asked, her voice filled with suspicion but laced with just enough sweetness to test my patience.

“Oh, you are definitely in trouble,” I said, keeping my tone light but firm. “Your mom is going to have a lot to say about this.”

Diana groaned dramatically, her free hand flopping against her side. “But we did not do anything wrong!”

Devon snorted quietly. “We snuck out, Di.”

Diana shot him a look, then turned back to me. “We were not lost or anything. It is not like we needed help.”

I raised a brow at her, biting back a smirk. She reminded me so much of Samantha at her age — stubborn and defiant, but there was a softness to her that made it impossible to stay annoyed.

“You scared everyone,” I said, my voice dropping just enough to make my point. “Including your mom. Do you have any idea how worried she was?”

Diana’s face softened slightly, but she masked it quickly with a shrug. “We did not mean to. It’s not like we got hurt or anything.”

Devon tugged on her sleeve, whispering something I did not catch. Whatever it was made her roll her eyes before she muttered, “Fine, we are sorry.”

It was not much, but it would have to do for now.

As we approached Samantha’s room, Diana glanced up at me with a mischievous glint in her eyes. “Why did that guy back there keep looking at us like that?”

My stomach tightened at her question. “What guy?”

“You know, the grumpy one,” she said, giggling. “The one who bought us food.”

Dominic.

I forced myself to keep my tone even. “He was just worried about you two, that’s all.”

“He looked familiar,” she mused, tapping a finger against her chin. “Like... like someone famous, maybe. Like a movie star or something.”

My stomach flipped at the idea of Dominic being with the twins. I did not like it, he can’t be with them. He was nothing but a piece of douchebag. I exhaled, easing the tension slightly, though her words still poked at a growing suspicion I could not ignore. Dominic had been too curious about them. Too interested. And Diana’s uncanny resemblance to Samantha... No. I would not let my mind go there.

I quickly masked my reaction because the kids did not have to know that. “Is that so?”

Devon nodded thoughtfully. “Yeah, I thought so too. But Mom always says not to trust strangers.”

“She is right,” I said, my voice firmer now to make a point. “And that is why you two are going to stay where you are supposed to from now on. Understood?”

They both nodded, though Diana’s reluctance was written all over her face.

We reached the door, and I knocked lightly before pushing it open. Samantha was pacing inside with her arms crossed tightly over her chest. The moment she saw the twins, relief washed over her face, and she rushed forward to scoop them into a hug.

“Where have you two been?” she demanded, her voice shaking slightly as she pulled back to look at them. “Do you have any idea how worried I was?”

Diana squirmed in her grip, pouting. “We are fine, Mom. It is not a big deal.”

“Not a big deal?” Samantha echoed, her voice rising now. “You snuck out without telling anyone during the night! Do you have any idea how dangerous that was?”

Diana and Devon exchanged a quick glance before Diana straightened, her earlier confidence flickering. “We were... um, just exploring,” she replied, her tone unusually hesitant.

“Exploring?” Samantha’s eyes narrowed as she crossed her arms. “And how exactly did you manage to go far when you two should have been sleeping?”

Devon shifted nervously, his gaze dropping to the floor. “We — uh, we kind of — drove the car at first, but —”

“A car?” Samantha’s voice rose in disbelief, her arms dropping to her sides. “You what?”

Diana nudged Devon with her elbow, as she defensively answered. “It’s not like we drove the whole way or anything. We left it still near the house.”

Samantha narrowed her eyes in suspicion, she already knew partly of what happened. “You mean you crashed the car, yeah?”

“We did not mean to make you upset,” Devon said quickly, clearly trying to dodge the question. “We were just trying to find you!”

Samantha’s gaze darted between them, piecing together fragments of their story. “So you left the house? On foot? In the middle of the night?”

“We did not think it was that far,” Diana muttered, folding her arms and looking away. “And we only got in that car because—”

“Because what?” Samantha cut in, scolding them now although there was still that softness in her eyes. “Tell me everything.”

Devon hesitated before blurting out, “Two men picked us up on the road. They said they would take us to the Alpha Summit.”

Samantha’s breath hitched, her expression shifting from anger to alarm. “Men? What men? Did they hurt you? What did they look like?”

Diana huffed, trying to regain her bravado. “They did not hurt us! One had a beard, and the other looked like a grumpy old teacher. They say their name was Ethan and Mr. Bennett. But we still did not trust them, okay? But they took us here.”

Samantha knelt down, gripping their shoulders tightly. “Listen to me. Never, ever go with strangers again. Do you understand? You have no idea how dangerous that was.”

Diana’s confidence wavered, but she lifted her chin stubbornly. “We just wanted to see you, Mom. You have been so busy, and we thought...”

“You thought what?” Samantha prompted, her tone softening despite the panic in her chest.

Devon’s voice was barely above a whisper. “We thought maybe... you did not want us around.”

Samantha’s stern expression melted into something gentler. She pulled them both into a tight hug and her voice cracked as she spoke. “Don’t you ever think that. You are my everything. But running off like this, do you know how scared I was? I can’t protect you if something happens. Promise me you will never do this again.”

The twins nodded slowly and clearly, the look of guilt was evident in their faces.

Samantha straightened with her firm and lecturing tone again. “Good. Because you are grounded. No excuses, no allowances, and no going anywhere without me.”

“But Mom—” Diana started, her voice pleading.

“No buts,” Samantha interrupted. “You broke the rules, and now you face the consequences.”

Diana pouted, looking up at Samantha with wide, teary eyes. “Please, Mom? We did not mean to make you upset.”

“Don’t try that with me,” Samantha said, though a small smile tugged at the corner of her lips. “You are still grounded.”

Devon sighed, his shoulders slumping in defeat, while Diana pouted. “We just wanted to see you...”

“I understand, but you could have called instead,” Samantha said, her voice softening slightly. “Not like this.”

I watched the exchange silently, feeling both admiration and a pang of jealousy. Samantha’s bond with the twins was unmistakable, and it made me want to protect her, and them, even more.

“Thank you, Killian,” Samantha said suddenly, turning to me. “For bringing them back. I do not know what I would have done if—” She stopped, shaking her head. “Just... thank you. For bringing them back safely”

“Anything for you,” I replied, meaning every word. “And for the twins.”

Her lips parted slightly, as if she wanted to say something more, but she hesitated. Instead, she nodded, her gaze lingering on me for a moment longer than necessary.

“Get some rest,” I said, forcing a small smile. “All of you.”

She smiled faintly, then turned her attention back to the twins. As I stepped out of the room, I heard Diana’s voice behind me.

“A nice man bought us food and did not even get mad.”

I paused just outside the door, straining to hear Samantha’s response.

“What did I tell you about talking to strangers?” her voice came out soft yet lecturing.

“He was not scary,” Diana insisted.

My breath caught, and I froze, my hand on the doorknob as I slowly closed the door and their voices gradually faded away but caught quietly.

“Still. He was a stranger,” Samantha replied.

“He asked us some questions,” Devon interjected. “Like how old we are...”

There was a pause, and I held my breath, straining to hear Samantha’s response.

But I did not hear her answer anymore.

The unanswered questions ran in my mind, and the jealousy that had simmered all day now burned hotter. Complicated or not, Dominic was getting too close to something I was not ready to share.

Chapter 23
Dominic’s POV

They couldn’t be mine. Could they?

I leaned back in my chair, staring at the ceiling as if the answer might suddenly materialize there. The math wasn’t complicated, six years ago, Samantha left. The twins were about five. The timeline fits too well. Too damn well that got me thinking if they were my kids.

But then again, Samantha couldn’t have hidden something like this, not without slipping up. I knew her. If they were mine, wouldn’t she have stayed? The Samantha I knew would have never let that kind of opportunity slip through her fingers. She was always so desperate to prove herself, to claw her way into my life, to have my love and attention. She wanted to matter to me, to the pack, and she would have done anything to get there. She would have used the kids to get to me.

I scoffed, shaking my head as bitterness crept in. If they were my kids, she wouldn’t have run. She would have used them — paraded them in front of me, dangled them like a prize, something to make me fall for her. That’s

who she was back then. The girl who couldn't go a day without trying to win me over, trying to convince me she deserved more than the wolfless nobody everyone saw her as.

But since she was wolfless back then, she could have had kids with anyone. I frowned at that thought. If she did, I would have carved the man's heart and gifted it to her if it happened in my territory.

Regardless, she left. No explanations, no goodbyes. Just gone. And now she appeared to have twins.

But there was no bite mark on her, she was not claimed. I pushed the empty glass of whiskey back to the desk and heard a knock in my room.

"We're ready," Ethan informed as soon as he entered. We were going to visit the site where Samantha and Killian were ambushed by these unusual rogues that suddenly appeared in the region.

I pushed myself up, shrugging on my jacket. "Let's get this over with."

As we neared the parked SUV outside the hotel, I spotted Olivia standing by one of the cars in the convoy, her father, Richard Bennett was beside her. He looked every bit the seasoned warrior he was with his penetrating gaze and rigid posture that proved the countless battles he had fought.

Ethan fell into step beside me as he asked. "You think we will find anything useful out there?"

"We'll see," I muttered, unwilling to entertain speculation but this problem with the rogues needed to be fixed immediately. Rogues are like pests that if they are not eradicated immediately, they would grow into a bigger problem.

Olivia and her father entered their car and I, together with Ethan hopped in the assigned SUV for us. The drive was quiet despite the occasional running of my mind back to Samantha and the twins. Killian may not confirmed that they were her kids, but... the resemblance they had with Samantha can't be just coincidental. They must be her kids, but if that was

the case, the question was with who? A growl erupted in my chest at the thought of her having another man.

“Something wrong?” Ethan asked.

“Nothing. It’s just that... you also think the twins resembled Samantha, right?” I blurted out, trying to ease the thoughts in my head. I could not be the only one who noticed it.

“Yeah. She had been away for years. It would not be a surprise if she already had a family of her own,” he trailed while keeping his eyes on the road, driving.

I felt my wolf claw his way out but I held him down, “Say that again, Ethan? Did you forget that she’s my wife?” I retorted, shooting the sharpest glare toward him. I knew that he was once Samantha’s friend but he was not in the place to utter such comments to his Alpha.

Ethan cleared his throat and shifted in his seat. “I apologize but —”

“Shut up. Just drive,” I grumbled, knowing that I would not like what would come out of his mouth again.

When we arrived, the scene was eerily quiet with only a few of the forensic investigators gathering more evidence in the scene to be analyzed especially since the rogues were unusually different. They were either evolving or someone was developing their bodies and manipulating them like attack dogs.

The clearing bore the marks of violence, showing the battle that had happened in the past night. The ground was churned up, patches of grass and soil scattered haphazardly. Deep claw marks marred several tree trunks and some had their barks splintered and broken. A faint metallic scent still lingered in the air — blood, though it had faded with time.

I crouched near the center of the clearing and dipped my fingers brushing in the soil. There were faint impressions, the kind left by boots and paw

prints, though the recent rain had muddied them beyond recognition. But still, the traces were noticeable.

“This is where they fought,” I uttered.

Olivia walked past me and scanned the area. “The rogues did not hold back,” she murmured, pointing to a tree with deep gouges carved into it. “These marks are fresh, likely from the ambush.”

Ethan knelt beside one of the claw marks, running his hand over it. “This was not a random attack,” he said. “Rogues do not operate like this unless they have orders.”

Richard nodded in agreement, his gaze fixed on the remains of the fight. “Whoever sent them wanted to deliver a message, or they had deliberately targeted them, either both or one of them.” And I clenched my fist at the thought of Samantha being put in danger again. I would not let that happen.

I stood and narrowed my eyes as I scanned the clearing. “Where were the bodies taken?”

“To the pack morgue,” Richard replied. “The ones that survived the initial attack were interrogated, but they did not reveal much before...” He trailed off, his meaning clear.

“They were silenced,” Ethan muttered, standing up.

My jaw tightened. This was not adding up. Rogues did not just ambush without a reason. Someone had orchestrated this.

Ethan’s voice broke through my thoughts. “I overheard something earlier,” he spoke hesitantly.

“What?”

“They mentioned Samantha, she was here that night, right?”

“What did they say?” asked I.

He hesitated, and his gaze was flicking to Olivia and back to me. “They said she was probably the target.”

For a moment, the world seemed to tilt as I felt my frown deepened. I clenched my fists, staying calm in this situation. We would not get anywhere even if I flipped the lands here.

“She was the best Luna I’ve ever met,” Ethan said suddenly, as if reminiscing about her days back in my pack. “Smart, strong, loyal. I have never seen anyone like her.”

“She left. Stop talking about her like she’s some saint.” I remarked, although a part of me did not mean the words, despite coming out harsher than I intended.

Ethan tilted his head, a faint smirk tugging at his lips. “And yet, here you are, thinking about her.”

I turned away, refusing to dignify his comment with a response.

Ethan stepped closer, his voice dropping to a near whisper. “If she’s coming back into your life, Dominic, you need to figure things out. Starting with Olivia. You’ll have to get rid of her.”

I glanced at Olivia who was examining another tree. “What about Olivia?”

“She’s not going to like playing second to a ghost,” he simply replied. “And that’s what Samantha is to you right now — a ghost you can’t stop chasing.”

Before I could respond, Olivia’s voice rang out. “Dominic! Over here!”

We turned to see her standing near a patch of disturbed ground with a serious expression on her face as if she had found something disturbing.

“What is it?” I asked, striding over.

She pointed to a jagged claw mark etched into the base of a tree. “This mark...”

Before I could respond, Olivia stiffened as her eyes narrowed on the deeper part of the woods. “Wait, look.”

We all turned, following her line of sight. Between the dense trees, there were shadows that moved so fast that we almost did not catch them, as if something, or someone, was watching. A faint rustle carried through the air, reaching our senses.

“There’s something out there,” Olivia whispered, her hand instinctively moving toward the dagger at her hip. “Be prepared.”

Chapter 24

Samantha’s POV

“Don’t you ever scare me like that again,” I warned, pulling the car into the driveway. My eyes flicked to the rearview mirror where Devon and Diana sat silently, their wide, guilty eyes meeting mine.

They didn’t respond right away, but their guilt was obvious. Taking a deep breath, I forced myself to stay calm — for their sake. I’d already lectured them, and one reminder was enough. After opening my door and stepping out, I waited for them to follow.

As soon as we stepped inside the house, Annie came rushing toward us. Her face was pale, her hair slightly out of place, and her hands trembled as she clasped them together.

“I’m so, so sorry!” she blurted, her voice cracking. “I don’t know how they managed to—”

“Annie, it’s okay,” I said firmly but gently, resting a hand on her shoulder to reassure her. “I know how much you care about them, and I’m not blaming you. But we’ll need to take extra precautions from now on.”

I glanced at the twins, who stood a few feet away, shuffling awkwardly. With a wave of my hand, I motioned them forward. “You two owe Annie an apology. She’s been worried sick about you.”

Diana was the first to step forward, her voice soft. “We’re sorry, Annie. We didn’t mean to scare you.”

Devon followed, adding, “We’re sorry, Annie. We promise we won’t do it again.”

Annie smiled and knelt to their level, pulling them into a quick hug. “I’m just glad you are safe,” she murmured.

Watching the scene, I felt a swell of pride and relief. Despite their mischief, my twins had kind hearts, and moments like this reminded me they were growing up with the values I’d worked so hard to teach them.

Once Annie excused herself to prepare dinner, I ushered the twins into the living room. Sitting down on the couch, I gestured for them to join me. “Now, let’s talk,” I said.

They exchanged wary glances before climbing onto the couch, one on each side of me.

I leaned back, studying their faces. “Tell me something. When you were at the hotel, did you meet anyone?”

The question made them exchange another glance, this one more uncertain. My heart started to race, but I kept my expression calm. I didn’t want to alarm them.

Diana hesitated, her small brow furrowing. “We talked to a man, the one who gave us food,” she said slowly.

My breath caught. “What man?”

“I don’t know,” she replied, her tone unsure. “He was tall, and he asked us who we were. But we did not tell him anything.”

“Did he tell you his name?” I asked, my voice steady despite the knot tightening in my stomach.

Devon shook his head. “No. But he asked where our dad is, and he knew Uncle Killian.”

Killian. My thoughts flashed to his tight expression earlier, the way he had seemed on edge when he brought the kids back. Could it have been Dominic? The possibility made my stomach churn. I could not let him find out about the twins — not like this.

“Are you sure you did not tell him anything about where you are from or who I am?” I pressed gently.

Devon tilted his head, thinking hard. “I think we said we were from Uncle Killian’s pack.”

Relief mixed with anxiety. That detail might be enough to keep Dominic guessing, but it was still too close for comfort.

“What did the man look like? Can you tell me?” I asked, trying to keep my tone light so they would not sense my rising panic.

Diana held her chin as she was thinking hard. And as if a light bulb popped up on top of her head, with her wide doe eyes, she turned to her mother, “He had super dark hair, like Devon, and he had a tiny mole, Mommy, the same as Devon’s mole here on his temple!” She giggled, pointing to Devon’s temple. “They’re twinning, Mommy!” she exclaimed cheerfully, as if it were the most exciting discovery.

But my stomach dropped. I knew that mole all too well. The same tiny dark spot sat on Dominic’s temple, identical to the one on Devon’s. And I would not deny that Devon does resemble Dominic more than Diana’s softer features.

Diana tugged at my sleeve, pulling me out of my dreaded thoughts. “Mommy, why are you asking so many questions? Did we do something bad?”

I forced a smile, brushing her hair back. “No, sweetheart. You did not do anything bad. I just want to make sure you are safe.”

Devon’s eyes narrowed slightly. “Are you worried about that man?” he asked taking me aback.

I hesitated before answering. “I’m worried about a lot of things, but you two are the most important to me. I need to know that no one can hurt you.”

They nodded solemnly with their young faces unusually serious. Pulling them close, I held them tightly, as if I could shield them from any harm.

Later, when the twins were tucked into bed, I sat alone in the living room with my thoughts a tangled mess. If that man had been Dominic, it was only a matter of time before he started asking questions, and I needed to be prepared.

The buzz of my phone broke through my thoughts. I grabbed it from the coffee table and saw Killian’s name on the screen.

“Killian,” I said as I answered.

“Samantha,” he began. “We need to talk. Dominic’s been asking questions.” And so that was when I confirmed that it was Dominic that my twins had encountered.

My grip on the phone tightened. “What kind of questions?”

“About the twins,” he replied. “He is suspicious. It won’t be long before he figures it out.”

A chill ran down my spine. “Then... I’ll figure out how to handle this,” I replied even though I did not know how to face Dominic with this matter.

“I’ll come by tomorrow,” Killian said. “We’ll figure it out together.”

Ending the call, I stared at my reflection in the darkened window.

I had built a new life for myself and my children, but the past was closing too fast that I could not keep up. I had hidden the truth for years, and yet, it was hunting me down as if I were its prey.

And I was not sure how much longer I could keep this at bay.

Chapter 25

Dominic’s POV

The phone rang three times before Liam picked up.

"Alpha," he uttered. He knew better than to expect a casual conversation when I called.

"I need answers, Liam," I said, pacing the length of my office. My mind felt like it was tearing itself apart with a tangle of suspicion, memories, and unanswered questions. "Did you find anything about the twins yet? Who their father is?"

A pause. Too long. And it ticked my nerves.

“We’re digging, Alpha," Liam replied. "Killian’s pack records are airtight. No mention of the twins in any formal capacity. It is like they do not exist on paper."

I slammed my hand down on the desk and the sharp sound echoed through the room. "That’s not good enough, search the hospitals in his area, Liam. I need every single piece of information about them."

Liam sighed on the other end. "I’ll see what more we can do, Alpha. But Killian’s pack is notoriously private. You know that."

My jaw tightened. I did not care how private Killian was. I needed to know the truth.

"I do not want excuses," I snapped. "I want results. Check every pack within a hundred-mile radius if you have to. Someone knows something."

"Yes, Alpha," Liam replied before the line went dead.

The silence that followed was suffocating, choking me with anxiety. I dropped the phone onto the desk and pressed the heels of my hands against my temples, trying to silence the thoughts in my head. Ever since I met the twins, they had never left my mind anymore. Their cute bubbly faces, the little girl reminded me of Samantha's soft features, and the boy... Damn it, I did not even have the chance to know their names. I should be ignoring all these, because why would I bother? Those kids were probably another man's blood. But... They may have their mother's eyes, but the boy's features gave it away. I might be crazy to say that I resembled him.

I took a gulp

I clenched my fists, feeling my nails dug into my palms as I leaned behind the desk and stared at the marble floor.

It was not possible. It couldn't be. Samantha had left. Run away without a word...

After the wedding, I thought I had her figured out. I thought she was someone who would not dare to leave me. But she did.

She had me wrapped around her fingers, playing the dutiful mate while secretly scheming her escape. And when she did run, I told myself it was for the best. That she was not worthy of my time, my anger, my care.

So why couldn't I stop thinking about her?

Six years and I thought I was over her.

But I was wrong.

I sat heavily in the swivel chair, leaning back as memories of her flooded my mind. Samantha, with her fiery spirit and that damn stubborn streak that made me want to either throttle her or kiss her senseless.

Kissing her.

The thought sent a jolt of desire, and jealousy at the thought of her being with another man in than span of six years that she vanished. I slammed my fist against the armrest, as if I could punch the feeling away. But it clung to me, unforgiving, reminding me how I treated her in the past years when she was crawling her way to me, craving every second of my attention. Did I waste it all?

I hated her for running. For making me feel like this. For leaving me to stew in anger and regret.

But then, regret wasn't new.

I remembered the day I realized she was gone, I came to an empty house with only her scent fading in the air. My rage had been all-consuming, like a wildfire that burned through everything else. I wanted to tear the world apart until I found her. But I didn't.

I told myself she did not deserve to be found, so I entertained myself, drowning in liquor and duties, taking my mind off the wife who ran away from me.

And now, six years later, she'd come back into my life like a storm, bringing chaos and questions I was not ready to face.

The twins' faces swam before my eyes again, and the rage simmering beneath my skin boiled over.

I stood, unable to sit still any longer. Crossing the room in a few strides, I threw open the liquor cabinet and poured a generous measure of whiskey. The burn as it slid down my throat did little to dull the ache in my chest.

If those children were mine...

The thought sent a shockwave through me, equal parts terror and longing. I did not want it to be true. And yet, the idea of them being someone else's made my blood run cold.

A knock at the door snapped me out of my spiraling thoughts.

"Come in," I barked.

The door opened, and Liam stepped in. "I thought you might want to hear this in person."

I gestured for him to continue as my patience was wearing thin.

"There were rumors," he said, and even though I did not want rumors, if not facts, I would not have entertained it. But if it was about the twins, I would take whatever it was. "Killian's been extra protective of Samantha and the twins. It's like it is his duty to do so."

"Of course," I muttered, pacing again. "That bastard always had a soft spot for her."

"Alpha," Liam hesitated, "we cannot rule out either that he might be the father—"

I cut him off, "No. It cannot be," I firmly said, my veins throbbing in fury at the thought. But thinking about it rationally, he can't be. I saw how the twins interacted with him, they did not call him 'dad' the way they called their mommy.

"He had been with the twins since they were born, actually since Samantha was still pregnant. He was there for her, like he was the father of her children," Liam added still and I shook my head, in denial of that fact.

He may have been with her, but... he wasn't still the father, even if he took them as his. They were still not his blood.

"Keep digging," I ordered. "Find out who the real father of the twins."

Liam nodded and left without another word, closing the door softly behind him.

Alone again, I let out a breath I did not realize I had been holding. My mind returned to Samantha, unbidden.

I hated her.

I missed her.

I wanted her.

The truth was a double-edged sword, cutting me no matter which side I fell on. If the twins were not mine, it meant Samantha had moved on, given her heart — and her body — to someone else. The thought made my stomach twist.

But if they were mine...

I downed another glass of whiskey, the burn doing little to soothe the rage inside. If they were mine, then Samantha had kept them from me. She'd hidden my children and denied me the chance to be their father.

And I didn't know which betrayal hurt more.

Chapter 26
Samantha's POV

"Mommy, look! I made a butterfly!" Diana exclaimed, as she held up her craft project — a messy combination of glitter, glue, and construction paper.

"That's beautiful, sweetheart," I said, crouching down to admire her creation. Devon sat nearby with his tiny hands busy assembling what looked like a spaceship made of popsicle sticks.

A knock on the door pulled me out of the small bubble of peace.

I straightened and glanced at Annie, who had just walked into the room. “Annie, keep an eye on them,” I said as I stepped to the door and opened it.

Killian stood there. He smiled warmly, but the tension in his eyes betrayed the purpose of his visit.

“Killian,” I greeted with a smile. “What brings you here?”

“Can I come in?” he asked, his voice was calm but it carried something that put me on edge.

I nodded and stepped aside, closing the door behind him. As soon as we were in the living room, I folded my arms. “What’s going on?”

Killian’s expression softened as he glanced toward the doorway where Diana and Devon’s giggles floated from the next room. “I needed to check on you. And the kids.”

“We are fine,” I said quickly, too quickly.

His eyes narrowed. “You don’t look fine, Samantha.”

I sighed and sank onto the couch, motioning for him to sit. “It’s... complicated. The kids mentioned that they talked with a man. Was it Dominic?” I asked.

Killian took a seat across from me, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees. “Yes. He found them first and called me to pick them up,” he replied and I sighed, brushing my palms on my face. I did not expect that the truth will be catching up this fast.

But the news Killian carried pushed me more to the edge.

“And Dominic had been sending his people to dig into your life, and about the twins.”

The air left my lungs in a whoosh. My head whipped up to meet his gaze. “What?!”

“He’s not subtle about it,” Killian said. “My pack caught wind of his men snooping around. They are asking questions about the twins.”

My pulse raced, my thoughts a tangled mess of panic and anger. “What does he know?”

“Not much yet,” Killian admitted. “But if he keeps digging, it’s only a matter of time before he finds out everything.”

I swallowed hard, my throat dry. My first instinct was to grab the twins and run, but I couldn’t. Not again. “I can’t let him find out,” I whispered while my head was searching for another escape route. A place where he would not be able to find us ever again. I wanted to run.

Killian’s gaze softened. “Samantha, you can’t do this alone.”

“I’ve been doing it alone for years,” I snapped as I stood up and paced around, the frustration spilling out before I could stop it.

“And look where that’s gotten you,” he countered calmly but firmly, making me understand the situation with a more rational view. “You’re stressed, paranoid, and one wrong move away from Dominic knowing the truth.”

I clenched my fists as I forced myself to sit back down. “I won’t let him take them from me.”

Killian leaned closer, his expression was earnest. “Then let me help you.”

“How?” I asked, unable to stop my voice from shaking.

He hesitated for a moment before speaking. “Let me act as their father.”

The words hung in the air like a thundercloud. I stared at him, my mind reeling.

“What?”

“It would make sense,” he said. “I’ve been around them since they were born, Samantha. I carried them with you. I have always been here. People already assume I’m their father. If Dominic’s people come asking questions, it’s a believable cover.”

I shook my head, my stomach churning. “Killian, I can’t ask you to do that. This isn’t your fight.”

“It became my fight the moment you came to me,” he said firmly. “You and those kids are under my protection. And I would do anything to keep you safe.”

His words hit me harder than I expected. Killian had always been there, a partner when everything else in my life was falling apart. But this... This was too much.

“I don’t know,” I said, my voice barely above a whisper. “It feels wrong. Like I am dragging you into a mess you don’t deserve.”

He reached out and took my hand gently. “You are not dragging me into anything. I am offering because I care about you. And I care about them.”

The sincerity in his eyes made my chest ache. But doubt clawed at me, whispering that this would only make things worse. “What happens when Dominic finds out the truth? He’ll see through it eventually.”

“Then we deal with that when it happens,” Killian said. “Right now, we need to buy time. This is the best way to do that.”

I pulled my hand back, standing up to put some distance between us. “I need to think about it.”

Killian stood too, his gaze never leaving me. “Take all the time you need. Just know that I’m here for you, no matter what. And I am willing to be the father of the twins.”

His words were like a lifeline, but I was too afraid to grab hold of it.

He stepped closer, and his presence made my heart race. “Samantha...”

The way he said my name sent a shiver down my spine. And before I could react, he closed the remaining distance between us. His hand came up to cup my cheek, his thumb brushing lightly against my skin, and my breath caught in my throat as his lips descended on mine.

For a moment, I was frozen, caught between the pull of his kiss and the storm of emotions swirling inside me. His lips were warm and insistent, a mix of comfort and something more.

But then reality crashed down like a tidal wave, and I gently pulled away. I wasn’t ready yet to do this. No matter how much I try to deny to myself that I had already moved on from Dominic, the mate bond’s pull was telling me otherwise. “Killian, I can’t—”

He stepped back immediately, his hands raised in a gesture of surrender. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have—”

“No,” I interrupted. “I just... I need time. To think. About everything.”

Killian nodded in understanding. “I understand. I’ll give you all the time you need.”

He turned to leave, but before he reached the door, he paused and looked back. “Just remember, Samantha. You are not alone anymore. You don’t have to carry this on your own.”

And then he was gone, leaving me standing in the middle of the room, my lips still tingling from his kiss and my mind was a mess of confusion and doubt.

I sank back onto the couch with my head in my hands.

What was I supposed to do?

Killian's offer was tempting, too tempting. But it felt like I was playing with fire, and I was not sure I could survive the burn.

Chapter 27

Dominic's POV

"Tell me you have something," I said, leaning back in my chair as Liam stepped in, taking my attention away from the file spread across my desk.

Liam cleared his throat. "I tracked down some details about the twins."

My fingers drummed against the desk as I waited. He always dragged out the bad news like it would soften the blow, but it never did. It was only prolonging the agony and anticipation to hear something positive, only to end up delivering bad news.

"They are under the foster care of a human nanny, that alone was certain." Liam finally said. "Her name's Annie. Beyond that, nothing substantial. There is no confirmed information about their mother."

A human nanny? My jaw tightened. That did not align with anything I knew about Samantha. She was many things, but reckless was not one of them. She would not just leave the children in the care of some random human. But, if that was the case, then they might not be her children, because she would not be that stupid to leave the werewolf pups to humans.

Nevertheless, I pressed. "And their father?"

"Nothing." Liam's gaze shifted. "From the outside, they appear... fostered, maybe. But there's no solid proof of anything. It is like someone intentionally erased the trail."

My mind spun as I thought it through. Samantha had vanished into thin air years ago, and now, out of nowhere, these twins appear with no past. It was not just convenient; it was suspicious.

“And Killian?” I asked, though I already knew the answer.

“We do not know yet for sure. However, I have noticed that his men and his territory were tightened. His people’s lips were more sealed now, not even a gossip came from them anymore. It is no doubt that he is protective of the twins.”

Of course, he was. Killian had been circling Samantha for years, a vulture waiting for his moment. My lips curled into a sneer. “Killian does not protect unless there is something worth protecting.”

“Do you think—” Liam hesitated.

“Think what?” I snapped.

“That they are Samantha’s kids?”

The thought gnawed at the edge of my mind, but I shoved it down even though I was suspicious of it. But as long as there was no confirmation, then the doubt still remained. “If they are, then why hasn’t she come forward? Why hide them? No,” I shook my head, “there is more to this, and I am going to find out.”

Hence, I took matters into my own hands since Killian did not seem to yield any more information about the kids. But I had to know. My SUV slowed at the checkpoint, the guards stiffening as they recognized who I was. Good. Let them sweat.

I did not wait for their approval before stepping out, my boots crunching against the gravel. The air here was heavy, tinged with the sharp bite of pine and impending confrontation. I could sense it but I did not care. I would find the truth now.

Killian appeared moments later, flanked by his warriors. His posture was relaxed, but his eyes betrayed him with an undeniable wariness reflecting within them.

“Dominic,” he greeted, with no hint of any amusement at my presence. “To what do I owe this... visit?”

I did not waste time on pleasantries. “I am here to speak with Samantha,” I said.

Killian’s smile was all teeth. “This is my territory, Dominic. You do not just waltz in and make demands.”

“I am not here to play your games, Killian,” I said, stepping closer. “We both know you are hiding something.”

His expression did not waver, but there was a flicker of something in his eyes, annoyance, maybe even fear. “You think you can come here and throw accusations around? You’ve got no authority here, Dominic. Go back to your land.”

“I have more authority than you think,” I countered.

Killian’s warriors tensed, but he raised a hand to keep them in place. “You are grasping at straws, Dominic. If Samantha wanted to see you, she would have.”

“That is not your call to make.”

Killian stepped closer, his voice dropping. “It is when you are trespassing on my territory, Dominic.”

The tension crackled like a live wire, and for a moment, it felt like the entire pack was holding its breath.

“If you have nothing to hide, then let me talk to her,” I challenged.

Killian stepped forward, his smirk vanishing, replaced by a hard, stubborn glare. “And if she does not want to talk to you?” he shot back sharply.

“Then I will hear it from her, not you,” I said, stepping closer, invading his space.

His lip curled, a low growl rumbling in his chest. “You don’t belong here, Dominic. You walked away from her years ago. You do not get to show up now and pretend you care.”

The words hit their mark, but I did not let it show. Instead, I smirked, leaning in closer. “Maybe if you weren’t so busy sniffing around her, she would not have left and run to you.”

Killian’s fist was fast, but I was ready. I caught his wrist just before it connected with my jaw, shoving him back a step. His warriors bristled, their hands twitching as their claws protruded, but Killian raised a hand, stopping them cold.

“No one interferes,” he growled. “This is between us,” he hissed.

“Finally, something we agree on,” I shot back before lunging at him.

We hit the ground in a tangle of limbs as we dominated each other and his fist connected with my ribs causing sharp pain to lance through me, but I did not let up. My own punch landed squarely on his jaw, and the satisfying crack fueled my next move.

Killian attacked me nonstop in a blur of fury and strength, but I matched him, blow for blow. Blood smeared across his cheek where I had struck, and I felt the sting of a cut above my eye. The pack circled us, murmuring until their whispers turned into an eruption of cheers for their alpha, but I did not care, and I drowned their voices with the adrenaline roaring in my ears.

“Is this what you are good at now?” I sneered between breaths. “Playing guard dog while she hides?”

Killian’s roar was deafening as he drove me back, but before he could land another hit, a sharp voice cut through the chaos.

“Stop this! Both of you!”

Samantha's voice was a whip crack tearing against the crowd, silencing them, and we froze mid-motion. I turned, chest heaving, to see her storming toward us, an omega trailing nervously behind her.

I fixed my gaze on Samantha and her eyes burned with fury, flicking between the two of us.

"What the hell is going on here?" she demanded.

Killian pulled away first, wiping the blood from his lip as he glared at me. "He is trespassing," he spat.

"And you are hiding things that do not belong to you!" I countered, brushing the dirt off my shirt as I straightened.

Samantha's gaze narrowed at both of us. "Are you both children? Fighting like this in front of the pack?"

"He started it," Killian said, his tone laced with mockery.

"Enough," Samantha snapped. Her attention turned to me, her expression hardening. "What do you want, Dominic?"

"I need to talk to you," I said, ignoring the burning sting of my injuries.

"I do not want to talk to you," she said firmly, pointing his finger as she spoke with fury and disdain evident in her tone. "This is not your territory, and you have no right to be here."

I took a step closer, defiance surging through me. "I am not leaving until I get answers."

Her anger flared brighter. "Answers to what? To questions you have no business asking?"

Chapter 28
Samantha's POV

“I think I deserve the truth.” Dominic’s demanded.

I stiffened, my nails digging into my palms as I faced him. His eyes burned with accusation, suffocating me with the lies and secrets I had kept hidden.

“The twins,” he continued, his voice softening but no less intense. “Who are they, Samantha? Are they yours?”

My lips pressed together in a hard line, and I bit back the instinct to respond. He did not deserve an answer. Not after everything he had done. But the silence stretched between us, heavy and oppressive, and I knew he would take it as guilt.

“They are none of your concern,” I replied firmly. I did not owe him an explanation, after everything he had done. He had chosen Olivia over me, over us.

His jaw tensed, the frustration in his eyes flaring brighter as he retorted. “That’s not an answer.”

“It’s the only one you’re getting.”

I folded my arms across my chest as a defense and comfort, every muscle in my body coiled like a spring as he stepped closer. The proximity made my skin prickle with awareness, the pull of the mate bond humming faintly beneath the surface, and I hated that I was being affected by his mere presence. I hated how my body reacted to him, how even now, after everything, his presence could stir something I had buried long ago.

“Samantha, do not play this game with me.” His tone dropped, still commanding. “If they are mine—”

“They are not!” I snapped, cutting him off. My voice came out sharper than I intended, but I did not care. “And even if they were, you lost the right to ask the day you chose her.”

I saw the flicker of pain in his eyes, a flash of vulnerability that made my chest tighten. But I did not let it sway me. Not this time.

“You have no claim here, Dominic,” I said, despite the emotions that swirled inside me, wanting him close, but I had to choose to push him away, even though my wolf was protesting, craving for our mate. But no, I had to do this, to protect us. “Leave.”

“I am not going anywhere,” he uttered stubbornly, his jaw set in defiance.

Of course, he would not. He never knew when to back down, when to walk away.

“If you think I am going to walk away—”

“That is exactly what you are going to do,” I cut in, taking a step toward him. “You don’t get to waltz back into my life and demand answers. Not after everything.”

The fire in his eyes shifted, anger flaring to the surface. “You think hiding them is the solution? If they are mine, I have a right to know.”

I laughed bitterly. “A right? You think you have a right to them? To me?”

“You are not the same person I knew,” he said, shaking his head as if he did not recognize me.

“No, I’m not,” I shot back, my eyes locking with his. “That person was broken and naïve. She is gone. And so is any obligation I had to you. Now, leave, Dominic. This is Killian’s territory, not yours. You do not belong here. And you already have your answer, they are not yours, Dominic. Don’t be delusional.”

The words came out harsher than I intended, but they needed to be said. I needed to push him away, to make him see that there was no place for him in my life anymore.

His gaze bore into me, stern, as if searching for cracks in my lies. I forced myself to hold it, even though it felt like my insides were twisting into knots.

Then I turned, my movements stiff as I started to walk away, I could not bear it any longer, any more softness in his hard eyes, I might have broken, so I had to leave.

But before I could take more than a few steps, his hand shot out and grabbed my arm.

And there was that tingling sensation that immediately engulfed me, making my breath hitch. Heat exploded through my skin where his fingers touched, searing and electric, like a live wire connecting us. My heart pounded against my ribs as the mate bond roared to life, drowning out every rational thought.

“Then let me at least see the twins,” he challenged. “I would know if they were ours or not.”

I clenched my jaw, fighting against the pull, against the way my body betrayed me in his presence. “You have no right to demand anything, Dominic,” I snarled, yanking my arm back. “You are not seeing the kids.”

“Why?” he pressed, his eyes narrowing suspiciously at me. “Is it because I’m right?”

“No.” My voice wavered slightly, but I quickly steadied it. “Let me go now and leave.”

Before I could take another step, Killian stepped in between me and Dominic.

“You heard her,” Killian warned. “Let her go and leave now.”

But Dominic did not back down. Instead, his focus shifted to Killian, his hand flying to grab the collar of his shirt.

“What’s your f-cking problem?” Dominic growled. “You don’t want Samantha to talk to me or show me the twins. Why? You’re scared they will return to me?”

Killian smirked, his calm demeanor infuriating Dominic further.

“That’s enough!” I shouted, stepping between them and shoving Dominic back. The anger boiling in my chest erupted, and I glared at both of them my voice trembling with frustration as I reprimanded them. “I said stop! Both of you!”

Killian stepped back, fixing his shirt with a smug grin, but Dominic’s glare remained fixed on me.

“This isn’t over,” Dominic growled.

“Get the message yet, Dominic?” Killian taunted from behind me.

I ignored Killian, my focus solely on Dominic. My chest was heaving, my emotions a tangled mess of anger, pain, and the lingering pull of the bond.

“This isn’t over yet” he uttered yet Killian smirked, shaking his head.

“You think you can just take whatever you want, Dominic. But Samantha is not yours anymore. She hasn’t been for a long time.”

Dominic’s gaze lingered for a moment longer before he turned and walked away, leaving me standing there with my fists clenched and my heart raging against my chest.

I swallowed hard, breathing from the suffocation of my lies. But even as he went in his car, I knew this was not the end. He would be back.

And when he returned, I was not sure if I would have the strength to push him away again.

Chapter 29
Dominic’s POV

“Have you found her yet?”

My mother questioned as she came into my study, making me flinch in surprise. She sat across from me and her hands folded neatly in her lap, she had been hard on me ever since I lost my Luna — Samantha, though I knew there was still concern lurking behind her eyes, after all, I was her son. Mother was never one to press unnecessarily, but when she did, it was because she cared.

“Yes, but she doesn’t have to do anything with me anymore,” I muttered, leaning back in the chair and scrubbing a hand down my face.

Mother tilted her head, her piercing gaze pinning me in place, somehow, she reminded me of Dad, stern, yet Mom still had softness in her. “And why would that be, Dominic? Have you ever thought about why she would not want to see you?”

I stiffened, clenching my jaw. I did not need her to spell it out. The truth hung me like a noose, choking me as if punishing me for the crimes I had done. “I made mistakes,” I admitted gruffly. “I know that.”

“Mistakes,” she repeated softly, her tone was devoid of judgment but heavy with disappointment, as his son and as the Alpha of the pack she and my father had built. “Samantha did not just leave because of mistakes, Dominic. She left because she was broken. And do you know who broke her?”

Her words were like daggers piercing my chest, each one striking deeper than the last, and each stab waking me up with the harsh truth of the past. I swallowed hard, my hands clenching into fists. “I never meant to hurt her,” I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

“But you did.” her voice cracked slightly, betraying the emotions she tried to keep in check. “You hurt her by neglecting her, by not seeing her worth. That girl did everything for you, Dominic. For this pack. She loved you, truly and deeply, and you—” She stopped, exhaling shakily. “You pushed her away.”

I stood abruptly, the chair scraping against the floor. “I know, okay? I know I failed her!” My voice rose as frustration and guilt spilled over. “But I can’t change the past.”

“No,” she said, rising to her feet. “But you can fight for the future. If you truly love her, Dominic, you will stop feeling sorry for yourself and start making amends.”

I wanted to argue, to defend myself, but the truth was, I had no defense. She was right. Samantha had given me everything, and I had given her nothing but pain in return.

“She used to take care of you when you were too stubborn to take care of yourself,” she continued. “Do you remember the time you were injured during that rogue attack? You refused help from anyone, but Samantha stayed up all night tending to your wounds. She was so gentle, Dominic, so patient. And when you finally passed out from exhaustion, she was still there, watching over you like you were the only thing that mattered.”

I closed my eyes, the memory rushing back with startling clarity. I remember waking up to find Samantha asleep in a chair beside my bed, her head resting on her arms. I had brushed it off at the time, too proud to acknowledge the care she had shown me.

“She was Luna in every way that mattered, even if you did not acknowledge it because she was wolfless and you were too crazy looking for your mate that you were not even sure if it existed,” she remarked. “She ran the pack when you were too busy with... other things. She made sure everyone was fed, cared for, protected. And you—” Her voice broke, and she turned away, composing herself.

I didn’t need her to finish. I knew exactly what she was about to say. ‘And you repaid her by chasing after Olivia.’

The guilt was stifling like a vice tightening around my chest. How many times had I dismissed Samantha’s efforts? How many nights had she gone to bed alone while I was off with Olivia?

“I thought...” My voice faltered, the words catching in my throat. “I thought she was just after the title of a Luna. That she did not truly want me.”

She turned back to me, “She didn’t want you, Dominic? Or did she just want you to see her, to choose her, to love her the way she deserved?”

Her words hit me like a freight train, and I sank back into the chair, burying my face in my hands. “She doesn’t want me now,” I muttered. “I went to Moonstone Pack, tried to talk to her, and she... she pushed me away.”

“What did you expect?” she spat, her words were like a slap to my face. “That she would welcome you back with open arms after everything? Trust is earned, Dominic, and you have a long way to go.”

I looked up at her as I asked, “How do I fix it?”

“You start by showing her that you have changed,” she uttered simply. “That you are willing to fight for her, not because she’s your Luna, but because she deserves it. And you don’t give up, Dominic. Not if you truly love her.”

I nodded slowly, knowing that she was right. Samantha deserved better than what I had given her, and it was time I became the man she needed me to be.

As I left the study, memories clawed their way to the forefront of my mind. Samantha’s face haunted me, the fury and disdain in her eyes when I had cornered her in the Moonstone Pack, demanding answers. She had looked at me like I was a stranger, someone unworthy of her time or energy, and yet, behind the anger, there was pain, a pain I knew I had caused. Her voice had wavered when she denied the twins were mine, and though she had shouted her denials, something about the way she had said it gnawed at me. She was hiding something, and the truth was there, just beyond my grasp.

But her anger was not unfounded, was it? The truth hit me like a punch to my gut, carving out any excuses I could muster. Samantha had given everything— everything— for me, for the pack. I remembered her

constantly moving through the halls of our home, handling disputes, tending to the injured, and ensuring the pack had what it needed. She had cared for me in ways I had been too blind or too arrogant to see at the time. When I was injured, she had been there, her gentle touch as she bandaged wounds that I had not even realized I had. When I was absent, lost in my own ambitions, it was she who held the pack together.

She had been Luna in every sense of the word, even when I had failed to be the man she deserved. I had ignored her sacrifices, dismissed her worth, and then shattered the life we had. My stomach twisted at the memory of the nights I spent with Olivia, oblivious to the woman who had quietly endured and carried the weight of everything I should have been. Samantha had been nothing short of extraordinary, and I had treated her like she was less than ordinary.

And now, she hated me. That much was clear from the way she had faced me in the Moonstone Pack. Her loathing was like a cold, impenetrable wall that acted as a barrier keeping me from the truth. But beneath the layers of anger and defiance, there was a glimpse of something else. Hurt. Betrayal. Maybe even a lingering shard of the love she once had for me. I had to believe it was still there, because if it wasn't, what was the point of fighting for her?

I walked down the corridor, thinking that Samantha was right to hate me. But I was not the same man I had been anymore. I couldn't be. Not if I wanted any chance of undoing the damage I had done.

When I returned to the Moonstone Pack, I would not leave until I had the truth. This was not just about the twins anymore; it was about her. About us. And this time, I wouldn't demand answers like some entitled fool. I would fight for her — for us.

No matter how long it took, I would make things right. I had to. Because losing her forever was a future I wasn't willing to face.

Chapter 30
Samantha's POV

“You’re thinner than the last time I saw you.”

Lena’s voice pulled me from my thoughts as she placed a steaming cup of tea on the small table between us. She settled into the chair across from me, scanning me in the way only she could — half affectionate, half appraising.

I let out a short laugh, one that felt foreign and awkward after years of keeping myself guarded. “I guess life has a way of wearing you down,” I replied.

She frowned, her lips pressing into a thin line. “You’ve been through too much, Samantha. More than anyone should have to endure.”

I avoided her gaze, my hands warming against the teacup. The years apart had not dulled her ability to see right through me. It was comforting and unsettling all at once, after all, when my mother died, she took me in, cared for me, and raised me to be the Luna I had been. But fate decided to hand me a cruel life I had to escape from.

“I’ve managed,” I replied after a moment. “The Moonstone Pack has been good to me. It’s peaceful there.”

Lena tilted her head slightly as she focused her eyes on me, searching. “Peace is important. But it’s not everything,” she finally said. It was no wonder to me how she managed to reach me. I knew Dominic must have told her where I was. And when she contacted the Moonstone Pack, requesting my presence and contact details, who was I to decline? So I took the contact details that she used in reaching out to the Pack and contacted her for an afternoon tea. Despite the fallout between me and Dominic, I wouldn’t deny that I still missed Lena. She was like a mother to me already — always been nice, and caring.

Seeing her again after all these years felt surreal, like stepping into a memory that was both familiar and foreign.

“I’ve missed you,” I admitted, my voice softer than I intended. “More than I realized.”

Her expression softened, and she reached across the table to squeeze my hand. “I’ve missed you too, Samantha. You were like a daughter to me. You know that, right? Losing you... it felt like losing her all over again.”

Her words hit me harder than I expected. Lena had been my lifeline after my mother’s death. She filled the void left by my mother’s absence. Hearing her speak of that loss reminded me just how much we had shared.

“I never meant to disappear,” I said, my voice barely above a whisper. “But I could not stay. Not after everything that happened.”

“I know,” Lena said, and despite the understanding in her tone, there was a tinge of sadness. “I don’t blame you, Samantha. You did what you had to do. And I apologize because I was not able to do anything.”

Lena filled me in on the changes the Silver Crescent Pack had undergone since I left — new alliances forged, territory disputes settled, and the growing strength of its warriors. Yet, as she spoke, her tone shifted, her voice growing heavier when the conversation inevitably drifted toward Dominic and the life she had lived after I disappeared from his life.

She hesitated before mentioning his name.

“He hasn’t been the same,” Lena finally said, avoiding my eyes for I know that I had frowned at his name and if possible I would have wanted to avoid the topic about him.

“Losing you... it broke something in him.” She was almost hesitant, as though speaking the truth aloud might hurt me.

I forced myself to meet her eyes, even though it felt like peeling open an old wound.

“And whose fault is that?” I asked although I did not intend to be rude.

Her expression faltered, the discomfort evident in the slight downturn of her mouth. For a moment, guilt stabbed at me. But it was fleeting, easily swallowed by the bitterness I carried.

“He made his choices,” I continued, softer this time because I understood that this was not in her hand. We both knew that she could not do anything about it. His son was stubborn and no one could stop him. However, the pain pushed me to utter the truth and not coat it with sugary lies. “He chose his woman, over everything else. I was there, I endured it all. Though I know this was neither of our fault, I do not think I can do it again, Lena. I’m sorry.”

Lena did not defend him and did not offer the excuses I half expected. Instead, she nodded slowly, agreeing, or perhaps understanding where I was coming from.

“You’re right,” she replied. “And he is paying the price for it.”

I opened my mouth to ask what she meant, but she continued before I could speak.

“After you left, he became... different. Withdrawn, harsher. He drove himself into his duties — training, securing alliances, strengthening the pack like it could fill the void you left. But nothing did. He pushed himself and everyone else to the edge, demanding perfection because it was the only thing he could control.”

I sat back, stunned by her words, and surprised at how Dominic, as if I could see it all in my head how he might have been. But I tried not to show any concern. I could picture it vividly — Dominic, commanding with perfection, and throwing himself into work because facing the truth was too painful. I knew the feeling. I’d been there, burying myself in work just to divert my mind from the pain he had been causing me when I was still with him. I wanted to sympathize, but the part in me that wanted revenge stopped me from feeling sorry.

“There were nights,” Lena continued, her voice quieter now, “when he would not even come home. He would spend hours alone in the training

grounds, beating himself against targets long after everyone else had gone to bed. He never said it outright, but it was clear to anyone who knew him — he was punishing himself. For losing you."

I felt a pang deep in my chest, a mix of anger and something softer I did not want to acknowledge, and my wolf felt it too, whimpering in the back of my mind, quietly scolding me for leaving our mate. "He didn't lose me," I remarked. "He pushed me away. There's a difference."

Lena did not argue, but her expression told me she understood more than she let on.

"He doesn't talk about it," she said after a pause. "Not to anyone. But the cracks are there. He is still carrying the pain of your absence, Samantha. Even if he will never admit it."

I looked away, staring into the tea that had long since gone cold. Memories from that time came flooding back—the way Dominic's anger had overshadowed everything else, his relentless need for control that left no room for compromise or understanding.

"I was there, Lena. But he chose someone else. So I had to leave. The relationship that was supposed to be just for the two of us became too crowded... He doesn't get to be broken over something he chose to destroy."

Lena nodded again and sighed, shifting the conversation away from Dominic. But her words lingered, pressing against the walls I had built around myself., no matter how much I tried to bury it away from my memory and erase the vivid image of Dominic miserably getting through his day since the day I left.

Dominic was broken. But so was I. And neither of us had figured out how to put the pieces back together.

But as the afternoon wore on, Lena's tone grew more serious.

“Samantha,” she began carefully, “you know the Silver Crescent Pack will always be your home.”

I stiffened, sensing where this was headed. “Lena—”

“Let me finish,” she interrupted gently. “I am not asking you to return as Luna. That is your decision, and I will respect whatever choice you make. But you do not have to carry that burden if you don’t want to. You can come back — just as you are.”

I stared at her, not knowing what to say, but I knew for sure that I would not want the twins anywhere near Dominic. And that place... I did not want to be around Olivia. I did not want to go back to the place I tried so hard to escape from. I feared that if I return, I would find them again, tangled within each other’s arms. I did not want to suffer like I did in the past again.

“Even if you don’t want to lead,” she continued, “you are still part of us. You always will be.”

The Silver Crescent Pack had been my entire world once. Leaving it had been the hardest decision I had ever made, but staying had felt impossible at the time.

“I don’t know if I can,” I admitted. “My life in the Moonstone Pack... it’s quiet, Lena. It’s more peaceful.”

She nodded, “I understand. But promise me you will think about it. You do not have to decide now. Just... don’t close the door entirely.”

“I’ll think about it,” I said after a pause, although I was genuine with my response, I was also uncertain.

A small smile tugged at her lips, and she reached out to squeeze my hand again. “That’s all I ask.”

As the conversation wound down, a thought began to take root in the back of my mind — a thought I hadn’t allowed myself to fully entertain until now.

Lena did not know about the twins.

She didn't know about the two little lives that were as much a part of Dominic as they were of me. And while I had done everything in my power to keep them safe, to shield them from the chaos of my past, a part of me could not ignore the guilt that came with keeping them a secret from her.

She had been like a mother to me. She had loved me when she didn't have to, guided me, and stood by me when I had no one else.

Didn't she deserve to know them?

Lena hugged me goodbye.

Someday, when the time was right, I would let her meet them.

For now, the twins were my secret, my only support against the storm that Dominic's return had brought into my life. But Lena... she was different. She was family.

And perhaps, letting her into their lives would be the first step toward something I hadn't dared to hope for in years — healing.

Chapter 31
Dominic's POV

I shouldn't have come.

The thought hit me like a gut punch as I pressed my back against the cold wall outside my mother's sitting room. Her voice floated through the partially open door, soft and warm, a tone I had not heard in years.

And then there was Samantha's voice.

It was not the sharp, defensive tone she used whenever we crossed paths recently. This voice was softer, more vulnerable. It caught me off guard, the way it threaded through me, stirring memories I had no right to hold on to.

I clenched my fists, forcing myself to stay rooted to the spot even though every instinct screamed at me to burst through the door. My wolf was restless, clawing at the edges of my mind, demanding to see her, to speak to her. But I couldn't. Not yet.

"I've managed," she said, her voice was quiet but firm. "The Moonstone Pack has been good to me. It's peaceful there."

Peaceful.

The word stung. Was she happy without me? Had she found a life so free of the chaos I brought into hers that she had never even considered coming back?

My mother's voice broke through my thoughts. "Peace is important. But it's not everything," she said.

I could almost see the way she looked at Samantha when she said it, her eyes full of that mix of love and scrutiny she reserved for the people she cared about. She always had a soft spot for Samantha, when she disappeared, my mother had been hard on me, subtly blaming me for her disappearance.

I leaned closer, keeping my movements silent. I should not be doing this. Eavesdropping on my mother and Samantha wasn't just low — it was pathetic. But I needed to know what she thought, what she felt, without the walls she always put up around me.

"I've missed you," Samantha admitted to her. And that was one of the reasons why I had given my mother her whereabouts, it was not only so they would see each other again, but also to see if she could changed her mind.

I heard my mother's chair creak as she leaned forward. "I've missed you too, Samantha. You were like a daughter to me. You know that, right? Losing you... it felt like losing her all over again."

Her?

I realized that she was talking about Samantha's mother who was my mom's best friend. They had been inseparable and when she died, she was devastated especially since we just lost my father that same year.

And Samantha? She had been the one thing that brought my mother joy after years of mourning, and now it felt like I had also taken away my mother's joy when Samantha left.

"I never meant to disappear," Samantha said and I could hear the regret in her voice. "But I couldn't stay. Not after everything that happened."

The words felt like an accusation, even though she was not speaking to me. I leaned my head against the wall, closing my eyes as guilt twisted in my gut.

You drove her away. I told myself, even though it was hard to admit it.

My mother's reply came quietly, carrying more understanding than I deserved. "I know. I don't blame you, Samantha. You did what you had to do."

But she should blame me. Samantha had been her family, her second chance at healing, and I had destroyed that too.

"He hasn't been the same," my mother said suddenly, and my breath caught.

Samantha did not respond right away, but I could imagine the way she stiffened, the way her eyes narrowed when my name was brought up.

"Losing you... it broke something in him," my mother continued, carefully, almost hesitant. "He drove himself into his duties — training, securing alliances, strengthening the pack, like it could fill the void you left. But nothing did."

Her words were like a knife. I wanted to deny it, to tell myself that losing Samantha had not wrecked me the way it clearly had. But I couldn't.

Samantha's reply came sharp nevertheless. "He made his choices."

I flinched.

"He chose his woman over everything else," she said, her voice quieter but no less biting. "I was there. I endured it all. But I can't do it again, Lena. I'm sorry."

My heart twisted painfully at her words. She wasn't wrong. I had chosen Olivia when I should have chosen her.

And now I was paying the price.

"There were nights," my mother said after a pause, "when he wouldn't even come home. He would spend hours alone in the training grounds, beating himself against targets long after everyone else had gone to bed. He never said it outright, but it was clear to anyone who knew him — he was punishing himself. For losing you."

I exhaled sharply, and I did not expect my breath to come out trembling. I fidgeted with the car key in my hand as I listened further.

"He didn't lose me," she replied. "He pushed me away. There's a difference."

She was right. I had pushed her away. But hearing her say it, hearing the quiet pain in her voice, cut deeper than I thought it would.

"He doesn't get to be broken over something he chose to destroy," she added, and my wolf growled low in my chest, reacting to the raw truth of her statement.

My mother did not argue. She simply sighed, shifting the conversation in a different direction.

But Samantha's words lingered in my head, echoing like a damaged old disc, repeating themselves and piercing my chest with every word.

I should have walked away then. I should have let them have their conversation in peace. But I couldn't.

"Samantha," my mother said, her voice growing serious, "you know the Silver Crescent Pack will always be your home."

Home.

The word felt foreign now, even to me. The time Samantha left, the pack never felt like home anymore but more of a duty, a heavy responsibility that I never thought would make me feel burdened. But then I realized, it was Samantha that made it all light, that made it a home for me. It was she who kept our room filled, the bed warm, and the soups and coffee hot in the morning. When she disappeared, everything went cold, heavy, and foreign.

"I don't know if I can," Samantha admitted. "My life in the Moonstone Pack... it's quiet, Lena. It's more peaceful."

Peaceful. That damn word again.

"You don't have to decide now," my mother said. "Just... don't close the door entirely."

"I'll think about it," Samantha replied with uncertainty.

The conversation wound down, and after a few seconds, the door creaked open, and I stepped back into the shadows with my heart pounding against my ribs.

Samantha walked out, her head down, with a distant look on her face.

She did not see me standing there, watching her go.

But she would.

Not yet.

Now that she was here, I wasn't going to let her slip away again.

Chapter 32
Samantha's POV

I froze at the bottom of the porch steps when I saw him. He was there, standing in the shadow of the old oak tree at the edge of the driveway. Dominic.

His eyes locked on mine instantly, and he looked like he had a thousand questions in his head and had no idea which one to ask first.

For a moment, neither of us moved. It was like the world had stilled, leaving just the two of us in this charged, suffocating silence.

I swallowed hard and forced myself to keep walking, ignoring the way my pulse raced and the way my wolf stirred uneasily, yet delightedly inside me. Though I did not share the same joy she felt.

"Samantha."

His voice stopped me dead in my tracks. Deep, rough, and filled with something I could not quite name, or one that I refused to — longing.

I did not turn around. "I have nothing to say to you." I did not want to look into his eyes and feel guilty to all the lies that I said. Lena said he had changed, and that he was devastated when I left, and he was here to make amends, which I was not yet ready to.

"That's not going to work," he said, stepping closer. I could feel him behind me now, too close for comfort. "Not this time."

I turned slowly, keeping my expression as neutral as possible even though my heart was pounding against my ribs. "What do you want, Dominic?"

He stared at me like he could not believe I was real, his gaze scanning my face as if looking for something he had lost.

“You’ve been gone for six years,” he began. “Six years, Samantha. And yet you act like nothing happened?”

I lifted my chin, refusing to let him see how much his words affected me. “I didn’t come back for you.”

His jaw tightened, his hands curling into fists at his sides. “Don’t do that.”

“Do what?”

“Act like you don’t care,” he snapped, his voice rising. “Like you did not leave without a word. Like you didn’t tear this pack apart.”

I flinched at the accusation, but I would not let him see it. “I left because I had to. You know that.”

“No, I don’t!” he shot back, his voice breaking slightly. “You never told me why. You just... disappeared.”

“You know why! Your actions did. You did, Dominic!” I retorted.

I took a step back, putting more distance between us as I calmed myself down, taking deep breaths while gripping the handle of my bag harder. “This isn’t the time or place for this conversation, Dominic.”

His laugh was bitter, full of disbelief. “When is the right time, Samantha? Huh? You’ve been gone for six years! Do you think I can just ignore that?”

“Actually, you know what, we have nothing to talk about. It was already in the past, I have moved on, and so should you.”

I turned away. But he was not going to let this go.

“Samantha,” he said again, softer this time. “Please.”

The raw emotion in his voice made me stop. Against my better judgment, I glanced back at him.

He looked... broken.

“I just want to know,” he said, stepping closer. “Why? Why did you leave? Why didn’t you tell me where you were going?”

“I couldn’t stay,” I said finally.

“That’s not an answer.”

“It’s the only one you’re getting.”

He closed the distance between us in a few quick strides as he spoke. “You owe me more than that, Samantha.”

“Owe you?” I snapped, the words spilling out before I could stop them. “I don’t owe you anything, Dominic. You made your choice, remember?”

His expression darkened, a flash of guilt crossing his face. “I know I screwed up. I know I hurt you. But that doesn’t mean you can just erase me from your life.”

I felt a sharp pang in my chest, but I shoved it down. “I did not erase you, Dominic. I moved on.”

“Bullshit,” he spat. “If you’d moved on, you wouldn’t be here.”

“I’m here for Lena,” I replied firmly. “Not for you.”

He laughed again, but there was no humor in it. “You keep saying that like it makes a difference. You’re here, Samantha. And I’m not letting you walk away again without answers.”

I shook my head, taking another step back. “I do not owe you answers. Not after everything you put me through.”

“Then why can’t you look me in the eye and say you don’t feel anything for me anymore?” he challenged and my heart stopped.

“Say it,” he pressed, stepping closer until there was barely an inch between us. “Look me in the eye and tell me you feel nothing.”

I couldn’t.

The words stuck in my throat, my wolf howling in protest as I tried to summon the strength to lie.

But he did not wait for an answer. His hand shot out, gently gripping my arm. The contact sent a shockwave through me, the mate bond flaring to life in a way I could not ignore.

“Don’t,” I said, my voice trembling as I tried to pull away.

He did not let go. “Don’t what? Don’t remind you of what we had? Don’t make you face the truth?”

“I said let go,” I repeated, sharply.

His grip loosened slightly, but he did not step back. “I am not letting you walk away, Samantha. Not this time.”

The intensity in his eyes made it hard to breathe. I wanted to scream at him, to tell him he had no right to make demands of me after everything he had done. But the words would not come.

“I can’t do this,” I whispered, finally pulling free.

He stared at me with a mixture of anger and desperation. “Why not? What are you so afraid of?”

“Afraid?” I repeated, my voice quivering with barely contained anger. “I am not afraid, Dominic. I am done. Done with you, done with this... whatever this is. Just let me go.”

But he did not move, his eyes searching mine for something I was not willing to give.

Chapter 33
Dominic's POV

I stood there as she left. The urge to go after her nearly consumed me, but something stopped me, a bitter mix of shame and realization of the fact that I hurt her, that I pushed her away, and now, she did not want anything to do with me.

I had no right to demand anything from her. Not after what I had done.

The frustration simmered just beneath my skin, fueled by both anger and regret. Regret for the years I had let slip by without finding her, and anger at myself for being the reason she had left in the first place.

My chest felt tight as I turned back toward my mother's house. I had come here hoping for answers, for some kind of clarity, and instead, I was left with more questions and a gnawing sense of failure.

"She's not going to make this easy for you."

I looked up sharply to see my mother standing on the porch with her arms crossed over her chest. She was watching me with that knowing look she always had, the one that told me she had seen and heard everything.

"Did you talk to her?" she asked.

"She wouldn't listen," I muttered, running a hand through my hair. "She's still so angry."

My mother raised an eyebrow. "And you're surprised?"

I shot her a look but did not respond. What could I say? That I thought six years would be enough time for her to forgive me? That I thought I could just show up and things would fall back into place?

“Dominic,” my mother said, her voice was softer now as she stepped closer. “You can’t expect her to just forget everything that happened. You hurt her, deeply.”

“I know,” I said, my voice tight. “You don’t think I know that?”

She sighed, reaching out to place a hand on my arm. “Knowing is not enough. You have to show her you have changed. That you are willing to fight for her.”

I laughed bitterly. “And what if she doesn’t want me to fight for her? What if she’s done with me for good?”

My mother’s gaze hardened. “If you really believe that, then you don’t deserve her.”

Her words hit me like a slap. I looked away, my jaw clenched as I tried to process her words, knowing that they were true.

“She’s here, Dominic,” my mother continued. “She showed up. That means something, whether she admits it or not. But if you want any chance of making things right, you need to prove to her that you are not the same man who let her walk away.”

I swallowed hard. “Do you think she will ever forgive me?” I asked quietly, hating how vulnerable the question made me feel.

“That depends on you,” my mother said simply. “But if you want her back, you’re going to have to work for it. No shortcuts, no excuses.”

I nodded, though the weight of her words settled heavily on my shoulders.

“What should I do?” I asked, almost desperate for guidance.

She smiled faintly, patting my arm. “Start by being honest. With her and with yourself.”

I stared at her, unsure of what she meant. “I was honest. I told her how I felt—”

“No,” she interrupted firmly. “You told her you wanted answers. That is not the same as telling her how you feel.”

I opened my mouth to argue but stopped. She was right. I had been so focused on demanding explanations, on trying to understand why she left, that I had not taken a moment to acknowledge what I had put her through, or how I felt about her now.

“I don’t know if she will even give me the chance,” I admitted.

“That’s up to her,” my mother said. “But if you are serious about this, you won’t give up just because she is pushing you away.”

I agreed with her. “But I need your help,” I said after a moment, looking at her.

Her eyebrows lifted in surprise. “My help?”

“You are the only one who knows her,” I said. “Really knows her. I need to know how to reach her, how to show her that I have changed.”

My mother studied me for a long moment, as if weighing my sincerity. Finally, she nodded.

“Alright,” she said. “But do not expect this to be easy. Samantha’s strong, and she has been through more than you realize. If you want to win her back, you are going to have to earn her trust all over again.”

“I will do whatever it takes,” I said firmly.

She smiled faintly, though there was a hint of sadness in her eyes. “I hope you mean that, Dominic. Because if you don’t, you will only hurt her more, and if you do it again, this time, she will never come back.”

Later that day, I called Liam to my office after we found more evidence of the rogue attack where Samantha and Killian were ambushed.

“Come in,” I said when I heard the knock. Liam entered with a stack of reports under his arm.

“Updates from the patrols,” Liam said, setting the reports on my desk. “We’ve increased border surveillance, but the patterns are irregular. Whoever these rogues are, they are not moving like typical rogues.”

I picked up one of the reports and skimmed through it. “And the tracker we sent to follow the trail from the last attack? Did they find anything useful?”

Liam hesitated. “Some traces, but nothing concrete. What’s strange is the level of coordination. Rogues don’t usually organize like this unless someone’s pulling the strings.”

I leaned back in my chair, my jaw tightening. “Someone with resources. And a grudge.”

Liam nodded. “Exactly. We have also cross checked the symbols carved into the trees near the ambush site. They match markings seen in rogue attacks further north, close to Kane’s territory.”

The mention of Kane made my expression darken. “You think Kane’s involved?”

“We do not know yet. It could just as easily be someone trying to stir trouble between us and Kane’s pack.”

I frowned, as I thought that the timing of the Summit was suspicious. If this was a setup, we couldn’t walk into it blind.

Then Liam cleared his throat as he delivered another news, “And about the official meeting regarding this matter, it’s most likely that Samantha would attend on Killian’s behalf since he’s gone out of the country for a while.”

I bit the inside of my cheek in anticipation of seeing Samantha again, and this time, Killian would be out of the picture.

Chapter 34
Samantha's POV

"Mom, why do you smell like him?" I froze mid-step at Devon's innocent question.

The twins stood in the doorway of the living room with their faces scrunched in confusion. Devon's nose twitched as if he was still trying to figure out where the scent was coming from, and Diana was clutching her stuffed wolf tightly, her small brows furrowed.

The question struck me like lightning and my breath hitched as I stared at them, my heart hammering in my chest.

"What do you mean?" I asked carefully, even though I already knew the answer.

"That uncle from the hotel," Devon said, his voice insistent. "The one who bought us food when we got lost."

Dominic.

My stomach churned. How could they recognize his scent on me? I had showered twice since the confrontation at his mother's house, scrubbing at my skin as if I could erase the memory of his touch. Yet, somehow, my children had picked up on something I could not hide. And time was indeed catching up. They were growing up so fast that I feared sooner or later, they might be able to recognize their own father already. And I was not yet prepared for that.

"That's impossible," I said, shaking my head, trying to sound dismissive. "You must be imagining things."

"No, Mom!" Diana chimed in, her little voice was stubborn, seconding on her brother. "It's him. I remember. It smells like him. Did you see him?"

My legs felt like they were going to give out. I forced myself to stay calm and crouched down so I was at their eye level. “Okay, slow down. Why do you think it’s him?”

Devon crossed his arms over his chest, his expression serious in a way that reminded me too much of Dominic. “Because we remember his smell. And you smell like him now. Did you meet with him?”

I blinked, trying to process their words, and avoided their question. They remembered his scent from the Summit? From the brief interaction they’d had with him? That should not have been possible. And yet, here they were, staring at me like I was hiding some big secret.

“Devon, Diana,” I called them gently, “you met a lot of people at the Summit. Maybe you’re just confused.”

Diana frowned. “We’re not confused, Mommy. It’s him. Why do you smell like him?”

How could I explain this without revealing everything? Without exposing truths I was not ready for them, or myself to face?

I stood up, brushing my hands on my pants as if the action could ground me. “Why don’t you two go play for a while?” I said and Devon’s eyes narrowed. “You’re not answering,” he replied, looking at me suspiciously.

The twins were beginning to ask questions, and soon, they might begin asking more about their father, I knew that when the time came, I might not be able to lie to them anymore. I just hope that when that time comes, they will understand why I hid the truth from them.

Before I could respond, Diana tugged on my sleeve, her voice softer now. “Is he... important that you met with him?”

Her innocent question sent a pang through me. I could not lie to them — not outright. But the truth was too dangerous, too complicated.

“Go play,” I repeated, more firmly this time. “We’ll talk later.”

They exchanged a look, clearly unsatisfied with my answer, but thankfully, they did not push further. As they padded off toward their room, I sank onto the couch with my head in my hands.

How had things spiraled out of control so quickly?

The memory of Dominic’s hand gripping my arm flashed in my mind, unbidden. The intensity in his eyes, and the raw emotion in his voice, had shaken something loose inside me. I had spent years building walls, convincing myself that I was over him, that I had moved on. But his presence was like a storm, tearing through every defense I had so carefully constructed.

And now, the twins had sensed it. They had felt the connection I was desperately trying to ignore.

So why couldn’t I shake this gnawing sense of uncertainty?

Later that evening, as the twins played quietly in their room I found myself standing in front of my bedroom mirror, staring at my reflection.

I thought back to the way Devon and Diana had described him after the Summit. How kind he had been, how he had bought them food and helped them return to Killian. I hadn’t thought much of it at the time, chalking it up to a rare moment of compassion from a stranger.

Yet why did my children remember his scent so vividly?

The sound of my phone buzzing on the nightstand snapped me out of my spiraling thoughts. I hesitated before picking it up, the screen flashing Alpha Lucas. Killian’s father rarely called me directly, and the timing immediately set me on edge.

“Alpha Lucas,” I greeted.

“Samantha,” his gruff voice replied. “I need a favor. Killian’s out of town, and something’s come up that requires immediate attention.”

I frowned in curiosity. “What is it?” I asked. As the right-hand woman of Killian, I would have to stand on his behalf in some meetings where his Beta and his father could not be in.

“There’s a meeting tomorrow morning,” he said. “It’s related to the ongoing issues we’ve been managing with the Summit and the other packs. I was scheduled to attend in Killian’s absence, but I’ve been called to deal with an urgent matter elsewhere.”

My stomach tightened at the thought that suddenly occurred to me. If this was related to the events in the Summit, then Dominic would be there. As much as possible I would not want to see him again. “And you want me to go?”

“You’re his third in command and trusted to represent this pack when needed. The Alphas won’t wait, and your presence will signal our strength, even in Killian’s absence.”

I opened my mouth to protest, to tell him I was not prepared for this, but Lucas cut me off.

“Samantha,” he said firmly, “this is not a request. It’s a necessity. You’ve proven yourself capable of handling pressure before, and I trust you can handle this. Killian does too.”

“Yes, Alpha,” I said finally, forcing the words out.

“Good,” Lucas replied. “I’ll have the details sent to you tonight. This is also related to the rogue attack that happened to you two, so you have to be there.”

“Got it,” I replied and the call ended abruptly, leaving me staring at the phone in my hand as I sighed.

The thought of walking into that meeting, especially with Dominic likely in attendance was already creating a panic in my chest. Yet, there was no way out of it. Lucas was right, this was my responsibility now.

The next morning, as I prepared to leave for the meeting, Diana tugged at my sleeve.

“Mom,” she said. “If you see him again, can you ask him if he remembers us?”

I stared at her, my heart breaking a little at the hope in her eyes.

“I’ll see what I can do,” I replied, ruffling her hair.

Chapter 35
Samantha’s POV

"Oh! I’m so sorry!" said someone slamming into me. I stumbled back, barely managing to steady myself as a stack of papers scattered between us.

“It’s fine,” I said quickly as the girl, wide-eyed and clearly flustered, knelt to gather the papers she had dropped, apologizing profusely. I smoothed my hands down the front of my blazer and I gave her a small smile before I walked to the room where the conference hall was.

The massive oval table stretched across the center and around it sat Alphas and Betas from various packs having conversations. I was the only woman in the room and I saw the indifferent glances of the other men to my presence as if I did not have the right to be there. I could feel their judgments even without hearing them. Why her? Why would the Moonstone Pack send a woman?

I ignored them and straightened my shoulders as I walked to an empty chair near the edge of the table. I refused to let them see my nerves, though the raw power of these Alphas exuding from their mere auras in the room was nearly suffocating.

As I settled into my seat, the doors opened again, and all eyes turned to the person who entered, except me.

I did not need to look to know who it was.

Dominic.

I felt his presence like a crackle of electricity and the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end. My fingers curled into fists on my lap and my pulse quickened when I felt his gaze on mine, but I ignored it.

I tried to keep my face neutral and fixed my eyes on the papers in front of me, but I could not ignore the way my body reacted to him. The familiar pull, the one I hated, tugging at my chest, threatening to unravel me.

His footsteps echoed as he entered, the room almost seeming to fall quieter, and I silently told myself not to look at him. I could not bear to look at him now, not yet, not when I just saw him recently ask me to return to him, and most certainly not when the twins' questions were still swirling in my head. I did not know if I could hold onto my lies any longer, and I was not sure what I should do at this point. I could not just keep on running away, and the twins already had a life here, I could not take them overseas to start a new life.

The meeting began, and I focused on the discussion on trade agreements and rogue activity, particularly the attack that happened me and Killian. When it was finally my turn to speak, I stood, smoothing my hands down my thighs as I prepared to address the room.

But before I could even finish my first sentence, a deep, mocking laugh cut through my words.

"You've got to be kidding me," said Alpha Vance with his loud and grating voice. I turned to face him, frowning at how disrespectful he was, and yet some of the Alphas also smirked as if agreeing with Vance.

“The Moonstone Pack sends a little girl to do this work? What a joke,” he said, his voice dripping with condescension. “They must be underestimating us; they are not taking this seriously to send a girl.”

I froze for half a second with the heat of humiliation climbing up my neck. The room was quiet and every eye trained on me.

“I’d advise you to hold your tongue, Alpha Vance. Moonstone Pack’s interests are as valid as any represented here, regardless of who delivers them.”

But he just laughed louder, leaning back even further in his chair. “Spoken like someone who doesn’t belong here. I don’t care what Killian thinks of you. This is a place for leaders, not... whatever it is you think you are.”

The anger in my chest flared, but before I could respond, Dominic’s voice cut through the room like a blade, all eyes snapping at him in silence.

“That’s enough,” Dominic commanded.

Alpha Vance snorted, his smirk widening as he turned toward Dominic. “Oh, what’s this now? The great Alpha Dominic has something to say?” He leaned forward mockingly, resting his elbows on the table. “Since when do you defend anyone, Dominic? Or is there something special about this one?”

I stiffened at the rising tension as all eyes shifted towards them.

Dominic did not hesitate. He stood, his hands braced on the table as he glared at Vance with a cold intensity. “You will watch your mouth, Vance,” he warned.

“Oh, come on,” Vance scoffed, waving a hand dismissively. “We all know she’s out of her depth. What kind of Alpha sends a woman to speak for him? She is not even the Luna, just a right hand, even lower than a Beta. She does not belong here.”

“Say one more word,” Dominic growled. “Go ahead. Insult her again, and we’ll see how far you get before I make you regret it.”

The room fell deadly silent.

Alpha Vance’s gaze narrowed, but the smirk remained. “Hah, protective, are we? Didn’t realize you’d taken a personal interest, Dominic. Or is there something we should know? Maybe she’s not here for Killian after all.” His eyes flicked to me, his tone dripping with dirty insinuation.

I clenched my fists, heat rising to my face as humiliation burned through me.

Dominic did not let his comment pass. “You arrogant piece of shit,” he hissed with a restrained fury in it enough to make even the more experienced Alphas in the room shift uneasily in their seats.

“What? Did I touch a nerve?” Alpha Vance taunted, leaning back with a smirk. “What’s the matter, Dominic? You’ve never cared about anyone but yourself. Why the sudden interest in her?”

“I’m warning you, Vance. If you have a problem with me, say it to my face. But leave her out of it.”

“Oh, I have no problem with you,” Vance said, standing now and squaring his shoulders. He was taller than Dominic by an inch, but the way Dominic glared at him made it clear he was not intimidated. “I have a problem with weak links sitting at this table and pretending they belong here. If Killian wants to make a mockery of these meetings, that’s on him. But do not expect the rest of us to sit here and pretend this is not a joke.”

Dominic’s hand slammed onto the table as he retorted. “You call her weak again, and I’ll break your damn jaw.”

Vance sneered, stepping closer to Dominic. “You can try, Dominic. I would love to see you defend someone for once in your life instead of screwing everything up like you always do.”

And that was it.

Dominic moved so fast I barely saw it coming. One moment he was standing at the table, the next he had Vance by the collar, yanking him forward and slamming him onto the surface with enough force to rattle the glasses and papers.

The room erupted in chaos as chairs scraped back and Alphas shouted, some moving to intervene while others stayed rooted, shocked by the sudden escalation.

“You don’t get to talk about her like that,” Dominic snarled, his fist gripping Vance’s shirt tightly. “Not here. Not anywhere. Do you hear me?”

Vance struggled beneath him, managing to shove Dominic back a step. “She doesn’t need you defending her, Dominic!” he spat, straightening. “You’re just pissed because you’ve finally realized you’ve got nothing left to—”

Dominic’s punch cut him off mid-sentence, landing squarely across his jaw with a sickening crack. Vance stumbled, clutching his face as rage contorted his expression.

“Enough!” one of the elder Alphas barked, stepping between them before Vance could retaliate. “This is a council meeting, not a damn brawl! Both of you, stand down!”

Dominic did not move, his chest heaving, his eyes locked on Vance with a feral intensity and Vance wiped the blood from his split lip, glaring at Dominic with equal fury but staying where he was.

The elder Alpha turned to Dominic. “Alpha Dominic, you’re out of line.”

Dominic calmed as he responded, but the fire in his eyes had not dimmed. “If being out of line means shutting him up, I will gladly do it again.”

The elder Alpha sighed, shaking his head, before turning to Vance. “And you. Insult another Alpha or their representative again, and I will make sure you are barred from every meeting moving forward. Is that clear?”

Vance did not respond, but the murderous glare he shot Dominic spoke volumes.

Dominic returned to his seat without another word, his jaw clenched tightly. He turned and held my gaze for a moment, sending a subtle message that we’d need to talk later on.

Chapter 36
Samantha’s POV

"Dinner? With you?"

The words tumbled out of me before I could stop them and Dominic just stood there, in front of me, calmer than I was used to, like he had carefully rehearsed this moment. I was not sure what I expected him to say after the meeting, but it wasn’t an invitation to dinner.

“I know it’s unexpected,” he replied, shoving his hands into his pockets. “But there are things we need to talk about, Samantha.”

I stared at him, feeling my irritation bubble beneath the surface. “We’ve talked enough, haven’t we?”

He exhaled through his nose, something faintly like frustration crossing his face, but he reined it in quickly. “Just one dinner. No arguments. I’ll take you back as soon as you want. I promise.”

It was not his words that swayed me, but the way he looked, like he had thought about this long and hard. Like whatever he wanted to say could not wait. And curiosity, my constant enemy, nudged at the back of my mind. “Fine,” I muttered before I could change my mind. I could always leave if it became unbearable.

The restaurant Dominic chose was just in a nearby street, but far enough from familiar faces to avoid curious stares. When I stepped inside, the muted lighting and soft hum of conversation told me he had picked it for privacy.

The host led us to a private dining room in the back. The moment the door clicked shut behind us, I tensed. It felt isolated like I could not escape if I wanted to.

Dominic moved ahead, pulling out a chair for me. “Go on.”

I stared at him for a beat longer than I needed to, my thoughts a mess. “This place is... quiet.”

“That’s why I picked it,” he replied evenly.

I sat down, watching him round the table to his own seat. The space between us was not much, but it was still enough to feel pressured. I frowned at the arrangement but nevertheless, I brushed it off.

The server appeared moments later with the menus, his professional smile lingering a little too long on Dominic. I noticed but did not comment.

“This feels excessive for one dinner,” I muttered.

Dominic shrugged, his focus on me instead of the food. “I wanted somewhere quiet. Somewhere we could actually talk.”

Something about the way he said it made my stomach twist and I could already feel the questions coming, but I forced myself to act indifferent, picking up the menu and read.

The food came unbelievably quick and was plated too perfectly for my liking, and the moment the servers left the room, the silence returned. I could feel his eyes on me as I picked at my plate, yet my appetite nowhere to be found.

“Why did you agree to this?” Dominic asked suddenly, breaking the silence.

I did not look up as I replied. “You asked.”

“Simple as that?”

“No, Dominic, nothing is simple with you.” I set my fork down, meeting his gaze. “So why don’t you stop dancing around whatever this is and get to the point?”

He did not look away, and for a second, I thought I had struck a nerve. Instead, he leaned back in his chair, studying me the way he always used to, like he was trying to solve a puzzle I refused to let him see.

“How have you been?” he asked, genuinely.

The question startled me. It was not the interrogation I expected, but the sincerity of it still caught me off guard.

“Fine,” I replied curtly.

“That’s it?”

“What else do you want me to say?”

He shook his head faintly. “I don’t know. I am trying to understand what happened to you, Samantha.”

The words lingered between us, soft yet accusing.

“I don’t owe you my story,” I answered sharply, taking a sip of the wine.

“I’m not asking for the parts you’re not ready to give.” He paused. “But I can see how much you’ve changed. I need to know why.”

His words pulled at something deep inside me, a bitterness I had not tasted in years. “You don’t get to ask that. Not after—”

“I know.”

His quiet admission made me freeze. He was not like this before. He was stubborn, insistent, and would not easily admit his mistakes. Yet right now, as if he had changed, and it left me momentarily speechless.

“I know,” he repeated, eyes locked on mine. “I made mistakes, Samantha. And I am not asking you to forgive them. I just need to know... what I missed.”

I forced out a laugh, though it did not feel like one. “You missed everything, Dominic. That’s the point.”

He leaned forward, resting his forearms on the table. “Then tell me.”

I stared at him, pulse quickening. Tell him? What, exactly? That I left because he had pushed me to the edge? That I had spent years trying to erase him from my life, only to have my past come crashing back into it? That there were two children with his blood?

My chest felt tight as if the air in the room became suffocating.

“You don’t want the truth,” I muttered finally. “Not really.”

Dominic’s gaze did not waver, and for a moment, I thought he might push again. But instead, he said something that made me go still.

“I am trying, Samantha. That has to count for something.”

The sincerity in his voice was almost enough to make me believe him. Almost.

Then the sound of his phone vibrating on the table broke the moment, jarring us both. Dominic glanced at the screen briefly before silencing it, his jaw tightening.

“Important?” I asked.

“It can wait.”

I did not ask why. I wasn't sure I wanted to know.

We sat there for a few minutes longer with the silence stretching and twisting between us. I hated how uneasy it made me. I hated that I did not know what to do with this Dominic, the one who was not shouting orders, wasn't dismissing me like I was nothing.

"Why now?" I asked suddenly, surprising even myself.

Dominic's brow furrowed. "What do you mean?"

"Why are you trying now? After everything that's happened?"

He did not answer right away, and for a moment, I thought he would not at all. "Because I can't lose you again."

The honesty in his words hit me like a punch to the gut. I opened my mouth to respond, maybe to tell him he had lost me, that it was too late, but the sound of my phone buzzing in my bag stopped me cold.

I frowned, reaching for it automatically. Annie's name lit up the screen.

And I knew Annie never called unless it was important.

"Excuse me," I muttered, standing and stepping away from the table. "Annie?"

"Samantha." Annie's voice was tight, trembling. "The twins—"

Chapter 37
Samantha's POV

My entire body froze. "What about the twins?"

Her words tumbled out in a frantic rush, each one was piercing like a cold knife to my chest. "Samantha, it's the twins. Something's happened."

My stomach dropped, the blood draining from my face. I gripped the phone tighter, and my knuckles went white.

“What happened?” I demanded.

“I... I don’t know. They are gone. You need to come now.”

Then out of nowhere, the line clicked dead.

My hands were trembling as I turned slowly, panic bubbling up so fast I thought I might choke on it. I hurriedly reached my bag and looked for my car keys but they seemed to be unrecoverable. Dominic was watching me from across the table with concern etched into every line of his face, but I did not have time now. The twins, they were gone.

“What is it?” he asked.

I could not speak. The only words running through my head were Annie’s frantic, terrified voice, delivering the news.

It can’t be.

“Samantha,” Dominic said again, standing now, trying to get my attention but I groaned as I almost poured everything out of my bag just to find the key while muttering “Where’s the key, where is it!”.

My vision blurred with the tears pooling in my eyes and the frustration and worry mixing together.

And all I could think was — no. Not them.

Not my kids.

“Samantha. Talk to me. What’s wrong?”

My knees felt weak, but I gripped the edge of the table to steady myself as I tried to calm down, reasoning to myself that I would not be able to get

anywhere if I was panicking. Dominic was already rounding the table, closing the distance between us with quick strides.

“I need to go,” I said, the words tumbling out in a shaky breath. My fingers fumbled as I decided to call a taxi instead, not caring where the car key was now.

“What happened?” Dominic asked again, this time firmer, and insistent.

“It’s the twins,” I choked out. “Annie, she said something happened to them. They’re gone. I need to go.”

Dominic froze, his entire demeanor shifting. His brow furrowed, and for a second, I saw something flash across his face — shock, panic — before it disappeared behind his usual mask of control.

“Where were they?”

“With Annie,” I replied, my voice breaking. I was not even sure how I was still standing. My body felt disconnected from my mind, as if I were on autopilot. “At Killian’s pack.”

Dominic grabbed his jacket off the back of the chair as he rushed, “We’re leaving now.”

I barely registered his words. Yet my legs were already moving, my instincts carrying me toward the door as my thoughts spiraled.

The twins...

No. No, they were safe. They had to be safe.

The images in my head made me want to scream, Devon’s fierce little scowl as he tried to act like the older brother he was, Diana’s bright eyes sparkling with mischief. I could not lose them. I wouldn’t lose them.

Dominic's hand landed on the small of my back, guiding me out of the restaurant, and I flinched at the contact. He did not let go, but his touch was aiding and comforting.

"Focus, Samantha," he uttered quietly, "We'll get to them."

The drive was silent, but the silence wasn't peaceful. It was suffocating. My eyes burned from not blinking as my focus locked on the road ahead of us as Dominic gripped the steering wheel tightly, and I noticed his jaw clenched tight, as if preventing something in him from pouring out.

"Do you know anything else?" he asked after a long moment, his voice even clipped.

I shook my head, staring blankly out the window. "Annie didn't say. She just sounded... terrified. She was supposed to get them from school earlier, but she said, they're gone. I don't know how. They should have been safe."

Dominic's hands tightened around the wheel, his knuckles paling as he spoke. "Annie... she's a human, right? A human nanny."

My stomach twisted at the unspoken accusation in his voice.

"The twins are yours, Samantha," he continued, his tone carefully controlled but sharp enough to cut through. "They are werewolves, our kind. And yet, you handed their care and safety to a human girl." He sounded calm, but I knew Dominic, there was a raging storm brewing behind that calmness of his voice.

I knew it was my fault, I was careless, and he was right. I should have done better for the safety and care of my kids. I bit my lower lip, wiping the tears that stubbornly rolled down my cheeks. "Annie's been with them for years," I said softly, almost defensively, though I could not look at him. "She loves them like her own."

"That's not the point," Dominic shot back. "Human or not, she is not equipped to protect them if something — anything — happens. Did you even think about that?"

His words stung because I had thought about it. But Annie had been the only one I trusted. She had been there when no one else was. When I had been broken, alone. When I did not even trust myself.

“You don’t know her,” I snapped quietly, my voice trembling. “You don’t know what she’s done for them — for me.”

“And you don’t know what I know,” Dominic replied, his voice sharper now. “I looked into her.”

My head jerked up at that, my eyes narrowing on him. “What?”

He did not look at me, his gaze locked on the road ahead. “When I started... piecing things together about you,” he said, carefully choosing his words, “I learned a few things. About you. About the twins. About her.”

My pulse quickened, and I could not stop the flash of anger that rose in my chest. “You investigated me?”

“I needed answers,” he said simply. “You vanished. For years. And when I found out about the twins—” He stopped abruptly, as though realizing he had said too much.

“When you found out?” I echoed bitterly, glaring at him now. “How long have you been prying into my life?”

Dominic’s hands gripped the wheel tighter, his voice lowering. “Does it matter now? I didn’t know about them, Samantha. I didn’t know they existed until I started looking. And even then, everything I found did not make sense. Why would a Luna leave her pack, abandon her mate, and raise her kids alone with a human nanny?”

His words felt like a slap, and I recoiled slightly, my throat tightening. “Because I had to,” I muttered and my voice cracked. “You wouldn’t understand.”

“Then help me understand,” he shot back, he was no longer calm. “Because right now, all I know is that your children are missing, and their safety was trusted to someone who can’t protect them.”

I turned away, staring back out the window as the ache in my chest deepened. “I did what I thought was best,” I whispered. “Annie was the only one I could trust.”

Dominic sighed heavily and strained. For a few moments, the ride was quiet except for the hum of the engine and the pounding of my own heartbeat.

But then, his voice softened.

“I’m not saying she doesn’t care about them,” he said quietly. “But Samantha... they are your kids. You should have told me. I could have protected them.”

I scoffed under my breath, shaking my head. “You? Protected them?” I turned to him, my eyes burning. “You couldn’t even protect me.”

His jaw tightened, a flicker of something, regret, maybe — passing across his face. “That’s not fair.”

“Isn’t it?” I shot back. “You weren’t there when I needed you.”

For a long moment, Dominic did not say anything.

“I’m here now,” he remarked, soft and quiet.

And I wanted to believe him, I wanted to believe that he could have protected them if I did not leave, that he could somehow fix all of this, but I could not shake the years of hurt, the years of doing everything alone.

I wiped at my cheeks again, trying to force the tears to stop knowing that crying would not help. Worrying would not help.

Dominic glanced at me briefly, his expression softening. “We’ll find them, Samantha,” he reassured “You’ll see them soon.”

Something about the way he said it made me pause, and for a moment, he almost looked... worried. But not for himself.

For me.

I turned away quickly, my throat tight as I muttered, “Drive faster.”

Dominic pressed his foot down on the gas, and the car surged forward, but my thoughts were racing even faster.

What if something had already happened to them?

I clenched my fists in my lap, forcing myself to breathe. They were okay. They had to be okay.

But no matter how hard I tried to convince myself, the fear refused to let go.

The moment we pulled up to the driveway, I was out of the car before Dominic could even cut the engine. Gravel crunched under my boots as I sprinted toward the front door.

“Samantha!” Dominic’s voice called behind me, but I did not stop.

The door swung open before I could reach it, and Annie appeared, her face pale, her hair in disarray. Her wide eyes locked onto mine, and I felt my heart stop.

“Where are they?” I demanded.

Chapter 38
Samantha’s POV

“They’re gone. I don’t know how—” Annie’s voice cracked, but I was not listening anymore.

The words echoed in my head, pounding like a drum. Gone. My legs felt numb, but I pushed past her into the house. My eyes darted around frantically, looking for any sign of Devon or Diana. Their laughter, their little shoes in the hallway, anything. But there was none.

“Where are they?” I shouted, spinning to face Annie. She flinched, her hands wringing together as she tried to speak.

“I... I don’t know, Samantha. I was... I left for just a second. I swear. They were here. I don’t—”

Dominic spoke, cutting through her panicked rambling. “Where were you when they disappeared?”

I knew he was angry, I could hear it in his voice, but it was buried under his calm face. I could not say the same for myself. My chest heaved as I fought to keep breathing through the panic and anger.

“The backyard,” Annie stammered. “They were playing. I came inside to grab their snacks, and when I went back out—” Her voice broke. “They were just... gone.”

I staggered back, my knees threatening to give out. Dominic caught my arm, steadying me. I shrugged him off, blinking hard against the tears that were already spilling over.

“They couldn’t have just vanished!” I yelled, my voice shaking. “Someone took them.”

Dominic’s gaze darkened, his jaw clenching. “Annie, has anyone been near the house today? Anyone suspicious?”

She shook her head quickly. “No. No one. I swear!”

Dominic exhaled harshly, dragging a hand through his hair before turning to me. “We need to split up. I’ll search the area with the patrols. You—”

“I’m coming with you,” I cut him off, leaving no room for argument.

He looked like he wanted to argue, but he did not. Instead, he nodded, already pulling his phone from his pocket. “I’ll call Killian. His men can help search the perimeter. We will find them, Samantha.”

I swallowed hard, barely hearing him. My head was spinning with every worst-case scenario I could imagine. What if they were hurt? What if—

No. I couldn’t let myself think like that.

“Let’s go,” I said, forcing my legs to move.

We started with the roads around Killian’s pack. Dominic was silent beside me as he scanned the trees and fields that stretched along the road. Every shadow, every movement had me flinching, hoping that it was my twins.

“They’re smart kids,” Dominic said suddenly, as if reading my thoughts. “Devon wouldn’t let anything happen to Diana.”

His words were meant to be reassuring, but they only made the lump in my throat grow tighter. “They’re just children,” I whispered. “They shouldn’t have to protect each other.”

Dominic did not reply.

We drove slowly, stopping every few minutes to search the sides of the road. Dominic called out their names into the quiet woods. I followed behind him, my hands trembling as I pushed through bushes and peered behind boulders and large trees, desperate for any sign of them.

Nothing.

“They’re not here,” I muttered, wiping the sweat from my forehead and my voice broke as the fear crept back in. “What if we are looking in the wrong place?”

Dominic turned to me. “We’re not giving up. Keep moving.”

I nodded weakly, though the weight in my chest made it hard to breathe.

We searched for what felt like hours, driving through every inch of the territory surrounding Killian's pack. As the minutes stretched into hours, my desperation grew deeper, and my anxiety rose. My thoughts spiraled out of control; had they wandered off? Were they scared? Were they even still here?

I could not stop the tears from slipping down my cheeks. I turned away from Dominic, trying to hide them, but I knew he noticed. He did not say anything, though, and for that I was grateful.

We searched through the night. The forest was dark and silent, and the only sounds were coming from our footsteps as we pushed through the underbrush. Dominic called for the twins every few minutes, but the only reply we were getting was an echo of his own voice or the crickets in the dark. I shouted their names too, despite my throat burning, but there was no answer.

At some point, Dominic stopped me. "Samantha, we're running in circles. We need a new plan."

I shook my head furiously. "No! We can't stop!"

"I'm not saying we stop," he said firmly. "But searching blindly is not helping."

I opened my mouth to argue, but I knew he was right. My legs were aching, and my body was heavy with exhaustion, but the thought of stopping, of giving up, made my stomach turn.

Dominic's hand settled on my arm. "Listen to me. We'll go back to my pack. I'll have my men search every inch of the territory down to every road connecting us to Killian's lands. We will cover more ground that way."

I hesitated. "What if they're not anywhere?"

"They might be," he reassured. "Trust me, Samantha."

I stared at him for a moment, until I finally nodded. “Okay.”

The drive to Dominic’s pack felt like the longest of my life. I sat rigid in the passenger seat, my hands twisting in my lap as I stared out the window. The darkness outside seemed endless, and I could not help but imagine my children out there, alone and scared.

Dominic glanced at me occasionally, but he did not say anything. I could see the tension in his face, the way his jaw was set, and his grip tight on the wheel. He was worried too, even if he would not admit it.

When we finally pulled into the Silver Crescent Pack’s territory, Dominic did not even bother to park the car properly. He threw it into park and jumped out, already barking orders to his men.

“Search the grounds. Every building, every road, every inch of the territory. I want eyes everywhere,” he commanded. “The twins are missing, and we need to find them.”

The warriors scattered, moving quickly to follow his orders. Dominic turned back to me and said, “We’ll find them.”

I nodded, though I could not bring myself to speak.

Chapter 39
Dominic’s POV

“Alpha, they are at Olivia’s house.”

The words came from one of my men over the phone and my grip tightened as he relayed what they had just confirmed.

“We saw two kids being brought into Olivia’s place earlier tonight,” he said. “Didn’t think much of it until we got a closer look just now. It’s them, Alpha. It’s the twins you were looking for.”

I was relieved to hear that the twins were alive and unharmed, but they were in Olivia's house. A place they should never have been. And my pack territory was miles away from Killian's, it would have been impossible for them to just wander around and end up here in a few hours.

She must have taken them.

And that thought made me more furious. Olivia had no right to touch the kids, worse, she had no fucking right to take them from their home. That's kidnapping!

"I'm on my way," I replied, ending the call without waiting for a response.

I turned to Samantha, who was pacing near the car, and her hands clenched into fists, trying to calm them from trembling. The desperation in her eyes tore at me, but I knew what I was about to tell her would both make her feel relieved and furious. Olivia had touched something she should not have.

"Samantha," I called, stepping closer to her. I wanted to wrap my arms around her, comfort her, pull her into an embrace, and cover her with my warmth. But... Samantha wouldn't allow that.

She stopped, looking at me with wide, frantic eyes, the worry and stress were evident in them. "Did you find them?" she asked, with clear desperation in her voice.

I nodded. "They're at Olivia's."

Her entire body went rigid, her eyes narrowing as disbelief flashed across her face. "What did you just say?"

"The twins are at Olivia's house," I repeated as I moved closer to her and attempted to calm her down a little, not wanting a war to break out. For a moment, she just stared at me, as if trying to process what I had said. Then, her rage erupted, making me hesitate to get nearer. I already learned my lesson years ago, and that is not to push buttons with an angry she-wolf, or else you would get caught up in her flames.

“What the hell is she doing with my children?” she shouted, her voice trembling not with fear and worry anymore but with fury. “Why are they there, Dominic? Why would she take them?”

“I don’t know,” I admitted, though my own anger was simmering beneath the surface. “But we are going there now.”

“That conniving, manipulative bitch!” Samantha’s words dissolved into a frustrated scream as she spun around, slamming her hands against the side of the car. “I swear, if she’s hurt them, I will kill her instantly.”

“She won’t hurt them,” I interrupted, though the knot in my stomach betrayed my own uncertainty. “But we need to go now. Get in the car.”

Samantha glared at me with her chest heaving with ragged breaths. “You knew she was trouble,” she spat, accusingly. “You knew, and you let her stay in your life!” I gripped the steering wheel tighter, knowing that she was right, and I had been regretting every time I had spent with Olivia, which made her act on her own as if she had the right and power to do so. I should have tightened the leash on her a long time ago.

And I kept that in mind. I would not want her running around again, causing trouble, especially when it came to Samantha and her kids.

I opened the car door for her, and replied, “We will deal with Olivia after we get the twins. Right now, they’re all that matters.”

Her lips pressed into a thin line, and I thought she might argue. But then she stepped out quietly, probably reserving that pent up fury to unleash at Olivia when facing her.

“Samantha, wait!” I called after her, but she was already pounding on the door.

“Olivia!” she screamed. “Open the damn door! I know you’re in there!”

I hurried after her, placing a hand on her shoulder to steady her, but she shrugged me off. The door creaked open, revealing Olivia, her usual smug composure faltering slightly at the sight of Samantha's wrath, but still, she smiled, a smug one, seeing Samantha's anger and distressed state. She definitely knew that what she did was wrong, and still did it anyway to provoke Samantha. She knew how important the kids were, she made a mistake messing with a mother who loved her children. No she-wolf would just sit idly after learning her pups went missing.

What was Olivia thinking?!

"Samantha," Olivia mused, dripping with fake sweetness. "What a surprise. I didn't expect—"

And Olivia's words were cut off when Samantha's clenched fist collided with Olivia's jaw, wiping off the smugness in her face, replaced with a surprised reaction. She held her cheek and looked at me with wide eyes, and a pleading look, asking for help. But I did not cave. I frowned at her, showing that I was as pissed as Samantha because I also cared for those twins.

"Cut the crap!" Samantha snapped, stepping forward. "Where are my children?"

Olivia's eyes settled back on Samantha after realizing that I was not there to help her. "They're safe," she retorted strongly.

"Safe?" Samantha repeated, her voice rising. "You kidnapped them! What the hell were you thinking?"

"I didn't kidnap them," Olivia replied, crossing her arms. "I was protecting them."

Samantha let out a bitter laugh. "Protecting them?" she echoed, sarcastically. "You had no right! No right to take them from me!"

"I had every right," Olivia snapped. "Do you even realize what kind of danger they're in? I was doing what you couldn't, keeping them safe."

“You’re insane,” Samantha hissed. “You took them out from my house where they were perfectly safe. You kidnapped them!”

“Enough,” I cut in, stepping between them. I turned to Olivia, containing my anger. But it did not mean forgiving or forgetting what she had done, her time will come. For now, we had to make sure the twins were okay. “Where are they?”

Olivia hesitated, her gaze flickering between us. “They are inside,” she finally admitted, stepping aside.

Samantha did not wait for further explanation as she pushed past Olivia, rushing into the house. I followed close behind, making our way to the living room.

The twins were sitting on the couch, looking confused but unharmed. The moment Samantha saw them, she let out a choked sob, falling to her knees and pulling them into a fierce hug.

“Mommy!” Diana cried, clinging to her.

Devon, quieter but no less relieved, buried his face in her shoulder.

“They’re okay,” I said softly, more to myself than anyone else, as relief washed over me.

But the moment was short-lived. Samantha turned back to Olivia, still holding the twins protectively. Her eyes were filled with a rage that burned brighter than before.

“I was looking out for them,” Olivia said defensively, though her tone wavered under Samantha’s glare.

“If you ever come near my children again,” Samantha threatened, “I swear, I will make you regret it.”

Olivia opened her mouth to respond, but the warning in Samantha's eyes made her think better of it.

Samantha turned away, guiding the twins toward the door. I turned back to Olivia, "We're not done here yet. You crossed a line taking the twins," I warned her before I followed Samantha, casting one last glare at Olivia before stepping outside.

Chapter 40
Samantha's POV

When I heard Dominic's news about my kids, for a second, I thought I had misheard him. Surely, he had not just said Olivia's house. Not that Olivia, the conniving snake who had slithered her way into every aspect of Dominic's life and made it her mission to meddle in mine. But his grim expression left no room for doubt.

"What did you just say?" My voice was shaking, though not with fear.

"The twins are at Olivia's house," he repeated.

Something snapped inside me. The heat of my fury surged through my veins, and my hands clenched into fists as my mind raced. Olivia? Olivia had my children? What possible reason could she have for taking them, what possible excuse?

"What the hell is she doing with my children?" I shouted. "Why are they there, Dominic? Why would she take them?"

"I don't know," Dominic said, but I did not miss the tension in his jaw or the way his hands curled into fists at his sides. "But we're going there now."

"That conniving, manipulative bitch!" I screamed, slamming my hands against the car. "I swear, if she's hurt them, I will kill her instantly."

"She won't hurt them," he interrupted, as if he was so sure of it. "But we need to go now. Get in the car."

I got more annoyed at how nonchalant he was, that it was his mistress who took my children. And I hated even more that I wanted to blame him, for having relationship with Olivia, because now, she had dared to touch my kids.

But how did she know? How the hell did she find our house and learn about the twins?

“We will deal with Olivia after we get the twins. Right now, they’re all that matters,” Dominic said and I only glanced at him for a second, my mind swirling with the possibilities. Did he tell her about them? Or had she been snooping in his office and found the initial investigation Dominic had conducted about the twins?

I should have tightened the security around the kids, but I never thought she would come after them when in the first place I have not been meddling with her life. I even left Dominic for her own, and yet she had the audacity to come for my twins.

Every second felt like an eternity as we drove to Olivia’s house. My mind was spinning with terrible possibilities, every worst-case scenario flashing before my eyes. What if she had hurt them? What if—

I clenched my fists, trying to steady my breathing. No. I would not let myself spiral. They were fine. They had to be fine.

When we arrived, I did not wait for Dominic to say anything. I was out of the car and at Olivia’s door in an instant, pounding on it with all the strength I had.

“Olivia!” I shouted, trembling with rage as I pounded at the door. “Open this damn door! I know you’re in there!”

Dominic was behind me, his hand hovering near my shoulder, but I shrugged him off. This was my fight, my children. He could stand back and watch for all I cared.

The door opened, and there she stood, her perfect facade cracking for a moment before that smug smile returned to her face.

“Samantha,” Olivia said sweetly, but I could still see the fake sincerity on her face. This woman could never leave me in peace. I already ran away years ago so I could have peace, and yet, she still had to find her way back in to ruin it. “What a surprise. I didn’t expect—”

Her words were cut off as my fist collided with her jaw. The satisfying crack of my knuckles against her skin somehow soothed my frayed nerves, though it was not nearly enough to quench my fury. I wanted t do more, to claw her face, to rip her throat, and to feed her body to vultures.

“Cut the crap,” I snapped, stepping closer to her. “Where are my children?”

She stumbled back, holding her jaw as she stared at me with wide eyes. She had the audacity to glance at Dominic as if expecting him to intervene, but he stayed silent. Good. Or else I would think he was involved in this.

“They’re safe,” Olivia said finally, and she was losing some of her composure. I did not know what was running in her mind, or what she was planning. What else did she want from me? She had already once ruined my life!

“Safe?” I repeated. “You kidnapped them! What the hell were you thinking?”

“I did not kidnap them,” Olivia retorted, straightening herself as she crossed her arms. “I was protecting them.”

I let out a bitter laugh. “Protecting them? You had no right! No right to take them from me!”

“I had every right,” Olivia snapped, and my anger bubbled to the surface, I breathed exasperatedly what she was talking about. What right she was claiming when those were my kids! This is ridiculous. “Do you even realize what kind of danger they’re in? I was doing what you couldn’t, keeping

them safe," she reason still and I groaned in my chest, trying to calm down because I would not want my kids to see any bloodbath in the doorway.

I argued with her for another minute until Dominic stepped in between us, demanding Olivia where the kids were.

Olivia hesitated, her eyes darting between the two of us before she finally stepped aside, and my eyes did not miss the nervousness that flashed briefly in her eyes when she glanced at Dominic who was furious.

"They're inside," she replied, meekly at her Alpha.

I did not wait for further permission anymore as I pushed past her, and immediately I searched for them inside. And there they were, sitting on the couch, their faces lighting up the moment they saw me.

"Mommy!" Diana cried, running to me.

Devon followed, quieter but just as relieved, burying his face in my shoulder as I pulled them both into a tight hug.

But the moment of relief was short-lived. I turned back to Olivia, "Why did you take my kids? What the hell were you planning, Olivia?" I snarled.

"I was looking out for them," Olivia replied, defensively. But such an answer was unreasonable. My twins were completely safe at home, but she went to take them.

"If you ever come near my children again," I threatened her. "I will make you regret it."

Her lips parted to respond, but her father came from the west wing of their house.

"What's going on here?" his voice boomed in the large room, as if we were intruders in his house. But when he saw Dominic behind me, his stern expression became more subdued. However, the stern look on his face and the glare he pointed at me showed that I was not welcome in the place.

He was one of the high-ranking officials in the Silver Crescent Pack, and I had always known that he did not like me, even when I was still a Luna in this pack. No wonder, he had tolerated his daughter's actions, and her status as the Alpha's mistress, just to keep his position.

Chapter 41
Samantha's POV

"Your daughter kidnapped my children," I snapped at him, disregarding any respect for whoever he was in this pack. "That's what's going on."

Richard's eyes darted to Olivia, whose carefully composed mask faltered for just a second before she straightened. He ignored her and addressed Dominic instead, his tone shifting to something smoother, almost rehearsed and reverent.

"Alpha Dominic," Richard began, his tone oozing with false diplomacy, "I'm sure this is just a misunderstanding. Olivia was not trying to harm anyone. She was only doing what she thought was best for the children."

"What she thought was best?" I repeated. "She had no right to take them from me! What kind of twisted logic are you trying to sell here?"

Richard raised a hand as if to calm me, but it only stoked the fire in my chest. "Samantha, let's not forget that Olivia and I have already proven our loyalty to your children once. Do you recall the Summit? When Devon and Diana wandered off? Who found them? Who brought them back safely to you?"

I froze. The twins had been missing for hours, and I had been on the verge of losing my mind with worry. Richard and Ethan had been the ones to find them wandering near the road. But that did not justify what Olivia had done now.

"That has nothing to do with this," I hissed.

“It has everything to do with this,” Richard countered, stepping closer. “It proves Olivia cares about their safety as much as I do with kids. She has every right to be concerned when she sees their own mother is incapable of keeping them out of harm’s way.”

His words hit me like a slap, and for a moment, I was stunned. But then the anger surged back, stronger than before. “Excuse me?” I said, my voice trembling with fury. “You think I am incapable? I have raised these kids on my own for years. I have protected them, cared for them, and loved them in ways your daughter would not even begin to understand. Don’t you dare question my ability to be their mother!”

Richard did not back down. “And yet, they managed to slip away from you before, didn’t they? Wandering alone, on dangerous roads. If it were not for us, who knows what could have happened to them?”

“That doesn’t give Olivia the right to take them from me now!” I shot back.

“She did not take them,” Richard insisted, his voice calm but condescending. “She was looking out for them. She was worried about their safety, something a good mother should be able to manage on her own.”

I wanted to scream, to lash out, but I forced myself to stay composed for the twins who remained silent behind me.

“Looking out for them?” I repeated coldly. “Is that what you call it? She came into my home, without my knowledge or permission, and took my children. That is not a concern. That’s kidnapping!”

“She wasn’t acting maliciously,” Richard said, dismissing me with a wave of his hand. “She was just worried—”

“Worried?” I barked. “Don’t stand there and try to paint your daughter as some kind of hero. Olivia does not care about my kids. This was about her trying to insert herself into my life again. She’s obsessed, and I will not let her use my children as pawns in whatever twisted game she is playing!”

“Samantha,” Olivia interjected. “I was just trying to help. You are blowing this out of proportion—”

“Help?” I cut her off, turning to glare at her. “You call this helping? You took my children without my consent. You have no idea the kind of panic and fear I felt, thinking something horrible had happened to them. And now you stand here, trying to justify it?”

“I was worried about them,” Olivia insisted. “You’re always so busy, Samantha. Maybe if you actually paid attention to what they needed—”

“Don’t you dare,” I snarled. “Don’t you dare stand there and act like you care more about my children than I do. I have sacrificed everything for them — everything. What have you done, Olivia? You think you can just swoop in and play the savior? You are nothing but a self-serving, conniving snake who doesn’t know the first thing about being a parent!”

“That’s enough,” Richard said, stepping between us. “Samantha, I suggest you watch your tone. Olivia was only trying to do what you couldn’t and that is to protect your children.”

I laughed bitterly. “Protect them? From what? From me? The only person they needed protection from today was her!”

Richard opened his mouth to respond, but I raised a hand, cutting him off. “I don’t care what excuses you or your daughter come up with. What she did was wrong. She crossed a line, and if she ever comes near my children again, I swear—” I turned to Olivia, my eyes blazing with fury. “I will make you regret it.”

Olivia’s lips parted as if to respond, but the look in my eyes stopped her. She glanced at Dominic, as if she was expecting him to help her, but he remained silent.

I turned to Richard one last time as I warned, “Tell your daughter to stay out of my life. Tell her to stay away from my children. If she doesn’t, I won’t be so forgiving next time.”

With that, I held the twins' hands and marched toward the door. Dominic stayed back for a few seconds, and I thought he was going to console Olivia, but as I stepped out of the door, I heard the threat he spat on her, a punishment for her actions, and I was glad that he sided with me this time. And if I remember it correctly, this was the first time he actually believed me and took my side instead of Olivia's.

Dominic followed us out afterward but I heard Olivia's voice stopping him, I did not hear them anymore since I thought he would ignore her and proceed in the driver's seat. But I was wrong when he actually went back inside the house.

Chapter 42

Dominic's POV

I reached for the car door where Samantha sat with the twins, their small forms huddled together in the backseat. "Wait for me," I said. "I'll drive you home. Just give me a minute."

She did not respond, did not even look at me. Her silence was louder than any words she could have spoken. It was a silence I was not used to, one that had a gravity of its own. I turned, heading back toward the house, but something in her quiet stillness tugged at me.

For the first time in what felt like forever, I believed we might be able to fix this, whatever this was between us. Finding the twins together, fighting side by side against Olivia, I showed her how much I cared for her and the twins, and I just hoped she could see that I was serious with her, and in fixing our marriage. I wanted her back, and she should know that. Maybe it was not too late yet. Maybe I could prove to her that I was not the man she had run from all those years ago.

I stepped back into Olivia's house, and before I had even reached the living room, I heard the rumble of my car engine roaring to life, and my stomach dropped.

“No—” I bolted to the door just in time to see my car speeding away down the driveway, Samantha at the wheel. She must have found the key still in the ignition.

“Damn it!” I cursed under my breath, watching the taillights disappear into the night.

“Dominic.”

Olivia’s voice dragged my attention back inside. She was standing there, arms crossed. “You are just going to let her leave like that?”

“She needs space,” I muttered, though I could not shake the bitter taste of watching Samantha drive away. She was always running, from me, from us, but this time, I could not let it be the end.

“Do you?” Olivia questioned. “Because I think you have been avoiding the real question all along. Dominic... don’t you think it’s time you asked yourself who the father of those twins is?”

Her words stopped me cold. I turned to face her fully, my jaw tightening. “What are you talking about?”

She took a step closer. “You know exactly what I am talking about. Samantha ran away from your pack. She disappeared. Then, she suddenly shows up with two children, twins. You really think it’s a coincidence?”

The twins, Devon and Diana. Hadn’t I always felt some strange pull toward them? Like a thread connecting us that I couldn’t explain?

I did try to investigate about the twins but I had always met by a dead end. Killian had been protecting them and every single information about them. I had my suspicions before, but I could not jump yet to conclusions.

But no. It couldn’t be. Samantha would have told me, wouldn’t she?

“I don’t have time for your games, Olivia,” I snapped.

“This isn’t a game,” she said, almost pitying. “You deserve to know the truth. If you will not ask her, then find another way. Because those children might be more yours than you realize.”

If the twins were mine... everything would change.

I knew what she was trying to insinuate, that I could take the children to myself if they were indeed my kids, and taking Samantha out of the picture. But I could not do that, I would not. Samantha was their mother and she would remain as their mother, nothing could change that, and with that fact, the twins would choose to be at her side. And besides, I doubt Samantha would easily give up her children. Not that I was actually thinking about taking them from her if they were truly my kids. But if they were, I would want to be a part of their lives, and of Samantha’s again. I would want us to be a complete family.

I thought back to Samantha in the car, her silence, her guarded demeanor. Was she protecting them? Or was she protecting herself?

Before I could dwell on it further, a flicker of movement in the corner of my eyes caught my attention. Through the glass paneled doors leading to the backyard, I noticed faint wisps of smoke curling upward into the night sky. My gaze sharpened, drawn to the shadowy figure of an old woman hunched over something near the garden’s edge.

She moved slowly with her gnarled hands stirring a small clay bowl that emitted thin, pale smoke. A faint, rhythmic sound reached my ears, soft chanting, low and guttural, barely audible but distinctly unsettling.

“Who the hell is that?” I muttered, stepping closer to the glass.

Olivia did not answer immediately. When I turned to glance at her, I saw the faintest hint of a smile tugging at the corner of her lips. “She is helping me,” she replied simply, as if that explained anything.

“Helping you with what?” I demanded, the unease in my gut growing.

Olivia tilted her head, her tone turning almost conspiratorial. “With the answers you are too afraid to seek.”

I turned back to the figure in the garden. The woman straightened slightly, and in the dim light spilling from the house, I caught a glimpse of her face, withered and lined, with eyes that gleamed like polished stones. She seemed to sense my gaze because she paused, lifting her head to look directly at me.

For a moment, the world seemed too eerily still. The smoke curled and danced around her like living tendrils, and the air felt heavier and suffocating.

“Who is she?” I asked again, my voice quieter this time.

“A seer,” Olivia replied smoothly, stepping closer to me. “She has been assisting my family for years. Her methods may be... unconventional, but they get results. And she can help you, Dominic. She can tell you the truth about the twins.”

I let out a sharp breath as my instincts warred within me. Every fiber of my being screamed not to trust Olivia, not to trust this stranger lurking in the shadows of her garden. But then my thoughts drifted back to Devon and Diana, to the way they had clung to Samantha, to the way they had looked at me tonight, and to the hopeless investigation I had done that did not produce conclusive results.

Could this woman really give me the answers I needed?

“She is ready whenever you are,” Olivia said softly, her voice coaxing me to agree. “All you have to do is ask.”

Through the glass, the old woman returned to her work, her chanting resuming in a ghostly rhythm. The smoke seemed to thicken, swirling in patterns that were almost hypnotic.

Maybe it was desperation, or maybe it was the gnawing sense of inevitability, but I found myself nodding slowly. “Fine,” I said, my voice gruff. “But if this is some kind of trick—”

“It’s not,” Olivia interrupted smoothly with a triumphant glint in her eye. “You will see soon enough.”

Chapter 43
Dominic’s POV

“You’re playing with fire, Dominic,” Olivia said as the old woman lit another bundle of herbs, releasing a thick, pungent smoke into the air. “But I think you already know that.” She did not mean the literal fire in front of us, but the truth that would arise after this.

However, I was not sure if it was the smoke or her words that made my stomach churn. My instincts were screaming at me to stop, to leave, but the nagging doubt Olivia had planted refused to be silenced in my head. I needed answers.

The old woman — “the seer,” Olivia called her, was crouched on the floor of a dimly lit room at the back of Olivia’s house. The space reeked of aged wood, dried herbs, and something metallic, like blood. Candles flickered from every corner with their flames casting eerie shadows that seemed to dance with a life of their own.

“What exactly are we doing here?” I asked.

The seer did not look up; her attention was fixed on the symbols she was drawing on the floor with what looked like charcoal mixed with ash. They were intricate and unfamiliar, looping together in a pattern that made my skin crawl.

Olivia leaned against the wall, arms crossed, and her face calm, almost smug. “We are uncovering the truth. You want to know if those twins are yours, don’t you?”

My jaw clenched. I hated the way she spoke, as if she already knew the outcome and I was just catching up.

“And this... ritual of hers?” I gestured to the seer, who was now muttering something under her breath in a language I could not understand. “How does it work?”

Olivia pushed off the wall, stepping closer to me. “She will summon the connection between you and the children. If there is any bond, blood, specifically, it will show. Think of it as... forcing the truth to reveal itself.”

I did not respond. The logical part of me wanted to walk out, to call this what it was: insanity. But another part of me, the part that had spent sleepless nights wondering, questioning, kept me rooted to the spot.

“Sit,” the seer rasped, her voice gravelly and ancient, like it had been pulled from the earth itself.

I hesitated, my gaze flicking to Olivia, who nodded encouragingly. Against my better judgment, I lowered myself onto the cold, hard floor. The seer shuffled closer, placing a small bowl in front of me. The contents were thick and dark, swirling like ink under the dim candlelight.

“Give me your hand,” she said.

I stared at her outstretched hand, her fingers crooked and gnarled like tree branches. Every instinct in me screamed not to trust her, but Olivia’s voice echoed in my mind: You deserve to know the truth.

With a resigned breath, I extended my hand, and the old woman took it, her grip was surprisingly strong as she turned my palm upward and dragged a small, curved blade across the skin. The sting was sharp but brief, and blood welled up instantly.

She held my hand over the bowl, letting the blood drip into the liquid and it mixed with the dark substance, spiraling into a deeper, almost unnatural black.

“What now?” I asked my eyes still trained on the fluid.

The seer did not answer. She dipped her finger into the mixture, smearing it across the symbols on the floor. The chanting grew louder, the words tumbling from her lips faster, more urgently. The air grew heavier, thicker, like the room itself was holding its breath.

I felt a strange pull in my chest, a tightening that was not entirely physical and my pulse quickened as the symbols began to glow faintly, their edges shimmering with a soft, golden light.

“What the hell is this?” I muttered, my eyes darting to Olivia.

“Just watch,” she calmly said, nodding her head to the symbols in a gesture for me to watch them.

The glow intensified, spreading outward until the entire floor seemed to pulse with light, and then my heart pounded as the room filled with an almost deafening hum, a vibration that resonated deep in my bones.

Then, suddenly, everything went still after a breeze.

The seer stopped chanting, her head snapping up to look at me. Her eyes were wild, reflecting the golden light like mirrors.

“It is done,” she whispered.

I blinked, my breath catching in my throat. “What’s done?”

Instead of answering, she reached into the bowl again, smearing more of the dark mixture onto the floor. This time, the symbols shifted, rearranging themselves into an image that made my blood run cold.

Two small figures appeared in the center of the glowing circle — figures that were unmistakably Devon and Diana.

“No,” I breathed, my voice barely audible in disbelief.

The seer pointed a bony finger at the image. “Blood does not lie. These children are yours.”

The words hit me like a physical blow, stealing the air from my lungs. My mind reeled, scrambling for any explanation, any way to deny what I was seeing. I thought I was prepared to know that truth, but despite the joy that sprouted in my heart learning that the twins were my children, a flicker of anger had also resonated in my chest, a fit of anger directed at the lies that Samantha had uttered. She hid my children from me, she never informed me about them, and when I confronted her, she lied, strongly denying that they were mine. Why? Why would she do such a thing?! I knew that I had made mistakes in the past, but I was willing to make things right again, but still, she refused me relentlessly. She did not want me in our children’s lives.

But still, no matter what happened in the past, they were still my children.

“No,” I said again, louder this time. “That’s not possible.” I wanted to deny, not the children, but Samantha’s lies. I wanted to make myself believe that she was not that cruel to keep my children away from me.

But she did.

Memories flooded my mind, Devon’s fierce protectiveness, Diana’s mischievous smile, the way they both seemed to mirror pieces of me I had not realized...

“They’re mine,” I whispered, the realization crashing over me like a tidal wave.

I staggered to my feet, backing away from the glowing symbols as if distance could change the truth. My hands shook my heart racing with a mixture of shock, anger, and at the same time, joy to know that the twins were mine.

But six years. She hid them from me for six fucking years!

Olivia stepped closer, as she spoke. “Now you know.”.

I turned to her, my jaw tight. “Did you know?”

Her silence was answer enough.

Rage bubbled up inside me, hot and uncontrollable. “You knew,” I snarled. “And you waited until now to say something?”

“I suspected,” she said calmly. “But I was not sure. That’s why we did this.”

I wanted to shout, to throw something, to do anything to release the storm raging inside me. But the image of Devon and Diana burned in my mind, anchoring me to the moment.

They were mine.

“I have to go,” I said abruptly, shoving past Olivia and heading for the door.

“Dominic—” she started, but I did not let her finish.

“I have to see them,” I uttered urgently. “I have to see my children.”

Without waiting for a response, I stepped out into the cool night air and ran to the woods.

Devon and Diana. My children.

The thought was both exhilarating and terrifying, filling me with a sense of purpose I had not felt in years. However, more dreadful thoughts came into my mind as I passed through the shortcut routes back to the manor.

What if they don’t want me as their father? What if they won’t acknowledge me? Had Samantha ruined my image as a father to our children?

Chapter 44
Dominic’s POV

“What does that even matter? I’m unlucky enough to be marrying Samantha as it is.”

The words echoed in my mind, sharper now than the day I had spoken them on our wedding day, and I saw the broken look in her eyes, the way her shoulders had slumped as though carrying a weight too heavy to bear. I had been too blind to see it then, or I just did not care. I was too consumed by my own bitterness and resentment to realize that I had been the one breaking her.

I ran through the woods as the cool night air whipped against my face. The revelation of my children’s existence surged through me like a storm, leaving me breathless, and excited, but at the same time, the regret was consuming me like a fire determined to turn me into ashes. Devon and Diana were mine. Mine. And yet, Samantha had kept them from me, hiding their existence for six years. But I understood, or perhaps, I wanted to because I knew that I had done her wrong, but I also thought that I had the right to know, and the twins had to right to know who their father was. Did she tell them that their father was dead? Had they been seeing Killian as their father figure already?

I told myself I was furious at her deception, but the truth gnawed at me from the inside out. The anger was only a mask for what lay beneath, regret, shame, and a pang of festering guilt that I had tried to bury for far too long.

By the time I reached the manor, my legs were shaking, but my thoughts refused to settle. The house stood silent in the darkness with its windows gleaming faintly in the moonlight. I pushed open the door and stepped inside, the familiar scent of wood polish and lingering embers doing little to calm the chaos in my head.

Dropping onto the couch in the dimly lit living room, I buried my face in my hands. The truth was undeniable now.

Samantha had stolen six years of their lives from me, and yet... I had driven her to it, hadn’t I?

I leaned back, staring at the ceiling as memories clawed their way to the surface.

The day we married had been a day of duty, not love. My mother had orchestrated it, seeing Samantha as the perfect Luna for our pack. I had not disagreed outright, but neither had I embraced the idea. She had been so young, so in love with me, and so eager to prove herself, and I had barely looked at her.

After the ceremony, I had thrown myself into my responsibilities as Alpha, convincing myself that my indifference toward her did not matter. I had been cold, dismissive, treating her as nothing more than a figurehead for the pack. I remembered the way she had tried, time and time again, to connect with me, bringing me meals to my office, asking about my day, tending to my wounds, and even suggesting plans to strengthen the pack.

And how had I responded? With silence. With excuses. With outright dismissal.

I closed my eyes and felt the weight of my failures pressing down on me. I could still see her face the night I had come home late from a pack meeting, reeking of alcohol and exhaustion. She had been waiting in the living room with her eyes red from crying.

"Do you even care, Dominic?" she had asked with a trembling voice. "Do you even care about this marriage, about us? Or am I just another obligation to you?"

I had not answered her. Instead, I had brushed past her, mumbling something about being tired. I had heard her muffled sobs as I climbed the stairs, but I had not stopped.

And then there was Olivia.

Olivia had always been there, lingering on the edges, offering sly smiles and subtle touches. Samantha had seen it, of course she had. She had confronted me about it once, or twice, multiple times, her voice shaking

with anger and hurt, but I had dismissed her accusations, telling her she was being paranoid.

That had been the final straw, hadn't it?

The next morning, she was gone.

I rubbed my temples, the ache in my chest growing stronger with each passing moment. I had failed her as a husband, as a mate. And now I had failed my children without even knowing it.

Devon and Diana.

I could not stop picturing them, the way Devon had shielded his sister during that council meeting, the way Diana had smiled up at me with those mischievous eyes that were so much like my own. How had I not seen it sooner?

But even as I burned with the desire to claim them as mine, fear clawed at the edges of my resolve. What if Samantha had poisoned them against me? What if they saw me as the monster she had fled from?

I could not lose them. Not now.

The first rays of dawn were creeping through the windows when I finally pulled out my phone. My hands shook as I dialed her number with each ring tightening the knot in my stomach. I had to talk to her. I needed to.

When she answered, her voice was cautious, guarded, and groggy, I might have woken her up from sleep. "Dominic?"

"I know the truth," I uttered immediately without beating anymore around the bush. "About the twins. About us. We need to talk, Samantha."

There was a long pause, and for a moment, I thought she might hang up. But then she spoke, with her voice barely above a whisper as I heard in the background how she shifted perhaps on her bed. "Where?"

“Somewhere private,” I said. “I don’t want the children involved. Not yet.”

Another pause, then, “Fine. Tell me where and when.”

I exhaled, relief and anxiety battling for dominance. “I’ll visit, tomorrow at noon.”

“Okay,” she replied softly, and the line went dead.

I stared at the phone in my hand with my heart pounding. The truth was out now, and there was no going back.

Six years had been too long, and I had lost so much already, but I was not going to lose them. Not my children. Not my family.

No matter what it took, I would make this right.

Chapter 45
Samantha’s POV

The knock at the door came just as I finished tucking Diana into bed for her afternoon nap. My heart immediately sank to my stomach. I knew it was him. Dominic.

I hesitated, my hand hovering over the doorknob as I tried to calm myself. Last night, I hated that he stayed with Olivia, that he was with her, it reminded me of the past, that I had been working so hard to forget, but every time I saw them together, it all came rushing back. I did not know what happened to them that night, nor did I want to know what they did. That should be none of my business already, but it never left my mind since this morning. Dominic had been relentless in pursuing me, wanting me back in his life, but I could not shake the fact that Olivia was still hanging around him, and I did not want that because it made me question his loyalty. I could not fully trust him.

I opened the door, and there he was, standing tall, broad, and imposing with his hands shoved deep into his pockets, as though he was restraining himself from reaching out. The sunlight caught in his dark hair, and for a

brief moment, I was reminded of the man I had once fallen in love with, the man who had been both my greatest joy and my deepest pain.

He was not wearing the intimidating mask of an Alpha this time, though. Instead, he looked... tired, regretful even.

“Samantha,” he uttered, like a whisper that only we could hear.

“Dominic,” I replied, gripping the edge of the door tighter than I needed to. “What do you want?”

He let out a slow breath, his gaze flicking to the side before coming back to me. “Can we talk? Just us.”

I did not want to let him in. Every instinct screamed at me to protect myself, to protect the fragile peace I had built in the years since I had left him. But there was something in his eyes, a vulnerability I was not used to seeing. Against my better judgment, I stepped aside.

“Make it quick,” I said, closing the door behind him as he entered.

He paused in the living room, glancing around like he was searching for something, or someone. I knew he wanted to see the twins, but I was not ready for that. Not yet.

“I am not letting you see them.” I said bluntly, folding my arms across my chest.

His jaw tightened, but he nodded. “I understand. I didn’t come here to force anything. I just...” He trailed off, running a hand through his hair, a gesture I remembered all too well. “I needed to see you. To talk.”

“Then talk.”

He turned to face me fully, and for a moment, his gaze made it hard to breathe.

“I’m sorry,” he said. I had heard it so many times already. But I still could not get my heart to forget everything he had done in the past. “For everything. For the way I treated you. For not being the man you deserved. For pushing you away when all you ever wanted was to be close to me.”

I blinked, caught off guard by the raw honesty in his voice. We had been here before, but I knew that this time, we were getting closer to what we were if I would allow us to be.

“I was a fool,” he continued, stepping closer. “I was so consumed by my responsibilities, by my own insecurities, that I did not see what I was doing to you. I did not see how much I was hurting you until it was too late.”

“Why now?” I asked, my voice shaking despite my efforts to keep it steady. “Why are you saying all of this now, Dominic?”

“Because I’ve had time to think. To reflect. And I realized I made the biggest mistake of my life by letting you go.” His voice cracked, and for a moment, he looked like he was battling his own emotions. “I don’t expect you to forgive me, Samantha. I don’t deserve it. But I need you to know that I am sorry. That I will spend the rest of my life making it up to you if you will let me.”

His words hit me like a tidal wave, stirring emotions I’d buried long ago. Anger, sadness, love, they all swirled together in a chaotic storm.

“I loved you, Dominic,” I uttered, barely above a whisper. “I loved you so much it hurt. And all I ever wanted was for you to love me back. But you didn’t. You ignored me, pushed me aside, and let Olivia...” I could not even finish the sentence.

He flinched at her name, guilt flashing across his face. “I know. And I hate myself for it. I let her get too close, let her poison what we had. But I swear to you, Samantha, it was never because I did not care about you. I cared. I just did not know how to show it.”

I laughed bitterly, shaking my head. “That’s not good enough, Dominic. Caring is not enough. Not when you made me feel like I was invisible. Like I did not matter.”

“You mattered,” he uttered quickly, and desperately. “You mattered more than anything. I just did not realize how much until you were gone.”

The sincerity in his voice, the regret etched into every line of his face, made it hard to hold onto my anger. But the pain was still there, a wound that had not fully healed after all these years.

“I don’t know if I can trust you,” I admitted with a trembling voice. “You broke me, Dominic. And I can’t let you do that to me again.”

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he said softly, stepping closer until he was just a breath away. “All I want is a chance to make things right. To prove to you that I can be the man you and the twins deserve.”

The mention of the twins made my heart ache. I wanted so badly to believe him, to give him the chance he was asking for. But could I risk it? Could I open myself up to the possibility of being hurt again?

“I need time.”

He nodded. “Take all the time you need. I will wait as long as it takes... But, can I see the twins? Are they okay?”

Chapter 46

Samantha’s POV

I clenched my fists by my sides, trying to keep my composure. My heart hammered in my chest as I felt the intensity of his gaze on me, weighing, challenging, and gauging what would be my response. He did not leave my eyes even though I began to look somewhere else just to avoid his gaze while telling myself not to waver.

His interest in the twins terrified me. I could not let him get close, not now, not ever. I was not ready yet.

“They’re fine,” I replied curtly.

“I would like to see them,” he pressed gently, taking a step closer as if caging me to a point wherein I could not refuse.

“No.” My voice came out sharper this time, leaving no room for argument. “They do not need to meet you, Dominic. Not now, and maybe not ever.”

He frowned, his jaw clenching, but he did not lash out or argue. Instead, his gaze softened, filled with a kind of determination that made me uneasy.

“I am not here to take them from you, Samantha. I just... I just want to know them. To see them. Even for a moment.”

I glared at him, “Why? Why would you want to see them? You don’t even know them, Dominic. You have no reason to care.”

“Because...” He hesitated, trailing off. “Because I was there last night when you were worried sick about them. I saw how much they mean to you, Samantha. And if something had happened to them—”

“Nothing happened to them,” I cut him off sharply. “They are fine, Dominic. And I will make sure they stay fine without you interfering.”

His eyes darkened, but not with anger. It was something deeper, something I could not quite place. “Samantha, this is not about interfering. I just need to know they are okay. That nothing scared them or hurt them last night. I was also there, I helped you find them, so I think I also deserve to know, and to see them.”

I narrowed my eyes, trying to read him. “What are you really after? Because it does not make sense for you to care this much about kids who are not yours.”

His expression flickered, just for a second, before he spoke. “Maybe it doesn’t make sense to you, but I can’t just ignore what happened. They are just kids, Samantha. If they are anything like you, they have been through enough already. I need to see for myself that they are okay.”

I scoffed, folding my arms. “Well, you are going to have to trust me when I say they are perfectly fine. I am their mother, Dominic. I do not need you to swoop in and act like you suddenly care about their well-being.”

He stepped closer, almost pleading. “I am not trying to take anything away from you, Samantha. I just—” He paused, exhaling deeply. “I can’t explain it, but I need to know.”

“You do not need to know anything,” I shot back. “I am grateful that you helped me last night, and that we found them. But that’s it. It ends there. You do not have to see them anymore. They are not your responsibility. You do not even know them, Dominic. So, stop pretending like you have a right to be in their lives.”

His face fell slightly, and for a moment, I thought he might back down. But then he surprised me. “Maybe I don’t have a right,” he uttered quietly, sounding almost defeated. “But I can’t stop thinking about them. And I will not pretend like I do not care, because I do.”

But before I could respond, a small voice interrupted us.

“Hey... you’re the guy from the hotel!”

I spun around, my heart sinking as I saw Devon standing in the doorway of the living room. His messy hair stuck out in all directions, and his eyes were wide with recognition.

“Devon,” I said sharply, trying to keep my voice calm but firm. “Go to your sister’s room. Now.”

“But Mom,” Devon protested, pointing at Dominic, “that’s the guy who gave us pancakes! Remember, at the hotel?”

Dominic's eyes flickered with something I could not quite place, curiosity, realization, or maybe something deeper. My pulse quickened as I saw him crouch slightly, meeting Devon's gaze.

"You like pancakes?" Dominic asked gently with a hint of a smile on his face and a look of longing in his eyes even though he shouldn't.

"Yeah," Devon said proudly, stepping closer to the man he clearly remembered. "They were really good. Thanks for that."

"Devon!" My voice came out sharper than I intended, and he froze, turning to look at me with confusion written all over his little face.

I forced myself to soften my tone. "Go check on Diana, sweetheart. She's sleeping. She needs you to make sure she is okay."

Devon hesitated, glancing back at Dominic, then at me. "Okay, Mom," he mumbled before trudging out of the room and disappearing down the hallway.

The moment he was gone, I turned back to Dominic with my chest heaving with anger and fear. "This is exactly why you can't be here."

"I did not mean to—"

"No, Dominic." My voice trembled, my frustration spilling over. "I have worked so hard to protect them, to keep their lives stable. I do not need you coming in and turning everything upside down."

He straightened, but surprisingly, he kept himself silent.

"I do not know what you're hoping to achieve here," I continued, "But the twins are fine without you. They do not need you."

"Maybe they don't need me, Samantha. But maybe I need them."

“They don’t know you,” I replied meekly, avoiding his gaze, knowing that I was the reason why they did not know their own father. “And I intend to keep it that way,” I said, despite the guilt consuming me.

The silence that followed was suffocating and I could feel his presence, his questions, his doubts pressing down on me. And for a brief moment, I saw it in his face, the doubt, a hesitation, like he was starting to piece things together but was not ready to confront the truth.

“Samantha, I don’t want to hurt you, or them. I just... I want to be in their lives. Even if it is just from a distance.”

I shook my head, “That is not your decision to make.”

For a moment, he looked like he wanted to argue, to push, but instead, he nodded. “I’ll leave,” he finally said. “But this isn’t over.”

I did not respond. I couldn’t. I stood frozen as he turned and walked toward the door. He paused before leaving, glancing over his shoulder one last time.

“Take care of them.”

The moment the door clicked shut behind him, my knees buckled, and I sank onto the couch with my head in my hands. Guilt twisted in my chest and I could not push the ache away especially now that in the other room, I could hear that Devon was already talking about Dominic to the newly awakened Diana, telling her that the man who bought them food had come home.

Devon and Diana deserved to know their father, didn’t they? But how could I let Dominic into their lives when I could not even trust him in mine?

Chapter 47

Olivia’s POV

"How could everything go so wrong?" I whispered to myself, pacing back and forth in my bedroom. My heels clicked against the hardwood floor, and

I clenched my fists tightly, my nails biting into my palms, and forming a crescent line mimicking the ends of my nails. No matter how many times I replayed the last few days in my head, the outcome did not change. Dominic knew. He knew he was the father of Samantha's twins, and now, he could not seem to stay away from them.

This was not how it was supposed to be.

I sank onto the edge of my bed, burying my face in my hands. Every breath I took felt shallow with each exhale carried with frustration. I had imagined this going differently, so differently. I thought Dominic would be angry. Furious, even. I thought he would storm into Samantha's life and rip her apart for hiding the truth from him. And I thought he would be grateful to me for showing him the light, for helping him uncover the truth.

But instead... instead, he turned all his focus onto them. Those kids. And her.

I ran my fingers through my hair, tugging slightly as tears pricked at the corners of my eyes. "He was supposed to choose me," I muttered with a cracking voice. "After everything I have done, he was supposed to choose me."

I felt invisible now, like I did not even exist in Dominic's world anymore. All his attention, all his care, it was for them. The twins and Samantha. Not me. Never me. My stomach churned as a sick, twisted ache settled in my chest. I could not believe this. I wouldn't believe it.

The door creaked open, and I stiffened, quickly wiping my eyes as my father stepped inside and his eyes immediately landed at me.

"Olivia," he uttered with a mix of sternness and concern. "I have been hearing you pace like a caged animal for the past hour. What is going on?" he asked.

I glared at him, my anger bubbling to the surface. "What's going on?" I repeated bitterly. "Everything is falling apart, that's what's going on."

He raised an eyebrow, stepped further into the room, and closed the door behind him. “Be specific, sweetheart. What exactly is falling apart?”

I let out a sharp, frustrated breath, gesturing wildly with my hands. “Dominic! He does not care about me anymore, Dad. All he cares about are those stupid kids and that woman. He knows they are his, and now he can’t stay away from them!”

My father’s expression hardened after a flicker of surprise on his face. “That’s not possible,” he said firmly. “The twins aren’t his.”

My throat tightened as panic surged through me. The words tumbled out before I could stop them. “But they are his.”

His eyes narrowed sharply. “What did you just say?”

I froze for a moment, my breath catching in my throat. I knew my father would be furious to learn this, but there was no point in lying now. The truth was out. Dominic had been his golden boy prepared for me, and he did all he could to get him, for me. Yet now, everything seemed to be crumbling down.

I swallowed hard, my voice trembling as I admitted, “The ritual. We performed a ritual to confirm their paternity, and it revealed that Dominic is their father.”

For a moment, my father did not say anything. He just stared at me, his jaw clenching as he processed what I had just said. When he finally spoke, I could sense the underlying fury in his voice. “You performed a ritual?”

I nodded, my stomach twisting painfully. “I had to,” I said quickly, trying to justify myself. “I needed to know the truth. Dominic needed to know the truth. But I did not think it would end like this. I thought he would be furious at Samantha. I thought he would take the kids away from her and finally...” My voice broke. “Finally, see me. I thought he would be grateful to me, that he would choose me!”

“And instead, he is running back to her,” my father finished for me.

Tears welled in my eyes again, and I bit my lip to keep them from falling. “He doesn’t even look at me anymore, Dad. He is so focused on them. On her. I do not exist to him.”

My father let out a slow, measured breath, and I could see the shift in his expression, from worry to a threatening darkness. “Do you realize how reckless this was, Olivia?” he uttered, he sounded calm but I knew it was laced with anger. “Do you understand the position you have put yourself in? You have handed Dominic a reason to reconnect with those children and that woman, and now you are surprised that he is acting like a father?”

“I did not think he would choose them over me!” I cried, my voice rising. “I thought he would see what I did for him and be grateful. I thought he would hate Samantha, not... not run back to her!”

My father’s gaze softened slightly as he sat down beside me, but there was still an edge to his voice when he spoke. “Listen to me, Olivia,” he spoke firmly. “It does not matter how much Dominic cares for those children. It doesn’t matter how well he treats them or how much time he spends with them. At the end of the day, they are not his kids.”

“But they are his kids,” I insisted.

“Not in my eyes,” my father replied sharply. “And not in anyone else’s unless we allow them to be. Do you understand me?”

I stared at him, my chest heaving as I struggled to breathe. “What... what are you saying?”

“I’m saying,” he continued, “that this is not over. Dominic might think he has a claim to those children, but he doesn’t. You made a mistake, Olivia, but it is not one we can’t recover from. I will handle this.”

His words sent a chill down my spine. I knew my father, he could be ruthless, and I was very much aware of the connections he held for the benefit of the pack. “You’ll handle it?” I asked cautiously.

“Yes,” he said, standing and straightening his suit jacket. “You do not need to worry about the how. Just trust me. Everything will be fine.”

As he walked out of the room, I sat frozen. How are you going to handle this, Dad? I wondered with dread curling in my stomach. Whatever his plan was, I knew one thing for certain: it would not end peacefully.

Chapter 48
Dominic’s POV

"You’d throw it all away for her, wouldn’t you?"

Richard Bennett’s words echoed off the walls of my office like a challenge. He stood there with a commanding presence as if he owned the room, and me.

I did not bother to hide the irritation flashing in my eyes. “Is that why you are here? To question my choices?”

He smirked, the kind of smug expression that used to make me bite my tongue out of respect, but not anymore.

“Questioning your choices implies you have made any worth questioning,” he replied condescendingly. “This is not about choices, Dominic. It is about your complete disregard for everything we have worked toward.”

I leaned back in my chair, crossing my arms. “You mean everything you’ve worked toward. Let’s not pretend your interest in me or my pack has ever been selfless.”

His smirk faltered, and I knew I had struck a nerve. He recovered quickly, though, stepping further into the office and closing the door behind him. “Selfless or not, my investments have made your pack stronger, and your position more secure. I have helped you maintain control, Dominic, while others in your position have crumbled under pressure.”

“And for that, I have repaid you in full,” I countered. “Every deal, every contract, every cent of your so-called investment — I’ve upheld my end of the bargain. Don’t confuse business with personal loyalty.”

He narrowed his eyes, his tone hardening. “It’s not just about money. It is about Olivia.”

I sighed, pinching the bridge of my nose. Of course, it always came back to her.

“You don’t have to say it,” I said flatly. “I know where this is going.”

“Then save us both the trouble and listen,” he snapped, his patience clearly waning. “Olivia has been loyal to you, loyal in ways no one else has. She has stood by your side, helped manage your affairs, and waited for you to come to your senses. And yet here you are, ready to throw her aside for a woman who abandoned you and children you barely even know.”

My fists clenched at his words, but I forced myself to remain calm. “Samantha did not abandon me. I pushed her away.”

Richard scoffed, shaking his head. “You are rewriting history to suit your narrative. She ran because she could not handle the life you gave her. And now you are letting her waltz back in, using those twins as leverage to—”

“Enough,” I barked, and my voice was loud enough to make him flinch. I stood, towering over him now, my patience hanging by a thread. “You don’t get to stand there and insult the mother of my children. You don’t know what happened between us. You don’t know the half of it.”

His eyes darkened, but he did not back down. “What I know,” he said, and I could hear the threat in his voice, even though it was faint, “is that you are making decisions that will ruin you. Do you think the council will respect you if you go chasing after a woman who betrayed you? Do you think other alphas will see you as strong if you let your emotions dictate your actions? You are an alpha, Dominic, not some love struck fool.”

“I am a father,” I uttered firmly. “And that’s all that matters.”

Richard’s lips curled into a sneer. “A father? Do you even know how to be one? Or are you just using this as an excuse to play the hero in Samantha’s story? Because let me tell you, Dominic, there is no happy ending here. Not for you, not for her, and certainly not for those twins.”

My blood boiled at his audacity, but I forced myself to keep myself controlled. “Say what you came here to say, Richard. I do not have time for your theatrics.”

He stepped closer, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper. “Here’s what I am saying: marry Olivia. Make her your Luna. Secure your position, your pack, your inheritance. Do that, and I will ensure that your children are provided for, that Samantha has no reason to come sniffing around for more.”

I stared at him, my fist clenching as his words sank in. “You are offering me a bribe.”

“Call it what you want,” he said with a shrug. “It ais a solution. A practical one. You get to keep everything you have worked for, and Samantha stays out of your way.”

I laughed bitterly, shaking my head. “You really think I would sell my family for a title? For money?”

“You would be a fool not to,” he replied confidently. “Do you think love and loyalty will protect you when the council turns on you? When your enemies sense weakness and come for your pack? You need power, Dominic. Stability. And Olivia gives you that.”

“Olivia gives me nothing but headaches,” I snapped. “And you give me nothing but ultimatums.”

He raised an eyebrow, “So you would throw it all away? For what, Dominic? A second chance with a woman who does not trust you? Children who do not even know you? You are walking into a losing battle.”

“Maybe,” I remarked. “But it is a battle worth fighting.”

Richard stared at me, his eyes narrowing as if trying to gauge whether I was serious. “You are making a mistake,” he expressed. “A mistake you will regret for the rest of your life.”

I stepped around the desk, closing the distance between us until we were face to face. “The only mistake I made was letting you think you had a say in my life. That ends now.”

For a moment, we stood there in tense silence, gauging and challenging each other. I had cared for this pack for too long already and I was more than willing to let go if needed, if in exchange of my family. I would always choose her, and the twins. Then, without another word, Richard turned on his heel and walked out of the office, slamming the door behind him.

I exhaled slowly, running a hand through my hair as I leaned against the desk.

Richard Bennett could keep his money, his connections, and his schemes. None of it mattered to me anymore.

Because for the first time in years, I knew exactly what I wanted, and I was not going to let anyone stand in my way. Then the next morning, I found myself standing in front of Samantha’s door.

Chapter 49
Samantha’s POV

The knock on the door was unexpected, especially at this hour. I had just put the twins back to bed after they were woken up by the thunder. Devon had fallen back asleep almost immediately, but Diana kept her eyes on me, as if watching for any sign of trouble, I assured her and handed her the wolf stuffed toy before I kissed her forehead and promised her everything was fine.

“Dominic? What are you doing here?” I asked, barely masking my surprise as I opened the door to find him standing there, looking as though he had just walked out of a war zone. His shirt was wrinkled, his jaw tight, and his eyes carried the kind of intensity that made my pulse quicken.

He did not answer right away, his gaze flicking behind me before settling on my face. “We need to talk. Now.”

“It’s barely dawn,” I countered, glancing over my shoulder to check if the twins were still asleep. “This could not wait?”

“No,” he replied firmly, stepping past me into the house without waiting for an invitation. “It couldn’t.”

I nodded reluctantly and stepped aside. Dominic walked in, glancing around as if looking for something that I could only guess was the twins.

I closed the door and turned to face him. He paced the living room like a caged animal, his hands running through his hair as though trying to find the right words. Whatever brought him here, it was not good.

“Dominic,” I started, crossing my arms. “What is this about? If it is about the children—”

"Richard Bennett is playing games," Dominic remarked which surprised me. "And this time, he is not just targeting me, he is targeting you and the twins."

My stomach twisted. The mere mention of Richard’s name sent a chill down my spine. I never fully understood that man, but I always had a bad feeling being around him before. "What do you mean by targeting us?" I asked.

"He’s made threats," Dominic continued, running a hand through his hair. "Not directly, of course. The man’s too slippery for that. But his intentions are clear. He sees you and the twins as leverage against me, and he will stop at nothing to get what he wants."

Leverage. The word felt like a noose tightening around my neck. "I knew he was dangerous, but I did not think he would go this far."

Dominic's gaze softened, but his voice remained firm. "I will not let him hurt you, Samantha. Or the twins. But I need you to trust me on this."

I frowned, crossing my arms over my chest. "And what exactly is 'this'?"

Dominic's eyes locked onto mine. "You need to come back to the Silver Crescent Pack with me."

The words hit me like a thunderclap. "No," I instantly answered, shaking my head. "That is not an option. Dominic, Olivia is still there. And Richard, he will be even closer to us if I am in your pack. How is that safer?"

Dominic stepped closer, his towering presence both intimidating and grounding. "I have already taken steps to keep Olivia in check. She will not come near you or the twins. And as for Richard, he will not try anything while you and the twins are under the protection of the pack. But here, out here, just you and the twins, he might do something, and I can't let that happen."

"But what about the past, Dominic?" My voice cracked as I tried to hold back the wave of emotions threatening to overwhelm me. "Do you have any idea how hard it was for me to leave that pack? To leave you? Going back... it is like walking into a nightmare."

Dominic's expression softened. "I am not the same man you left behind, Samantha. And I am not asking you to trust me blindly. But this is not just about us anymore. It is about Devon and Diana. They need to be safe. And the only place I can guarantee that is with me."

My chest tightened knowing that he was right, as much as I hated to admit it. But the thought of stepping back into that world, of facing the ghosts of my past, was almost too much to bear. And I could not let my children go back to that place and cause them the same nightmare I had been. Olivia was still around and clinging onto Dominic, I would not want my twins to be

witnessing that, I would not want to put them in the same pain I had been in the past years.

"I can't," I whispered. "Anything but that."

Dominic sighed, running a hand through his hair as he paced in front of me. "If there was another way, I would take it. But there isn't. Richard is a threat, and he is not going to stop. The only way to protect you and the twins is to bring you back to my pack."

He stopped pacing and turned to face me fully. "And there is something else I need to ask of you."

I frowned, confused by the sudden shift in his tone. "What is it?"

Dominic took a deep breath, as if steadying himself. "If you come back, I need you to consider becoming my Luna."

My breath caught, and the room seemed to tilt slightly. "Your Luna?" I repeated in disbelief.

"Yes. It is not just about protection, Samantha. The pack needs stability, and so do you. If you are going to be part of the Silver Crescent Pack again, you can't just be there as a mother or someone I am trying to protect. You need to have a role, a position of power. As my Luna, no one, not Richard, not Olivia, would dare challenge you or your place."

Part of me wanted to scream at him, to tell him this was not fair. That he could not just waltz back into my life and expect me to fall in line.

But another part of me, a smaller, quieter part, knew he was right. The twins' safety came first. Always.

"I... I don't know," I stammered, unable to meet his gaze. "This is too much, Dominic. I need time to think."

His eyes softened, but his determination did not waver. "I understand. But just know that I will do whatever it takes to keep you and the twins safe. And I need you to trust me again."

Chapter 50
Samantha's POV

Trust was one thing that once it was broken it could no longer be fixed. And I knew that even if I tried to trust him again, I would not be able to completely do it. To return to the Silver Crescent pack and live with him, be his Luna, it would be a nightmare that would keep me on my tiptoes, walking on a tiny thread that would shatter me once again with even one minor mistake he would make. Could I risk it? Could I gamble with my heart again? It was a difficult decision especially since it was not just me who would be in this, I now have the twins to worry about too. I did not want them to undergo what I went through. It would break me to see them suffer because of their own father.

My heart felt like it had been thrown into a storm, torn between the past that refused to loosen its grip and the present that demanded something I was not sure I could give.

"Trust you?" I repeated softly, more to myself than to him. My voice wavered, barely a whisper, but he heard it. Of course, he did. Dominic's sharp senses never missed anything, sometimes he just did not bother to care, like in the past.

"Yes. That's all I am asking." He spoke as if the trust was just a mere worthless coin to bet on a gambling table. Didn't he understand yet how important trust is? It was worth more than everything, even more than this thing we call 'love', that when the trust was broken, it could never be returned to its complete and original state anymore, no matter how much you forgive and forget.

I let out a hollow laugh, shaking my head. "That's all? Do you have any idea how impossible that feels right now?"

He stepped closer, his towering frame making me feel both small and exposed. “I know I have given you plenty of reasons not to. I have made mistakes, more than I can count. But this is not about the past, Samantha. It is about the future, about us, and think about the twins.”

He may be right. This was not just about me anymore. But how could I ignore the years of hurt, betrayal, and the scars he had left on my heart?

I turned away, needing the space to breathe, to think. My arms wrapped around myself as if they could shield me from the memories threatening to overwhelm me. “You do not get it, Dominic,” I uttered. “It is not just about trusting you with my life or my safety. It is about trusting you with my heart. And you have shattered that before.”

“I know.” His voice softened, and for a moment, it was not the Alpha speaking, but the man I had once dared to care for. “I know I hurt you. And I will never forgive myself for that. But things are different now. I am different.”

I spun around, anger flaring in my chest. “Different? How? Because you suddenly decided you want to play hero? Because you think a few promises and a title will fix everything?” My voice rose, and I did not care if the twins heard me anymore.

Dominic’s jaw tightened, but he did not back down. “No, Samantha. Because I have seen what my choices have cost me. Cost us. And I am trying to make things right, even if you can’t see it yet.”

I shook my head, frustration bubbling to the surface. “You do not understand, Dominic. You did not see what it did to me, to walk away from everything, to leave behind the one person I—” I stopped myself, biting down on the words that threatened to spill out.

“To leave behind the one person you what?” he pressed, it was quiet but insistent. He wanted me to say the word, to tell him.

But I dared not to. I had proven him before, but he chose not to see it. I was not going to tell him now. I was done.

“It doesn’t matter,” I snapped, turning my back to him again and my hands trembled as I tried to calm myself despite the memories that flooded my head. The way he had touched Olivia, the coldness in his voice when he spoke to me back then, the way he had ignored the cracks forming in our fragile bond. He did not care.

Dominic sighed heavily. “It matters to me. Everything about you matters to me now, Samantha. That is what I am trying to make you understand.”

I turned back to him with my eyes burning with unshed tears. “And what happens when it does not matter anymore, Dominic? When this... effort you are putting in becomes too much? What happens when Richard wins, or Olivia finds another way to weasel into your life? Do you expect me to keep picking up the pieces of your mistakes?”

His face fell, and for the first time, I saw something in him that I had never seen before: vulnerability. “I do not have all the answers, Samantha,” he admitted. “But I know one thing for certain, I can’t do this without you. I can’t protect them without you. And I do not want to try not to have you again.”

The honesty in his voice chipped away at the walls I had built, but I was not ready to let them crumble. Not yet. I could still hold on. “You say that now. But what happens when things get hard again? When we become too much for you to care? Will you push me away like you did before? Will you go back running to Olivia for comfort?”

Dominic stepped closer, his hands clenched at his sides as if he were holding himself back from reaching for me. “I won’t,” he said firmly. “I can’t promise perfection, Samantha. But I can promise that I will fight for you, for them, for us. Every single day.”

The sincerity in his eyes made it hard to breathe. I wanted to believe him, more than anything. But trust was not something that could be rebuilt with words alone.

“I need time... I can’t give you an answer right now,” I admitted.

Dominic nodded, though I could see the disappointment in his eyes. “Take all the time you need. Just... don’t shut me out completely. Please.”

I looked away, unable to face the raw emotion in his eyes, fearing that I might surrender to his pleas. “I do not know if I can do this, Dominic.”

“You can,” he coaxed softly, and with a conviction that I could not muster. “Because you are the strongest person I have ever known. And because Devon and Diana need you.”

His words lingered long after he left, leaving me sitting on the edge of the couch, staring at the door he had walked through, with questions spinning in my head.

Could I really do this? Could I risk everything for the chance at a life where my children were safe, where they could know their father, where I could finally stop running?

And more importantly, could I open my heart to Dominic again, knowing the pain he had caused me once before?

Chapter 51
Samantha’s POV

“You’re trembling,” Dominic uttered.

I inhaled deeply and balled my hands in an attempt to stop the slight trembling for I did not even realize I was until he pointed it out. Dominic stepped closer with his eyes fixed on mine, full of longing and wanting, and his presence burned like wildfire in the midst of the pouring rain outside.

“Don’t.” The word came out before I could stop it, shaky and unconvincing, as if I were begging him and warning him all at once. My mind was in a mess and his presence was making it even worse. I was already conflicted about which decisions to make in our situation, and yet my heart was still

adding up to the stress, including my wolf that had been pacing around and purring in my head since he arrived.

“Don’t what?” he asked, taking another step closer, so close I could feel his breath ghosting against my skin.

I opened my mouth to reply, but the words got stuck in my throat. Don’t look at me like that. Don’t say my name the way you do. Don’t make me forget all the reasons I should not want you.

But I couldn’t speak.

His hand rose slowly, giving me every opportunity to step back, to pull away, but I did not. He tucked a strand of hair behind my ear, his fingertips brushing the edge of my jaw, and I hated the way my body betrayed me, leaning into his touch as if it belonged there. I let out a shaky breath at the sudden jolt of electricity through my body.

“Trust me,” he uttered again, yet this time, his voice was barely above a whisper, enticing.

I wanted to laugh, to scoff, to push him away. Trust him? After everything? The man who had been my undoing, who had shattered every part of me and left me in pieces? And yet, here he was, putting those pieces back together with nothing more than a look, a touch, a word. I had managed to protest him and argue with his proposals just minutes ago, I had made my decision, but he seemed to know my weakness. His close proximity, his touch, his breath against my skin, were like a burning flame melting my frozen heart, smoldering the walls I had built.

“You’re impossible,” I muttered, the words weak and shaky with no conviction behind them. I knew he was a very persistent man, that he would stop at nothing to get what he wanted, but I never thought I would be this easy to coax.

Was it because I deeply longed for him despite my denials?

“And you’re lying,” he replied, his lips quirking into a small, knowing smile.

And before I could protest, he closed the gap between us, his hand moving to cradle my face, sharing with me the warmth of his touch, with his thumb brushing against my cheek in a way that made my pulse quicken.

“I want you,” he mumbled. “I long for you, Samantha.”

His words should not have affected me the way they did, but they ripped through my defenses like they were made of paper. My chest rose and fell, each breath coming harder than the last as I fought to keep my composure. I should have pushed him away, and told him to leave... but I did not.

His confession made something inside me snap and my wolf howl. It felt like the mate bond rose and thumped wildly against my heart, burning brighter against the thawing ice. I could not think, could not breathe, could not fight the storm raging within me.

“No,” I said, but it was barely a whisper, more a plea than a rejection. I was unsure of what I wanted.

“Yes,” he countered, his hand sliding around my waist, fingers splaying against my back as he pulled me closer. The heat of his body pressed against mine, igniting every nerve ending as if I had been cold my whole life and only now realized what warmth felt like, and my wolf purred, totally welcoming our mate without regard to the risks of reconciling with him.

“You want this too. Don’t fight me.”

His lips hovered inches from mine, so close that I could feel the heat of his breath, but he did not move, didn’t close the gap. The tension between us was unbearable, like standing on the edge of a cliff, knowing one wrong step would send me plummeting but still unable to pull away.

My mind screamed at me to stop this, to push him away, to remind him of all the reasons this could not happen. He had hurt me, betrayed me, shattered me in ways I was not sure I could ever recover from. But my wolf... My wolf stirred inside me, urging me to give in, to let him in.

I hated him. I wanted him. I could not think straight.

“Stop,” I whispered, but it lacked conviction, making me question my own words. My hands moved to his chest, and immediately, his warmth seeped through my palm. But instead of shoving him away, my fingers curled into the fabric of his shirt, clinging onto him, for my sanity, or perhaps, I just wanted to hold him, to keep him in place, to have him under my fingers. My touch betrayed my own words as my body leaned into him even as my mind begged me to fight.

His hand on my back slid upward, his fingers brushing the nape of my neck, his thumb grazed my jawline, tilting my head slightly, and it forced me to meet his gaze. His eyes burned with something raw and untamed, and I felt my resolve crumbling under the intensity of it. I wanted to fight him, to protest, and yet... I surrendered when his lips crashed onto mine.

It was not gentle, it wasn’t tentative... it was hungry, desperate as if he had been holding himself back for too long and could not bear it anymore. His lips claimed mine with a fervor that made my knees go weak, and I clung to him for support, my fingers tangling in his shirt as if it were the only thing keeping me sane.

I should have stopped him. I should have pulled away. But instead, I kissed him back, equaling the same intensity he was giving, and even though my mind was cursing me for being a fool, my heart rejoiced on the other hand. I did not know if this was a good idea, but what I was only certain at the moment, was... I missed him.

My hands moved of their own accord, sliding up his chest to his shoulders, feeling the hard planes of muscle beneath his shirt. His hands roamed down my sides, traveling so firmly yet gently like he was afraid I might disappear if he let go.

“Dominic—” I tried to protest, my call muffled against his lips, but he silenced me with another kiss, desperately consuming me as if he would not give me another chance to argue with him.

“Don’t push me away,” he murmured against my lips, then a light kiss before he spoke again. “Not tonight.”

Then his lips left mine, trailing down my jaw to the sensitive spot just below my ear. My breath hitched as his teeth grazed the skin there, followed by the soft, warm press of his lips. His hands slid lower, settling on my hips as he pulled me flush against him, leaving no space between us.

My wolf mewled her approval, her presence surging within me, and I hated her for it. I hated the way she welcomed him, the way she urged me to give in to him, to surrender. But more than that, I hated the way my own body betrayed me, responding to his every touch, his every kiss, as if it had been waiting for this moment all along.

“Why do you do this to me?” I whispered, shivering at the unrestrained wanting coursing through me.

“Because you are mine,” he replied, raw, filled with a certainty that both terrified and thrilled me.

His hands slid beneath the hem of my shirt, his fingers brushing against my bare skin, and I shivered at the contact, making me gasp at the same time. My heart pounded in my chest with each beat echoing like a drum in my ears. My mind screamed at me to stop this, to end it before it was too late, but my body refused to listen as I leaned closer to him, feeling his touch, his warmth, and relishing the electricity that made my insides throb, stimulating my core.

“You can’t just say things like that and expect me to forget everything,” I said, trembling with the effort it took to speak.

“I am not asking you to forget,” he whispered, his lips brushing against my collarbone as he spoke. “I am asking you to feel.”

“Come with me,” he murmured. I knew what he meant, and I should have said no. I should have stopped this before it went too far. But the way he looked at me shattered my resistance.

He took my hand and guided me toward my bedroom where the door was left ajar. My legs felt like jelly, barely able to keep up with him, but I did not let go.

The moment we crossed the threshold and the door closed, he turned to me, finding my hips as he kissed me again before his hands found the hem of my shirt tugging them up and I hesitated for a moment.

“I can’t—” I started, but he silenced me with a kiss, his hands sliding under my shirt to my chest, and the moment his fingers brushed my nipple, I gasped. He cupped my breast and squeezed, making me arch my back to lean more to his touch as he continued to attack my neck with kisses.

Then I raised my arms, letting him pull the shirt over my head, and his gaze raked over me, filled with a raw, unfiltered hunger that made my cheeks flush. His hands followed the path of his eyes, brushing over my shoulders, and down my arms, leaving a trail of heat in their wake.

My hands trembled as I reached for him, my fingers fumbling with the buttons of his shirt. He stilled my hands with his, his lips curving into a soft, almost teasing smile before he took over, shrugging out of the fabric and tossing it aside. My breath hitched as my eyes took in the sight of him, broad shoulders, and taut muscles, and I was reminded of the times I had felt him inside me.

He stepped closer, his hands cupping my face as he kissed me again, deeper this time, his tongue sweeping against mine in a way that made my knees weak. He carried me to the bed and began trailing kisses to my chest, taking a nipple into his mouth, and rolling against his tongue while his hand gave attention to the other. As he trailed lower, he discarded my shorts and underwear before he immediately dove down, licking my pussy and playing with my clit. As his tongue played with my entrance, his hands worked on unbuckling his belt until he was left with all his naked glory. He came back up and captured my lips, devouring me as he brushed his cock against my slick pussy, teasing, and lubricating himself with my own wetness.

And when I felt the head of his cock prodding for my entrance, I gasped. He held my hips steady as he leaned back and watched my pussy stretch to accommodate his huge shaft. He moved, slow at first, while his thumb rubbed my clit, adding to the sensation in my core.

“Dominic, please.” I moaned, wanting more. I wanted him faster, harder, and deeper. I needed him to take me like he always had, rough, and claiming.

“Patience, baby,” he whispered to my ears while his hands went back on molding my breasts and toying with my nipples, pinching and pulling them, making me yelp and clench at the sensation he was causing.

The bed creaked beneath us as he began thrusting harder, and I clamped my hand over my mouth to muffle the moans escaping my lips, worried that I was being too loud and might wake the twins up from their sleep.

Chapter 52
Samantha’s POV

I woke to the sound of soft, steady breathing beside me, and my heart instantly seized in panic. The events of last night came crashing back and I bolted upright, clutching the blanket to my chest. Dominic stirred next to me, his arm draped lazily over his face as if he did not have a care in the world. The sunlight filtering through the curtains illuminated his features, his sharp jawline, the messy strands of hair falling across his forehead, and the faint smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

He looked peaceful. Content.

I, on the other hand, was a mess. My thoughts scrambled for clarity, guilt and longing clawing at me. What had I done?

“You’re staring,” Dominic murmured, his voice husky from sleep, his lips twitching into a lazy smirk as he cracked one eye open.

“I’m not!” I snapped, yanking the blanket tighter around myself, even though my face was burning red.

“Sure, you’re not.” He rolled onto his side, propping himself up on an elbow as his eyes roamed over me. “Good morning, by the way.”

“Don’t ‘good morning’ me,” I hissed, trying to sound annoyed, though the warmth spreading through me betrayed my attempt at indifference.

Dominic chuckled, and the sound sent a shiver down my spine. “Relax, Samantha. It’s not like I haven’t seen you like this before.”

“That was... last night was a mistake,” I muttered, turning away from him. But even as I said the words, I was not sure I believed them.

“Was it?” he teased. He did not believe me. Not for a second.

I shot him a glare, hoping it would be enough to shut him up, but his smirk only grew. Before I could fire back, he reached out, brushing a strand of hair away from my face. His fingers lingered, trailing down to my jaw.

“You’re blushing,” he uttered and infuriatingly smug.

“Am not,” I shot back, swatting his hand away.

He grinned, clearly enjoying my discomfort. “You are cute when you lie, you know that?”

“Oh, shut up.” I grabbed the nearest pillow and smacked him with it, hoping to wipe that stupid grin off his face.

But Dominic only laughed, catching the pillow mid-swing and tossing it aside. “Really? Resorting to violence this early in the morning?”

“Maybe if you would keep your mouth shut, I would not have to,” I retorted, but the corner of my lips betrayed me with a twitch of amusement.

He reached suddenly, grabbing my wrist and pulling me toward him, on top of his chest as his arms locked around my body. “You’re impossible,” I muttered, my heart racing so fast I was sure he could hear it.

“And yet, here you are,” he mumbled, his nose brushing against mine while his lips hovered for a light feathery kiss.

I shoved at his shoulder, but it was half-hearted, and we both knew it. “Dominic...” I started, my tone more a warning to myself than him.

His eyes narrowed at me suddenly, seeming like a thought had occurred in his head.

“What are you thinking?” he asked, his tone more serious now.

“That I should have locked the door,” I said, trying to deflect.

He chuckled. “Too late for that.”

I rolled my eyes and shoved his shoulder, but the moment I did, he took my wrist, pinned me on the bed, and pressed his weight against me just enough to remind me of how much trouble I was in.

“Dominic...” I started, but he cut me off.

“Where are the kids?” he asked as he shifted off me, giving me space to breathe.

“They are probably still asleep,” I replied, sitting up again and adjusting the blanket around me.

“Let’s check on them.”

Before I could protest, he was already up, pulling on his discarded pants. I scrambled to grab my robe, tying it tightly around my waist as I followed him into the hallway.

We entered the twins’ room quietly, and my heart softened at the sight of them curled up in their beds. Dominic approached Devon first, gently pulling the blanket up over his shoulders before moving to Diana and doing the same.

Watching him like this, so tender and careful, made me ache and longed for a family like this. He looked like he belonged here, like this was where he was meant to be. My wolf, who had been unusually quiet, stirred and whispered, Trust him.

Dominic turned to me, “They look just like you,” he spoke softly.

“Do they?”

He nodded, his gaze lingering on them for a moment longer before he straightened and walked back to me. “Samantha,” he started, his brows furrowing slightly this time. “Are you keeping something from me?”

My chest tightened as panic flashed through me. He could not know. Not yet. I was not ready to tell him about the twins being his, and I had not talked to them about their father yet. I opened my mouth to deny it, but the words stuck in my throat.

“What do you mean?” I asked, feigning confusion.

He studied me for a moment, his keen eyes piercing through me as if he could see the truth I was desperately trying to hide.

“I mean,” he trailed, “your wolf.”

I blinked, completely thrown off. “My... wolf?” I thought he was asking about the kids, and now I just remembered that I was also keeping this from him. I bit the inside of my cheek to swallow the guilt that crept inside me. I had too many secrets from him.

“You still don’t have it?” he asked.

My wolf stirred in my mind, as she insisted, Tell him, Samantha. He’s our mate. He deserves to know.

I ignored her, keeping my face neutral as I met Dominic’s eyes. How could I explain something even I didn’t fully understand? My wolf had been absent

for so long, silent and unreachable. Then, after the twins were born, she returned like a ghost of something I thought I never had.

I shook my head in response to his question and yet his gaze still remained, watching whatever reaction I would have so I forced my face to remain neutral.

“Hmm. I thought...” he wondered as he stepped away from the twin’s bed. “You felt different, so I thought it must have something to do with it.”

Chapter 53
Samantha’s POV

“You’re imagining things,” I replied, crossing my arms on my chest as if it could comfort me from my own lies. “It’s not possible. I am past the age of awakening. If I did not have a wolf all this time, I am not going to suddenly get one now,” I denied.

Dominic’s eyes narrowed as he focused on me and we both stepped out of the twins’ bedroom. “I know what I felt, Samantha. You—”

“You are wrong,” I interrupted immediately, my voice rising slightly, more defensive than I intended. My wolf stirred inside me. ‘Stop this’, she growled, impatiently and laced with authority. ‘Tell him. He’s our mate.’

No. I argued, shoving her presence away from my mind. And as I noticed Dominic still trailing behind me, I spoke again. “You’re reading too much into it. I am still the same wolfless Samantha you looked down on, remember? Nothing’s changed.”

Dominic’s steps faltered. I did not want to start a fight this morning, but... his questions were bringing me back to the past when he used to insult me, belittling me for not having a wolf.

‘A Luna without a wolf? What kind of leader are you supposed to be?’ he once said. The sting of his derision, the humiliation of standing in front of the pack and hearing their whispers, those wounds were still felt fresh.

“You made it perfectly clear that I was less because of it. Do not pretend otherwise.”

Dominic stepped closer, his expression shifting to that resembled regret. “I was wrong,” he uttered quietly. “I should not have said those things. I was angry, frustrated... but I never meant to hurt you like that.”

He’s apologizing, my wolf pushed again, her frustration practically vibrating through my body as she insisted on accepting him. But I was not completely ready yet to reveal to him that I already had my wolf. I needed to know if he was being real, and genuine, I wanted to know if he would still truly want me and accept me even if I still did not have a wolf because I would not want him to only accept me just because of the presence of my wolf which would strengthen his since we are mates. I wanted him to want me for who I was, with or without a wolf. ‘He is trying. Why are you making this harder?’ my wolf insisted, and I think she was being too immature for all of these because when I experienced all the pain when I was still with Dominic in the past, she was not yet a part of me, and I only got her when I gave birth to the twins. She would not understand. She couldn’t.

Because I have to, I snapped back internally. Because it is not that simple.

I clenched my fists, my nails biting into my palms as I replied to Dominic this time. It was so hard to deal with two beings at the same time. “It’s easy to apologize now,” I said bitterly. “But what happens when things get hard again? What happens when I am not enough for you anymore? When I’m just... less again?”

“You are enough, Samantha. With or without a wolf, you have always been enough. I did not see it before, and that is on me. But I see it now, Samantha. I see you.”

My chest tightened, a mix of longing and fear battling inside me. I wanted to believe him, to trust the sincerity in his voice. But the memory of his cold eyes, his sharp words, the way his disdain had cut me down, made me feel like nothing, was something I could not forget, they haunt me like a ghost, following me everywhere even after six years.

‘He’s changed’, my wolf insisted, her voice softer now trying to persuade me. ‘He’s not the same as he was back then. Can’t you feel it?’

I need to be sure, I argued. He is only saying this because he thinks I do not have a wolf. If I tell him you exist, what if everything changes? What if the only reason he wants me is because of you?

That’s ridiculous! she snarled, her anger flaring. He is our mate. He deserves the truth. Stop running from it!

I am not running, I snapped back. I am protecting myself. Do you know what it was like to stand there, to hear him belittle me in front of everyone? To feel like I was not enough for him, for the pack, for anyone? I will not go through that again. Not unless I know he is sincere.

My wolf growled with her evident frustration. ‘You are being selfish. This isn’t just about you. It’s about us.’ she countered.

It is about me, I shot back fiercely. I am the one who lived through it. I am the one who had to pretend his words did not hurt, who had to carry on like it did not matter. And now, I need to know if he means it, if he truly wants me, or if he is just saying what he thinks I want to hear.

My wolf fell silent, her anger simmering just beneath the surface, but she did not push further. For now, at least.

“I just want to understand,” he spoke. “That’s all. If you do not have a wolf, that’s okay. If you do... that’s okay too. It does not change the way I feel about you, Samantha. It does not change what I want.”

“And what do you want?” I asked, my voice trembling despite my best efforts to sound composed.

“You,” he said simply. “I want you. All of you. No matter what.”

My heart clenched at his words, the sincerity in his voice stirring something deep within me. But the scars he had left behind, the hurt, the humiliation, were still fresh in memory.

“I don’t know if I believe you,” I admitted.

Dominic’s jaw tightened, but he nodded. “Then let me prove it to you. I can’t change the past, but I can make damn sure I do not repeat it. Just... trust me. Give me a chance.”

I did not respond right away, and one question entered my mind that made it harder for me to trust him again and believe his words. “What about Olivia?” I asked, looking straight into his eyes.

Dominic’s brows furrowed, and he tilted his head slightly. “What about her?”

“She’s still here,” I said, crossing my arms. “Still in your pack. Still... close to you. What exactly is she to you, Dominic? What’s her position in your life?”

His lips parted as if to answer, but he hesitated, and the silence that followed only fueled my doubts.

“Right,” I said bitterly, stepping back, my chest tightening. “That’s what I thought.”

Dominic’s eyes darkened, his jaw tightening. “It’s not what you think,” he said, but I could hear the edge of frustration creeping in.

Chapter 54
Dominic’s POV

I stepped closer to her and brushed her arm, trying to calm her down and make her understand that it was her that I sincerely wanted, and not Olivia.

“Olivia means nothing to me, Samantha,” I said but she laughed bitterly, taking her arm away from my touch. She did not believe me.

“Nothing? She is in your pack, always around you, practically glued to your side. That’s what nothing looks like?” she retorted and I sighed, dragging a hand through my hair as frustration tried to surface.

“Samantha, I know how it looks, but it is not what you think.”

“Then explain it to me,” she demanded, stepping closer. She was cold, and challenging, but I could see the pain in her eyes. “Because from where I stand, it seems like she is more to you than you are willing to admit.”

I took a deep breath, forcing myself to stay calm. “Olivia and I were close in the past,” I admitted, watching her expression closely. “But I changed, Samantha. I no longer engaged myself with Olivia. And she is only in the pack now because she and her family are members of the pack. But I swear, nothing is going on between us. It’s you that I really want.”

I felt guilty, ever since the day she ran away and left the pack, I had been feeling guilty for the things I had done even though I could not fully understand before. I knew that what I did was wrong, and I would not give any excuse for that. But I was willing to make everything and that was what I needed her to understand.

“Samantha, there was a time when I thought Olivia and I... that maybe we could have been something. But that ended a long time ago. But not anymore.”

Samantha’s jaw tightened, her arms hugging herself like she was trying to hold herself together. “Why should I believe you?” she doubted, her voice barely above a whisper.

“Because it is the truth,” I replied, stepping closer to her. “I do not have feelings for Olivia. The only reason she’s still here is because she’s been a loyal pack member. But that’s it. There is nothing between us, Samantha. Nothing.”

Her eyes searched mine, looking for any hint of deception but I stood my ground, willing her to see that I was telling the truth.

“And yet she is still in your life,” she accused, and once again, I exhaled in frustration, but I tried to calm down. I understand her, that she had been hurt and was still in pain. But what frustrated me the most was the fact that she was not even giving me a chance to prove to her that I truly wanted her, that I loved her, and that I was going to make everything right. She would not give me a chance to prove myself.

“She is still there, reminding me of everything I am not. Do you have any idea what that feels like?” she added.

I reached for her hand, but she pulled away, her walls going up again. “Samantha,” I said softly, “you are not less. You never were. I was blind, stupid, and cruel, but you were never less.”

Her laughter was hollow, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. “You say that now, but how do I know it’s real? How do I know you will change your mind the next time things get hard?”

I closed the distance between us, my hands resting gently on her shoulders. “Because I have already lost you once,” I remarked. “And it damn near killed me. I am not going to make that mistake again. I know I do not deserve your forgiveness, but I am asking for it anyway. I am asking for a chance to prove to you that I have changed, and that I see you now for who you truly are. You’re not less, Samantha. You are everything.”

I noticed how her breath stopped for just a moment and how her eyes wavered and lost focus on mine, avoiding my gaze. I knew Samantha, she had always been a kind good girl. I had done her a lot of wrong things, and yet she remained by my side for years, loved me, and tolerated all my bullshits in life. She stayed, until she could no longer endure. Yet I was not able to see those in the past, and I fucking regret it, big time. I wasted six years that could have been spent with her, and the twins.

“I don’t know if I can believe you,” she whispered.

“Then let me show you,” I urged, my hands sliding down her arms until they found hers. “Give me a chance, Samantha. Just this once, and I will make everything right..”

Her silence was deafening, and when she finally looked up at me, there was a mix of anger, sadness, and something else, something softer, lurking in her eyes.

“And if you hurt me again... that’s it. I’m done.”

“I won’t,” I promised. “I swear to you, Samantha.”

Her eyes searched mine one last time before she nodded, the tension in her shoulders easing just slightly.

And then, as if some invisible thread pulled us together, she was in my arms. Her lips met mine in a kiss that was both desperate and hesitant, like she was trying to find the balance between anger and longing.

I did not care. I did not care what was driving her to respond to my kisses, what mattered was that I had her. I poured everything into that kiss, every ounce of regret, every promise I could not put into words, and I just hoped that she would see it, the sincerity and love that I had for her.

She clutched at my shirt as if trying to hold on and push me away all at once, but I held her waist to her back, to keep her close.

“Samantha,” I murmured against her lips, my hands cradling her face.

She did not answer, her breath ragged as she pulled me closer, and I yielded. The world outside ceased to exist anymore, and there was only her, her warmth, her scent, and the way her lips trembled against mine.

We stumbled toward the couch, her hands fisting in my shirt as I lowered her onto the cushions. The tension between us crackled like a live wire, and the years of pain and anger dissolved into something passionate and undeniable.

“Dominic,” she breathed, and I was reminded of how she had moaned my name, several times last night, causing my cock to hardened

I pulled back just enough to look at her, my forehead resting against hers. “Say the word, Samantha. If you want me to stop, I’ll stop.”

She looked at me, her eyes wide and filled with desire. And instead of answering, she kissed me again, her fingers tangling in my hair pulling me closer, and keeping me in place.

It was everything.

But then, a small gasp shattered the moment, and we both pulled back abruptly, our heads snapping toward the hallway.

Devon stood there, his wide eyes bouncing between us with his messy hair sticking up in every direction. “What are you doing?” he asked, with a mix of confusion and accusation.

Samantha’s cheeks flushed crimson as she quickly backed away from me, her hand flying to her mouth. “Devon, sweetheart, you’re awake.”

Chapter 55
Samantha’s POV

“Why were you kissing him?” Devon’s question cut through the awkward silence. He looked so confused.

I opened my mouth to respond, but nothing came out. What could I possibly say to a kid who just caught his mother kissing someone he barely knew?

Dominic was the first to recover, crouching down to Devon’s eye level. “Well, buddy... that’s a great question. Do you think I shouldn’t kiss your mom?” he questioned, glancing briefly at me.

Devon’s arms crossed over his chest, his tiny lips pursed into a pout. “Yes. Only me and Diana can kiss Mommy,” my son replied.

Dominic glanced back at me, his lips twitching with amusement, while I stood frozen, unsure whether to intervene or let this play out.

“Hmm,” Dominic mused, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. “That doesn’t seem very fair. What if your mom wants someone else to kiss her? Like, say... me?”

“No!” Devon exclaimed, stomping his foot. “Mommy doesn’t need anyone else’s kisses. She has mine!”

“Devon, sweetheart,” I said, finding my voice at last. “It’s not really up to you who can and can’t kiss me.”

His gaze snapped to me, his big brown eyes widening in betrayal. “But Mommy—”

Dominic held up a hand, cutting him off with a grin. “Hang on, champ. Let’s negotiate. How about we share your mom’s kisses? You get some, Diana gets some, and I get... oh, I don’t know, a few?”

Devon’s eyes narrowed, his little brain clearly working overtime to process this outrageous suggestion. “No,” he said firmly. “Mommy is ours. No one else can kiss her unless... unless they’re her partner.”

I blinked, my cheeks heating at his innocent yet unexpectedly accurate comment. Dominic, however, looked positively delighted.

“Well, then,” Dominic said, leaning in conspiratorially, “what if I am her partner?”

Devon gasped, his jaw dropping. “You are not! Mommy doesn’t have a partner!”

“Not yet,” Dominic countered playfully but his eyes flicked to me with amusement and approval within them. “But maybe one day.”

“Stop it,” I interjected, stepping forward and placing a hand on Devon’s shoulder. “This conversation is officially over. It’s still too early for you to be up.”

“But Mommy—”

“No buts,” I said firmly, guiding him toward the hallway. “Let’s go back to your room for now.”

Devon shot Dominic one last suspicious glance before reluctantly allowing me to lead him away.

As we walked down the dimly lit hallway, I felt the tension in Devon’s small frame. He was quiet, too quiet, and I could practically hear the gears turning in his head.

“Devon,” I called softly, kneeling in front of him once we reached his room. “What you saw back there... it’s nothing for you to worry about, okay?”

He frowned, his little brow furrowing. “But why were you kissing him, Mommy? Do you like him?”

My heart clenched at his innocent question. How was I supposed to explain something I did not fully understand myself?

“Dominic is... complicated,” I admitted, tucking a strand of his messy hair behind his ear. “But what matters is that you and Diana are my priority. Always.”

“Is he going to be your partner?” he asked.

“I don’t know,” I said honestly. “But if he ever is, you and Diana will be the first to know. Okay?”

Devon studied me for a long moment before nodding slowly. “Okay. But I still don’t think he should kiss you.”

I could not help but smile, leaning forward to press a kiss to his forehead. “Noted, little man.”

He climbed under the covers, but as I tucked him in, his expression grew serious again.

“Mommy?”

“Yes, sweetheart?”

Devon hesitated, fidgeting with the edge of his blanket. “Are wolves real?”

The question sent a jolt through me, and I forced myself to stay calm, kneeling down beside his bed. “Why do you ask that, Devon?”

His eyes flicked toward the door, then back to me. “Because... you talk about wolves sometimes. And I don’t feel anything like that. Diana doesn’t either. Do we have one?”

I exhaled slowly. “Devon, listen to me very carefully, okay?”

He nodded, his eyes wide with curiosity and just a hint of worry.

“You and Diana are still young, and there are things about yourselves that you will discover as you grow,” I explained gently, brushing a hand through his messy hair. “You might not feel it yet, but there is something very special inside of you. Something that makes you strong, brave, and... different from other kids.”

“Like a wolf?” he asked, barely above a whisper.

I hesitated for a moment before nodding. “Yes. But it’s very important that you don’t talk about this to anyone, not even Dominic. Not yet.”

“Why not?”

“Because it’s a secret,” I said, holding his gaze firmly. “One that we need to keep safe. Do you understand?”

Devon tilted his head, considering this. “Even from Dominic?”

A small smile tugged at my lips, “Even from Dominic. For now, this is something just between you, me, and Diana. Can you do that for me?”

His little face scrunched in thought before he nodded solemnly. “Okay, Mommy. But... when will I feel it? The wolf?”

“Soon,” I assured him, leaning forward to kiss his forehead. “But you do not need to worry about that right now. Just remember what I said, okay?”

“Okay,” he said, though I could tell he still had questions.

“It’s still very early, Devon,” I added, tucking the blanket around him. “You stay in your room for now or play quietly in the playroom if you are not sleepy?”

“Alright,” he murmured, snuggling deeper into the covers.

I stayed there for a moment longer, watching as his eyelids grew heavier.

When I returned to the living room, Dominic was still there, sitting on the couch with an amused expression.

“You handled that well,” he uttered, laced with humor.

I shot him a glare, plopping down in the chair opposite him. “Don’t encourage him. The last thing I need is him policing my love life.”

Dominic chuckled, leaning back and folding his arms behind his head. “The kid’s got guts. I like him.”

“He doesn’t like you,” I muttered.

“Oh, I noticed.” He grinned. “But that’s okay. I’ve got time to win him over.”

I rolled my eyes, refusing to let his charm get to me. “This isn’t a game, Dominic. They are my kids. My world. If you are serious about being in their lives, you’d better be ready to prove it.”

His smile faded, replaced by an intensity that made my heart skip a beat. “I am serious, Samantha. About you. About them. All of it.”

His sincerity was almost too much to bear, so I looked away, unsure how to respond.

Chapter 56
Dominic’s POV

“Why are you in Mommy’s bed?”

The voice startled me out of a deep, content sleep. My eyes flew open, and the first thing I saw was the two small figures standing at the side of the bed. Devon had his arms crossed over his chest with a suspicious and accusing look, while Diana clung to his side, her head tilted as she curiously studied me.

I blinked a few times, trying to orient myself and trying to avoid Devon’s glares toward me because I knew that this little kid had already warned me hours ago, and yet, he still found me with his mom, worse, on the bed.

“What are you two doing here?” I whispered, sitting up carefully so I would not wake Samantha since we barely slept at dawn when we went back to bed. She was still fast asleep beside me, her dark hair spilling across the pillow, and how I wished I could have this view every morning, and with the kids. My heart warmed at the thought.

Devon ignored my question, narrowing his eyes. “Why are you in Mommy’s bed?”

His voice was not loud, but it carried enough harshness to make me wince. Diana tugged on his sleeve, whispering something to him, but he did not budge, his gaze locked on me like I was an intruder.

“Well...” I hesitated, scratching the back of my neck. “It got really cold, and your mommy lent me a blanket. I guess I accidentally fell asleep here, and besides, it was pouring rain earlier.”

Diana’s brows knit together in confusion. “But why didn’t you sleep on the couch? Guests sleep on the couch.”

Devon nodded in agreement, clearly unimpressed with my excuse. “Yeah. You are not supposed to sleep with Mommy.”

They had me cornered, two tiny inquisitors armed with questions I was not prepared to answer. “You are absolutely right,” I said, keeping my voice light. “That was my mistake. Grown ups make silly decisions sometimes, especially when they are tired.”

Devon’s frown deepened. “Hmm. I do not think I like you sleeping with Mommy.”

I could not help but smile. “Fair enough. How about this stays between us, okay? No need to wake her up and scare her. Let’s let her rest for a little longer.”

The twins exchanged a look, some unspoken conversation passing between them, and then nodded. Devon still did not look entirely convinced, but he took a step back, allowing me to slide out of bed. I carefully tucked the blanket around Samantha, pausing for a moment to watch her peaceful face before turning back to the twins.

“Come on,” I whispered, motioning for them to follow me. “Let’s go for a little walk.”

“Where are we going?” Devon asked, his voice quieter now but still wary.

“Just outside for a bit. It’s a beautiful morning.”

The sun was already up, bathing the garden in warm, golden light as we stepped outside. The cool morning air was refreshing, and the twins

immediately perked up, darting ahead to inspect the flowers and chase after the occasional butterfly.

I followed at a slower pace, watching them with a mix of amusement and warmth in my heart. It was new, this feeling of belonging, of being part of their world. This was what I wanted, and I hoped I could have it soon, again, when Samantha began trusting me.

“Dominic?” Devon’s voice pulled me out of my thoughts. He was standing in front of me now, loosking serious in a way that seemed far too mature for someone his age.

“What’s up, buddy?” I asked, crouching down to his level.

He hesitated, glancing back at Diana, who was busy collecting flowers. Then, looking me straight in the eye, he asked, “Are you going to be our new dad?”

The question caught me off guard, stealing the breath from my lungs. For a moment, I did not know how to respond.

“What do you think about that?” I finally managed, keeping my tone calm and gauging. I wanted to know what he thought of me, and if he would approve of me for his mom.

Devon frowned, clearly mulling it over. “I think... it’s okay. But only if you promise to take care of Mommy and never make her cry.”

His words were simple, but they hit me harder than I expected. I nodded, placing a hand on his small shoulder. “I promise, Devon. I will do everything I can to make her happy.”

“And us too!” Diana’s voice rang out as she skipped over to join us, clutching a handful of flowers. She thrust them toward me with a grin. “If you are going to be our new dad, you have to take care of us too.”

“Of course,” I said with a smile, accepting the flowers like they were the most precious gift in the world. “You two are part of the package.”

Diana beamed, satisfied with my answer, and then tugged on my hand. “Can we go see the ducks now?”

We spent the next half hour exploring the garden. The twins’ energy was endless as they darted from one discovery to the next, with their laughter echoing through the morning air that carried the smell of fresh grass and rained soil, the sky was already clear and the sun was up, but the twins’ smiles and laughter were so much brighter than the day.

Diana kept adding to her flower collection, while Devon stuck close to me with his watchful eyes still sizing me up.

“You are not so bad,” he finally said, breaking the comfortable silence.

“Thanks, I think,” I said with a chuckle. “Does that mean I’ve passed your test?”

He nodded solemnly. “Maybe. But you still have to buy us pancakes. Diana said so.”

I laughed, ruffling his hair. “Pancakes, huh? I think I can manage that.”

By the time we made our way back to the house, the sun was higher in the sky, warming the air and casting long shadows across the lawn. The twins were quieter now, their earlier excitement was replaced by the kind of content exhaustion that only kids seemed capable of.

But the moment we stepped inside, the atmosphere shifted.

Samantha was standing in the hallway, her arms crossed tightly over her chest with evident frustration on her face but the way she exhaled showed how relieved she was to see the kids returning. Her eyes darted from the twins to me, and I could practically see the questions swirling in her mind. Did she think I took her kids from her?

“Where were you?” she demanded.

Devon and Diana froze, clearly sensing their mother's fury. Devon shifted closer to me, while Diana half-hid behind my leg, clutching her flowers tightly.

I opened my mouth to explain, but Samantha's glare was enough to silence me.

"I did not think it was possible for someone to look so relieved and so furious at the same time," I thought to myself, swallowing hard.

This... was not going to be an easy conversation.

And as Samantha's gaze bore into me, I knew I was in trouble.

Chapter 57
Dominic's POV

"You took them without asking?!" her voice raised, reaching for the kids who shrank behind me, their earlier joy from the walk vanishing in an instant.

"I didn't—" I started, but she held up a hand, stopping me in my tracks.

"Do you have any idea what went through my mind when I woke up and found them gone?" she snapped, her voice trembling in anger. "I thought something happened to them! I thought—" She paused, her chest heaving as she struggled to keep her emotions in check.

"They are fine," I said, trying to keep my voice calm. "I just took them for a walk. They wanted to explore, and I thought—"

"You thought?" she interrupted again, cutting me off. "You did not think, Dominic. You did not think about telling me. You did not think about how I would feel waking up to an empty house."

Devon tugged on my sleeve, his small voice barely above a whisper. "Mommy, it was not his fault. We wanted to go."

Samantha's gaze softened for a brief moment as she looked at her son, but her frustration quickly returned when her eyes landed on me again.

"Go to your room," she ordered firmly. "Both of you."

Diana hesitated, clutching my leg, but I gave her a reassuring nod. "It's okay," I said softly. "Go on."

Once the twins disappeared down the hallway, Samantha turned her full attention back to me.

"I trusted you," she said began. "I trusted you to be responsible, and you took them without even telling me. Do you have any idea how scared I was?"

Her words stung more than I wanted to admit. "Samantha, I was not trying to scare you," I said, my frustration bubbling to the surface. "I was trying to give you some peace. You were exhausted. I thought I was helping."

"Helping?" she echoed, letting out a bitter laugh. "Dominic, this is not your pack. You can't just make decisions for my children without consulting me. You do not get to come into our lives and act like—" She stopped herself, pressing her lips together as if holding back something she did not want to say.

"Act like what?" I demanded, stepping closer. "Like I care? Because I do, Samantha. I care about you, and I care about them."

Her eyes flashed with something I could not quite decipher, anger, hurt, maybe even fear. "Caring isn't enough," she countered, and for a moment, we just stared at each other, until I shook my head, letting out a bitter laugh.

"You don't trust me," I said, more to myself than to her.

She did not respond, and that silence was all the confirmation I needed. Without another word, I turned and walked out the door, slamming it shut behind me.

I drove back to my pack, with my hands gripping the steering wheel so tightly that my knuckles turned white. I stepped on the gas and sped up, not caring about speed limits or safety anymore as I was being driven by frustration. Samantha was confusing and very difficult. I was trying to earn her, and have her trust, but why can she let go and give me a chance?

By the time I pulled up to the packhouse, my mood had not improved. I barely acknowledged the pack members who greeted me as I stormed inside, heading straight for my office.

“Dominic?”

I stopped in my tracks, turning to see my mother standing at the foot of the staircase. Her eyes narrowed as she studied me with a look of both curiosity and concern.

“What are you doing back so early?” she asked, crossing her arms.

“Change of plans,” I uttered curtly, not in the mood for a lecture.

“Change of plans?” she repeated, raising an eyebrow. “Does this have anything to do with Samantha?”

I did not answer, but the look on my face must have given me away because she sighed, shaking her head.

“You are making the same mistakes again,” she said, laced with clear disappointment.

That stopped me. “What’s that supposed to mean?” I demanded.

“You are running, Dominic. Just like you did before. When things get difficult, you retreat instead of facing the problem head on.”

“That’s not what this is,” I said, though even as the words left my mouth, I was not entirely sure I believed them.

“Isn’t it?” she challenged. “You left Samantha once before, and it nearly destroyed her. Don’t do it again.”

Her words struck a nerve, but I refused to let it show. “I am not leaving her,” I said through gritted teeth. “I just... needed some space. We both do.”

She did not look convinced, but she did not press any further. “Dominic,” she called after a moment. “If you really care about her, you need to show her. Not with words, but with actions. Earn her trust. Prove to her that you are not going anywhere.”

I turned and headed upstairs, hoping that a hard training session would help clear my head.

Ethan was already waiting for me in the training grounds when I arrived, wearing his usual cocky grin in place. “You look like you’ve been through hell,” he remarked as I approached.

“Not in the mood, Ethan,” I muttered, shrugging off my jacket.

“Perfect,” he replied, cracking his knuckles. “Then this should be fun.”

As we fought, Ethan did not hold back, and I did not want him to either. Every punch, every kick, every bone-jarring impact helped channel the emotions swirling inside me.

But no matter how hard I pushed myself, I could not shake the image of Samantha’s furious face or the hurt in her eyes.

And after what felt like hours, I finally called for a break, collapsing onto the ground and gulping down water. Ethan sat beside me, wiping the sweat from his brow.

“Alright,” he said, leaning back on his hands. “What’s going on?”

“Nothing,” I automatically replied.

He snorted. “Come on. I have known you long enough to know when something’s eating at you. Spill.”

I hesitated, debating whether to confide in him. But the words came out before I could stop them. “It’s Samantha.”

His eyebrows shot up in surprise. “Samantha?” he repeated. “As in the Samantha?”

“Yes,” I said, running a hand through my hair. “It’s... complicated.”

“That’s an understatement,” he muttered. “So what’s the problem?”

“She doesn’t trust me,” I admitted, the words tasting bitter in my mouth. “And I do not know how to fix it.”

Ethan was quiet for a moment before he spoke. “Well, you can’t just expect her to trust you overnight. You have to earn it. Show her that you are willing to put in the effort.”

“And how am I supposed to do that?” I asked, genuinely frustrated.

He smirked. “You’re the Alpha. Figure it out.”

Chapter 58
Samantha’s POV

“I almost called Killian.”

The confession tumbled out of my mouth before I could stop it. Annie froze mid-motion and the rag she was using to wipe the kitchen counter dangled from her hand as she turned to look at me.

“You did what?” she asked surprised and with a tinge of disapproval in her tone.

“I didn’t,” I said quickly, burying my face in my hands. “But I almost did. When I woke up and found the kids and Dominic gone, I panicked. My first

instinct was to call Killian for help," I admitted. I was scared that Dominic would take my kids away and it was only Killian that I thought could help me. Even after learning from Annie that Dominic took the twins for a walk, I was still paranoid that he might have tricked her and actually took the kids away from me.

Annie set the rag down and leaned against the counter, crossing her arms. "Samantha, you really thought Dominic would just take off with them?"

I lifted my head and looked at her, my chest tightening with shame. "For a moment, yes. And I hate myself for thinking that. I just... I don't know. I overreacted. But..." I sighed, trying to find any excuse.

Annie sighed, shaking her head. "You were scared. And after everything you have been through, I do not blame you for being cautious. But you can't keep treating Dominic like he is the enemy," she pointed out.

"Can't I?" I muttered, crossing my arms. "How do I know he is not just here for the kids? How do I know he is not going to break their hearts... or mine?"

Her expression softened, and she walked over to sit beside me at the kitchen table. "The kids love him," she remarked with clear softness in her eyes. "You have seen it yourself. Devon follows him around like a little shadow, and Diana has not stopped talking about how he carried her on his shoulders during their walk. Dominic clearly cares about them, Samantha. Maybe it is time to stop questioning his motives and start looking at his actions."

I did not respond right away. Instead, I stared at the cup of tea in front of me, my thoughts swirling like the steam rising from the mug.

"He knows," I said quietly.

Annie blinked. "Knows what?"

“About the kids,” I clarified. “He knows they’re mine, and... he’s probably thinking too that they’re his. It would just be a matter of time now that he starts questioning further even though I already lied about them before.”

Anne just stared at me, not with a question, but with a gentle challenge that seemed to seek the truth. “Do you still love him?”

The question caught me off guard, and I looked up at her, with my heart pounding. “What?”

“Do you still love him?” she repeated, firmly and clearly this time.

I opened my mouth to respond, but the words would not come. Did I still love Dominic? Part of me wanted to scream “yes,” but another part of me was terrified of admitting it.

“I don’t know,” I trembled. “I don’t know if I can trust him. And then there’s Olivia... I mean, what if he is still with her? What if this is all just... I don’t know, some ploy to get the kids?”

Annie shook her head, a small, sad smile on her lips. “Samantha, you deserve to be loved. And not just by your kids. By someone who sees you for who you are, and who wants to be there for you. If that is Dominic, then maybe it is time to give him a chance. And if it is not, then you need to move on. But you can’t keep living in this limbo. It is not fair to you, and it is not fair to the kids.”

Her words hit harder than I expected, and I felt tears prickling at the corners of my eyes. “I’m scared,” I admitted, again. I was terrified of what he might bring to our lives.

“I know,” she said, reaching out to squeeze my hand. “But sometimes, you have to take the risk. Love is always a gamble, Samantha. But if you never play, you will never win.”

Before I could respond, the sound of the front door opening caught both of our attention. I stood up, my heart racing as Dominic’s familiar scent filled

the air. Moments later, he appeared in the doorway, holding a bouquet of flowers in one hand and a box of chocolates in the other.

“Dominic,” my voice coming out more surprised than I intended.

He gave me a small, tentative smile. “Hey,” he began, stepping into the kitchen. “I, uh, wanted to apologize. For earlier. I did not mean to upset you.”

I glanced at Annie, who gave me a pointed look before quietly slipping out of the room, leaving the two of us alone.

“You did not have to do this,” I said, nodding toward the flowers and chocolates.

“I wanted to,” he simply replied, as he handed me the flowers and chocolates, which I just awkwardly received, realizing that this was the first time I had received a gift from him. “I know I messed up. I should have told you before taking the kids out. I just... I thought I was helping.”

His sincerity caught me off guard, and I found myself softening despite my earlier anger. “I overreacted,” I admitted. “I shouldn’t have jumped to conclusions.”

He nodded. “I understand why you did. And I know I have a lot to prove to you, Samantha. But I am not going anywhere. I want to be here, for you and for the kids.”

I looked away, unsure of how to respond.

“There’s something else,” he said after a moment, sounding hesitant.

“What is it?” I asked, my curiosity piqued.

He took a deep breath before continuing. “I was wondering if you would let me take you out. On a date.”

My eyes widened in surprise. “A date?”

“Yes,” he said, a small smile tugging at the corners of his lips. “Just the two of us. No kids, no distractions. I want to spend time with you, Samantha. To show you that I am serious about this, about us.”

I did not know what to say. Part of me was touched by the gesture, while another part of me was terrified of letting him back in. But as I looked at him, standing there with that nervous, hopeful expression, I realized that maybe, just maybe, it was time to take a step forward.

“Okay,” I answered. “I’ll go on a date with you.”

His eyes lit up, and for a moment, the tension between us seemed to dissolve. “Really?” he asked, surprised, yet relieved to hear my reply.

“Yes,” I confirmed, a small smile tugging at my lips. “But don’t make me regret it, Dominic.”

“I won’t,” he uttered quickly, his smile widening. “You won’t regret it. I promise.”

Chapter 59
Samantha’s POV

“You’re going, and that’s final,” Annie said, cutting through my thoughts as I stared at the red dress laid out on my bed. “You have spent the entire day pacing back and forth like a caged animal. The least you can do is see where this date leads,” she added and I sighed.

I shook my head, biting my lip. “I don’t know, Annie. What if this is a mistake? What if he is just... doing this for the kids? Or to make himself feel better? I don’t want to end up—”

“Stop.” Annie’s hands landed on my shoulders, forcing me to turn and meet her gaze. “You deserve this, Samantha. You have been punishing yourself for so long that you have forgotten what it feels like to just live a little. And

Dominic...” She sighed, a small smile tugging at her lips. “I see the way he looks at you. Whatever his reasons were before, they are different now.”

I opened my mouth to argue, but her expression left no room for debate. Instead, I glanced back at the dress with its vibrant red fabric shimmering softly in the evening light. “I feel like this is too much,” I muttered.

“It’s perfect.” Annie walked over to the dresser, picked up a pair of heels, and set them next to the dress. “Trust me, he won’t know what hit him.”

Despite feeling nervous a small smile crept onto my face.

“Now, get ready. He’ll be here soon.”

By the time I had slipped into the dress and finished my makeup, I heard Dominic’s car pulling up outside, making me feel jittery inside, and I was not sure if it was because I felt nervous, or excited about this. This was the first time I was going out on a date, and I was not sure what to do and how this would work out. I smoothed my hands over the dress one last time, stealing a glance in the mirror, realizing that Annie was right, the dress was perfect. But the woman staring back at me looked more nervous than confident.

“Stop overthinking,” Annie whispered as she nudged me toward the door. “You’ve got this.”

When I opened the door, Dominic was standing there. He looked stunning as always, his tailored suit fitting him perfectly, but it was the way his eyes softened when they landed on me that made my breath catch.

“You look...” He paused, a smile tugging at his lips. “Beautiful.”

Heat rushed to my cheeks, and I managed a quiet, “Thank you.”

“Mommy looks like a princess!” Diana’s excited voice piped up from behind me, and I turned to see both kids peeking out from the living room.

Dominic chuckled, crouching down to their level. “She does, doesn’t she? But don’t worry, I will bring her back safe and sound.”

“Promise?” Devon asked, with keen observing eyes and brows furrowed.

“I promise,” Dominic replied, holding up his pinky. Devon hesitated for a moment before he lifted his own pinky and curled it around Dominic’s, nodding solemnly.

The drive to the restaurant was surprisingly comfortable once I had accepted the fact that this was actually happening and that there was no turning back this time.

“You should’ve seen Liam at the last Alpha training camp,” Dominic said, glancing at me with a rare, amused grin. “He thought he could outrun a timed obstacle course after eating a triple stack of pancakes. It did not end well.”

I laughed, picturing Liam trying to navigate an obstacle course while weighed down by his own overconfidence and, apparently, a lot of breakfast. “Did he make it through?”

“Barely. He tripped over a rope, ended up face-first in a pit of mud, and still claimed it was all part of his strategy to ‘blend in with the environment.’”

I could not help but laugh again, the image was so vivid it was almost impossible not to. I knew Liam back in the Silver Crescent, I had known him since we were kids, and he had always known that I had feelings for Dominic ever since the day I met him.

“That does sound like him. Was it really that bad?”

Dominic smirked. “Let’s just say I had to bribe a few of the other Alphas not to bring it up at the next council meeting. The man has no shame, but I can’t have my Beta becoming the camp’s entertainment highlight.”

“Sounds like the camp wasn’t all serious then,” I remarked, my shoulders relaxing as the conversation flowed naturally.

“It’s not always. But this year’s camp will be different.” His tone shifted slightly, a note of seriousness creeping in.

“Why’s that?” I asked, genuinely curious.

Dominic glanced over briefly before returning his eyes to the road. “It has been restructured this year. They are calling it an Alpha Leadership Initiative, something the council is pushing hard for. It is supposed to prepare Alphas for larger responsibilities beyond just running their packs. Strengthening alliances, handling rogue threats on a broader scale, that kind of thing.”

“So, it’s not just about physical training anymore?”

“Not entirely. There’s still the traditional training, the obstacle courses, combat practice, endurance challenges. But now they are adding leadership simulations and, even mock council scenarios.” He paused, his fingers tapping lightly on the steering wheel. “They’re trying to turn it into something more unified. They want packs to work together more, especially with all the rogue activity lately.”

I frowned, considering his words. “It sounds... extreme. And a lot to ask from a group of Alphas who are not exactly known for getting along easily.”

“That’s an understatement,” Dominic said with a low chuckle. “Alphas working together? It’s like throwing a bunch of territorial wolves into the same room and telling them to play nice. But it is necessary. If we can get even half of the packs on the same page, it could make a huge difference.”

“Is Silver Crescent participating this year?”

“We are,” he said, nodding. “The council made it mandatory for all recognized packs. It’s an opportunity to show where we stand, not just in strength but in leadership. And honestly, I think our pack could benefit from it.”

“Why?”

He hesitated for a moment before answering. “Our Pack is strong, but we have been isolated in a lot of ways. We have always handled things on our own, which worked for us in the past. But with everything that has happened recently, we need more allies.” He trailed off, his jaw tightening slightly.

We arrived in front of a lavish restaurant and Dominic stepped out of the car, rushed to my side, and opened the door for me before handing the key to the valet.

Dominic had reserved a private table near the back, away from the other diners, and I could not help but wonder how much planning had gone into this evening.

“This place is incredible,” I said as we sat down. I roamed my eyes around and somehow, I felt my heart clench at the sadness that immediately stabbed my chest. I could not understand what to feel, I was happy that he took me out on a date, but to think that with all the years that I had been in love with him and when we got married, never once had I been on a date, and most specifically, never with him. He never did.

But for tonight, I let myself relish the feeling.

“I’m glad you like it,” he replied, handing me a menu. “I wanted tonight to be special.”

And it was. From the food to the wine to the easy flow of conversation, everything felt... right. For the first time in what felt like forever, I allowed myself to just enjoy the moment, setting aside my doubts and fears.

But as the night went on, I could not help but notice the way Dominic’s phone kept buzzing on the table. He ignored it at first, but by the third or fourth time, his jaw tightened, and he glanced at the screen with a flicker of irritation.

“Do you need to get that?” I asked hesitantly.

“It can wait,” he said, though his tone suggested otherwise.

I let it go, focusing instead on the dessert menu, but when his phone buzzed again, he sighed and excused himself, stepping away from the table to take the call.

When he returned, his expression was carefully neutral, but I could tell something was wrong.

“Is everything okay?” I asked, setting my menu down.

He hesitated, his fingers tightening around the edge of the table. “It’s fine. Just something I need to handle back at the pack.”

I frowned, my heart sinking. “Handle? What does that mean?”

“It’s nothing you need to worry about, Samantha.” He sounded sharper now, more distant, gone was the gentle voice he had been using in the past days. I sat back, taken aback by the sudden shift in his demeanor. “But I think we should call it a night.”

“What?” The words slipped out before I could stop them. “Dominic, we just got here.”

“I know.” He stood, pulling out his wallet and signaling for the server. “But this can’t wait.”

I stared at him, my chest tightening as disappointment and confusion flooded me. “If something’s wrong, you can tell me. We are supposed to be trying—”

“I said it’s nothing,” he firmly replied, and I swallowed hard, the lump in my throat making it difficult to speak.

Chapter 60
Samantha’s POV

“You are seriously not going to tell me what’s going on?” I asked in disbelief. I had to muster some courage and put up with all this makeup, high heels, and a red dress just for the night to be put on hold. I thought he wanted to fix us, but he could not even properly be with me even just for a night. Well except when we were in bed.

He sat stiffly in his chair, barely meeting my eyes as he reached for his drink, taking a huge gulp before as if it could soothe his nerves.

“It’s pack business,” he said evenly, carefully controlled, like he was talking to a mere business partner he did not give a shit about. Was I that to him? “An emergency. I need to handle it,” he added, and I leaned forward, narrowing my eyes. “That’s it? You are not going to explain anything? You dragged me out here, acted like this was important, and now you are just going to bail?”

His jaw tightened, and he finally looked at me with his gaze filled with a mix of frustration and guilt. “Samantha, I am not bailing. This is important too—”

“Then why does it feel like I am being shoved to the side again?” I shot back, my voice rising despite the low hum of conversation around us.

He sighed, running a hand through his hair. “I did not plan for this to happen. Trust me, I wanted tonight to be perfect.”

“Well, congratulations,” I replied bitterly, pushing my chair back and standing. “It’s anything but perfect.”

Dominic stood as well, quickly as he reached for my arm. His touch was gentle, but it still stopped me in my tracks. “Samantha, wait.”

“What?” I snapped, glaring up at him.

His expression softened, and for a moment, the frustration in his eyes melted into something gentler, something almost vulnerable. “I’ll take you home. But let me explain on the way. Please.”

I hesitated, my anger warring with the part of me that still wanted to believe in him. Eventually, I nodded, pulling my arm away but following him toward the car.

The car ride was silent at first with only the hanging tension simmering between us like a boiling pot on the verge of spilling over. I stared out the window with my arms crossed tightly over my chest. I was looking forward to this night, being... well, I did not expect anything to be perfect, but at the very least, I did not want it to be this bad. I thought, for once in my life, I could finally experience being on a date with the person I loved. Yet it seemed the universe was so against that.

“I did not mean to ruin tonight,” Dominic uttered after a while.

I did not respond and I just kept my gaze fixed on the passing trees.

He sighed again, and I could almost hear the frustration in his breath. “Samantha, I am trying here. I am doing my best to balance everything—”

“Don’t,” I interrupted, turning to face him. “Don’t sit there and act like this is all about balance. You are the one who decided to take me out tonight. You are the one who promised there wouldn’t be any distractions.”

“And I meant it!” he shot back, his voice rising for the first time. “But I can’t ignore my responsibilities either. You of all people should understand that.”

His words hit a nerve, and I turned away, with my chest clenching and my mind somehow telling me ‘I told you so,’. I trusted him, and gave him a chance, only to end up being disappointed again.

However, I could not deny that he was not wrong either, but that did not make it hurt any less.

We drove the rest of the way in silence until he pulled the car to a stop in front of my house. Before he could say anything, I unbuckled my seatbelt and reached for the door handle.

“Samantha, wait,” he said, his hand gently covering mine.

I froze, not because of his touch, but because of the sincerity in his voice.

“Let me make it up to you. I’ll take you out again, no distractions, no interruptions. Just you and me.”

I turned to look at him, searching his eyes for any sign of deception. Instead, I found only guilt and quiet persistence. We pulled to my house and I immediately hopped out, and he also rushed to my side, stopping me from going inside, cornering me in between his body and the car. I gazed up at his eyes, challenging, questioning, and searching for a promise I was not sure if I would believe in.

“Why should I believe you?” I asked.

“Because I am not giving up on us. No matter how many mistakes I make, I am not going to stop trying.”

The sincerity in his voice broke through the walls I had been trying so hard to rebuild. I hated how much I wanted to believe him, how much I wanted to let my guard down and trust him again.

“Dominic...” I started, but he cut me off with a sudden kiss.

It was soft at first, almost hesitant, like he was giving me a chance to pull away. But when I did not, it deepened. His hands cupped my face, his thumbs brushing lightly over my cheeks as he kissed me urgently, and deeply, making my knees weak and my core fired.

I melted into him along with my anger and doubt dissolving under the warmth of his touch. His lips moved with a tenderness that stole my breath, a silent plea for forgiveness and a promise of something more. And I gave in... too easily. And I feared for my stupid heart that it might get hurt again.

His mouth left mine, trailing slow, deliberate kisses along my jawline, sending shivers down my spine. When he reached the sensitive spot just below my ear, my breath hitched, and my hands instinctively gripped his shirt, pulling him closer.

“Tell me to stop,” he murmured against my skin, vibrating through me like a current that awakened my insides.

I didn’t. I couldn’t. I wanted him to stay, to be with me, close to me and under my palms.

His hands slid down from my face, his fingertips grazing my neck before resting at my waist. He pulled me against him, the heat of his body enveloping me completely. His lips found my neck, brushing against my pulse in a way that made me gasp.

“Dominic...” I whispered, trembling as his mouth trailed lower, leaving a searing path along the curve of my shoulder.

His hands gripped my hips, gently as he pressed me against the car. I felt his breath against my collarbone as he dipped his head lower and his lips skimming the delicate line of my collar. Every kiss felt like a claim, branding me with his promise.

I tangled my fingers in his hair, anchoring myself as his hands slid up my back, pulling me even closer. His lips found the hollow of my throat, lingering there as if savoring the moment. The warmth of his breath against my skin sent a rush of heat through me that ignited something deep within me, something primal that made my wolf stir in excitement.

He pulled back just enough to meet my gaze. “You’re mine, Samantha,” he breathed “And I’ll spend the rest of my life proving that to you if I have to.”

I surged forward, capturing his lips with mine, and I was determined to keep him there, with me, and for him to forget whatever the emergency was in his pack. His Beta and the warriors could handle it. I did not want him to leave, I needed him to be here, with me. Always. I knew I was being selfish and such, but he promised to be with me tonight, and so he should keep that. I was not going to let him go easily tonight. Not after everything I had to do in preparation for the date that we were not able to continue. I thought, he should at least compensate for my time wasted in preparations.

The kiss was no longer soft, it was fierce and demanding, fueled by everything we hd been holding back. His hands slid up to cradle my face again, tilting my head to deepen the kiss, and I left him entrapped in this spell.

When his lips left mine, they did not go too far. He pressed kisses to my temple, my cheek, and my jawline, and then returned to my neck, his teeth grazing the sensitive skin there and a soft whimper escaped my lips, and his grip on me tightened, controlling himself, but I wanted him to lose control.

“Tell me to stop,” he whispered again with his ragged voice.

And I shook my head, my fingers trailing down his chest to clutch the fabric of his shirt. “Don’t stop,” I breathed, almost moaning to his ear, coercing him deeper into this enchantment. The demands of the pack had already taken too much of his time away from me, couldn’t I have one, even just for tonight.

He growled deeply in his chest, as if I had also heard his wolf approving to my reply. His lips captured mine again and his hands explored my back and waist as he pulled me impossibly closer, dipping his head down and sucking the skin on the upper part of my breast that was exposed by the dress, leaving a love bite mark that I knew would turn reddish purple in the morning.

Chapter 61
Samantha’s POV

“They are going to hate me,” I muttered under my breath, my fingers clenching the hem of my sweater as we walked on the uneven dirt path toward the pack house, and as we passed by several pack members, their eyes were trained on me with questioning gaze.

Dominic’s stride did not falter as he gripped my hand tighter. “They will respect my choice,” he remarked, with a faint hint of frustration that he did not bother to hide.

Respect his choice? The concept felt foreign to me now, like something out of reach.

“You don’t understand. I did not just leave, Dominic. I disappeared. I abandoned my role, my place, my duties. Do you have any idea how much damage that must have caused?” My voice cracked despite my efforts to keep it controlled.

He stopped so abruptly that I nearly stumbled. Turning to face me, he cupped my cheek with his free hand, his dark eyes boring into mine as he spoke. “They will understand, and they will accept you because you are their Luna. You always have been. And because I said so.”

He spoke like everything was certain and that no one would question him, but I knew that even though they would not do it in front of me, they would start talking behind my back.

I let out a shaky breath, trying to muster the same confidence he exuded so effortlessly, but I still could not calm myself, still feeling the eyes that bore behind me. “Do you honestly think it is that simple?” I whispered over the sound of rustling leaves. “You think they will forget how I ran away in the middle of everything, how I left them... left you, without so much as a goodbye? I am not just some stranger stepping into their lives, Dominic. I am the one who betrayed their trust. How do you expect them to forgive that?”

His jaw tightened, his fingers brushing lightly against my cheek before he dropped his hand. “Because they will see what I see. A woman strong enough to come back, to face the people she thinks she failed. That is what makes you their Luna, Samantha. Not perfection. Not the past.”

I swallowed hard, the lump in my throat making it difficult to speak. His words were convincing, almost too persuasive, and for a brief moment, I wanted to believe him. But the doubts remained, clawing at the edges of my mind.

“You are putting too much faith in them,” I said, looking away. “And in me.”

His grip on my hand tightened slightly, pulling me closer. “You don’t need their forgiveness to prove your worth,” he said, his voice dropping low enough that it felt like a secret meant only for me. “You just need to stand tall and remind them who you are.”

Who I am. The words lingered in my mind as I glanced back toward the trees hovering in the forest, almost hiding the pack house from the public human eyes, their branches swayed gently in the wind as if to remind me of the place I had taken when I ran away. Once upon a time, I had been their Luna, their leader. I had worn the title like a badge of honor, pouring everything I had into being the woman they needed me to be. But that woman felt like a stranger now, buried beneath layers of fear and regret.

“Dominic,” I said after a pause, my voice trembling slightly, “what if they never trust me again? What if—”

“They will,” he interrupted, leaving no more room for discussion. “And if they don’t, they will learn to.”

I bit my lip, glancing down at where our hands were joined. His confidence in me was almost suffocating, but it also gave me the smallest glimmer of hope. Maybe he was right. Maybe coming back was not about erasing the past but building something new.

But as we continued walking, the sinking feeling in my stomach only deepened. His confidence might have been enviable, but it was not contagious.

The whispers started before we even reached the main courtyard.

“That’s her?”

“She actually came back?”

“I heard she ran off to another pack.”

Dominic did not seem fazed, his hand tightening around mine as if to remind me he was there. But their stares were difficult to ignore, they were like tiny daggers pricking at my skin.

A group of women standing near the fountain did not bother lowering their voices.

“Look at her,” one of them said, her tone laced with disdain. “She does not even belong here anymore.”

“The Alpha must be desperate,” another whispered, her lips curling into a smirk.

I felt the heat rise to my cheeks, and my steps faltered. The courtyard was buzzing with quiet murmurs, packs of wolves huddled together with their gazes flickering between me and Dominic.

“Keep walking,” Dominic uttered firmly.

But my feet would not move. Their words stuck to me like glue, dragging me down, pulling me back into the doubts I had been trying so hard to push away.

“I can’t do this,” I whispered, my voice trembling.

Dominic turned to me with a stern expression. “Yes, you can.”

“Dominic—”

“No,” he said, cutting me off. His hand cupped my cheek, forcing me to look at him. “You are my Luna, Samantha. I don’t care what they think.”

His words were meant to be comforting, but the tension in his jaw told me he was just as angry as I was hurt.

“Alpha,” one of the older men greeted Dominic, respectful but cautious. His eyes flickered to me for a moment. “It’s... been a long time.”

“Yes, it has,” Dominic replied. “Samantha is back where she belongs.”

The man’s gaze lingered on me, and I forced myself to meet it, even though I felt like a deer caught in headlights.

“Back where she belongs?” someone muttered from the crowd.

Another voice chimed in, louder this time. “She abandoned us.”

A ripple of murmurs spread through the group, some nodding in agreement, others exchanging uncertain glances.

“I did not abandon anyone,” I uttered. “I left because I thought it was the best choice at the time.”

“And now you think you can just waltz back in like nothing happened?” a woman asked, stepping forward. Her arms were crossed and her eyes narrowed. “Do you even know what we have been through since you left?”

“Enough,” Dominic ordered and the murmurs ceased instantly, all eyes snapping to him. “If anyone has an issue with Samantha being here, you can take it up with me.”

The courtyard fell silent and their gazes lowered.

I took a shaky breath, as a thought entered my mind. I could not do this. No matter how much Dominic defended me, no matter how many times he declared me his Luna, the truth was staring me in the face: they did not want me here.

“I should go,” I said quietly, stepping back.

Dominic’s head snapped toward me, his eyes narrowing. “You are not going anywhere.”

“Dominic, they do not want me here,” I said, my voice breaking. “You can’t force them to accept me.”

“I can,” he said fiercely. “And I will.”

But I shook my head, pulling my hand free from his. “This is not about you forcing them. It is about me earning their trust back. And right now, I don’t think that is possible.”

Without waiting for his response, I turned and walked away, ignoring the way my heart clenched with every step.

Dominic caught up with me outside the courtyard, “You are not leaving,” he said, stepping in front of me.

“I should,” I argued.

“Damn it, Samantha,” he growled, running a hand through his hair. “Do you think I care what they say? What they think?”

“Maybe you don’t,” I shot back. “But I do. And you should too. You are their Alpha, Dominic. Their respect matters.”

“They will respect you because I demand it,” he said.

I shook my head, tears pricking at the corners of my eyes. “That is not how it works. You can’t force respect, Dominic. It has to be earned. And right now, I am not sure I even deserve it.”

He stared at me, his jaw tight, his hands clenched into fists at his sides. For a moment, neither of us spoke, the silence stretching between us like an unbridgeable chasm.

Finally, he let out a frustrated sigh, pulling his phone from his pocket.

“What are you doing?” I asked, frowning.

“Fixing this,” he said shortly, dialing a number.

I watched as he stepped away, his voice low as he spoke into the phone. I could not make out his words, but his posture was tense, his free hand running through his hair as he paced.

When he hung up, he turned back to me.

“Who did you call?” I asked, my voice wary.

“Ethan,” he said simply.

Chapter 62
Samantha’s POV

Olivia’s face still lingered in my mind, the way she had looked at me before I left the pack grounds. That smug smile. That group of wolves hanging on her every word like she was some queen. It was not new to me anymore. Olivia always thrived on being the center of attention, making sure I was on the outside looking in. But today, it had gotten under my skin in a way I could not shake.

The way she tilted her head with a smile just wide enough to feel like a challenge made my stomach stir. She did not even have to say anything. That was the worst part. She knew how to needle me without lifting a finger.

I let out a heavy breath as I sank deeper into the couch. My shoes were still on and my bag dropped somewhere by the door. I did not even have the energy to care. My body felt like it was running on fumes, but my brain would not shut off.

What was I even doing there? Going back to that pack, and walking into this mess, it felt like I had walked into a fire willingly. And for what? To prove something? To Dominic? To them? To myself?

I rubbed my temples and tried to push the questions aside. But no matter how hard I tried, Olivia’s smile crept back in, along with the whispers and stares from the pack members.

They did not want me here anymore. I left, I ran away. I had abandoned them, and now they did not like me. That much was obvious. And Olivia? She was loving every second of it, so eager to take my place.

I closed my eyes, leaning back against the cushions. The silence of the house should have been comforting, but instead, it felt too loud. Too heavy. I pressed my hands against my face, trying to block out the noise in my head.

And then there was Dominic. He had stood there earlier, telling me he was "fixing this." Whatever that meant. His words did not comfort me. If anything, they added to the chaos swirling in my mind. It only confirmed that there was truly an issue in the pack against me.

I groaned quietly and let my hands fall into my lap. Why did everything with him have to be so complicated? Every time I thought I had him figured out, he threw something else at me, making me question everything all over again.

It was not just the way he looked at me. It was the way he seemed to know exactly when I needed him to step in, even if I did not want him to. And I hated that I needed him today. Hated that when he had held my hand earlier, I did not pull away.

I hated myself more for liking it.

The knock at the door jolted me out of my thoughts and for a second, I thought about ignoring it. But the second knock came, louder, more insistent.

I forced myself to my feet despite my legs being stiff from sitting too long. When I opened the door, there he was.

Dominic.

He did not say anything at first, just stepped inside without waiting for permission. He closed the door behind him, and I felt the shift in the air immediately.

“What are you doing here?” I asked, crossing my arms over my chest.

He looked at me like he was trying to figure out where to start. “I wasn’t going to let you leave like that.”

I blinked, caught off guard by how simple he made it sound. “I needed space, Dominic.”

“You needed me,” he stated, like he was not trying to convince me of anything, just stating a fact he believed down to his core.

“You don’t get to decide what I need,” I replied sharply, but the edge in my voice cracked under the tension between us.

He took a step closer, filling the small space of my living room with his presence, making it feel far smaller than it was. “Maybe not,” he said quietly. “But I see you, Samantha. I see what you are not saying, even to yourself.”

I tried to laugh, to create distance, but the sound that escaped was thin and bitter. “You think you know me? Because I do not even know myself right now.”

The silence that followed was deafening, the kind that only made my chest tighten. When he finally spoke, his words were quieter but they cut through the air like a knife. “You are angry. At me, at them, at yourself. But you can’t give up. I’m trying to fix this. Just trust me, everything will be fine.”

I sighed, shaking my head in disbelief, not towards him but at myself. “I don’t know why I let you in,” I admitted quietly as I looked away, unable to meet his eyes.

His hand brushed against mine, barely a touch, but the heat of it sent a jolt through me that made it impossible to stay indifferent.

“Tell me to leave,” he said, his voice softer now, almost daring. “If you don’t want me here, say the word, and I will go.”

The way he looked at me, the way his voice dipped just enough to shake my resolve, I hated it. Hated how much I wanted him to stay, how much I did not want to tell him to leave.

I stood there, my chest rising and falling unevenly as I searched for the words. But none came.

He stepped closer, his hand finding its way to my jaw, his thumb brushing lightly against my skin. His touch was warm, and I leaned into it before I could stop myself.

“Say it,” he whispered, his forehead almost touching mine. “Tell me you don’t feel this.”

I couldn’t. My silence said what my voice refused to.

And then his lips found mine.

The kiss was slow at first, searching, like he was giving me time to pull away. But I didn’t. Instead, I gave in, my hands gripping the front of his shirt as if he was the only thing keeping me steady.

He deepened the kiss, claiming my lips, and his hands slid to my waist, pulling me flush against him. The heat between us was unbearable as it spread through every inch of me, making it impossible to think about anything else.

His lips trailed from my mouth to my jaw, down to the sensitive spot just beneath my ear. My breath hitched, my hands fisting in his shirt as he pressed me back toward the wall.

“Dominic,” I whispered, barely recognizing my own voice.

The next moments blurred together — his hands exploring, my body arching into his, the heat between us building until it felt like it would consume me. Somewhere between kisses, he scooped me into his arms, carrying me like I weighed nothing.

Before I knew it, we were in the bathroom. The sound of water running filled the space and the warm steam wrapped around us as he set me down gently.

His hands were on me again, sliding the straps of my dress off my shoulders with his eyes locked on mine. There was nothing hurried about it, just the kind of deliberate, unspoken tension that made my skin tingle with anticipation.

We stepped into the tub and the warm water lapped against us as he pulled me close again. His lips found mine, and this time, there was no hesitation. Every touch, every kiss felt like a claim, and I could not bring myself to care.

The rest of the world melted away, leaving only him, his hands on my skin, his lips against mine, and the overwhelming need that made me forget everything else.

Chapter 63
Samantha's POV

"Why did I let this happen?"

The question hung in the air like a fog I could not escape, pressing down on my chest as I sat on the edge of the bed with a towel wrapped tightly around me. The faint warmth of the water still lingered on my skin, but it was nothing compared to the fire that had raged between us just moments ago. My reflection stared back at me from the small mirror across the room, but it was not just my face I saw. It was the conflict within, the confusion, the shame. And something else, something I was not ready to admit.

I ran my fingers through my damp hair, pulling it away from my face as if that would somehow clear my thoughts. But nothing helped. My mind kept replaying the way his hands felt on me, the way his lips claimed mine like they were meant to. And worse, the way I had wanted it.

No, I had not just wanted it... I had needed it.

The realization sent a shiver down my spine, one that had nothing to do with the cool air in the room. What was wrong with me? After everything Dominic had done, after all the lies and the betrayal in the past, how could I have let myself give in so easily?

“Because you still love him.”

The voice was not mine, but it came from within me... it was my wolf.

“I don’t,” I whispered sharply, my voice trembling even as I tried to sound firm.

“You do,” my wolf replied, unyielding. “You have always loved him. You are just too scared to admit it.”

I clenched my fists, anger bubbling up inside me, not at her, but at myself. “He hurt me,” I snapped back. “He made me feel like I was not enough. Like I was just... an obligation.”

“And yet here you are,” she said softly, almost sympathetically. “You can lie to yourself all you want, Samantha, but you can’t lie to me. I felt it too, the way he looks at you, the way you feel when he is close. You want him.”

I closed my eyes, leaning forward to rest my elbows on my knees as I buried my face in my hands. She was right, and I hated her for it. I hated myself for it. But what was worse was the tiny part of me that did not hate it at all.

I needed to do something, anything, to pull myself out of this spiral. My gaze flickered to my phone on the nightstand.

Killian.

The name was like a lifeline, a reminder of the one person who had been there for me when Dominic hadn’t. He had given me a place to belong

when I felt like I had none, and more importantly, he had never made me question my worth.

I grabbed the phone and dialed his number and my heart pounded as I waited for the call to connect.

It did not.

The automated message telling me the number was unavailable felt like a slap in the face, and I stared at the screen in disbelief. Why wasn't he answering? Killian was always there when I needed him. Always.

The knot in my stomach tightened, and I could not shake the feeling that something was wrong.

"What are you going to do now?" my wolf asked.

"I don't know," I admitted aloud, my voice barely above a whisper. "I don't know what to do."

"You know exactly what to do," she countered. "You just do not want to admit it."

I did not respond, because deep down, I knew she was right. My mind kept circling back to Dominic, to the way he had looked at me tonight, not with anger or frustration, but with love, adoration, and longing, and it only made my heart clench harder, knowing that I had wanted all those in the past yet, he only betrayed me. It was unfair to look at me that way now, to treat me lovingly when he had already broken me.

What if I had been wrong about him?

The thought was dangerous, but I could not stop it from creeping in. What if Dominic was not the same man who had hurt me before? What if he really was trying to change, to make things right? And what if... what if I was the one holding onto the past too tightly?

I shook my head, trying to push the thoughts away, but they clung to me like shadows. This was not just about me anymore. It was about Devon and Diana, about what kind of future I wanted for them. They deserved stability, safety, and a family.

Could Dominic give them that? Could he give me that?

I did not know. And the ‘not knowing’ was eating me alive.

I stood up abruptly, the towel slipping slightly as I tightened it around myself. I could not sit here and drown in my thoughts any longer. If Killian was not answering, I would go to him. I needed clarity, and I was not going to find it here, wrapped up in memories and questions I could not answer. I needed his help at least, to have more clarity.

But as I started to move, something stopped me. A small voice in the back of my mind, quieter than my wolf but no less persistent.

What if you’re running again?

The thought hit me like a punch to the gut, and I froze, my hands trembling as I clutched the towel. Was that what I was doing? Running to Killian because it was easier than facing what I felt for Dominic?

The realization left me breathless, and for a moment, I could not move. I did not want to admit it, but it was true. Killian had always been my escape, my safe haven. But Dominic... he was the storm. And maybe, just maybe, I was tired of running from it.

My legs felt like lead as I sank back onto the bed, my phone still clutched in my hand. I did not know what to do, but for the first time, I was not sure I wanted to run.

The thought terrified me, but it also made my chest ache in a way that felt almost like hope.

And that was the scariest part of all.

I stared at the phone again, my thumb hovering over Killian's name. But I did not press it. Instead, I set it down and leaned back against the pillows, letting out a shaky breath.

I did not have the answers tonight. But maybe, just maybe, I did not need them all right now.

Chapter 64
Samantha's POV

"Mom, why does your face go red every time Alpha Dominic is around?"

Diana's question made me choke on my water. I coughed, sputtering as Diana giggled uncontrollably and Annie raised a single, knowing eyebrow from across the dining table. My cheeks burned hotter than the sun, and I struggled to compose myself, waving off Annie's attempt to hand me a napkin.

"I don't—" I started, then stopped, realizing any denial would only make things worse. Devon was staring at me with his arms crossed, his face far too serious for a six-year-old, while Diana leaned forward eagerly, clearly enjoying my discomfort.

"You do, though," Diana chirped, grinning. "It's like you are allergic to him or something. You always act weird."

"I do not act weird," I muttered, stabbing at the salad on my plate with far more force than necessary.

"You totally do," Devon said, smirking now. And that smirk, it was the same one Dominic wore when he knew he had the upper hand in a situation. Oh, great. My son was turning into a miniature version of his father. "I caught you kissing him again. In the kitchen, mom. You did not even see me, but I saw you."

My fork clattered onto the plate as I froze. My stomach dropped. “You... you what?”

Why hadn’t I been more careful? How could I have let my guard down like that in front of the kids?

“And hugging him too,” Devon continued, his smirk widening as if he were enjoying my discomfort far too much. “Last week. You were all smiley and stuff.”

Smile? When had I smiled? Oh, no. Did Dominic make me smile now? What was happening to me

“You are imagining things,” I uttered quickly, and I sounded a little too high pitched to sound convincing.

“He is not imagining it!” Diana piped up, her eyes sparkling with mischief and practically bouncing in her seat with glee. “And what about when we saw you in the same bed? Devon said grown-ups only do that when they are ‘in love.’”

In love.

My mind reeled at the words. How could something so simple sound so terrifying when said out loud?

I felt like I was about to spontaneously combust. “Okay, that’s enough!” I snapped, but the twins were on a roll now, completely ignoring me.

“Are you in love with Alpha Dominic, Mom?” Diana asked bluntly, tilting her head with all the innocence of someone who didn’t realize she was throwing dynamite into an open fire. “Is that why you were so nervous when he came to tuck us in last night?”

“I wasn’t nervous!” I exclaimed, my voice climbing another octave.

“Yes, you were,” Devon said, narrowing his eyes like a little detective piecing together a case. “You did not even say anything to him. You just

stood there, all awkward and quiet. And then your face went red, just like it is doing now!"

Oh, for goddess' sake. I groaned inwardly. Why were children so perceptive? Why couldn't they just let me exist in peace without analyzing every single one of my reactions?

"I'm not—" I stopped, realizing my protests were only fueling their fire. "You two are impossible."

"Mom, you should just tell him you like him," Diana said matter of factly, as if love and feelings were as simple as flipping a light switch. "That's what happens in the movies. The girl likes the boy, she tells him, and then they get married."

And then they live happily ever after. If only it were that simple.

"And then they kiss again," Devon added helpfully.

"Oh my goddess," I groaned, covering my face with both hands as Diana dissolved into another fit of giggles. Even Annie could not keep a straight face, her lips twitching as she tried to focus on feeding the twins' plates.

This was a nightmare. No, worse than a nightmare. Because in nightmares, at least, you could wake up.

"Okay, enough," I said, trying to sound firm but failing miserably. "Finish your lunch, or no dessert."

"That's not fair!" Diana protested, though her grin did not fade.

"Life's not fair," I replied, earning an exaggerated eye roll from her.

Annie cleared her throat softly, drawing my attention. She was not laughing anymore, but her eyes were still warm with a gentle look. "They are just kids, Samantha," she said quietly. "And kids notice things, even when we think they don't."

Her words hit harder than I expected, and I looked away, focusing on my plate. Of course, they noticed. How could they not, when I could not even hide my own confusion from myself?

~

After lunch, I busied myself with cleaning up, and I was absolutely grateful for the distraction. The twins ran off to play in the living room and their laughter echoed through the house as Annie followed behind to keep an eye on them.

But even as I scrubbed the dishes and wiped down the counters, my thoughts kept drifting back to Dominic. To the way he had looked at me last night. To the way my stomach flipped every time he was near, no matter how hard I tried to ignore it, and the way my body burned with each touch he rendered.

It was not fair. I had spent years convincing myself that I did not need him, that I did not want him. And yet, here I was, unraveling at the seams because of one heated moment. Or should I say, several.

I needed clarity. Distance. Something to pull me out of this spiral before I lost myself completely.

Killian.

The name brought a wave of guilt, but also a sense of relief. He had always been my anchor, my safe place. And right now, I needed that more than anything.

I grabbed my phone and headed upstairs to change. I had just finished pulling on a sweater when my phone buzzed in my hand.

An unknown number flashed across the screen.

Frowning, I hesitated for a moment before swiping to answer. “Hello?”

“Well, well, look who finally picked up.”

My stomach twisted at the sound of her voice. “Olivia,” I uttered flatly, gripping the phone tighter. “What do you want?”

“Relax, Samantha,” she replied, sickeningly sweet. “I am just calling to talk. You know, like civilized adults.”

“I have nothing to say to you.”

“Oh, but I have plenty to say to you.”

I clenched my jaw, my free hand curling into a fist at my side. “If this is about Dominic—”

“This is not about Dominic,” she cut in sharply. “This is about the twins.”

Her words sent a cold chill down my spine as I was reminded of what she did when she took the twins without my knowledge and permission. She basically kidnapped them. And I would never let my kids near this woman. “What about them?” I asked.

“You’ve really been playing mommy well, haven’t you?” she sneered. “But let’s cut the act, shall we? You and I both know those children deserve more than what you can offer. They would be better off with my family, with a proper future, one you can’t give them.”

Anger flared hot in my chest, and I gripped the phone tighter. “What the hell are you talking about?”

“I am talking about taking what is rightfully theirs and putting it in the hands of someone capable. You think you are enough, Samantha? You think your sad, pitiful attempt at motherhood is enough to prepare them for what’s coming? You are delusional.”

“They are my children,” I snapped. “You don’t get to dictate their future or decide what is best for them. And you sure as hell don’t get to come into my life and make demands!”

“Oh, but I do,” Olivia countered, her tone dripping with mockery. “Because unlike you, I know how to make things happen. You can either step aside gracefully, or—”

Chapter 65
Samantha’s POV

“Step aside?” I interrupted, “You are out of your mind if you think I am handing over my kids to you or anyone else. I would die before I let that happen.”

“How noble,” she drawled. “But don’t fool yourself into thinking this is a choice, Samantha. You are playing a losing game. You are weak. And when you fall, those kids will be left to pick up the pieces. Do you really want that for them?”

My hand trembled with the force of my grip on the phone. “You don’t know a damn thing about me or what I am capable of. And if you come near my children, if you even think about trying to take them again, you will regret it.”

“Oh, I’m trembling,” Olivia mocked. “You think you can scare me, Samantha? You think your little threats mean anything? I have dealt with bigger obstacles than you, and I have crushed them all. You are nothing.”

“Try me,” I spat. “Come near my children, and I will show you exactly what I am capable of. You think you are ruthless, Olivia? You don’t know the first thing about it.”

There was a brief pause, and then her voice dropped, cold and venomous. “You are going to regret this, Samantha. You and your little brats are living on borrowed time. And when the time comes, don’t say I did not warn you.”

“Stay away from my kids,” I hissed. “This is your last warning. If you so much as breathe near them, I will make sure you regret it for the rest of your miserable life.”

“Big talk for someone who’s already lost,” she shot back. “You can’t protect them forever, Samantha. Sooner or later, they will be mine... or they will be gone.”

Her words sent a jolt of cold terror through me, but I refused to let her hear the fear in my voice. Instead, I clung to my anger like a lifeline, letting it harden my response.

"You will never get near my children, Olivia," I warned. "Never."

"You think Dominic will stick around forever?" Olivia sneered. "Once he realizes you are just a weak, broken woman clinging to something you do not deserve, he will come back to me. He always does."

A sharp pang pierced my chest, but I shoved it aside. This was what Olivia wanted, to make me doubt myself, to make me second guess everything I had rebuilt. But I would not let her.

"Dominic is not your pawn to manipulate anymore," I countered, gripping the phone tighter. "You can spin your lies all you want, Olivia, but he sees right through you now. And so do I."

Her laugh was cruel and cutting, like shards of glass against my skin. "Oh, Samantha, you are delusional if you think he is yours. Dominic and I have history, something you will never understand. He will always come back to me, no matter how hard you try to keep him."

Her words ignited a flicker of doubt I could not quite extinguish, but I pushed forward. "That ‘history’ you are so proud of? It is over. He made his choice, and it was not you."

"Then why hasn’t he claimed you properly?" she taunted. "Why is he still hesitant, Samantha? If you were so important to him, he wouldn’t be waffling, would he?"

And the truth of her words froze me for a moment. She was right, and it made my stomach twist, but before I could retort, I felt a sudden presence

behind me. A shadow fell over the doorway, and my heart skipped a beat as I turned to see Dominic standing there.

He was leaning casually against the doorframe, arms crossed, but the way his eyes looked furiously at the phone in my hand told me he had heard everything.

"Olivia," I said into the phone, "you are done here. Don’t call me again."

But before I could hang up, Olivia’s voice crackled through the speaker. "Oh, Samantha. Dominic will never choose you. Not fully. And when he leaves, you will be alone again. Mark my words."

I clenched my jaw and my gaze locked with Dominic’s as I ended the call. My hands shook as I set the phone down on the counter, and for a moment, the room was silent except for the soft hum of the refrigerator.

"How much of that did you hear?" I asked, quieter than I intended.

"Enough," Dominic replied, stepping into the room.

I crossed my arms, trying to have some warmth of comfort through me. Everything she said threatened everything that I had — my twins, and... Dominic. But I acted tough in front of him as I spoke. "I didn’t need your help, if that’s what you are thinking."

His lips twitched into a faint smirk, though it did not reach his eyes. "Clearly. You were handling her just fine."

I let out a sharp breath, my frustration bubbling to the surface. "She’s unhinged, Dominic. She threatened my kids."

He closed the distance between us. "I won’t let her touch them. Or you."

There it was again, that maddening certainty in his voice, as if he could solve every problem with sheer willpower. But this was not something he could simply fix.

"She is convinced you will go back to her," I said, unable to keep the bitterness from creeping into my voice. "That you will choose her over us."

Dominic's expression darkened, and he took another step closer. "I have already made my choice, Samantha. You know that."

"Do I?" I shot back, the words escaping before I could stop them. "Because she seems awfully confident that you haven't."

His jaw tightened, and for a moment, he did not respond. The silence stretched between us, until finally, he reached out and gently took my hands in his.

"She doesn't matter," he reassured. "You do. The kids do. That's all that matters to me now."

I wanted to believe him, but the fear and doubt Olivia had sown in me would not be so easily uprooted. "And what happens when she tries again? Because she will, Dominic. She will not stop until she gets what she wants."

"Then we will stop her," he uttered simply, as if it were the easiest thing in the world.

His confidence was unnerving, but it was also strangely comforting. I wanted to argue, to tell him he did not understand the gravity of the situation, but the words caught in my throat.

Instead, I sighed and looked away, my gaze falling to where his hands still held mine. His touch was warm and comforting, and it made me feel all sorts of things to my core.

"You drive me crazy, you know that?" I muttered.

A faint smile tugged at his lips. "I've been told."

Before I could respond, he leaned down and pressed a gentle kiss to my forehead. The gesture was so unexpected, so tender, that it left me momentarily speechless.

But instead of pulling back, he lingered, his fingers slipping up to cradle the side of my face. When his lips moved lower, grazing my temple, then my cheek, I felt my resolve crumble, and I let him in.

When his mouth finally claimed mine, it was nothing like the hesitant kiss from before. This was deeper, more desperate, as though he was pouring every unspoken word, every apology, and every promise into the connection. His hands slid down my sides, pulling me closer until there was no space left between us. I melted into him, my fingers tangling in his hair, holding him as though letting go would shatter the fragile bond we were rebuilding.

He broke the kiss, his forehead resting against mine as we both fought to catch our breath. His eyes met mine, no longer guarded but open, vulnerable. "I am not letting you do this alone anymore, Samantha. Whatever it takes, we will face it... together."

The conviction in his voice left me breathless. He was not just saying the words; he meant them. And for the first time in what felt like forever, I allowed myself to believe him. The years of tension and distance between us felt lighter, replaced by something raw, something real, something burning. I nodded, not trusting myself to speak, and his lips curved into a faint smile before he kissed me again, claiming, rougher and devouring this time. And I surrendered once again.

Chapter 66
Samantha's POV

"Do you even realize how much you affect me?" Dominic murmured, his breath brushing my skin as his lips pressed against mine again, hungrier this time.

I barely had a chance to think, much less respond. Every kiss, every touch, sent my mind spinning. It was maddening, and addictive. His hands rested

on my waist, fingers curling slightly, like he needed to keep me close or risk losing me again.

And the worst part? I did not want him to let go.

But I could not ignore the chaos bubbling inside me. The guilt gnawed at the edges of my mind, the doubt clawing its way into the heat of the moment.

My twins.

I pulled back slightly, pressing my hands against his chest. And I felt his heartbeat thundered beneath my fingertips, matching the erratic rhythm of my own. “Dominic, wait.”

His brows furrowed and the intensity in his eyes softened just a fraction. “What’s wrong?”

“I...” I struggled for the right words, my chest heaving as I tried to calm my breath. “I can’t... We can’t just... What about Devon and Diana?”

The mention of their names seemed to ground both of us as his grip on my waist loosened, though his hands stayed there, warm and comforting. “What about them?”

“This,” I gestured between us. “This thing between us... It is not just about you and me anymore. They are my priority, Dominic. They always will be. What if...” My voice faltered, and I hated the vulnerability bleeding through. “What if this, what we are doing, confuses them? Hurts them?”

He was quiet for a moment, and I hated how exposed I felt under his gaze. Then he reached up, gently tucking a strand of hair behind my ear. “Samantha, they are my priority too. I know I have made mistakes, but I am here now. For you. For them. And I will do whatever it takes to make sure they know they are loved and safe.”

I could feel the sincerity of his words but they only added to the storm of emotions brewing inside me. “It is not that simple. They don’t even know much about you, and what if this does not work out—”

“It will work out,” he interjected firmly, leaving no room for argument. “Because I am not going anywhere.”

“You can’t promise that,” I whispered, more to myself than to him.

He tilted my chin up, forcing me to meet his gaze. “I can. And I will. But I understand why you are scared, Samantha. I get it. You have been through hell because of me, I’ve been a part of that. But I am trying to fix it. I am trying to be better, for you and for them.”

I wanted to believe him. Goddess, I wanted to believe him so badly. But the scars of the past were not so easily ignored.

“And what about your family?” I asked, my voice barely audible. “They are not just going to accept this, Dominic. Us. Me. The kids.”

“I will handle them,” he replied without hesitation. “But you are right. We need to take this one step at a time. I do not want to do anything that makes you feel unsafe or unsure, especially the kids, we can’t just suddenly shock them with this.”

I blinked at him, caught off guard by his sudden shift in tone. “What are you saying?”

“I’m saying,” he began, his hands sliding from my waist to gently take mine, “that I will help you. With my family, with the pack, whatever it takes to earn their trust and yours. But I need you to trust me too, Samantha. Completely.”

Trust. It was such a simple concept, but it was one I struggled with, especially when it came to Dominic.

“You have already made so many promises,” I murmured. “How do I know this is not just another one you will not keep?”

His grip on my hands tightened slightly, his eyes never leaving mine. “Because I have never wanted anything more than I want this. You, the kids, a chance to fix everything I have broken. I can’t undo the past, but I can make damn sure our future is better.”

Something in his voice, in his expression, in his eyes, cracked through the walls I had built around myself. For the first time in a long time, I allowed myself to entertain the possibility that maybe, just maybe, he meant it.

Still, doubt lingered. “What if we are moving too fast? What if this all falls apart before it even has a chance to start?”

Dominic let out a soft breath, his thumb brushing over the back of my hand. “It’s not about speed, Samantha. It’s about doing this right. And I will wait as long as you need me to.”

His patience, his willingness to put me and the kids first, chipped away at my defenses. “You are making it really hard to keep my guard up, you know that?”

He smiled faintly, the corners of his mouth lifting just enough to make my heart ache. “Good. Because I don’t want there to be any walls between us anymore.”

Then he leaned in again, his lips capturing mine in a kiss that was both tender and insistent. It was a promise, a plea, a thousand unspoken words wrapped into one moment s he moved and dipped deeper into my mouth, tangling with my tongue.

But then, just as I was beginning to lose myself in him again, he pulled back, his brow furrowing slightly. “Samantha...”

“What?” I asked, suddenly self-conscious under his gaze.

He tilted his head, his nose brushing against the curve of my neck. “Your scent. It’s...” He trailed off, his expression shifting to something I could not quite place.

“My scent?” I repeated, confused.

He pulled back slightly, his eyes searching mine. “You didn’t know?”

“Didn’t know what?”

His hesitation made my stomach twist. “That you’re giving off a scent. A very... distinct scent.”

I stared at him, utterly bewildered. “What are you talking about?”

Dominic’s jaw tightened, his gaze dropping briefly before meeting mine again. “Samantha, are you... in heat?”

His words surprised me, and for a moment, all I could do was stare at him, my mind scrambling to process what he had just said.

“I— what?” I managed to stammer, my cheeks flushing as a mix of confusion and embarrassment washed over me.

The room felt smaller and the space between us was almost unbearable. But I could not bring myself to look away or step back. I wanted his warmth, his touch, his closeness, and his presence. I craved for him... And I might have been needing him more than I realized.

“Are you in heat, Samantha?”

Chapter 67
[Samantha’s Point of View]

My face was red and I was too embarrassed, too proud to admit I wanted him.

Needed him.

As he realized the scent, his piercing eyes gazed at me with hunger, sending shivers down my spine. He leaned his head to the side as he lifted

the strap of my silk nightgown and watched it loosen as it slid down my shoulder.

I couldn't take my eyes off him. His luscious gaze captivated me. Hazel Brown mesmerizingly stared at me as he pulled me closer to him. His finger traced the line down my spine with a feathery touch.

A moan stuck in my throat, urging me to whisper Dominic's name, wanting to stop him from teasing me. But the dark desire in his eyes ignited a more dangerous flame after he caught the scent that was too impossible for me to hide anymore. I did my hardest not to make it look obvious to him but the sudden restlessness, the tickling feeling between my legs as the feeling of arousal took over my senses, was something impossible for him to ignore.

He truly enjoyed it—enjoyed every second of it as his hands ran down the sensitive skin of my arm and my breathing went uneven. My wolf and I were nervous and anticipating at the same time. And I had to fight hard not to close my eyes at the warmth and pleasure his fingers did to me.

"Dominic..." My words were cut off before I could muster them when his lips started brushing at the small curve of my neck—his stubble tickled me and I couldn't help but bite my lower lip hard and pray not to whimper. His teeth started nibbling the lobe of my ear while his hands explored the skin underneath my shirt and I gasped. His scent and the amazing sensation his hands created as they brushed up underneath my perky br**ts, were so intoxicating that my head started to feel a little dizzy.

"Say it, Samantha. Say my name again," he whispered in my ear. His dominance made it sound a lot more like a command, making me wetter as he bit the scapha of my ear.

I was about to whisper his name again, addicted to his rough and hoarse voice, when we both got distracted by my phone. I thought about ignoring it as I drowned myself in the wonderful feeling of Dominic's lips brushing down my throat. But the ringing was persistent and urgent, and Dominic's losing patience made him groan with his lips pressed on my shoulder.

“Ignore it,” Dominic snarled on my skin as he glared at my device. I pushed a little away from him, reaching for my phone on the table but he hooked his hand on my waist and pulled me against him, pressing his ripped body against mine.

“I said ignore it.” there was a warning in his tone as he leaned down and wanted to fervently claim my lips but I bent backward with my hand on his chest as I widened my eyes at him in warning.

“It must be urgent, Dominic! Let me answer it.” I didn’t know why I wanted to smile when I saw that annoyed look on his face but he refused to let go of me as I reached for my phone on the table, stretching my arm as he held me tight, not letting me lose my balance.

Then another nervous feeling burst in my chest when I saw Killian’s name on the caller ID.

Dominic must have noticed the change in my expression and his eyes darkened. He already knew who ruined his moment.

I hesitated if I would answer the call. My heated wolf told me to throw the phone away and focus on Dominic. But my head tried to make sense of why Killian needed to talk to me in that hour of the night. Was it something urgent? An attack? An important matter that he needed to be informed about? I stared at Dominic’s hazel eyes, giving him a warning to behave for a second while I took the call.

He let out a dangerous growl of exasperation as he let me answer the call but still refused to let me walk away with his arms still wrapped around me. I turned around and he buried his face on my shoulder, his lips still brushing, tongue tracing on my soft, feverish skin.

“Killian?” I answered. I let out a little sigh as I made my voice steady and calm while I felt Dominic’s stirring anger behind me. I bit my lower lip hard when I felt his chest rise and fall as he heard the Moonlight Pack Alpha’s name. He was obviously unhappy that the beautiful moment we were having was interrupted by the person he currently hated most.

But I was baffled when Dominic had something more mischievous in his mind.

As much as I tried to get my voice under control despite my heart beating erratically in my chest, Dominic's hand started caressing, kneading under my shirt with his long, candle-like fingers deliciously stroking and molding my br**sts. My eyes widened and my back arched automatically, rubbing my bottom against his hardness as I closed my eyes breathlessly.

"Sorry, I just suddenly want to hear your voice." There was a touch of desperation and longing in Killian's voice and the pang of guilt pierced my chest. "And also checking if you and the kids are alright."

I didn't know what to say. I was so immersed in the wild feeling of Dominic's expert hands exploring me. I felt his throat rumble silently behind me and I panicked. "I'm fine, Killian. The kids are probably sleeping now with Annie checking on them."

There was a minute of pause from the other line and I squeezed my eyes shut as I arched my back again. What was Dominic doing? The sensation was a dangerous, harsh form of torment, as he kept on tempting me, teasing me, while fully aware that it was Killian on the other end.

And the Goddess knows how he was so delighted by it.

"I know these past few days have been difficult for you after dealing with Dominic and the rest of his bu*llsh*t. I wish I could make it all better for you, Sam. All I wanted was for you to be happy. For the kids to be safe and happy."

I knew Dominic was listening. I knew he could hear Killian's every word. But his hands kept on giving my body the gratification it needed as the fingers of his right hand enclosed my n*pple, tugging, teasing it gently—skillfully. His warm left hand moved on my body, fingers brushing on my curve, feeling the sexy roundness of my thigh.

I swallowed hard, confused if I would stop Dominic or if I would let my wolf win and have her mate for the night. Killian had always been with me at my

worst when I was lost and needed someone. He was there and witnessed my twin's growth, adored them like they were his own. He protected me and sheltered me when I had no one to go to. He was always with me through my highs and lows—the only he-wolf who never gave up on me when I almost gave up on myself.

But being with Dominic, even after all the horrors I went through and suffered because of him, my body still betrayed me, screaming that he was the only he-wolf I needed. Every fiber, every inch of me, knew every stroke of his fingers very well—the taste and the way his lips brushed whenever he claimed my lips. His touch was the only cure I needed to get rid of this ache I suffered whenever he was around.

He was my insanity and clarity at the same time

Dominic's hand ran down between my legs and my tongue wetted my lips as I swallowed hard, my c*nt so wet with the ache of him wanting inside me so badly.

"I-I have to go, Killian. Maybe we could talk about it some other time."

I wasn't sure what happened but my body acted on its own, surrendering to Dominic entirely as I ended the call and tossed the mobile phone onto the bedside table with a loud thump. My arms wrapped around Dominic's neck as his lips landed on my lips, kissing me ardently, possessively. I could only listen to what my heart and body wanted and every part of my existence screamed of Dominic's name. My mind blared a warning but I didn't care anymore. I wanted him. I wanted to taste him. Feel him. Every inch of him. Goddess, I needed to be with him or I would lose my mind.

Whimpers and soft moans escaped from my lips when my wolf finally succeeded in letting Dominic completely claim me.

Love was so fierce.

And wonderfully passionate.

Chapter 68
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

A soft groan escaped from my lips.

A soft ray of morning light made me blink several times as I realized the sun was already up. But the cold breeze escaping from the slight opening of the window made me want to stay longer in bed. Every inch of me was aching as I attempted to move to my side. A strong arm pillowed underneath my head as Domic wrapped my hair around his fingers, carefully so he wouldn't wake me.

I wanted to smile, for him to know I was already awake. But I wanted to enjoy more this gentle side of him as he leisurely traced the curve of my shoulder with the tip of his finger.

Last night was like a dream to me—a dream I had always wanted but was too scared to risk. Dominic had always been like a fire to me. He was the warmth in the middle of the winter night but would burn me alive once I completely submitted to my desire.

Everything that happened last night was still fresh in my memory.

His warm breath was divine to my skin as he planted small kisses on my shoulder where his fingertips traced down to my arm. I got a little nervous when he took my hand as his fingers closed on my fingers and kissed the back of it with such passion that it almost made me breathless.

"Good morning, beautiful," he whispered in my ear and bit the lobe of my ear. "I love that you keep on pretending you are sleeping while enjoying my kisses."

"Shut up." I chuckled at him and shifted to my side, my face blushing red. "How's your sleep?"

"Glorious," he answered with a grin as he pulled me to him in a gentle cuddle. The side of my face pressed on his broad, slightly hairy chest. "I had never slept so peacefully like this in six years." his voice was hoarse.

His hazel eyes stared at me like I was the only woman he needed in the world.

Or maybe I was still high with the amazing feelings with him last night that I wanted to convince myself we only belonged to each other—just like how I dreamed of us six years ago.

“What are we doing, Dominic?” I asked him, confused with my feelings. I wanted him close but I was scared of falling for him again. My wolf told me I was right where I should be—in the arms of the man whose name resonated with my heart’s longing. The name of the man who made me suffer but was worth suffering for. Because f*ck it, I wasn’t sure what I was feeling right now while looking at those gentle hazel eyes that were looking at me with such gentleness I had never seen in him. He was different and I couldn’t explain it. So many unpleasant things happened between us but my feelings stayed the same. Stayed crazy whenever he was around me.

“Whatever that is that’s going on in your head,” Dominic’s voice was deep and soft as he caressed the side of my face. “All I know is I belong to you, Samantha. And I was too foolish not to see that from the start. To realize that all I have ever wanted is you and no one else.”

My slightly widened. I gazed into his eyes and watched them swim with pure emotions that I had never seen before. I felt my chest tighten as we spent several minutes with our eyes locked on each other. Memorizing every inch, every small detail on my skin.

As if he were seeing me for the very first time.

And that’s when I remembered something vague. Something important that was still foggy in my head and when I did, my mouth dropped open.

“Did you use—”

“No.”

That flatness in his voice made me slap him on the shoulder. I couldn't believe what I just heard. "What do you mean, no?!" I asked, a little horrified at his answer. "Dominic, what did you—"

'Hey, hey, relax." he pulled me to him as soon as he saw the panic in me and kissed my forehead. "I was so consumed with my feelings for you last night that I didn't think about it. I know you felt the same way, Samantha. It was amazing and I'll never regret what happened."

I was silenced by the sincerity in his voice as he wrapped me in his arms. "I wish we could be like this every night and day. Being with you here makes me hate to go back to my office."

His words were shocking to me. He was never open with his feelings before and seeing these changes made me want to smile and giggle. I couldn't remember the last time I was beaming like this. "You know you can't stay," I whispered to him, hiding my smile as I buried my face on his bare chest. Dominic, not using any protection last night, gave me fears that he might get me pregnant again but why was I not bothered by the thought? Was I starting to feel comfortable with him?

I shouldn't entertain such thoughts. Dominic was a complicated person and I never wanted to be betrayed with my hopeful wishes again.

"I'll stay if you want me to," Dominic answered with his eyes serious. "And I don't need any protection when I make love with you, Samantha." He leaned closer and kissed the back of my hand once again, making me nervous at the small gesture he didn't usually do before.

Dominic's lips tugged to a side in a teasing grin. "And I don't care if you ever get pregnant again, Samantha." There was something in his stare that made me blush as he teased my hand with more kisses until his lips stopped on the tip of my finger and bit it. I drew in a sharp breath as I stared at his sexy glare. "I want you. Everything about you, Samantha. Maybe we can have more pups. A dozen would be amazing."

My eyes widened. Goddess save me! Was he serious?!

I snatched my hand back away from him. “Stop with your jokes, Dominic.” I almost rolled my eyes at him and pushed myself up the bed to dress but he pulled me again, rolled me back to bed, and pinned me with him on top of me. Goddess, he was so handsome with his unruly dark hair and those hazel eyes staring at me hungrily. My chest started to rise and fall for it was hard to breathe with both charm and danger oozing from his ripped, sexy body. He was driving me insane.

But I worried the children might wake up soon and look for me. I never wanted them to find out I had someone in my room so I snapped out of my wolf’s crazy demand to make Dominic stay and spend the whole day with him.

“You have to go, Dominic...” I had to swallow hard before I said the words to silence the wolf inside me. “The twins can’t know you spent the night here with me. I am not ready yet to explain to them about what you are to me.”

There was something in his eyes that sparkled interest. A thirst. A demand. “What am I to you, Samantha? Tell me. I need to know.”

I shouldn’t have said it to him. “Not now, Dominic.” I pushed him away. I didn’t know why I had to force myself not to laugh in front of him. Maybe I was a little worried he would get too comfortable with me again and refuse to leave.

He sighed in defeat as he helped me get up from the bed and planted a soft kiss on my lips first before he let me grab my clothes on the floor. “Fine. I wish I could stay, though. Maybe we can talk the kids about us—”

“No.” the words slipped abruptly out of my lips and I saw that sudden solemnness in his eyes that made me want to regret. “I mean, they are not ready yet for this, Dominic. I don’t want to rush them.”

“I understand, love,” he murmured as he slipped his pants on with his eyes focused on me. I couldn’t concentrate on putting my clothes on because I couldn’t stop myself from watching him from the corner of my eyes. I ended

up just leaning my hips on the bedside table with the blanket covering my naked, aching body.

Dominic, who was already fully clothed, reached for my hand and pulled me again to him. “Message me whenever you need me, Samantha. I mean it. I need to know how you are doing with the twins while I am away.”

“This week will be pretty busy for me so I can’t promise,” I smiled at him teasingly and my grin widened when he narrowed his eyes on me. “Okay, yes.” I responded with a chuckle, and a surprised smile tugged at his lips.

I looked into his hazel eyes with a nervous smile and asked, "What are you smiling at?"

“Keep smiling,” he whispered. “I love it.”

I felt warmth in my chest as we stared at each other and he touched my forehead with his. I couldn’t believe he was there with me. Sharing this kind of happiness I thought I would never experience with him.

“See you, Dominic.” I whispered to him, leaving me with unexplained sadness.

“I’ll come back,” he answered as he lifted my face with his finger and planted a soft kiss on my lips.

A gentle breeze swept across my face and disappeared.

Chapter 69
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I didn’t know what was wrong but something was different. Something that made our little office off and I needed to know what made Killian’s mood look like a volcano spreading lava all over everyone.

“I don’t think it is the right moment to talk to him, Samantha.” One of his council members, who had just left Moonstone Alpha’s office, quietly warned me. “He’s not looking promising today.”

I smiled at the sweet old man and patted him on the shoulder. He was one of the council members who welcomed me into the Moonstone pack. “Nothing to worry about, Sir Elliot. I will make sure to deal with whatever made Killian upset today.” I assured him and he nodded at me with a wide smile on his face and excused himself for another meeting that needed his presence.

With a heavy sigh, I stood in front of Killian’s door as I prepared myself for whatever was waiting for me inside. I prayed to the Moon Goddess it wasn’t about Dominic again but I couldn’t hope. I had a huge feeling it was about me dropping off his call last night while I was with Dominic. Did he notice I was with my mate? I wasn’t sure what was going on inside Killian’s head. The only thing I was sure of was that he would never let Dominic win. While I was uncertain of what I wanted...needed, of what my heart really yearned for—I couldn’t let myself settle for whatever my heart had been screaming to me.

You don’t have to deal with it, my wolf told me when I grabbed the doorknob. Turn around, Samantha. You don’t have time for this.

I can’t keep ignoring this. I answered my wolf, who was frustrated with my answer. Killian had been a very good friend to me and whatever it is that bothers him, I need to be there.

Silly girl, my wolf hissed. Isn’t it obvious? It was about last night when you ignored him because of our mate. Maybe you can give him more time to process his feelings. You’ll just make things worse if you get inside that room.

My wolf was right. But just like what I told her, I couldn’t run away and ignore him all day.

“Killian?” I asked as soon as I stepped inside his office with folders in my other hand and the other still holding the doorknob. He was standing with his back to me and staring at the window panel that overlooks the heart of the city of the Moonstone Pack.

He didn’t turn around and answered me with a detached tone. “Get inside.”

I frowned and closed the door gently behind me. I stood behind him and didn’t sit on the couch, while I usually did when I visited his office. I stayed silent, waiting for him to talk. But we stayed there in his office for a torturing five minutes without saying a word to each other.

It was agonizing to stand there and wait so I decided to leave.

“Wait.”

“Whatever it is that makes you so upset, just tell me, Killian.” I snapped at him. I am too busy for this. You know I can’t deal with this anymore. Either you tell me what is in your mind or I’m out of here.”

“Samantha.” His voice still sounded stern, but there was a hint of solemnity in it. “Where were you last night?”

My frown deepened. “What’s this, Killian?” I threw the folders on his table and folded my arms on my chest. “I am not informed I should tell you everything I am doing now.”

“I am just asking, Sam. I need to know. I need you to be honest with me.” He turned his head to the side, refusing to let me see his face.

The guilt felt as if I was being gutted in front of him. I didn’t know how to answer because if I told him the truth, I was certain a war between him and Dominic would start because of me. If I lied, I would end up hating myself more than Killian would hate me. It was an awful thing to do to a man like Killian, who did nothing but help and protect me since I arrived in his pack.

“I was home,” I answered as simply as I could while biting my lower lip.

“And?” Killian growled. His hands curled into fists at his sides so tight his knuckles turned white.

Goddess, it was awful. I hated when my wolf snarled at me; I told you so.

“What do you want to know, Killian? Does it matter?” I lashed out at him, shaking my head slightly as I massaged the space between my eyes. “Maybe we shouldn’t talk about this.”

Killian finally decided to turn around and face me. There was a sudden ache in my throat the moment I saw that pain and defeat in his eyes—mixed with disappointment and betrayal as he gazed at me with darkened green eyes. Muscles feathered his jaw as he studied me with that judging looks I had never imagined I would see him do to me.

“Shouldn’t we, Samantha?” There was something dark in Killian’s voice that made my eyes sharpen. Even my wolf didn’t like the sudden gravity in the room as Killian showed his Alpha power in front of me. Or maybe he wasn’t aware he was doing it because of the uncontrolled emotion he was having.

“He was there with you.” It wasn’t a question but an accusation. “I don’t understand, Samantha. I thought... I thought—”

“There’s nothing for you to understand about something between me and Dominic, Killian,” I answered him, unable to look into his eyes. “Dominic isn’t that cold and cruel man I ran away from. He’s changed. He’s... ” I shook my head and bit my lower lip hard before I spoke again. “He’s different.”

“He’s from Silver Crescent, Sam! He’s a pack that had been a huge threat to me and our people! The Moonstone people!”

We both knew that it wasn’t about Dominic being an enemy of the pack.

“Let’s not talk about this, Killian. You don’t understand.” I pleaded with him. As the Alpha of the pack, I stayed calm and showed Killian I still respected him. But it was too hard when he was displaying such dominance as if he had the right to decide for my life.

“You don’t know what you are saying, Sam. How many times does he have to hurt you to see that man as the monster you must avoid?” he snarled at me.

His fists tightened once again as he spat hatred against Dominic, which didn't sit right in my stomach. He hated him. No. He was jealous of him. And I felt awful that I caused him so much pain knowing that Killian had feelings for me as well.

"I know what I am doing, Killian. I know what my heart wants." I snarled at him, not liking the tone of his voice anymore. "You can't dictate to me what I should feel! You don't have any right, Killian!" My eyes were piercing, but tears stung because I knew how this would end. Killian had been with me through my ups and downs. But seeing him raging just because I couldn't reciprocate his feelings was something wrong. Very wrong.

"I love you, Samantha! You know I would do anything for you! I could be the best mate and father to the twins. Just let me in your life!" That dark expression on his face suddenly softened for a second as he tried to close the gap between us but I stepped back. This was not out of hatred, but rather because I found his uncontrollable emotions were dangerous.

"I am not asking you to do this, Killian. You are important to me but not in the same way you feel for me." I swallowed a lump in my throat, trying my hardest for my voice not to crack because as much as it killed him, I was hurting as well. "You are a good man, Killian. You have been by my side since the day I came here to Moonstone. You are a friend who trusted that I could be something else. I know you like what is going on but this is my choice. This is what I truly feel and I wish you could try to respect it for the sake of the years we were together, Killian. You are important to me. But I had already chosen. My heart had already chosen. And I don't think anyone can change my heart or my mind anymore."

I couldn't describe the look on Killian's face. It killed me to see him so broken in front of me. But the rage in him was like a fire that refused to extinguish.

"I am not accepting this, Samantha. I know that bastard did something to convince you and I won't let him deceive you again with his f*cking words." Killian snarled.

I felt something in my head throbbed achingly. I couldn't believe what I just heard. "Leave. Killian. I need time to think." My voice was harsher than I intended. I thought he would refuse but he glared at me and moved to grant my only request.

"Know that I am not the monster here, Samantha." Killian's voice was like a knife stabbing me repeatedly in the chest as he grabbed the knob. "You think about this before you get yourself destroyed again for the second time."

I was left in the room with tears streaming down my face.

Chapter 70
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"Goddess, it's awful," I murmured to myself in frustration and self-disappointment as I leaned against the wall while I looked emptily at the window panel in front of me.

The scene there was usual. The streets were buzzing with busy people while the lampposts started to lighten and make the city lively during the night. I looked down at my wristwatch and saw that it was already six in the evening and yet I couldn't move.

My mind was still foggy with the thoughts and the possibilities when finally, I had the courage to choose between them. If only I had been honest with myself, maybe I would have prevented it. Maybe Killian didn't have to feel so wrecked after finding out that Dominic and I began seeing each other again.

How could I explain to him that it was something I had no control over? How would I tell him that it was always Dominic, no matter how hard I tried to stop myself? I looked up at the ceiling and thought about the decisions I made while watching Dominic peacefully sleeping beside me that night. Decisions that terrified me at first but I had to make so the twins and I could move on to the next phase of our lives. I was highly aware it would never

be easy for the twins and it was a gamble I had to take knowing we couldn't stay in the Moonstone anymore and further hurt Killian with our presence here.

They were right. It was always the right thing that was harder to do or make.

I collected the folders I tossed on Killian's desk and I felt funny. My eyes furrowed and I thought it was just the automatic dim light of the room that made my vision look a little blurry but it wasn't. I felt dizzy and hot and it was hard to stand up without the fear of falling and hitting my head on the white marble floor of the Alpha's office.

"W-What's happening to me!?" I whimpered to myself as I cupped my forehead with my hand and propped the other one against the table, trying to regain my equilibrium once again. My chest was tight and my breath was a little faster and warmer than usual. A fever? I asked myself as I blinked fast and drew in a steady and calming breath.

I wanted to get out of Killian's office as soon as I could to avoid starting any arguments with him again. I never wanted for us to hurt each other because it was pointless for him to throw any more insults at Dominic just to convince me I was making a huge mistake. I already made a decision and he couldn't change it. All I wanted was for him to realize that it was something I needed. That Dominic was a huge part of me I couldn't get rid of easily.

Despite the feverish feeling, I did my best to stand without looking like a boozer in the hallways. The folders were still on my arm, safe and secure, making sure they wouldn't slip from my grip because if they did, I wasn't sure if I would be able to stand up again. I had never felt so dizzy like this before. It must be the rapid beating of my heart that pushed the adrenaline through my veins that I was able to get to my own office and slumped on the couch near the slightly opened window.

The feeling was annoying as hell. I was sweating heavily despite the cold breeze entering the room. I saw my faint reflection on the glass window and

my face was so red. My breath was hot and it was as if I was going to explode any moment.

It was overwhelming I didn't know what to do so I opened the buttons of my dress and let the cold wind blow on my slightly bare bosom, covered enough to not expose my n*pples.

Not now... I whispered to myself as I panted. My wolf couldn't help as well for she was as tortured as I was with the uncomfortable feeling I couldn't understand.

I was in heat.

Was it because I finally accepted Dominic as my mate? Was the Moon Goddess designed to let me know I was on the right track in choosing the man I should spend my life with?

My head was throbbing and I had to put the air conditioner on full blast to extinguish this uncomfortable feeling. My skin had never felt so sensitive like this, with my groin tingling deliciously, making me whimper as memories of how Dominic f*cked me last night flooded my head.

"Samantha I just want to apologize—"

I was startled when Killian's baffled eyes stared at me hungrily and stayed on my almost exposed br**sts and my legs spreading on the couch. I wondered if my face could be redder than it already was because it was embarrassing beyond imagination for him to witness me in that shameful state.

"Killian, you shouldn't be here." I couldn't recognize my voice anymore as I huffed a rapid warm breath. "Please leave."

My pleadings snapped him back to whatever thought he had in his head and concern and panic abruptly displayed on his flustered face. He quickly approached me and felt my forehead with his forehead. His scent was so enticing that it made me swallow hard.

Killian bent down so our faces were at the same level and it was as if I wasn't myself when I pulled the collar of his shirt to kiss him. Killian, who was aware that I was on heat, turned his face to the side so my lips were just brushing his neck, making him let out a sigh.

"F*ck, you are having a fever." He knew what was going on with me but he decided not to mention it because that would make it awkward for the both of us. Despite the uncomfortable feeling, Killian remained calm and decided to help me even after the ugly fight we had in his office.

"Goddess, Samantha," he snarled as he looked down on my exposed br**sts and held both of my arms. He was saying something I couldn't understand because my body was too distracted by the confining feeling of desire and lust that oozed all over me.

And I could feel Killian was having the hardest time controlling himself with me seeing my chest almost half-naked in front of him. I could tell by the bulge in his jeans that made my feelings wilder than they already were.

"Leave me," I growled at him but my body told me otherwise. If Killian were a man who exploits situations like this, he would undoubtedly jump on me without a word and take advantage of my condition. But Killian was a gentleman and a man who had huge respect for me. He knew a small skin contact would drive me crazy so he decided not to touch me and went straight to the bathroom, where there was a medicine cabinet for an emergency like this.

"I just turned my back on you for a little bit and now you're already looking like a mess." He uttered, looking stern but more concerned. "Here. take this."

I looked down at his hand and saw a pill. I couldn't recall the last time I took one of these, but I remembered that I had one in my medkit just for safety. It was something used to calm down a female's body when a she-wolf was in heat and seeing Killian giving me one of these felt so f*cking embarrassing.

Despite the temptation in front of him, Killian chose to stand against the wall and make sure I was comfortable lying on the couch even though I kept on squirming, rubbing my thighs together and the occasional whimper escaping my throat. I saw his Adam's apple bob up and down his throat, as well as his intense glare, which made me feel like I needed to touch myself but desperately fought not to.

Ten minutes and the medicine had no effect. Killian started to get worried.

"That's it. I have to get you to the healer," he grunted as he carried me in his arms. A side of me, that crazy feeling, made me want to protest and tell him to just enjoy the moment but my wolf helped me to fight the urge and just hid my flushed face against his chest as he rushed me to the clinic.

"You owe me one," Killian still managed to let out a joke with his voice full of worry as he laid me down on one of the clinic beds. Healers rushed in and asked him to stay in the waiting area so they could calm these strange changes happening in my body. I didn't know what they did but I lost consciousness while they used something to cover my nose and mouth and when I woke up, Killian was already beside me, waiting for me to open my eyes.

There was pure sadness in his eyes that made my heart feel like a pincushion.

I was about to apologize to Killian when the head healer entered the room, bringing something in his hand. Killian and I focused on the thing.

"Is that Samantha's blood?" Killian asked, wide-eyed with disbelief.

"I came here to inform you, Alpha," said the healer with the same amazement in his eyes, "that this is a component in Miss Samantha's blood indicating that she came from the highest form of breed found in our species. This is a sample of a rare primordial blood that reigned over these lands for centuries."

Chapter 71
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

My head was still foggy, and I thought I had heard the doctor say something like a primordial thing.

My frown deepened as I narrowed my eyes at the head healer. He stood in front of us at the height of Killian's shoulder with a frantic look. It was as if he had never seen anything like this before, and it scared him—no, more like terrified and amazed at the same time.

"What are you talking about, Ned?" Even Killian got confused about what was happening. "She's not feeling well, so I carried her here. What are you talking about, primordial—a-are you serious about what you are talking about?"

Even the healer seemed so agitated by what he had discovered that his fingers began to tremble. Looking at his reaction made me scared of what that really meant, so I looked at Killian with panic in my eyes. Killian saw the terror in me and put his hand on my back gently, trying to calm the perturbation in me.

"I will explain this to you later," Killian whispered as he gestured for the doctor to talk outside the clinic. I wanted to tell him I needed to go, but the severity of the situation frightened me based on the terror that I saw on the healer's face. It was something I never expected. I was just having a strange in-heat experience because I finally chose my mate, but what was it that was happening?

Seeing Killian talking to the doctor outside, looking so calm and collected, somehow pacified the fear in me. I couldn't remember much of what happened, but I was thankful Killian came back to check on me before something happened to me in my office.

For a mated she-wolf, this in-heat experience was nothing new to me. But it had been six years since I denied my connection with Dominic and ran away pregnant from the Silver Crescent pack and since then, I had never experienced these feelings again. Only when I started accepting Dominic in my life did it come back and suddenly, I didn't know what to do.

“What’s happening, Killian?” I asked when I heard the wooden door creak, and he entered the clinic while massaging the space between his eyes. He seemed distressed. But I wasn’t sure if it was about what he found out about my blood or if it was because of me choosing Dominic over him.

“I am not really sure what it means, Samantha,” he answered me with honest confusion and sat on the edge of the bed with an exhausted face. He sighed and then uttered softly, “You know you are like a box. Always full of surprises,” he smiled weakly.

“Is it bad?” I asked him with innocence and he chuckled while looking at the other side of the room and then at me.

“Primordial means you came from an ancient bloodline that first dominated these lands before other clans came here.” Killian started explaining as he stared into my eyes with such longing. I felt a lump in my throat but refused to lower my gaze because I would rather not hurt his feelings again. “Many believe that this bloodline has disappeared for centuries, but a few percent believe that some clans inherited their abilities after some of these powerful beings wed with women from the other clans. And finding that amazing component in your blood means you are from this bloodline, Samantha—you are a royalty among the shifters in this continent.

I didn’t know what to say. It sounded ridiculous to me because I didn’t come from a very powerful family but from an average one. Lena arranged my marriage with Dominic because my mother had been a lifelong friend of hers. “There is nothing special about me,” I murmured to him, smiling awkwardly. “I already told you the kind of family I came from and there’s nothing exceptional with my clan. I was wolfless before I had my twins—”

“That’s not true, Sam.” Killian’s voice was solemn and I saw his hand inches from mine, wanting to hold me. “You are always special to me and you know that. From the very first day you came into my pack, I knew there was something in you that made me believe you were meant for something huge. There is something amazing in you I couldn’t explain.”

I pretended to shift on the bed and finally averted my eyes from him as I pulled my hand away from him. Despite that awkward feeling, Killian held

on to his patience and just raised an eyebrow at me and smiled, wanting to make the tension between us a little lighter.

Maybe that's one thing about him that made me feel comfortable with our friendship for so many years.

"I am not sure what to feel about the primordial bloodline thing. I have never heard my parents mention this to me." I frowned worriedly, mostly because of my twins. "Or maybe they did but I couldn't just remember."

"It doesn't matter," Killian answered quietly while still staring into my eyes. "I am not sure about this, Samantha. All I know is that you should keep it a secret from everyone, while you have no idea how this truth is going to impact you and the twins' lives. I've heard that these powerful beings are living somewhere on this continent, but their existence is a huge secret. I already discussed everything with the head healer and he swore to me he is not going to tell anyone about what he found out here."

"Can we trust him?" I asked him, scared of what this primordial bloodline meant to me and my children. "I am not sure what is going on, but I am starting to feel scared about it," I admitted to him.

Killian turned to face me. In his eyes, I saw the sincerity and longing that brought guilt into me.

"I told you. As long as I'm here, I won't let anyone or anything harm you and the twins, Samantha." His voice was hoarse but gentle. His mesmerizing green eyes melted something in me that I couldn't explain, which I shouldn't feel because I had already chosen between the two of them, and I would never allow myself to be confused and hurt Killian again and again because I was a f*cking coward who couldn't decide.

The desperation on his face made a twisting feeling in my stomach. "I know you believe Dominic is the right guy for you, Samantha. But why can't we try? Let's try it, and I will do everything to make you and the twins happy. I proved myself so many times already and you know how I cherish—" He shook his head, seemingly unable to find the right words to express his feelings. "No. How much I love you, Sam. Goddess, you have no idea how

this is killing me. To watch you and Dominic together when I had already imagined a life with you and the kids."

I bit my lower lip hard as tears started to glimmer on the edge of my eyes.

"I thank you for everything you did for me, Killian." In gratitude, I smiled and held his hand, which he wanted but couldn't out of respect. Killian looked at our hands and then into my eyes again, and I saw how his face was filled with pain, knowing that there's nothing that can change my mind anymore. "But I am happy with my decision. Dominic is my mate, and no matter how many times I try to resist him, you know it is impossible for me to do that. I belong to him. Just like how the Moon Goddess brought us together and made Dominic realize my real worth in his life."

Killian was silent for a minute as his eyes lingered on the floor full of thoughts. And then there's sudden anguish in his eyes, which I already expected because he still wasn't giving up despite everything I explained to him. "You are not sure yet what Dominic wants from you, Samantha. For six years, he didn't look for you or check what happened to you after you disappeared from the Silver Crescent pack. For six years, he never cared. And now he saw you somewhere and then suddenly thinks you're still his? I can't believe you are doing this to yourself."

His voice was filled with disappointment, which I understood because he was right. I was sure anyone who knows me and Dominic would think I was crazy enough to go back to the father of my twins. But what they didn't know is that I believe that Dominic indeed changed. He chose to change for me, and that was enough to prove that his desire to bring me back to his life was more powerful than his ego.

"You don't understand it, Killian. But this is what I need for now." I told him as gently as I could as I watched him break into pieces. "I never want to hurt you but please... I need you to know that me and the kids are moving to Silver Crescent Pack as soon as Dominic and I decide a date to settle in."

Killian's eyes widened, devastated at what he heard. I thought he would throw the bedside cabinet on the other side of the room, but he stood and

startled me with that cold, angry look as I watched him walk out of the clinic room and smalled the door behind him.

Chapter 72
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

After the embarrassing and awful things happened in the Moonstone Pack office, I didn't see or hear from Killian again. It was as if he was avoiding me since I told him my decision, and I couldn't blame him if he refused to see me again after the conversation we had in the clinic.

To give him some time, I requested a two-day leave from the management, explaining that I needed to spend a bit more time with the kids after working tirelessly for a week on a successful project that benefited the pack. Killian knew I always gave my best when it came to my work, and whenever I needed some time to recuperate and rest, I didn't have to go straight to him and ask for his approval.

This time it was different, though. It was difficult to choose Dominic without hurting KilliKillian, but I had no other options. I couldn't lie to myself anymore. If I didn't do something to fix this, we would only hurt each other, and I didn't want Killian to hate me.

He was still important to me after all the years we spent together nurturing the kids. He was Devon and Diana's acting father when things got overwhelming for me as a mother, and I was grateful for him for caring for my kids even though they weren't his.

"Mom, I thought you were at work." Devon was surprised to see me cleaning the kitchen when he, Annie, and Diana came from school. "What's wrong? Did something happen?"

It was unusual for the kids to see me at home on a regular day, so I smiled and bent down to Devon's eye level and patted his unruly dark hair. "Mommy worked hard last week. So I thought about having more time with you and Diana while I'm on my two-day rest."

Diana's eyes lit in excitement and Devon's giant smile made my heart the happiest as he threw his little arms to embrace me tight. "Thanks, mom! Diana and I have so many things to tell you about what happened today at school.

I looked at Annie and the smile on her face showed that she was glad I took a short break from work to give more time for the kids. I mouthed her thank you for taking care of them on days when I was too busy to attend for the twins.

"It's good that you take some time to rest from the work. It's important for Devon and Diana that you make time for them." Annie approached me after she put Devon and Diana's bags on the couch and made sure the twins' had gone to their rooms to change. "They could feel that you have been a little agitated these past few days, and they are worried."

"Yeah," I told her and sighed as I shook my head and looked at the twins' rooms, where they were giggling and excited for the idea that I was free for two days to spend with them. "I didn't notice I got too busy solving things that are going on between me and Dominic that I forgot the kids need me as well. I need to make up for it."

"They're really thrilled about it." Annie was excited, too, because it meant a day off for her as well.

And just like I promised them, the twins and I went to a mall, and I let Diana choose a dress she always wanted. Devon asked for another game, and then we spent three hours in a playground and ate the food they wanted until they went exhausted and slept in the car as I drove us home. While looking at my kids in the rearview mirror, I promised myself to not let the work eat too much of my time and remind myself that I had to sometimes relax and have time with the kids often.

When I arrived at home, I noticed a black SUV and spotted a tall, dark figure leaning against the closed door as if waiting.

Dominic.

Just knowing he was here again made my heart erratic. Did something happen? Did Killian go to his office again and make a scene again? So many bad things entered my head. I swiftly removed the seatbelt and jumped out of the car to ask him what made him visit at eight o'clock in the evening.

"Dominic," I approached him nervously as I panted. "W-What brought you here?"

He was surprised to see the fear on my face and frowned. "Why? What's happened?" he asked with the same worry on his face. "Are the twins fine?"

As soon as I realized that there's nothing to be worried about, I drew out a heavy breath and placed a hand on my stomach. "Oh, nothing. I just—I panicked thinking something terrible happened. Why are you here anyway?"

He stared into my anxious eyes and pushed my hair behind my ear. "Nothing is wrong, Samantha. I'm just here because I missed you and the kids."

All the tension in my body disappeared as soon as I saw the longing in Dominic's eyes. I couldn't understand why I went into a full panic, but perhaps it was because I was afraid he got into another fight because of me, and I didn't want him to be hurt again. "Oh," I answered, heaving a long and slow sigh. "Okay. The kids and I... we just went to a mall. They're sleeping in the car."

"Let me help you tuck them in bed." Dominic smiled softly, planted a kiss on my lips, and then proceeded to check on Devon and Diana in the car. I watched him carry Diana first as I opened the door with the key and helped him go to Diana's bedroom and tuck her to bed, making sure his little girl was comfortable cuddling with her doll.

I waited for him in Devon's room and watched as he tucked him to bed as well with Mr. Snuffles in his arms.

“Thank you,” I whispered to him with a smile as I closed the door of Devon’s room and offered him a drink in the kitchen. “I didn’t expect you to come. You were just here last night.”

“I can’t concentrate with my work the whole day thinking of you.” He was obviously flirty but his voice was sincere as he sat on the bar stool while I served him a cup of wine. “I need to see you tonight, Samantha.”

The longing in his tone brought pure joy in my heart because I couldn’t get him out of my system as well after that glorious night we shared that made me decide on a huge change in my life and the twins’ lives. “I have something I need to tell you, Dominic.”

“Anything,” Dominic answered as he looked at me with lustful eyes and sipped on his wine.

“I...” I bit my lower lip and focused my eyes on the glass in front of me. “I already decided to move to Silver Crescent Pack territory for good.”

Dominic’s eyes widened as I saw pure happiness and surprise lit in his eyes. I didn’t know how to react, though, but it also brought me a thrilling feeling to imagine myself and the kids finally settling in the turf where Dominic was ruling. So I asked him with a suppressed smile, “So when do you think the best time to prepare for it?”

“As soon as you can, Samantha.” he leaned over the table and closed the gap between our faces with a deep kiss. I had never seen his face so excited before and he reminded me of little Devon with that huge smirk on his face. “Just tell me when you are ready and let me prepare for everything." But then his face darkened as he thought about something. “Killian. Did you tell him already about your plan?”

“I did. I already told him last night.” I answered as the awful memories came into my head. Through our mate bond, Dominic got the power to access it and saw what happened. I got nervous that he could do such a thing, but when he looked at me, all I saw was gratitude and love in his eyes.

“Thank you for trusting me, Samantha. For choosing me. This means so much to me, love,” he murmured as he took my hand and kissed the back of it. “What if Killain refused to let you and the twins go? He has the right since you are still a member of his pack. And you can only transfer into mine if he ever releases you.”

“I already made my decision,” I said firmly while staring into his eyes like nothing can change my mind anymore. “It is not right to stay here when Killian has feelings for me, Dominic. I can’t do this to him. And please allow me some more time to prepare the kids for this. This will make them confused and scared because all their life, all they know is this place and the people here. I need for them to feel comfortable with the idea that we need to move.”

“You can have the time you want, Samantha.” he smiled at me. “Choosing to move in my turf makes me so happy.”

I smiled at him and spent a little more time drinking wine before he decided to go. Just like how he is, he teased me if he could stay for the night again, but I refused, telling him he had to go.

After I prepared and went to bed, my eyes were already closed when I heard my phone ring and saw Dominic on the caller’s ID.

“What?” I asked, smiling. My heart danced at the idea that he couldn’t get me out of his head even after we just saw each other an hour ago.

“I just want to say I love you, Samantha,” he murmured with a voice that made me think he was smiling while saying it. “Have a wonderful sleep, love.”

“Goodnight, Dominic,” I whispered with a huge smile and dreamed of him with me and the kids in a garden full of lavenders and white roses.

Chapter 73
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I didn’t sleep well last night.

The idea of moving to Silver Crescent Pack was a huge risk, not just for me but for the kids as well. I didn’t know what to expect. I knew we weren’t completely welcome there, and it was selfish of me to move the kids when Devon and Diane were comfortable with the Moonstone territory. But it was the right thing to do to avoid more damage between me and Killian. If we keep on staying here and the council and the pack members find out I was having a connection with the Silver Crescent Alpha, I will be branded a traitor to the pack. There’s no way I would risk my neck and make my children motherless because I was being careless and indecisive.

It was the only way to move forward and start a new life with Dominic.

I just wish I wouldn’t regret this decision.

Shut up with your hesitations, woman. You saw how our mate’s eyes lit the moment you told him about this. My wolf chided me. We can’t change our minds now.

I almost rolled my eyes and exhaled in exasperation, but I remembered I was with Annie in my room helping me put my things in the boxes. I asked Dominic not to rush me with this, but I decided that if the time came that we needed to do it, at least my things were ready.

“I hope Alpha Killian will allow you to make this decision,” Annie said to me, knowing that Killian won’t make this easy for me after rejecting the Alpha’s feelings and choosing his nemesis instead. “I am worried about the twins. I have a feeling the situation will not be easy for them.”

I drew out a deep breath as I folded a shirt and threw it inside a box. “We can’t stay here anymore, Annie. It’s too dangerous for the kids. Once the Moonstone people find out about me and Dominic, we will be in grave danger. And I don’t think Killian could help us if that happens because that’s one of the rules of the pack. Traitors are bound to die and I have no plan of dying because of staying here.”

Annie nodded as she understood that all my fears made sense. "Yeah, that's pretty scary to think about," she commented with terrified eyes as we continued folding clothes and organizing things in boxes. "But Smanatha, I can tell you are truly happy with the Silver Crescent Alpha."

I paused from what I was doing and felt my face heat when Annie grinned at me teasingly. She added. "You don't blush like this unless I mention his name."

"Goddess, Annie!" I laughed awkwardly at her and panicked a little. "The kids might hear you."

"I have a feeling that they know already, though," Annie answered with a smile still pasted on her lips, looking happy that I was finally happy with my decisions. "They are smart kids. They know and feel if something is happening to you. And seeing you looking so lovely and blooming with Alpha Dominic, I can say the kids are happy with you as well."

"Do you think?" I asked her anxiously, not sure if the kids would accept Dominic that easily. "They're fond of him, but I am not sure if— you know what I mean." I lowered my eyes as I pulled another shirt to fold. "I'm scared Devon will hate him if he finds out."

"We can't dictate what the twins will feel about certain things," Annie said with gentleness in her voice as she reached out for my hand and squeezed it. "But we can control things by explaining it to them and making them understand it well."

"Thank you, Annie." I smiled at her. "You have no idea how much help you give me with the twins. I can't thank you enough."

"I love them like they are my own." Annie's eyes curved into a genuine smile and then she chuckled, "But it's brave that you finally decide what you really want, Samantha. That's really brave."

"This is for the twins. I have to think what is best for them," I said to her with determination in my voice. "I am never running away again. I will face this and fix everything while I can. But Killian..." I murmured the Moonstone

Alpha's name with guilt. "I hate that he has to suffer because of his feelings for me. I...I hurt him, Annie."

"Speaking of the Moonstone Alpha," Annie's eyes widened in surprise and worry when she picked up my phone and saw Killian's anime on the caller ID. "I think he needs to talk to you."

*****

I was surprised to know that Killian finally wanted to talk to me after I rejected him twice a few days ago.

I wanted to think positively that maybe he had already accepted my decisions and would pray for my happiness and the kids. But I knew Killian. He never gives up on anything; he would rather make me hate him than let Alpha Dominic have me and the twins.

And I wish I didn't have to deal with that side of him now that he was ready to talk to me.

The only strange and suspicious thing is that he was not in his office and one of the desk officers there told me that Killian had not gone to the building yet. I confirmed it when I checked his log and he had no record of his attendance yet.

So I thought maybe I could go straight to his house, but my instinct told me it was a bad idea

"Goddess, what's going on with you, Killian?" I hissed to myself as I went into my car, annoyed, and drove straight to the Manor of the Moonstone Pack. The place wasn't as extravagant as Dominic's Pack House, but it was welcoming and cozy with a huge garden filled with different kinds of orchid plants in a huge orchidarium. That garden was always the highlight of the Moonstone pack since the most livelihood of this peaceful place was farming.

I was about to knock on the door when I found out it was unlocked and I frowned. With my werewolf sense, I could tell the main floor was empty and

there was no sound of anyone; even Omega servants weren't there. My curiosity pushed me to go inside and find out what was happening since it was rare to see Killian's home empty because the Omegas and Gammas of the pack always gather here after their work to contribute to the house.

The Pack House was unusually dark and silent so I decided to go upstairs and think that maybe Killian was just drunk and sleeping in his room. Perhaps he needed my help because he was always a helpless drunkard, and the thought gave me a pang of guilt knowing I was the cause of his pain after he poured his heart out to me and I refused to reciprocate. If only it was something I could control, if only my mind could win over my heart and the bind of the Moon Goddess could be ignored, maybe I would choose Killian over Dominic for having a pure heart for me and the kids. But I couldn't. It compelled me that Dominic chose to change just to have me back and it was enough proof that maybe it was true—that second time romance can be the sweetest for someone like me who had been dreaming of him to be completely mine.

The wooden stairs creaked under my heavy, slow steps while my eyes wandered around the empty house. I smelled something burning on the third floor where Killian's room was and my eyes widened. I started to panic.

With long strides and a heavy chest, I got into Killian's room but felt and heard something was going on. When I heard Killian moaning as if he was in pain, I sharpened my werewolf senses, calmed myself, and closed my eyes while pressing my ears against the door of his room. I frowned and started to feel nervous as I decided to listen first. The sound of a woman's whimper startled me so much that I flinched away, causing the back of my leg to collide with a vase. The crackling sound of the shattered vase caused panic in me, and I lost my balance and hit my back on the wall with a loud thud.

Alarmed at what the ruckus was about, Killian opened the door, and I was shocked to see him half naked with only a blanket to cover him from the hips below. I saw how his eyes slowly widened, flabbergasted to see me in a situation he never expected, and I was there, numb and stunned.

“S-Samantha what are you—”

My eyes noticed something moving behind him and found a naked woman with the same baffled expression as her arms instinctively went to her exposed br**sts to cover herself.

I didn’t waste any more seconds and moved. Feeling betrayed and sick in the stomach, all I wanted was to get out of the d*mned house.

Killian grabbed my hand and growled, “Wait, Sam, this is not what you think it is!”

“F*cking let me go, Killian!” I threatened him with a deadly glare. I was halfway down the stairs when he stopped me. “I was in agony for many nights, believing I was the worst she-wolf in the world for hurting you and the guilt almost killed me thinking you’re here all depressed and gloomy. But here you are, f*cking a woman already,” I laughed dryly. “What am I thinking!”

“It’s something for the pack I need to do.” He kept on explaining nonsense things to me, which only made me so bitter I wanted to punch him in the face.

I shook my head, confused about what he was trying to say. “Whatever, Killian.” My voice almost cracked as tears of both pain and anger sparkled in the corner of my eyes and snarled. “Go with her and f*cking forget I came here.”

Chapter 74
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Let me go, Killian!” I snarled at him; my eyes, which were wide with shock, were now filled with anger. “Let me go or I’ll f*cking scream.”

“Just promise me you will listen, Samantha. This is important to me,” he begged as soon as his hands started to loosen on my arm. “Please let me explain this.”

I shook my head, confused. I would rather not hear anything from him after what I saw, but seeing Killian's face as he begged made me think twice. I gave him a deadly glare before he let go of me and we stood in the middle of the grand staircase. He was on the higher steps, looking down at me with pleading eyes while I lifted my face and waited to see if he would make a lame excuse for what he was doing.

Goddess, I knew I was a hypocrite, and I had no reason to feel mad after I hurt and rejected Killian. But it was something I couldn't control as well. He told me he loved me, and it killed me to shatter him after I chose Dominic. But seeing him have another girl just a few days after I tortured myself because of guilt? I was so confused! These feelings didn't make sense to me. All I knew was that I was angry.

What worsened it was when the dark-haired woman appeared from the top of the staircase with a grin on her face as she glowered at me through her nose. I answered her with a sarcastic smirk and then widened my eyes at Killian, whose green eyes glinted with amusement at the reaction he saw on my annoyed face.

"Brianne, please go back inside the room," Killian ordered the woman. She seemed graveled, though, but did what Killian told her.

I raised an eyebrow at him. "For the pack?" I asked him. "You are f*cking a d*mned witch for the pack?"

Killian, who was already exasperated, sat on the steps, still half-naked with the blanket covering his lower half. With his body glistening with sweat and his muscles taut, my throat involuntarily swallowed hard and I quickly lowered my gaze, averting my eyes from him uncomfortably, not wanting to look him in the face.

He must have sensed my admiration for his ripped physique after seeing that awkward gesture. He refused to smile, though, as he took the matter seriously, which I was grateful for because I would surely smack him on the face if he ever smirked at me.

“Like I told you, it is not what you think it is, Sam,” his voice sounded apologetic but I could tell there was still a hint of anguish in there. “You’re right. Brianne is a witch living across the borders of this pack. She had been one of the best healers here that people mostly went to. She has the ability I need to protect the pack.”

I shook my head. It still didn’t make sense, but I let him explain.

“Last month, I learned there is a huge threat brewing at the west corner of my turf. My patrolmen told me the number was around four hundred to six hundred hybrid rogues populating that place. And I have to do something to stop them. I discussed this with the pack council and the elders and suggested something to me. They showed Brianne to me—the sole daughter of one of the most powerful witches on the continent. They all asked me to perform this one ritual with her, which I refused to do because I couldn’t do it when I have these huge feelings for you, Samantha.”

I wanted to know the connection of what I saw with the ritual, but I decided to stay patient as I saw he wasn’t done explaining yet. I just stared at him because I knew how terrifying it was to know that there were covens of hybrid rogues dwelling at the outskirts of this city, and I could feel Killian’s concern about it with his shoulders drooped heavily in front of me.

“I can’t ask you to go with me back in my room to see if it was not something you did out of desire for someone else.” Killian tried to sound as convincing as he could because, hell, I would go back to his room with that woman still in there.

“After I realized it wasn’t me who you needed, after you chose Dominic over me and decided to move to Silver Crescent for the twins—I was too devastated to see you or even look into your eyes again and accepted that you will never be mine regardless of what I do, Sam. And out of pain, out of misery, I decided to go whatever the elders and the council wanted me to do for the sake of the pack’s safety.”

Killian’s strong and calloused fingers ran through his dark, unruly hair as he let out a heavy breath. “I asked for them to send Brianne to me so we could be done with this. The ritual is about the exchange of abilities, and Brianne

has this power to expel dark and evil auras within ten thousand square miles, which has brought her clan safety and peace for centuries. But to achieve this, I have to take her virginity. In that way, she can transfer a part of her ability to me and make sure those monsters can't get inside my territory."

It was the very first time I heard such a thing, and I wasn't sure if I would believe it—or maybe Killian was just making another excuse to hide that he was just done with me. Perhaps it was for the best, thinking it was something he needed to forget me, but I didn't understand why I felt betrayed. Was it because Killian had been with me for years, and he was as important to me as I was to him? Perhaps at least he told me about this thing because I did not know that such a problem existed, and he had to deal with it, that involved having a woman in his bed.

It was as if the Moon Goddess dodged me from a massive bullet of agony.

Biting my lower lip—I wasn't sure what to feel about it, but again, I felt awful that Killian had to do something like this as a responsibility for his pack. I looked into his eyes and I saw the same pain I saw on his face that time when we were in the clinic.

"I'm sorry you have to do this for the pack," I murmured as I lowered my gaze at him. I decided to sit on the steps as well and exhaustingly slid my back against the railings and joined him with his misery. "I'm sorry I hurt you and I'm sorry I have to move to Silver Crescent pack with the twins, Killian. I have to."

He didn't answer, though, as we both stared at nothingness and let the silence fall upon us for minutes. I was scared to look at his face and see how broken he was until I heard him sniff and I thought I was being torn apart.

"So how does it work?" I asked him just to break that awkward silence and somehow ease the tension and sorrow between us. "Do you think this will succeed and drive those hybrids away from Moonstone?"

“I am not really sure about this, Sam but as the Alpha, this has to work,” he answered, uncertain of what he was doing but having faith that it would help the pack. “Brianne and I talked about this and we agreed that there’s no emotion involved in this ritual. She knew it was just a task to be done, though and still I felt bad that I had to do this to her.”

No one wanted this. That’s for sure and I felt stupid and reckless with my behavior. “Yeah. Sounds like it’s very unfair that Brianne has to sacrifice herself for this. She must have prepared herself for this kind of duty.” I commented and sighed heavily. “Do you think it’s a good idea, though? Trusting the witches with this? I heard they are very cunning people. Didn’t they demand anything to agree to this arrangement?”

Killian couldn’t answer for a second but then decided he had to so he uttered anxiously, “Brianne’s parents demanded a huge amount of money for this.”

Goddess, those people basically sold their daughter for this. I suddenly felt bad that I showed Brianne an attitude when she was the real victim here.

“I’m sorry I got upset.” my frown deepened with both guilt and embarrassment as I finally gazed into his green, solemn eyes. “I was just shocked and confused about what was happening. Maybe I should go—”

He grabbed my arm once again, stopping me from getting up and stepping down the stairs. “Wait, Samantha, I just need to know if it’s your final decision.” there was still desperation in Killain’s voice that made my heart shrink. “Are you really going to leave Moonstone?”

“I have to, Killian. I already decided on it the second I chose Dominic as my mate. It’s for the twin’s safety as well. The council and the Moonstone people will not be pleased to know that I am still staying in your pack when I was connected with the Alpha of the Silver Crescent. That’s straight treachery.” I explained to him.

“Is this the part that you need my permission to let you go?” He asked bitterly with his head hanging low and his dark hair cascaded down,

concealing the defeated look on his face. “Is this goodbye, Sam? Is it too late to stop you anymore?”

“Goddess, Killian,” I exhaled raspily as tears poured down my face and moved to wrap my arms around him, not wanting to see him like the world was going to end just because it was time for me to spend another Chapter of my life with the Silver Crescent pack. “You are still my best friend. The man who I will never forget for taking care of me and the twins when we needed most. I wish I could love you the way you do for me, but it doesn’t work that way.”

Killian held me tight and my heart shattered with him once again.

Chapter 75
[ALPHA KILLIAN’s Point of View]

Goddess, help me! I panicked after I saw Samantha in front of the door of my room, petrified and confused. I couldn’t understand why she suddenly thought about looking for me in the pack house after days of not talking.

But then when I checked my phone, I saw her caller ID on the missed call register, and I thought I must have clicked it mistakenly after I hesitated about calling one of my pack council members and informing them I had already agreed with their suggestion with Brianne.

But it wasn’t as easy as I thought it was.

It was just s*x. I kept on reminding myself when I saw Brianne enter the main door of the pack house wearing only a thin white clothing with her n*pples apparent from the sheer fabric. I had known Brianne since we were teens.

She was introduced to me by my parents after the coven of witches made a pact with us to occupy the southern part of the Moonstone territory in exchange for using their abilities for the benefit of the pack.

It was one of the things that Moonstone was not proud of since witches were hated all around the continent.

But my father, the former Alpha of the pack, took this as an advantage to use their power in exchange for their safety. And since then, their coven and Moonstone have done their best to live in harmony, especially when the growing numbers of hybrids posed threats to all of us.

And Brianne—she was beautiful. The prettiest among the women in her coven, who was chosen to do the ritual with me. If only I were some kind of guy who would enjoy such an opportunity, I would have done it already with her and taken her virginity. But I wouldn't do such a thing if someone had already captured my heart.

After I did everything and proved to Samantha that I was better than the man who only did was to hurt her, it still wasn't enough. And as much as I hated to hear her reason it out, she was right. She was fated to Dominic, blessed by the Moon Goddess. And whatever I do, no matter how hard I try just to make her feelings change, I'll fail. Because the two fated people only belonged to each other and no one can alter it—unless their partner rejects them.

So that only meant I only had to wait for Dominic to change his mind.

It was a lame hope, but it was better than nothing.

Despite my efforts to convince myself that Sam would return to me and that her decision to choose Dominic was a grave mistake she would later regret, the sound of his name as she uttered it on her lips, it still felt like a cold knife stabbing me rapidly and hard on the chest. I never thought I would love a woman like I loved Samantha, but it was something I had to endure, or it would destroy me from the inside.

Perhaps it was something Dominic had hoped for—to watch me slowly deteriorate while he had the woman of my dreams. Perhaps it was his plan to take Samantha and the kids away so I would succumb to melancholia to destroy me and the Moonstone pack.

So after what happened in Samantha's office, after she told me her decisions, choosing Dominic and moving to Silver Crescent, I did my best

not to burst into a ball of rage. I refused to go to the office for a few days, hoping not to see her while I was still hurting. I tried to drown my rage with booze; I went to the bar with some friends just to keep my mind busy and not think of her. But as the problem at the border territories arose, and the hybrids became the number one concern for the pack's security, I thought maybe Brianne could be a blessing in disguise to help me forget Samantha.

I saw her in front of my door and I felt nothing. Plain nothing.

Brianne knew it was a duty she needed to fulfill since she was trained for it her whole life as part of the agreement with her coven for the pack. There was no hint of fear or anxiousness in her eyes. Her lack of expectations greatly favored me, as I was unsure of how to reassure her about the outcome and its likelihood of success. All I knew was that she was ready. And she didn't hesitate to come into my bedroom and remove her clothes with her eyes staring at me lusciously.

Samantha suddenly appeared at my door with shocked eyes, and for the first time, I didn't know what to do.

While we were there in the middle of the grand staircase, talking and breaking our hearts again and again, I couldn't believe I begged for her to change her mind for the third time, only to be rejected again. I had never been so desperate like this and it felt as if the whole sky had fallen upon my shoulder, burying me deep as the earth swallowed me whole.

And as we cried together with her arms around me, I couldn't help but savor the moment and held her tight—as if it was the last time I would ever hold her again. I never thought loving someone could be this painful. And I wondered if I would ever recover again after this—after suffering this level of agony of loving the woman I knew would never be mine.

"I'm sorry I disturbed something important." Samantha sniffed and pulled away from me gently. Her eyes and nose were red and her face was stained with tears. "I think you should go back to her, Killian. There's no reason for me to stay here."

“I don’t want you to go, Sam.” The words came out of my lips on their own as if my mind and my heart had agreed to this feeling and convinced my lips to utter them. “I don’t know if I can take it. I don’t know what to feel if I ever see that house again without you and the twins.”

A tear ran down her cheek again, but she wiped it quickly with the back of her hand and stared at the ceiling. Her lips trembled and her fingers were shaking. Her breath was uneven as she fumbled for words but couldn’t say them. It was as if she was scared her voice would break if she ever spoke a word to me.

We spent another minute calming ourselves down, and Samantha finally got the courage to speak. “You know you can still see the twins, Killian. Devon and Diana love you as a father figure to them. We can stay as friends—”

“Just like you told me before, Sam, these feelings are something you can’t control,” I told her, reminding her of the words she used against me before. “It’s something I have no power over, Sam. I don’t know how I could recover from it, but I’ll try. Because you know that all I want is for you to be happy. Although I wish it were me, I understand, Sam. I just have to f*cking deal with this.” I rasped and ran both my hands against my unruly dark hair.

Samantha looked helpless when she saw me angry at myself, but I couldn’t help it. Perhaps she saw that it was the only way I could cope with the situation and just let me say whatever I wanted and tolerated it.

“I’ve been here in the Moonstone Pack for six years. I saw how you worked hard for your people, Killian. But I won’t tell you what you should prioritize first because I know you are hurting. And it was all my fault. But you can’t let the situation ruin you and your duties to the pack, Killian. If you hate me for choosing Dominic, then hate me. You are right. No one, not even you, can control these emotions, but as someone who cares for you, you have to snap out of it and put the pack first.”

“Don’t make me fall for you with your smart, powerful words again, Samantha. You know that’s one of the things I like most about you.” I frowned at her with sarcasm just to make her think I was finally feeling

okay, and even though she felt I still wasn't and I was trying to pretend it, she managed a small smile on her face.

"My bad. It's just me," she chuckled, before standing up and brushing off the invisible dust on the bottom of her pants. "She's waiting for you, Killian."

I looked up and saw Brianne watching from the mezzanine floor. My werewolf eyes were sharp enough to see how annoyed she was to see us chuckling about something, and it was pure hate in her eyes that made me frown.

"Dominic and I talked already about this," Samantha said, which caught my attention back to her. "I agreed to move to Silver Crescent next week and I have already started preparing for it. I am just looking for a good chance to tell the kids and..." she paused and then looked at me with a firm look on her face, "And your permission for me to leave the Moonstone pack to start a new life there."

Just as I expected.

I looked down and sighed. "If this will make you happy, Samantha," I looked into her ocean blue eyes and wondered if I could still stare at them like this after this moment. "I, the Alpha of the Moonstone Pack, now release you from your bond as a member and as my second hand to allow you to join another pack to seek happiness and growth, which you have always been wishing for."

And as the words broke the pack's bind on Samantha's soul, I saw her glow for the very first time since I first laid eyes upon her.

She was happy. That's all that mattered to me.

My face fell into my hands after I watched her step out of the door of the manor.

Chapter 76
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I tried my hardest to take my mind off what happened in the Moonstone Manor. I was grateful that Killian didn't make it difficult for me to be released from the bond of the pack and finally allowed to join Dominic in his turf.

Devon and Diana, on the other hand, didn't make it simple for me. So many questions were thrown at me and I was worried they would hate moving when their friends were in the Moonstone pack. But with Annie with them, I could tell they seemed okay with it and were even excited about the new place, with Devon telling me all the beauty and grandeur of Silver Crescent's territory based on what he saw on the internet.

I just smiled at the thought, forgetting how smart kids are now because of the gadgets and free information they get from the sites they were only allowed to access.

Dominic and I had already moved some of our stuff to the house we agreed to use for myself and the kids. I didn't agree that we would transfer straight to the pack manor and expose the children to the people, knowing that some of the people in the pack still couldn't trust me after I ran away from my responsibility as their Luna and left their Alpha.

I just kept on thinking they didn't know what I suffered. They didn't know my story. So whatever they think about me, whatever impression they have of me—accusing me of being an irresponsible Luna or coward to the pack, I never really cared. All I wanted was for my children's safety while building a life with Dominic. Someday I would tell Devon and Diane everything about me and their father, but not at the moment. I wanted the process to be gradual for them, so they wouldn't feel pressured by the knowledge that they would one day rule these lands and discover they were descended from a powerful clan. The idea that they both came from the bloodline that ruled the largest and most successful pack on the continent.

The house was a simple bungalow with three rooms, a cozy kitchen, and a comfortable living area. The walls are painted in cream in and out of the house, but Diane asked if she can have her room painted in yellow and Devon's room green, knowing her twin loves his room painted in light

green. Dominic loved the idea and made adjustments for the kids' requests and even put a playground in the backyard under a huge Eastern Redbud.

I was surprised when Lena was already there when I pulled over the driveway. I looked at the rearview mirror and saw Devon's and Diana's grave and nervous faces and smiled at them to break the tension in the backseat of the car.

"We're here," I said to them and reached for Diana's small face to let her know that everything will be alright. "I know moving here is sudden, but things will be different here. And I mean positive things. Plus, Annie is still staying with us so how about a loud hooray before we get out of the car?"

"I am not sure, Mom." Diana's face seemed anxious as she pouted her small lips. But then she looked at me when I felt nervous and smiled, "But as long as you are happy, then Devon and I are happy for you."

"I'm excited to explore the place!" Devon blurted excitedly. He was always my little adventurer. And Diana, as I expected, was always the cautious one but always had the softest heart.

"Of course," I answered to both of them with a huge, grateful smile, "We are going to have so much time to explore this place and eat delicious foods we saw on the internet." They were intrigued by the sweets here, especially ice creams, given that Silver Crescent is a place rich in culture.

Diana's smile gave me a huge relief as I decided to help them take their seat belts off and hop down from the car. Lena's smile was divine when I saw her and approached the children. It was the very first time she would meet her grandchildren, and she was so happy she couldn't hold back her tears of joy as she embraced Diana and gave Devon a kiss on the cheek.

I wrapped my arms around Lena and she held me tight. I even felt her sob as she buried her face in my shoulder as the happiness overflowed from her chest and she couldn't contain it.

Both of them were confused why the old lady was crying, and Diana's and Devon's faces were filled with confusion and worry. Devon asked, "Mom, why is she crying? Did something happen?"

"Oh no, no, my lovely boy," Lena sniffed as she smiled at Devon and gently patted the top of his dark, unruly hair. "I am just pleased to see both of you. Your mother and I are very good friends. She's like a family to me so that means both of you can call me Granny. I will be delighted to hear you call me Granny."

"Go and fix your things inside," I whispered to the kids. And as they ran with excitement to see their new rooms, I turned to Lena and gave her an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry it took you a very long time to see them in person, Lena. Seeing them with you is just... it's indescribable. I'm so happy that you are finally able to see them as much as you want."

"You have no idea how much you make me happy, Samantha." Lena smiled with tears of joy as she dabbed the corner of her eyes with a handkerchief, careful not to mess her mascara and smear it on her face. "It's the day I had been dreaming of, Samantha! For you to finally decide to move in the Silver Crescent pack! Now I don't have to pester Dominic night and day to convince you."

I chuckled. Lena was always so sweet to me. We decided to walk to the backyard where we can talk without the kids hearing us. I saw the lovely playground and smiled, thinking that the kids would love it. Dominic always knew how to win the twins' hearts.

"It worried me that the Alpha of the Moonstone Pack won't allow you to transfer to Silver Crescent," Lena said with a worried tone as we sat at the picnic table in the middle of the garden. "Dominic was worried sick as well. I saw him spending sleepless nights on the balcony looking at the sky and holding his phone. As if he was trying his best not to call you too often and make you feel annoyed."

I was surprised at what I heard and didn't expect Dominic could be that clingy when he was there at the pack manor. "It wasn't easy to convince Killian, but I managed. He has been a good friend to me for so many years,

and I know he just wanted me to be happy as well." I explained to Lena as simply as I could, leaving the other details to myself. "Moonstone will be the second home for me, though. They welcomed me like a family there when I needed one."

Lena nodded and understood my sentiment. She reached for my hands, though, and squeezed them. "Thank you for bringing my grandchildren here, Samantha. Diana is a beautiful girl with that strong feature, just like you. And Devon—he reminds me of Dominic when he was that age."

"I decided to open my heart again and trust Dominic, Lena. I thought I was risking too much to believe in him again, but then I couldn't be selfish and deny you and your son the kids. Devon and Diana, they love Dominic...and Dominic adores the twins." I looked down and then sighed before I gazed back into Lena's face, full of motherly love for his son and the twins. "I'm sorry I denied you the twins as well."

"No. I understand your anguish, Samantha. You endured so much, and you survived it all without anyone's help."

"Killian," I answered with a plain voice, a little awkward to say his name in front of the mother of my mate, "He was there when I needed someone to help me with the twins. That's why it wasn't easy for me to leave Moonstone as well. But for Dominic, after I saw these wonderful changes in him, my wolf convinced me that maybe I can gamble a little and trust him for the second time."

"I can see Dominic is working hard to be worthy of you again and that makes me happy for the both of you." Lena smiled at me but then faded when thoughts suddenly flooded her face. "But I'm afraid Olivia is not happy about this. After she found out that you're going to move here with the kids, she stormed into the pack manor and straight to Dominic's house and created a ruckus there, making the Omega servants petrified and scared. I had no choice but to send her away and never step into my home unless she had calmed down and was ready to talk to Dominic like a decent she-wolf."

I didn't expect Olivia could be so desperate like that, but I didn't give any comment about this because I didn't really know what exact words to say. Olivia was a threat to me and my children but Dominic assured me he would assign guards outside the house twenty-four seven, especially for Annie and the kids.

"I have a feeling Olivia is brewing something dangerous with her father, Richard, and you have to stay careful and cautious around them, Samantha," Lena warned me with a worried look on her face. Don't let the kids stay out of your sight. If your instinct told you that there's something wrong with your twins, listen to it. Mother's instincts are always right. I will make sure no one can harm my grandchildren as long as their Granny is alive."

Lena's protectiveness and love for Devon and Diana made me feel secure in the safety of the kids. "We need it, Lena. Thank you. But now that I am here in the Silver Crescent, it's time for me to get what is mine. And that is the duty of being the Luna of the pack which Olivia took from me so many years ago."

Chapter 77
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

"I can't believe you managed to convince her to move here."

I was in the middle of deep thinking when Ethan entered my office with a huge smile on his face. Even he celebrated that the Luna of the Silver Crescent pack had finally returned and was excited for the future of the pack now that Samantha had proven so much of what she was capable of when she was in Moonstone.

"They're here?" I asked. Eagerness slipped on the tone of my voice, and Ethan's brows raised in surprise. I realized I lost my composure so I cleared my throat and straightened my suit as I looked at my wristwatch with a nonchalant look on my face. "Yes. They should be here by now. Samantha sent me a message when they left the Moonstone pack, and it's been two hours since then. Mom told me she wanted to wait for them."

“I bet your mom’s elated to see the twins. She spent the entire day yesterday discussing the twins with my mother, and I can assure you, Dom, that your mom will spoil these kids rotten once Samantha agrees to stay with them at the Pack Manor with you one day.”

I grinned at Ethan, but I could picture it in my head, and my heart couldn’t contain the happiness I felt while thinking about Samantha and the kids laughing and giving color and life to a home that had been cold since she left the Silver Crescent.

Ethan sighed, though, and folded his arms on his chest. “It would be better, though, if she stayed in the pack manor with the kids. There, we could monitor them well.”

“It doesn’t matter,” I said to Ethan. I scratched my temple with my finger, hiding my impatience and then slipped my hands in the pocket of my pants. I was a little anxious about whether I would go straight to the house to check on Samantha and the kids or if I would let Mom have time with them for a bit. “Samantha agreeing to move here is already a big thing for me and the pack. We will make it slow for her, Ethan. I would rather not pressure Samantha. She’s still anxious about her position here at the Silver Crescent, and as much as possible, I need her to feel comfortable with the place and the people again.”

“Fair enough,” Ethan replied, nodding and understanding that all of it wasn’t easy for the woman I hurt once.

“I believe Samantha can handle everything, whatever these people throw at her,” I told Ethan with faith for my Luna. “I saw how strong she faced everything on her own without losing her compassion. The pack needs her, Ethan. They need a Luna who has a strong heart to lead her people. Because Samantha—she cares. She cares about everything, especially those people we occasionally tend to overlook.”

“You mean the Omegas?” Ethan replied with a grave look on his face. Even he felt that guilt.

I sighed, “Yes.” I admitted it to him. "I became so preoccupied with large-scale businesses that I overlooked these people." I kept on picturing big things but forgot to see these problems, which Olivia refused to take seriously. You know how she hates attending the Omegas.”

“Let’s not talk about Olivia and ruin this day for you and Sam,” Ethan replied cautiously, not wanting my mood to shift when it was a special day for me and my mate. “Are you not going there yet? She must be looking for you now.”

“Mom is already there. I bet she needs more time with Samantha and the kids since it’s her first time seeing Devon and Diana.” I couldn’t hide the smile on my face, and Ethan looked happy for me as well. “I’ll go there later.”

“Then maybe we should proceed with the meeting first. I heard the patrol group has a concern to share with you, and the council needs an explanation now that Samantha decided to move here to Silver Crescent. I heard they needed a word from you about this matter.” There was a warning in Ethan’s tone that told me the council wasn’t pleased with the news about Samantha settling once again in the Silver Crescent, and that was enough to annoy me entirely. I already discussed this with them, but I guess these people never learned that it was my decision who I wanted to welcome in my pack.

I fixed the button of my suit and straightened it as a snarl rumbled in my throat. “Then tell them to wait.”

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[In the Silver Crescent Meeting Hall]

From outside the door, I could already hear the commotion of the council members inside. Ethan gave me a helpless look and shrugged his shoulder, not knowing what to say because he knew these people sided with Olivia rather than Samantha. Richard has huge influence among the elders and council members of the pack and that meant they wouldn’t

make it easy for me after Samantha ran away from her responsibility as the Luna.

It was something they would never understand, though; it was all my fault, and it all happened because I was careless. I never treated Samantha right. And it was something I needed to fix now that she's here and the kids. I would never let these people ruin things for me again after I did everything I could to convince Samantha to return to Silver Crescent and become my Luna.

Ethan watched me nervously as I fixed the button on the wrist of my suit while I mentally prepared myself to face the council and the elders.

The heavy wooden door opened, and the gravity of the tension inside turned dark and intense as I stepped inside with Ethan, walking with his back straight behind me.

"Alpha." Everyone bowed their heads as soon as I sat at the head of the table. One of the elders spoke with a firm voice, his head still bowed, refusing to look directly into my eyes. "We apologize for this sudden urgent meeting. We just heard that the former Luna had entered the premises and found out that she's settling here with her twin pups. It's a serious matter we need to discuss with you since we have never expected this. We all thought here that she was branded as a deserter of the pack."

My eyes were sharp and menacing as I studied their faces one by one. I could tell Richard has talked to the elders about it and asked for their support for Olivia, and made sure Samantha will not be welcomed here in Silver Crescent.

Out of my ten council members, four of them were against Samantha's return. But the elders were the largest number inside the meeting hall, and I knew this was how Richard wanted to play the game with me—to turn these people against me by making them think I was too reckless with my decisions.

But of course, there's no way I would let them, though. I am the Alpha. The king of this land, and they are my subjects who should bow to whatever the f*ck I wanted, or I will banish them just as they wished for my mate.

"Yes. What you heard was right. Samantha is here and has the right to do so. I answered them with my voice booming inside the room. The power of Alpha's words weighed heavily over their shoulders, forcing their heads to lower in respect. "I know Richard said something to you to make you hate Samantha, but this is what I am telling you. She is an important part of this pack, and if ever there is someone here who is against it, then raise your hand, and I will make sure you know the consequences of questioning my authority in this pack."

Everyone's faces turned pale after they heard the threat in my voice. They knew I was a cold, ruthless Alpha, but I treasure my pack members, especially the councilmen and the elders who contributed so much to the pack. But that didn't mean I would tolerate them going against me after Richard played a card he thought would work to make these people hate me and Samantha. The thought made me figure out how desperate Richard was.

After a minute of silence and sensing that they were too anxious and scared to go against my will, I stood from my seat and looked at them coldly and threateningly. "I know you don't trust Samantha after she left the Silver Crescent. But I am asking for you to give her a second chance to prove herself. She is my mate, and you know what that means to me. I hope you understand that this is not something personal. I am doing this because I believe in Samantha, that she can handle bigger responsibilities the Silver Pack needs."

I added with a firm tone, making sure each of them heard me clearly, "I need you to treat Samantha equal to how you treat me as your Alpha and not make it too obvious for her. She's still adjusting to the changes that happened here in this place, and that means I demand respect from you for Samantha and her pups."

There was a murmur among them, but I decided to finally leave, and Ethan immediately followed me outside with an impressed look on his face.

“For a moment, I thought you would roar in front of them and tell them to f*ck off,” Ethan said with humor while chuckling behind me. “You handled it really well, Dominic.”

“They leave me no choice,” I answered as I loosened the necktie around my neck. Richard truly takes pleasure in getting on my nerves. And then something came to mind, and I asked Ethan with a frown, "Can female shifters without a wolf go into heat?"

“I am not sure about it, Alpha, but if they do, then that probably means pup number three—or much better, a new set of twins.” Ethan teasingly patted me on the shoulder and smiled like crazy. I always forget he could be this goofy sometimes.

But the idea of Samantha being pregnant with another child with me—it was something that made me wildly happy.

“My loyalty and strength are yours and Samantha’s only, Dominic,” Ethan swore to me with a determined look in his eyes. “I saw how you love the twins and how you care so much about them. And for that, I will make sure to protect them with my life.”

“That is something I need to hear from you,” I answered him and patted him on the shoulder, feeling grateful for his loyalty.

Chapter 78
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

Lena made sure we had everything we needed before she left the house and went somewhere where her presence was needed. I assured her that we were fine and comfortable, knowing that the kids loved how their rooms were designed based on their preferences, and Diana was excited with the plush toys Dominic must have bought and chose for her.

It took me almost the whole day to reorganize my things and make sure the kids were well fed after they took a relaxing warm bath and had a cozy short nap. With the help of two Omega maids that Dominic sent to help me

with our stuff and taking care of the twins, the day that I expected would be extremely exhausting for me went surprisingly smooth and easy.

The youngest maid, Cynthia, has a shy demeanor, and I thought it was adorable because she was always amazed at how witty Diana could get whenever the two of them started a little conversation. Madison, who was only five years older than Cynthia, was excellent at cooking and made sure the kids had a wonderful lunch.

“This is the best mango pie I ever tasted in my whole life.” I praised Madison while she was busy baking cookies for Devon and Diana and made sure it was ready before they woke up for their snacks. “I can’t even compare this to the ones I tasted in the pack manor before I—” I suddenly realized it was an awkward topic to talk about when Cynthia and Madison looked at each other uncomfortably.

“Sorry.” I apologized to both of them as I wiped the corner of my mouth with a white napkin and smiled, wanting them to feel as comfortable in my presence. “I guess both of you already know the story about me. And I am pleased that you still chose to work here for me and the kids despite the rumors of me being called a deserter.”

“We heard a lot,” Madison said, and Cynthia’s eyes widened in panic, reminding her friend not to be too involved, but Madison seemed to have a courageous soul and smiled at me. Her eyes were beaming with enthusiasm as she looked at me as if I were some kind of celebrity in her eyes. “And I can still remember you being the Luna of the pack when I was just a kid and a small helper in the pack manor kitchen. You are always like a celebrity to us Omegas, Miss Samantha. You are so beautiful and kind, and all of the staff in that place love you.”

I was surprised at what I heard. My heart and mind were filled with my pain and anger against Dominic and Olivia that time that I didn’t notice that there were people who were watching me, like how Madison was looking at me with a huge smile. That brought warmth to my heart and lowered my eyes; I was a little embarrassed to see Madison’s lovely eyes looking up at me with admiration I didn’t think I deserved.

“She’s saying the truth,” Cynthia shyly agreed with Madison with a small smile while she was busy arranging the newly bought china wares in the kitchen. “We, Omegas and the other low ranks here in Silver Crescent. We all had been looking forward to the day you return here and become a full-fledged Luna, Miss Samantha. You always have a heart for us, who are always forgotten by the people who are supposed to look after the weak members of the pack—the ones who need the Alpha the most.”

“But our voices are not always the loudest, Miss. I mean, especially when the packhouse only focuses on the large-scale businesses that help the Silver Crescent to become at the top of the list.” Madison continued Cynthia’s explanation while wiping a plate and placing it on the rack. “Miss Olivia is supposed to look over the Omega people.” She winced with hatred as she mentioned the name of the woman: "But we know how much she hates dealing with us, and going to the slum areas irks her. We never liked that woman.”

I understood my maids’ sentiments as I watched both of them work in the kitchen and then uttered, “I can’t promise you anything yet, Madison, Cynthia. But I will do what I can to help you and everyone in your village. I am not just here to seek shelter in the Silver Crescent pack but also to know my purpose. And now that you are telling me this, I think I already know what I need to do.” I smiled at both of them and ate a mouthful of mango pie.

Madison and Cynthia looked at each other again, but now with happiness glinting in both of their eyes, and that’s when the twins finally woke up from their nap. The maids wiped their hands and immediately attended to them with gentle smiles.

“When are we going to see Dominic?” Devon asked, still wiping his little eyes with the back of his hand. He seemed a little stern from the nap, and his dark hair was messier than it usually is. “Diana and I have been expecting him.”

I bent down to fix Devon’s hair and smiled, “He’s a busy man, Devon. I believe he will come here once he has his spare time. Don’t worry.”

Even I expected I would see Dominic with his mother when we arrived. But I guess he had to deal with the people who were against the idea of me moving here in the Silver Crescent territory. He already told me about it and assured me there was nothing for me to worry about.

And this time, I chose to trust him. Maybe it was time to give Dominic a chance to prove himself again and show me what he could do to protect me and the children against his people who were against us—the people who favored Olivia over me to become the Luna of the pack.

“I want cookies.” Diana pouted and Madison chuckled, saying cookies are ready together with warm milk.

I helped Madison and Cynthia prepare Devon and Diana’s snacks and asked the two to join us as well. They were reluctant at first, not used to such treatment from them. But I told them that they were now part of the family as well and thanked them for helping me with the twins.

After the snacks, Madison and Cynthia told Devon and Diana about the playground in the backyard, and I forgot that I hadn’t mentioned it to them after I got busy speaking with their granny. The twins were elated to see the swing set, and Diana loved the playhouse; she quickly took her kitchen set toys and asked Cynthia to play with her.

While watching all of them get busy, I felt my phone vibrate and ring in the pocket of my jeans and immediately took it and pressed it to my ear, “Lena?” I asked, a little confused because he had just left the house. “Did something happen?”

“No, not really, Samantha. I just need you to come here, and I need to discuss something with you.” She responded with a chuckle, trying not to make me feel nervous. But I knew her anyway. I could sense through her voice that it was something grave and urgent.

I sighed after Lena ended the call.

“First day, and duty already calls me,” I whispered to myself, trying to ease the nervousness as I told Madison and Cynthia that I was needed for an emergency. I also told Devon and Diana I would be home in no time.

*****

I looked up at the pack manor of the Silver Crescent and felt my heart was going to burst from my chest. My feet wanted me to run away from the place, but I collected all the courage I had and went inside the main hall with a deep, slow breath. Like I was walking underwater.

“Lena!” I felt so relieved as soon as I saw her on a couch in the sitting area. Her face instantly brightened the second she saw me and threw me a hug.

“I’m sorry you have to leave the kids for a minute, Samantha,” Lena apologized and gestured for me to sit beside her as her hand gently held my elbow. “But this is a matter that needs your attention as soon as possible.”

I knew the event would happen as soon as I entered the Silver Crescent. There were matters here that Lena thought only I could solve and it was a huge honor that she trusted me at that kind of level. I remembered what Madison and Cynthia told me about the growing poverty of the Omegas in the slum area of this territory. It was the same thing that worried Lena the most. Olivia abandoned the project after learning she had to visit the site until it was forgotten and became worse, that it became the nest of robbers and criminals.

“I’ll take care of it,” I said to Lena with confidence and remembered Madison and Cynthia as I took the folder from my mother-in-law. “You can trust me with this.”

Chapter 79
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

Lena, despite her busy schedule, insisted on going back to the house to see Devon and Diana once again. After I studied all the information in the

folder that was assigned to me, I made sure to tell Lena that I would give her a result within the week.

She asked her driver to drive us back to the family compound and used her red SUV. As I watched our way back, I didn't expect to miss the place as I saw the tall roadside pine trees and their amazing scent that made me close my eyes. It smelled like home. It was the smell of the place I cherished for years before I left to escape the misery I thought would never end.

But it did. Dominic was a storm that turned my life upside down, and yet that same storm brought clarity to what I really wanted in life—what I wanted to become and the person I wanted to be with. It was something I never expected after everything that happened. All of it felt as if it was a dream. And being with Lena in her car felt as if those awful things never really happened. Despite all of it, though, the twins were the most beautiful thing that happened between that storm. And I was willing to go through all of it over and over again if it meant I could have Devon and Diana.

As we arrived, Lena noticed a familiar face and uttered in surprise. "Ethan? What is he doing here?"

Ethan?

I looked out of the window and saw my friend waving at us with a huge smile on his face. It had been a while since we last saw each other, and I was excited to know how he had been.

As soon as the driver parked the car, I hopped out and gave Ethan a tight hug. He embraced me back, lifted me to the ground, and whirled me gently as we both laughed; both were delighted to see each other again.

"I am so glad you finally decided to move here, Sam. You have no idea how this makes me happy. At least here I can visit you anytime without worrying about Moonstone people tackling me down to the ground." Ethan laughed and patted my head, just as he used to when we were in the training camp.

“Don’t say that, Ethan.” I shoved his hand away with a smile and pouted my lip. “Moonstone people are not really that bad. They are just cautious with you, Silver Crescent people, for being too controlling and arrogant.”

“Don’t say that. You are one of us now. Just so you know,” Ethan raised an eyebrow at me and noticed Lena’s presence as she approached us and bowed. “Good evening, Mother Luna. The Alpha sent me here to make sure the place is safe and secure for the Luna and the twins. I am leading the patrol team tonight to rove the area.”

“No need to be too formal, Ethan.” Lena waved her hand lazily with a smile and chuckled at her son’s friend. “I am just here to check with the kids as well, making sure they love their room and everything.”

“You spoil them too much, Lena,” I said to her, grateful and worried at the same time.

“Oh, these little darlings deserve it. They deserve so much love from their Granny.”

Ethan and I watched Lena get inside the house, and I heard the children cheer with glee and then laugh as Lena gave them tickles and hugs.

"You bring so much joy here," Ethan said, gazing at me with a sense of gladness as he slipped his hands into his pockets and sighed at the night’s chill breeze. “It’s been a long time since I saw the Mother Luna being so lively and cheerful like that. It’s priceless, Sam.”

“You know that’s not true,” I thought otherwise as I looked at him meaningfully, “And I mean about the elders and some of the council members, Ethan. I know they don’t like me returning here in Silver Crescent. They prefer Olivia more than me, as Luna.”

Ethan grinned mischievously, “If you only saw their faces when Dominic shut them off after they made a ruckus in the meeting hall. It’s not their decision if you are welcome here or not, Sam. Dominic wants you here. There’s no way he would let anyone interfere with his decision when it’s the safest place for you and the twins, Sam.”

“I know. It’s just—I don’t know. Strange? Maybe because I’ve been away from this place for so long and... I don’t know how to feel.”

“It’s okay to feel a little doubtful with everything, Sam. As long as you believe in yourself, there’s nothing to be scared of.” Ethan spoke softly as we strolled towards the backyard, observing the playground that Dominic prepared for the kids.

“It’s been six years. Don’t tell me you haven’t found your mate yet,” I teased him, knowing that Ethan was a notorious womanizer in our younger years.

He rolled his eyes at me in dramatic exaggeration that made me chuckle, “How am I able to find the right woman for me when your mate kept on making me busy with endless paperwork!” he grumbled jokingly at me.

I frowned. “He told me he’s always done with his duties whenever he sneaks inside Moonstone to visit me and the kids,” I asked, a little curious and confused. “What’s happening?”

He eyed me. “He’s never done with his job assignments!” Ethan blurted, more like complaining but with humor that made me miss him more because of his comedic side. “He’s worried that whenever he’s not around, you and that Moonstone Alpha will get closer and you have no idea how that makes him crazy, Sam. he’s crazy when he’s so paranoid about you and Alpha Killian.”

“So that’s the reason behind the late-night visits and his sudden appearance in my house.” My eyes squinted. “Are you saying he’s trying to catch me having an affair with Killian?”

Ethan saw the anger rising in me, though, so he quickly dodged the bullet. “More like he’s concerned about your safety and the kids, Sam. He wants to make sure you and the kids are safe from Killian’s enemies. Especially when the rumors spread all over the continent about the hybrids growing larger in number on the borders of Moonstone. And of course, the threat of Olivia to you and your children.”

My eyes sharpened as my stare grew cold and menacing.

“Richard Bennett kept on influencing the elders to convince the Alpha not to welcome you here,” he added with perturbation in his voice. Ethan was aware of this issue and found it concerning. “He thinks the council and the elders can help him convince Dominic that Olivia is the right Luna for the pack; that’s why Dominic couldn’t go here no matter how much he wanted to. He has to deal with them first and fix this before he sees you and the twins.”

I appreciate Dominic’s effort to defend me against his people. I knew it wasn’t easy for him no matter how much he displayed his power as their Alpha.

I was about to open my lips to tell Ethan how much I was grateful for him and Dominic when I heard a terrified scream inside the house.

My heart raced as I froze in fear and panic, and Ethan was the first to reach the door.

Chapter 80
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Lena! What’s going on!” I screamed at the top of my lungs as I violently pushed the door open with my shoulder. It was baffling that it didn’t budge even after I kicked it with all my strength. Dominic made the house impenetrable from the outside, and he wasn’t kidding about saying it was the safest place for me and the kids.

Ethan was saying something, but I couldn’t hear him. My heart was pounding in my ears as the adrenaline rushed through me like hellfire, burning me from the inside out while hearing those horrible growlings and screamings inside the house. Lena was screaming—not out of fear. She sounded as if she were taming beasts in front of her, and I was terrified of the safety of my twins.

“Lena!! Lena let me in! What the f*ck is going on?!” I screeched in panic. Ethan dragged me away from the door as he attempted to destroy it. I

watched him kick it with all his might. The door, which I perceived was made from light but sturdy metal inside the mahogany wood, didn't even stir from Ethan's strength.

"What the—" he growled as he grimaced from the pain. The sickening crack I heard was his femur, which he ignored as he flinched away, limping.

"LENA!!!"

I didn't know what was happening. The shattering noises, the growling, the scratching on the walls, and that scream as if someone was in pain—I couldn't wrap it all in my head. It was as if I was going crazy and I couldn't do anything but kick the door. Blood streaked from my hand as my knuckles broke after punching the window and failed to break it. The d*mn thing was made of ballistic-proof glass.

I cursed Dominic in my head as I bared my teeth, ready to shift into my wolf form. I had to get my kids out even if it meant having to tear the f*cking house down.

"I don't know what's happening, but I saw Lena locking the door and the windows off," Ethan panted while wincing from the pain of his broken leg, which was slowly healing. "There's something wrong inside. I can't hear the kids."

My eyes widened in both rage and terror. My eyes glinted red as I flexed my fingers, ready to morph. "They're in pain," I said to Ethan. "Diana and Devon are in pain, and they're scared, Ethan! I have to destroy the house or—"

We both heard the lock of the door click. Lena slightly opened it and gestured for me to come in fast. Ethan and I froze for a second, and, despite my confusion and fear, I ran inside and was flabbergasted by what I witnessed.

My babies... My poor little babies...

In front of me were Diana and Devon in their werewolf form. Their eyes were fixed on me and their granny was full of confusion, pain, and fear. Their feet wobbled and Diana whined as she hid behind her brother with her tail between her legs while Devon's eyes widened, waiting for me to explain what was happening. He was breathing fast. He was scared, and I knew it was too dangerous to get too close to him. A newly shifted wolfling's first instinct was to attack anyone who tried to get near or touch them, and it was the last thing I ever wanted to happen because I knew Devon would be traumatized in life if he ever failed to control himself and got me hurt.

I was still in shock and never expected this would happen on the first day of our stay here in Silver Crescent. Was it because of the land that awakened their wolf spirits this early? Was it because their wolves knew they were finally home?

Or did they know there was a dangerous threat in this place, and their wolves tried to protect them?

I turned to Lena. I was stunned by what I saw, as it was too early for them to have their wolves. And even she couldn't explain what happened. She stammered as she uttered with her eyes wide in shock, "I—I was convincing them to prepare for bed, but they kept on asking if Dominic would come. I told them he's a little busy today and he couldn't come to see them, but Devon got mad and Diana—she was feverish and I got worried; I thought about running and telling you that there was something strange with the kids. But when I turned my back, there was a loud explosion and sounds of cracking bones everywhere...Samantha, how could this be possible? They're just...they're just eight!"

It was indeed alarming, and I understood Lena's bewilderment at the situation because an average werewolf shifted to their wolf form between fifteen and eighteen years of age. But with Devon and Diana's case, there was no explanation of how these happened. I couldn't believe I had overlooked the signs that the twins' bodies were ready to have their wolves. My mind was blown thoroughly.

Uncertain how to answer Lena's question, my attention shifted when Devon and Diana turned back to their human form.

"Goddess, Cynthia! Madisson! Help!"

Lena and I ran and carried the children, making sure they weren't hurt or if the transformation didn't cause permanent damage to their bodies. Tears streamed down my face as I embraced my twins with both hands and handed Devon to Lena to carry him to my room. Madison and Cynthia were trembling; they weren't sure what to do at first, but then realized the twins needed clothing and immediately went to their room and grabbed a pair of their pajamas.

Despite all the awful feelings I felt when I couldn't get inside the house during the commotion, I was grateful for Lena for her swift thinking about trapping them inside and not letting them get away. New shifters were difficult to deal with, especially since they had no control over themselves yet, and Diana and Devon were too young for this. They were scared and confused, and I didn't know what to do if both of them got into huge trouble and hurt themselves.

"You have to keep this a secret from Dominic, Samantha!" Lena pleaded as fear and perturbation showed on her already panicky face. I had never seen her so scared like this in my entire life that I knew her. "You can't tell anyone about this. Especially Dominic!"

I frowned, "What are you talking about, Lena? What happened? What did you see?"

Lena was too flabbergasted to talk. Her eyes were just looking at the kids with fear while her hands were on her chest, as if she couldn't believe what happened. Even I couldn't believe that Devon and Diana got their wolves at that early age, but Lena—there was something she saw. Something that horrified her, and I didn't know what it was. She wouldn't talk. I sensed she had no intention of telling me so I took the initiative to ask because it started to scare me.

“What is it, Lena? What did you see?” I asked her while looking at her terrified face. “Tell me what happened to my kids!”

“I can’t tell you anything yet, Samantha,” Lena looked at me as if spooked by something uncanny. “Silver Crescent faces enemies Dominic hasn’t told you yet and you have to keep the children safe from them. You have to make sure no one finds out they already have their wolves. No one can know about this, Samantha.”

My frown deepened. I was so frustrated by what was happening because I had no idea why she was acting so strange. “How am I supposed to protect them when I have no idea what you are talking about, Lena? What is it that you saw!? Tell me, please!”

“Samantha, calm down,” Ethan stopped me, and that’s when I realized I had already lost my cool in front of my mother-in-law. I blinked twice and looked at Lena apologetically as I murmured, “I—I’m sorry, Lena.”

“It doesn’t matter, dear.” Lena held my hand with more profound understanding as she uttered, “Just do what I told you.”

I didn’t know if I should tell it in front of her and Ethan, but I had a feeling Lena knew about something mysterious happening to me and the kids. So I stared straight into her eyes and asked, “But Lena, there is something strange about me. Something I couldn’t explain. You—you know my parents. You know where they came from and what kind of people they were, Lena. I need you to tell me what is different about me. Why do I feel so different?”

There was sadness in her face that left me heartbroken. Evan Ethan was so confused at what was happening but decided not to interfere.

“A High Healer from the Moonstone Pack told me about this ‘Primordial’ blood thing and I have no idea what it is,” I told her with an exhausted, sorrowful voice, and Lena let go of my hand. When I raised my eyes to look at her face, she was all pale and in dread.

“Don’t dive into things you don’t know, Samantha. This is not something you want to know about.” Lena warned me as she went downstairs as fast as if she had seen a ghost.

“Lena, wait!” Where are you going!” I called for her in desperation for an answer but she slammed the door behind her and didn’t look back.

I was shocked. I didn’t know what to do, and that’s when I noticed what happened inside. The house was a giant disaster. The walls had gigantic scratches on them, and the torn paper walls hung along with the photo frames, which were misaligned, while some were on the floor with the glasses shattered and scattered everywhere.

Even the china in the kitchen didn’t survive. All were broken into pieces. ‘

“Samantha...” Ethan called for me and I felt his hand on my shoulder. “The twins are woken up. They’re looking for you.”

Tears rolled down my face. I didn’t know what kind of chaos was waiting for us, but I could feel it was just the beginning of my disastrous life here in Silver Crescent.

Chapter 81
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Devon, Diana!” I exclaimed when I got into my room with my children crying in horror and pain. I wrapped my arms around them, tight enough to make them know I was there, and everything would be alright. “I’m here. Mommy’s here.” I kept whispering to them as I kissed the tops of their heads with tears on the corners of my eyes. Diana was so scared; she was trembling from head to foot. The sweetest thing Devon did that brought ache to my heart was when he reached for his sister’s hand and squeezed it to calm her as he fought his own fears.

“Mommy, what happened! It hurts! It hurts so bad!” Diana cried as she buried her face on my chest. “I’m so scared, Mom!”

“I’m sorry,” I answered with trembling lips, trying my best not to make my voice crack in front of my kids. “I’m sorry, you have to experience something like this. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you about this.” My tears trickled down my face as guilt and fear crawled up to my throat, almost choking me. “I’m sorry, I didn’t tell you.”

“It hurts,” Devon cried as he shut his eyes tight. “It feels like I was burning alive and my bones—”

“Shhh...” I kissed Devon’s hair as I held him tighter, “I know, Devon, I know...” I sobbed as I rocked back and forth with my twins, “I’m so sorry...” I kept on whispering in their ears as the three of us cried. I felt Madison, Cynthia, and Ethan leave the room quietly, closing the door behind them to give me time to calm my babies down.

Too focused on my twins, I didn’t notice the door opened again. Someone put a blanket around me and the twins, and when I lifted my tear-smeared face, it was Lena. I was surprised to see her; I never expected she would come back after I saw her terrified face when she left the house.

Lena looked at me with sad, apologetic eyes. I gave her a short, gentle nod to tell her I understand why she acted so harshly after what happened to Devon and Diana. Seeing her guilt was enough to show that she wished she had never done that. She mouthed sorry to me and I reached for her hand and squeezed it.

“Granny,” Diana reached for Lena, wanting the old woman to carry her while Devon was in my arms, finding comfort with my warmth. Lena was surprised that little Diana asked for her and immediately took Diana from me and embraced her.

“I’m so scared.” Diana pouted her lips to her granny with her eyes still teary. “I saw a wolf and she... she talked to me! I heard her in my head.”

“Me too,” Devon added, his voice still filled with perturbation as he looked at Lena and then at me. “He’s huge, and he’s scary! I thought I was just dreaming at first, but I felt him, Mom! I felt him and he told me he’s my wolf and... and...”

“It’s okay, Devon,” I stopped as I saw he was so overwhelmed with emotions. “You don’t have to rush things in your head. You can process all these slowly until you get used to it. I know it’s something new, and you are both confused, but this is how we, as shifters, get our wolves. This can be painful at first, but your body will adjust to it once you get trained.”

“I don’t want to be trained.” Diana frowned. “And I don’t understand. What are shifters, Mommy? Did you get your wolf, too? Were you scared when you shifted?”

I looked at Lena and didn’t know how to tell the kids that I was a late bloomer—that it took me so long to get my wolf and suffered a lot of judgment because of this. But I decided to leave the rest of the details and not tell them about it—in case they make a mistake of mentioning it to Dominic. I wasn’t ready yet to tell him that I already got my wolf so I bit my lip hard and lied, “No. Mommy hasn’t gotten her wolf yet but maybe soon.”

I wish my voice was convincing enough to make Lena believe as well.

“It doesn’t matter whether Mommy got her wolf or not,” Lena tried to change the topic to avoid the kids getting more anxious, thinking that they were going through something I didn’t. My stomach tightened so much that I had to lie to them about it.

What if Dominic finds out I already had my wolf? He must have felt it every time we shared a night, but he didn’t. He still had no idea that I was on heat and I had no courage yet to tell him. Perhaps I was still scared. Perhaps I was still cautious not to give him a reason to take advantage of me again. The funny thing was, I already chose him over Killian. I agreed to move here so we can get closer to him. And yet I still couldn’t manage to give him my one hundred percent trust.

And how could I? When Olivia was still around the Silver Crescent territory and plotting something against me to take back Dominic?

“You know what? How about I get you something to eat? I know you kids are very hungry right now,” Lena smiled at Diana and Devon, “I believe Madison prepared something yummy downstairs.”

“Yes, please,” Devon agreed shyly as he put his hand on his growling stomach, and Diana and I couldn’t help but chuckle as we saw his face grimace. Devon grumbled, “I can eat a whole cow right now.”

The heavy tension somehow lifted with Devon’s charming little joke. I felt every muscle in my body relax as soon as I saw my children were slowly getting better from the trauma brought by the sudden transformation with that smile on their faces.

Lena and Madison prepared something downstairs, while Diana, Devon, and I embraced each other in silence inside my dark room. I could hear their heartbeats getting slow and calm, and their breathing has improved while listening to the rustling of the wind outside the windows.

“Why didn’t you tell us about this, Mom?” Devon asked. I expect he would fret about it, but he was gentle with his words. The frown on his face was free of any accusation.

“I don’t know,” I admitted to them because I wasn’t really sure how I should explain it. “I thought it was too early for both of you to know that you have Shifter’s blood, and I still had time. Normal shifters get their wolves at the age of fifteen and...” I sighed, “...and you and Diana are—”

“Does that mean we’re not normal?” Diana asked, her voice shaky and worried. “Are Devon and I not normal, Mommy?”

“No!” I panicked a little when I realized they weren’t getting it right, and I never wanted them to misunderstand me. “I mean, you and Devon are very special; that’s why you got your wolves early, honey. Both of you are amazing and strong and smart... And I love you so much.”

“I love you too, Mom.” Devon smiled and wiped the tears on my face with his small hand. “Diana and I always love you.”

“Me too, Devon. You and your sister are my world, and I will do everything to keep you both safe.” I promised it to them. “Nothing can harm you while I’m breathing.”

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After Lena and I fed the kids and made sure they were comfortable as we tucked them in bed, I didn’t notice that she sent more maids to fix the kitchen and the living area and saw Madison and Cynthia sweeping the floor and picking up shards of glass and china wares that scattered everywhere. Ethan was nowhere, and I thought perhaps he decided to go back to the packhouse. I wondered if he was loyal enough to Dominic and would tell him what happened with the kids despite Lena’s warning. But I knew Ethan. He won’t do such a thing if it hurts my feelings.

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have done that.” Lena approached me with a warm glass of milk. “I shouldn’t have left when the kids were in distress.”

“It’s okay, Lena. I understand.” I replied. I wanted to ask her again about her strange behavior when the chaos happened and hesitated after seeing her avert her eyes when I opened my mouth.

“I know you want to know what’s going on, Samantha. But for your safety and the kids as well, you better stay out of it.” Lena pleaded and then turned away to give more orders to the maid as they continued cleaning and fixing the living area.

So many doubts and questions emerged in my head as I watched the maids work. Madison, as her usual self, has a smile on her face as she cleans the kitchen with another maid. Cynthia, on the other hand, looked suspicious after I caught her looking at me from the corner of her eyes, making me more concerned if she was Olivia’s undercover spy that was sent to ruin my reputation completely here in Silver Crescent.

And then I noticed it wasn’t just Cynthia. The other three maids were looking at me stealthily with ill judgment in their eyes.

I could tell they knew; I could feel the disdain in their eyes. I wasn't sure what their reasons were. Perhaps Olivia had already poisoned these girls' minds against me.

Fresia, one of the maids who was about Madison's age, approached me after Lena told me she finally had to go to a meeting with the elders. Whatever it was, I had a feeling it was about the twins, and I needed to find a way to get those answers from Dominic's mother.

"Miss Samantha," Fresia greeted me with a poker face as she clasped her hands behind her. "The Mother Luna told me she prepared an office for you in the Pack Manor. You are needed there tomorrow morning at exactly seven in the morning. You can't be late."

I frowned. I didn't like the way she talked to me, but I just chose to ignore it. I saw how she lifted an eyebrow at me before she gave me a hateful look and then turned her back on me.

Goddess, she was lucky I wasn't in the mood. I didn't know what kind of treatment I would get from the people here, but that night, I was too exhausted to even care about any of them.

Chapter 82
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

Seven in the morning.

I can still remember how that Omega maid told me about going in the pack manor to check on my new office there as if she were some kind of boss or something.

Contrary to Madison and Cynthia's story, not all Omegas were thrilled for my return here in Silver Crescent. I could sense that Cynthia was still skeptical about my position in the pack, and I understood her feelings after I turned my back on everything several years ago.

As I stepped inside the main hall of the pack house, I took in a long, deep breath and exhaled. I lifted my chin and straightened my back as I rolled my shoulders, ready for whatever hostility would come my way. I knew Olivia had her eyes on me in every corner of this place, and I wouldn't give her the satisfaction of seeing me cower. Not when I was ready to claim what was supposed to be mine.

Despite the confidence I portrayed as I entered the main hall, I couldn't hide the anxiety as my eyes explored the place. So many unpleasant memories came back to me as I stepped on the grand staircase and felt the smooth wooden handrail with my hand. In my head, flashed the picture of Dominic's cold, ruthless face. The way his words used to slice into my heart whenever he pushed me away from him. I could still remember how his eyes turned dark and disdainful whenever he glowered at me. His hands—how his hands brush me away whenever I try to touch him.

All those memories were like cold knives stabbing my chest in every single step I took as I ascended. Each step made my feet feel so heavy, same with my breath, and when I looked up, Fresia was already at the mezzanine, waiting for me with a scornful look that she didn't even bother to hide.

In response, I gave her a cold look in the eye despite the flashbacks that brought back the traumas I suffered from this place. "Seven in the morning. Just like what you told me." I raised an eyebrow at her, with every word oozing with pure sarcasm.

She didn't say anything, though, and gave me a cold shoulder. Fresia moved like a robot. She was difficult to read, especially when she had that stoic expression on her face. It was as if she went through something awful and lost her soul somewhere. Being with her felt strange and yet I had no choice but to go with Fresia and follow her straight to where my office was.

I couldn't remember what room it was for before Lena transformed it into my room to work on the pack. But Lena made a wonderful modification to it, making it look like a small library on the left and a huge bay window in the middle of the room. On the right side was the executive table with all the paperwork piled neatly together with the laptop on it. A typical design of a

working area, which I missed after I left and resigned from the Moonstone pack.

“Can you tell where I can find Mr. Richard Bennet?” I asked Fresia as soon as we got inside the office. “I need to speak to him and ask for his help on how I can adapt faster with my duties here in Silver Crescent. I know I’ve been here before and I should be familiar with the tasks here but it’s been...” I sighed and then smiled at Fresia with sad eyes. “It’s been a while and I am not sure how many changes happened here while I was gone.”

Fresia looked down at her feet first and then back at me with a wry smile on her face. “I don’t think it’s a wise idea to look for Mr. Bennet, Miss Samantha. You see, Mr. Bennet doesn’t want you here and he’s been after Alpha Dominic’s neck, convincing him for so many years to choose his daughter to become the Luna of the pack. Perhaps if I were you, Mr. Bennet would be the last man I would think of if I needed someone’s help.”

Fresia’s stingy words made me grimace, but she was right. I felt stupid to think about Mr. Bennet helping me when I remembered he was Olivia’s father. I let out a growl in my throat. I guess I didn’t have enough sleep the night after what happened with Devon and Diana, and there I was, making disastrous decisions on my first day in the pack manor.

“You should be careful, though.” Fresia averted her eyes from me, but I felt there was something on her face that made me more curious about her. There was that surprising concern in her eyes I never expected. “Mr. Richard Bennet had bribed some maids to spy on you. You can’t trust anyone here in Silver Crescent.”

My eyes widened. Perhaps I was wrong about Fresia. The tension in my body dissipated as soon as I heard her warning, and her words convinced me that she only had a sh*tty attitude and was never with Olivia or the old man.

But thinking about the maids being loyal to those people—

Fresia held me by the arm as soon as she saw me starting to panic. “It’s okay. It’s okay, Miss Samantha. The kids are with Madison and Cynthia,

and you can trust them. I assure you they are good people and can never hurt those little children."

I stared into her; my eyes were wide-eyed with fear, and I found sincerity in hers. She stared back at me and waited until I put myself together and breathed. Suspicious of what she wanted, I moved a little away with my eyes still on her and then nodded, my heart still racing in my chest.

"How sure are you that my kids are safe in that house?" I asked Fresia, wondering if she was giving me a warning because she was concerned with the kids or if she just wanted to threaten me and think twice about staying in Silver Crescent. "Are you also one of Olivia's spies?"

She seemed surprised at the accusation and suppressed a smile. I glared at her, though, hating that she thought everything happening was funny. I didn't know how she could behave that way when she was only an Omega. A servant. Or was she?

"I'm sorry. I don't really care what Olivia wants." Fresia answered with a sigh. "But my people are looking forward to you becoming the Luna of the pack and I don't think that's a bad idea at all. After all, I think you are better than Olivia." She seemed embarrassed to admit it, but I could feel she was telling the truth.

She could feel I wasn't convinced yet, so she added, "The Mother Luna made sure Ethan and the rest of the Gamma soldiers are around the area of your house to make sure your twins are safe and nothing can harm them. I know Alpha Dominic is crazy about you, knowing he managed to take you back after you left the pack."

Wow. I couldn't believe what I heard. So it was I who became the villain here after what Dominic did to me?

I shook my head and just considered the thought that they didn't know anything about what happened between me and Dominic. Maybe it was for the best, and I could start again by gaining their trust.

“Okay, Fresia. Thank you for bringing me here.” I sighed and smiled at her, almost like a grimace. “But perhaps I will like it better if you speak a little nicer next time.”

Fresia just straightened her back and then bowed a little before she left me in the office. I couldn’t help but feel uneasy knowing that my children were out there without me, but I had no choice. There were things I needed to do, and Lena trusted no one to work on those issues but me. I had to win her trust and win back the hearts of the people of the Silver Crescent.

I couldn’t afford to fail. Because that would mean Olivia might snatch my chance, not just the position as the Luna, but Dominic’s heart as well.

And there’s no way I would ever let her do that again.

With my arms folded across my chest, I walked towards the window, filled with heavy thoughts in my head. I didn’t know what to expect from here. But as I looked down and saw Dominic, naked, with his sweat running down his sexy, six-pack abs, there was tightness in my throat that suddenly made it difficult to breathe. Goddess, he was sexy! His dark hair cascaded down his hazel eyes as he did push-ups in front of the garden with one hand and the other on his back. His body looked as if the gods carved it themselves because, Goddess help me, he was perfect!

My thighs rubbed as I watched him with hunger in my eyes. I couldn’t believe such a beautiful being shared a bed with me so many times, and, oh, I felt like burning. Only Dominic had this kind of effect on me that I couldn’t suppress.

To my horror, Dominic lifted his face and our eyes locked. There was a mischievous grin on his face as he stood from the ground and picked up his shirt while I, on the other hand, cursed myself in panic as I blushed so hard.

Dominic must have enjoyed the look on my face. That wink before he left made me so nervous I was too stunned to move from where I was standing.

I've never felt so embarrassed to be caught peeking. But who cares? He was beautiful as hell, and I guess I can deal with so much teasing once we have time for each other again.

Chapter 83
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I needed to study the report papers, yet I couldn't get Dominic out of my head.

Those sexy abs, his small waist and that broad, hard chest and shoulders—

I rolled my eyes and tapped the pencil on the wooden desk. Perhaps it was a good thing he didn't go straight to my office after that embarrassing moment when he saw me peeking at him. If ever Dominic went here after that sexy display, I doubt this day would become as fruitful as I hoped it could when I first stepped into this office.

Exasperated, I leaned back against my swivel chair and bit my lower lip hard. Who had I been fooling? Even without him giving me a brief visit, Dominic still occupied a huge part of my brain, distracting me from everything that I needed to study while I waited for Lena's announcement.

My mind got busy thinking of how he would carry me in his arms as he kissed me fervently and place me on top of the desk, with my legs wrapped around his waist. My hands were buried in his dark hair as his hands explored all over my body, making me melt under his touch—

"Goddess, Samantha!" I chided myself as I frowned and tried to focus harder on the papers. "Focus!"

My eyes darted across the room when I heard the knob click and the door opened. My heart pounded, believing it was Dominic. I couldn't believe how much I missed him after we moved to Silver Crescent and haven't been with him since then.

I stood from my seat and felt my stomach drop when I saw Fresia instead.

I gave her a flat look and I noticed that despicable satisfaction on her face when she realized I was expecting someone.

“I’m sorry, it’s me and not Alpha Dominic,” she rested her fist on her hip and then leaned her head to the side as if she was trying to test my temper more. “Did I disappoint you?”

“What do you want, Fresia?” I snapped at her, slumping back to my chair and giving her a deadly look. “And please, stop behaving like that. I don’t like it.”

“Fine.” She flipped her hair to the side and sighed. I had never met an Omega maid who was so sassy, like Fresia. It made me more suspicious about her. Did she lie to me when she said she wasn’t under Olivia’s command to ruin my day?

“The Mother Luna needs you to come with me to the conference hall with the elders and the council members.” She said, as she checked something on the paper she was holding. “Follow me, please.”

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[Council Hall Meeting]

I had to look tough in front of everyone.

There’s no way I would make myself look weak or vulnerable in front of those people, especially when they think they were predators, expecting to see me recoil once they show me their fangs. But I wasn’t the same Samantha six years ago. I learned to fight back. I learned how to protect the people I love and make sure everyone knows my boundaries before they shove their opinions on me.

I’ll show them my growth and how powerful I had become after I endured so much from them—the people who were supposed to support me as their Luna before but rather chose Olivia over me because they thought I was weak.

Well, they thought wrong.

“Samantha,” Lena stood from her seat as soon as I entered the room and everyone’s eyes were on me, hard and flat. I could tell the atmosphere wasn’t so welcoming, but still I went inside, with my chin lifted and my eyes focused only on Lena.

I heard some of them hiss or click their tongue and felt their heavy stare as I sat at the head of the council table, representing as the Luna of the pack.

Yes. Dominic and I were still married and despite me hiding that I already had my wolf, Dominic, their Alpha was still my destined mate.

“Thank you, Lena, for arranging this meeting for me,” I said with a smile as I held Lena’s hand, who was sitting at my right. I could tell some of the people at the table were not happy with my closeness to the Mother Luna of the Pack. I looked at everyone, the same familiar faces of the council members, including Richard Bennet and Olivia, who were sitting side by side at the other end of the table.

Their silence brought tension to the room, and I uttered with such formality, “And I thank you, everyone for welcoming me back to the Silver Crescent Pack.”

The other cleared their throat and straightened their back against their seat. Richard’s and Olivia’s faces were rigid, suppressing their disdain from surfacing on their faces.

Dominic wasn’t in the meeting. But Lena’s presence was enough to make them watch over their behavior in front of me. If Dominic was a savage leader, so was Lena. Despite her gentle demeanor, she was once a deadly soldier who was dreaded by so many enemies of the Silver Crescent pack. Her old age made her look a little feeble, but everyone in the room was smart enough not to make the Mother Luna upset.

“All of us question your return, Miss Samantha,” one of the elders asked me, a bearded but huge man with a bald head. I remembered his face but not his name. “We want to know your intention of going back to the pack.”

I expected that question already so I answered as respectfully as I could. “You are all aware that I am still married to Alpha Dominic, which technically makes me the official Luna despite what happened, ” I told them with an adamant look on my face. I wanted to let them know they couldn’t intimidate me with their degradation as they mocked my presence in the Silver Crescent.

“That doesn’t make sense,” one of the council members, a woman with fading blond hair, opposed my statement. "You abandoned your duties and the title of Luna of the Silver Crescent the day you left the pack!" How dare you run away and stroll here like nothing happened?”

Others nodded their heads, agreeing with the woman. Lena remained silent as she listened to the argument, and I thought she was probably there to represent her son.

It made me wonder why Dominic wasn’t in the meeting, though. Was he dodging the judgment of the committee so I could learn to defend myself against them? Was this a test?

“I know each one of you is aware of the things that made our relationship very complicated that time,” I explained to them with my eyes staring straight at Olivia. She raised an eyebrow at me, though and the tension thickened, making everyone uncomfortable with the topic of the conversation. They knew. Everyone in that room knew how Olivia flirted with Dominic even after we got married. And it was something that made my blood boil and fueled my anger.

“I know you are aware how I endured the humiliation and pain of a woman who was married to a man who never cared for her even a single bit. I tried to fight for my position in the pack. For my position as his wife, he left me unmarked the night he was supposed to do it. He didn’t want me. And he made it clear every time he looked at me—like I was someone unworthy to him. All because I am a wolfless girl.”

Lena blinked and swallowed hard, and I felt awful that I had to say this in front of her. She was aware of the unpleasant things Dominic did to me before, and she was the first to apologize for her son's behavior toward me. She knew, and I hated having to break her heart hearing this.

"So what made the Alpha change his mind?" Another one from the council, asked. "What did you do to make him change his mind?"

"I didn't do anything. Dominic came to me and asked me to move back to Silver Crescent." I defended myself. "I know what all of you are thinking. You all think that I used Moonstone Alpha to make Dominic jealous, but that never happened. I never used anyone, and I never tried to manipulate Dominic's feelings just to get me back to Silver Crescent. He is doing this for the kids."

There was a gasp, followed by murmurs. Lena, who was looking proud of me, reached for my hand and squeezed it. I appreciated so much that she was trying to put more courage in me as I mentioned my twins to the council.

When I looked at Olivia, her eyes were already squinted at me, full of hatred and envy.

"So is it true? The rumors?"

"I can't believe this."

"Maybe the children weren't his. Maybe she's just using them."

"I heard they are twins. Do you think we should believe her?"

They talked as if I wasn't in front of them. It was Lena who couldn't tolerate them anymore.

"The little twin shifters are Dominic's," she told the council and the elders. Olivia, with pain and defeat etched on her face, averted her eyes from me, and Lena and Richard's glare focused on me like he wanted to burn me

alive. “She’s telling the truth. She and Dominic have children, and the bloodline of our family continues because of Samantha.”

“I was pregnant when I ran away from the pack, thinking of protecting my children from the people who wanted me out of the pack. I had no choice but to think of me and my babies’ safety! And Olivia, she tried to steal them away, thinking she was more worthy to become the Luna after Dominic refused to mark her.”

“LIAR!” Olivia screamed in outrage as she bared her teeth on me. “LIES!”

Lena glared at Olivia and Richard had no choice but to pacify his daughter before the Mother Luna dragged her out of the room. The elders, after their slow and long consideration, agreed that Dominic and I indeed had a connection. That made me the most eligible for the position of Luna but with one condition.

“This is the last chance for you, Miss Samantha.” The bearded, bald-headed guy spoke with a warning tone. It made me guess he was the head of the council. “We are hoping you won’t disappoint us all again this time.”

Chapter 84
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I was about to get out of the bathroom when someone aggressively pushed me by the shoulder and shoved me back inside. My eyes were wide with both shock and anger as I saw Olivia’s aggravated face.

“You’ll regret returning to this place, Samantha,” Olivia snarled at me and drove me to the corner of the comfort room. My back slammed against the tiled wall. “You have no power over this place!”

I raised an eyebrow at her and glared, “Then what makes you think you have the power over here, Olivia? What are you really?” My eyes gazed down at her from her foot to the face and then snarled back, “You are just a delusional Gamma who thinks she can climb her way up by flirting with the Alpha of the Silver Crescent pack. Did it do anything good to you?” I purred

to her, like she was some pitiful creature, “Where did your dirty moves bring you, Olivia? Are you successful after what you did to me and my twins?”

“I didn’t steal them!” she hissed between her grinding teeth, “You are just one incompetent Luna who thinks so highly of herself because the Mother Luna is on your side! If Lena’s not in favor with you, you are nothing, Samantha! You are just a wolf-less girl. Everyone knows you are not fit to be the Luna of the pack!”

“And who is fit to be the Luna? You?” My voices were sharp as knives, just as deadly as my glare was. I stepped forward, making Oliva flinch. My eyes glowed bright gold, showing her my Luna strength, a sign that the Moon Goddess chose me—favored me to become Dominic’s destined mate and to lead the Silver Crescent alongside him.

Olivia was stunned. Her bewildered expression brought secret pleasure in me as she lost her balance and tumbled to the floor. I had never seen Olivia lose her composure before, but I knew she was desperate. She knew she was losing the fight, and with me returning to Silver Crescent, it meant there was no hope for her to get the power she had always desired.

“I am not chosen as the Luna just because I was able to give the Alpha of the Silver Crescent his heirs.” I growled at Olivia as she stared into the gold orb encircling my eyes, “I am chosen because I am his mate. Dominic and I were destined to lead, and nothing can change that—not even you, Olivia! So you better stop dreaming that Dominic will choose you over me. That will never happen. Because he’s mine!” I snarled the last two words as I bared my teeth to her.

The door of the comfort area opened and Lena’s brows rose when she saw Olivia scramble up the floor and run away in chagrin.

“What happened here?” Lena asked me with a surprised look.

I exhaustingly leaned my back against the wall and looked at Lena with weary eyes. The second she saw my irises turn into golden orbs, her face turned pale and she went inside to help me ease the anger that woke the power simmering inside me.

*****

Lena advised me not to drive home after seeing that I wasn't feeling better after that unpleasant encounter with Olivia. It was the very first time I felt such raging power boil inside of me, and I was grateful that Lena appeared before I did something ugly to Olivia that I knew I might regret.

When I got back, I found Madison busy preparing snacks for the kids while Cynthia was playing with them in the backyard. The weather was lovely and the breeze was cool in Silver Crescent, making every day pleasant for the kids to play on the small playground Dominic assembled for them.

"Miss Samantha!" Madison's face brightened the second she saw me enter the house. The scent of freshly baked bread wafted all over the kitchen and living area, making my stomach growl. "I'm glad you are here! The kids just came back from school as well."

School. I forgot it was their first day at school. Exhausted, I threw my bag at the sofa and was about to go straight to the backyard when my phone rang. I thought it would stop when I ignored it, but it rang again.

It was Killian.

There was something in my stomach that made me a little uncomfortable. I wondered why he thought about calling me after we moved to Silver Crescent, and I hope he won't tell me he misses me. Because that would make things more complicated between us.

"Samantha..."

His deep, hoarse voice caused a lump to form in my throat. I didn't understand why it felt strange but the guilt remained in me and as I realized it wasn't just him who suffered the day I decided to leave the Moonstone pack. I had many beautiful memories of the place, and I had friends there as well. And choosing Dominic wasn't as easy as they thought it was.

“Killian,” I smiled nervously, hoping my voice wouldn’t betray me. “I’m sorry I didn’t call as soon as we came here. I thought... I thought you were not ready yet to hear anything from me so I hesitated making a phone call.”

“Don’t worry about it. I just want to know you and the kids are doing well.” I could imagine him smiling as he said the words as well. The tension was there, and I could hear it in his voice as well. “So how is it? Do the people in Silver Crescent treat you well?”

“It’s too early to conclude yet, but we are doing well here, Killian.” I told him, partly a lie after meeting Dominic’s council members and the pack elders today. “We’re coping.” I scratched my forehead as I watched Devon and Diana playing outside through the window.

“You know you can go back anytime you want, Sam.” Killian’s voice softened and my heart suddenly yearned for that familiar face that had been with me throughout those years. “You and the kids always have a place here in Moonstone.”

I was about to say my gratitude to him for his concern and love for me and the twins when I heard a flirtatious woman’s voice asking him, "Who’s that, honey?" Are you not hungry yet?”

I froze.

My finger immediately ended the call in panic and fret after hearing the woman’s voice. Was it Briane? Were he and Killian together?

The thought gave me a headache as I tossed the phone on the sofa. It was cruel to think that I wished I didn’t answer the phone. But hearing that woman’s voice calling Killian honey? I was having irrational feelings, and I hate it.

Devon and Diana must have noticed that I was finally home. They rushed toward me, racing to see who would hug me first. Diana, who was faster than Devon, wrapped her arms around my thigh and Devon, who was second, hugged me on my waist.

Diana was pouting, though, which concerned me.

“What’s wrong? “Did something happen?” I asked her as I bent down so we were eye level. I caressed her small face. “Didn’t you enjoy going to school?”

“School was fine,” Diana answered. She shrugged her shoulders but it was obvious she was sulking. “It’s just sad. Because I feel like the other kids don’t want to play with me.”

My chest tightened, and my heart broke when I heard the sad little voice of my daughter. I got worried with what Diana said. My children are starting to suffer because of my reputation here in Silver Crescent.

“Mom, what is wolfless?”

My eyes widened at what I heard from Devon. He was frowning innocently at me, looking anxious at the word.

Chapter 85
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I looked at Madison and Cynthia, and they just bowed their heads.

“Let’s get inside,” I said to the kids as I led them gently inside. I felt I had to explain to them about everything and reminded myself to be gentle with it. I never wanted my kids to misunderstand everything, and the last thing I wanted was for them to believe everything they heard from the people around this area, especially in school.

Madison and Cynthia were too scared to speak about what had happened, so I focused on the twins. I made Devon and Diana sit on my bed and sat in front of them. I was scared this day would come—that my twins would start asking questions about everything they would hear from people about me.

“What is wolfless, Mom?” She asked the same question worriedly. “Devon and I heard the mothers in school about Wolfless Luna while looking at us. I don’t understand what that means.”

I smiled at Madison and Cynthia to let them know that it was alright, and they could leave us three in the room. Cynthia closed the door and gave me an apologetic look, feeling awful that the kids experienced such poor treatment from the people around them.

But it was something I couldn’t control. The people in the Silver Crescent hated us. Most of them, especially the wealthy people in the pack, favored Olivia more than me. Olivia was right. If it wasn’t for Lena, no one would ever want me to go back to Silver Crescent even if the Alpha wanted it. The Alpha had to listen to the majority of his council and elders, and Richard and Olivia had the most support from them.

“I have a story,” I said to Diana and Devon with love as I caressed the sides of their faces to ease their worry. ‘I have a story about a beautiful young female shifter who was born without a wolf. And a shifter without a wolf... people call them wolfless.” I explained slowly. “So this girl, she was destined for a greater calling. She was loved by the Alpha with all his heart, for she was his mate. She was destined to become the Luna after the Moon Goddess bound them to be together forever.”

Devon yawned and Diana stretched her little arms. “Okay, I guess you need to take a relaxing warm bath and take a short nap.”

“No, Mom,” Devon complained, looking genuinely interested in the story, “I need to know if she got her happy ending!”

“Yes!” Diana agreed with her twin. “I need to know if she and the Alpha got married!” her little voice was demanding, with her eyebrows raised and lips pouting. “Finish the story, Mom, pretty please?”

I sighed and smiled helplessly, “Fine.” I laughed, tucked them into the bed, and ensured their comfort before I continued with the story. “The wolfless girl’s life wasn’t easy because life became a little challenging for her as she and the Alpha fought for their love for each other. But they had faith. And

that was enough to conquer everything until the Moon Goddess blessed them with twins—a boy and a girl, who they both loved with all their hearts. And after that, the wolf-less girl was finally granted her wolf. And she became one of the powerful she-wolves in their continent and lived happily with her Alpha and her twins."

Devon opened his mouth, wanting to ask another question, but he was too drained to utter a single word and fell asleep. Diana was already sleeping soundly as well. And I gave them kisses on their foreheads before I went straight to speak with Madison and Cynthia.

I found them both in the kitchen, waiting for me as well.

"Miss Samantha," Madison approached me first with an apologetic look in her eyes, "I'm sorry about what happened with the kids. We tried to protect them, but those people are too hard to handle."

"Did any of them hurt the kids?" I asked. Feathers appeared on my jaw as I spoke, which made Cynthia bow her head in fear.

"No, Miss." Madison was the only one who had the courage to answer. Her face was cold, pale, and sweaty as she wiped her hands on her apron. "They just gave the kids some nasty looks and couldn't help gossiping in front of them. Cynthia and I were too late to realize what was happening, but we took the kids away immediately and told them not to believe anything they hear from the people!"

I saw the sincerity in Madison's eyes and sighed, "Okay. It's my fault as well. I should have told you not to leave them too long on the playground at school."

Madison and Cynthia made sure something like that would never happen again, and I told them I never blamed them. The kids didn't ask me any questions again and thought about telling Dominic everything.

Exhausted and worried about everything that happened on our first day in Silver Crescent, I started to doubt my decision, if moving here was the right thing for me and the kids.

That night, I had a hard time sleeping, thinking about what I could do to win the heart of the people of Silver Crescent. How could I regain their trust and secure their acceptance of me and my children as part of the pack? Tears rolled down my face because I wasn't sure what I was doing anymore. Was the effort truly worth it? I didn't realize I was already sacrificing my children's happiness because of the decision to move here for Dominic.

Exhaustion slowly swallowed me when I felt strong arms wrapped around my body. And feeling Dominic's warmth and the smell of his skin was enough to hope and pray that everything will fall into their right places. I wish I could kiss him and feel him more, but I was too tired to move and felt as if everything just turned black the moment he cuddled me and pressed my face gently against his hard chest.

*****

I woke up groggy with a massive headache and found Dominic wasn't on his side of the bed when I reached to cuddle with him. Only a note was left on the bedside table telling me he was needed at an emergency meeting, and he would come back as soon as he could.

The day went by just as stressfully as yesterday, after I dealt with so much paperwork and went to the slum and desolate areas of Silver Crescent to check and understand what kind of help and assistance the people who lived there needed from their Alpha. It was sad that the council had time to gossip and ruin my reputation in the pack while they ignored the cries of the unfortunate members who needed their support and help.

While I was on my way home, I decided to make a brief visit with the kids at the school. Also, I wanted to know the treatment they get from those who were around them.

Just as I expected, when I arrived at the school, Diana and Devon were playing in the playground with Madison and Cynthia looking after them—making sure they were safe. But it broke my heart to see that no kids wanted to join them. Madison was right. I saw how those mothers threw nasty glares at my kids.

“There’s no way I can let them do this.” I snarled to myself as I marched inside and saw the shock on their faces. Diana, upon seeing me entering the gates, cried as tears streamed down her small reddish face. Devon looked distressed as he ran after his twin sister protectively.

Diana buried her face against my thigh.

“I want to go home, Mom! Please! Take us home!”

Chapter 86
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Mommy!”

“Please take us home!”

Devon and Diana cried, and I was confused about what had happened. For a matter of minutes, when I wasn’t looking at them, when I parked my car in the parking lot, the kids were already in distress and crying.

My eyes looked for Madison and Cynthia, wondering where the hell they went when my kids were left in the playground looking scared. I was so furious I glared at the mothers and they threw me the same distasteful look as they led their children away from us.

I couldn’t believe the amount of hatred I was getting from these people. Convincing the council and the members about my worth in the pack was not enough for the Silver Crescent to completely accept us. While I haven’t done anything to make them believe I can be the Luna this pack needed, I wouldn’t be anything to them but a deserter.

Madison came running towards me, her face as white as paper as she panted with her forehead beaded with cold sweat, “I am so sorry, Miss Samantha!”

Her eyes were wide with fear when she looked at me, but I saw she was more concerned about the kids than her fear of my anger. She bent down

to rub Diana's back, trying to comfort my daughter while her face was full of guilt. Her eyes were teary as she asked Diana, "What happened, sweetheart? I am so sorry; I thought Cynthia was with you when I left to go to the bathroom! Did someone hurt you? Oh, I'm really so sorry."

Diana didn't look upset with Madison, though, and let go of me to hug her babysitter. Devon looked at them and then at me as he exclaimed, "It's the other maid," in a nervous voice. "She told us Diana and I are wolfless! She told us we are not welcome in this place and we will never be happy here!"

My eyes sharpened. "A maid? Not Cynthia and Madison?"

Devon shook his head and then buried his face on my thigh, too embarrassed for me to see him scared when he's supposed to protect his sister.

"It's okay, Devon. You and your twins are safe now." I put my hand on top of his head, and my eyes went to Madison. "Who is this maid they are talking about, Madison? Did Lena send another maid here without telling me? What's happening here?"

"Someone came here today," Madison explained with Diana still in her arms. "I thought you already knew, Miss Samantha. So I didn't feel worried about it. She told me she was sent to help with the kids."

That's when the red light in my head started to flash, "Have you seen that woman around the pack manor before?" My chest started to tighten as I realized my kids weren't safe no matter how strict the security was.

"Wait, where is Cynthia?"

Something wasn't right. The panic on Madison's face made it clear to me that she had no idea what had happened, so we carried the twins and started looking around the playground until I heard someone screaming in the nearby storage area. With all my strength, I kicked the metal door and saw Cynthia sobbing miserably inside. The poor girl was trembling with fear.

“Cynthia, Goddess, what happened to you?” I asked after I put Devon down and helped her get up from the floor. “Who did this to you?”

“I—I don’t know, Miss Samantha,” Cynthia sobbed as she tried to explain everything while sitting and curled on the ground. Her face was smeared with tears and her eyes were swelling from crying. “Kana! The maid who said she was sent to help us with the kids—she told me Diana went running here so I went after Miss Diana. But she wasn’t here! Before I knew it, someone had locked me inside, and I was so scared,” she broke down as she covered her face with her hands, “I thought no one’s going to know I’m here.”

“It’s okay, Cynthia. Don’t be scared; Mommy’s here. She will keep us safe,” Devon soothed Cynthia as he patted her on the head.

“I can’t let this slip,” I snarled as I fished my phone inside my handbag and called Dominic.

There was surprise in his voice, “Samantha?”

“The kids and I need to see you. Right now, Dominic!” I said the words firmly. “There’s something I need you to fix here.”

*****

I didn’t want to bring the kids to the packhouse yet, but I had no choice. I couldn’t let these awful things keep on happening while I wasn’t around my children. And I couldn’t let Madison and Cynthia suffer as well. This was something Dominic had to take seriously. I knew these people were trying my patience. They kept pushing me to the edge, thinking they could drive me away from Silver Crescent with their bullying.

“Samantha...”

Dominic rushed to meet us in the main hall of the pack manor and went to check on Diana and Devon. My twins were still upset and scared. Dominic bent down, his face dead worried for them. “Are you both hurt?”

“No,” Devon answered as bravely as he could as he made himself look tough in front of Dominic. “No one can hurt Diana while I’m around. But this maid, the one with blonde hair, is so mean. She told me and Diana we are wolfless kids and we will never be happy in this place. She is so mean.”

Dominic’s eyes went to me and I gave him a disturbed look on my face. “This maid... Madison and Cynthia told me she was sent to help with the kids. But no one informed me about it. I only allow Madison and Cynthia to take care of them and no one else.”

“What is the name of that Omega?” His eyes were dark and furious as he looked at Madison and Cynthia. The two poor maids trembled in fear in front of their Alpha and answered in unison, “Kana, your Grace.”

“I miss Annie,” Diana pouted with teary eyes.

“Don’t worry, love. I will make sure this won’t happen again,” Dominic managed a sweet smile on his little girl as he pushed Diana’s hair behind her ear, “We can go to a picnic together. All of us.”

Devon seemed excited at the idea as he beamed at us with a huge smile. I asked the two babysitters to take the kids to my office and make sure they have their snacks before Lena comes to fetch them.

“Do you think Olivia did this?” My voice was low but sharp and he bit his lower lip, considering the idea. “I don’t know anyone who would go this far, Dominic.”

He gestured to one of the Gamma guards to approach him and he hissed, “Bring me that Omega maid named Kana and make sure Olivia will come here as well. She has to explain this.”

*****

Somehow, it upset me that Dominic took the matter into his hands and asked me to wait in the sitting area of the pack house until he was finished interrogating the maid. I had a bad feeling about it, though, after he brought

two Gamma soldiers with him in that small room where he usually grilled the accused.

He was wiping his hands on a clean white towel when he got out of the room. Blood smeared his white shirt as he looked at me with dark, lethal eyes.

“Dominic! What did you do?” I asked him as I stood from my seat with a horrified face. Goddess, he went overboard with his punishment for the culprit.

“She doesn’t talk. I had to make myself a little convincing, but Liam thinks that girl is under the influence of a spell that forbids her to say the name of the person who ordered her to hurt the kids.” He snarled as he threw the bloody towel on the floor. Dominic was looking so pissed. “She will stay in one of the dungeons until she’s out of that d*mn sorcery!”

“Alpha, Olivia is in your office waiting for you.” Liam stepped inside the room and bowed his head slightly, acknowledging my presence. “It seems she has no idea why you summoned her.”

“Of course she won’t admit she did it.” Dominic snarled as he slumped on the sofa with a heavy sigh. His eyes were darting, and even I got scared when a growl reverberated in his throat. “Whoever ordered that maid will pay for what they did to my kids.”

“Let me go talk to her.” I stood from my seat. It was clear that my mate was too enraged to think rationally about what happened. “I need you to calm down and don’t kill that poor maid. She is under a spell, and we are not sure if she really hates us or if she was forced to hurt Devon and Diana.”

“Are you sure you can handle this?” Dominic somehow cooled down as he leaned forward and rested his elbows on his knees. “I don’t trust leaving you with Olivia.”

I sat beside him and smiled, “It’s okay. I can do this.” I whispered and kissed him softly on the lips. “Go and check the kids.”

Chapter 87
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

My steps echoed in the hallways of the Silver Crescent Manor.

I reminded myself I would calm down. But as I remembered Diana and Devon's scared faces, it made me curl my hands tight into fists until my knuckles turned white and my nails dug into the skin. I couldn't understand why Olivia would go this far just to get the throne she had been wanting. But didn't she ask herself in the first place?

If Dominic desired her to be the Luna, he had already marked her after I left—after I vanished and went to the Moonstone pack.

Dominic was always a complicated man who didn't know what he wanted. But it was clear that whatever he and Olivia had, it wasn't as strong as I thought. Perhaps Dominic was a little rebellious, that he was arranged for a marriage with me? I couldn't blame him if he was upset. We didn't know each other. He had little idea where I came from and was stuck with me just because his mother and my parents were close friends. It was unfair for him that he wasn't able to choose the woman he wanted to be with. I understood his pain. But my pain was different.

Since we were teens, I had always admired Dominic, especially when we used to be trained together in the same camp. He was always admired by everyone. And I, who was a nobody, worshiped him from afar—until an unexpected thing happened, which made me the number one person he hated.

And that hatred turned to a feeling of obsession when our paths crossed again after I left.

Perhaps it was the Moon Goddess who helped Dominic to realize his true feelings when we saw each other at that party. I didn't understand why he suddenly wanted to be part of my life again after all the awful things happened between us. After all the pain he caused me.

And there I was, fighting for him—fighting for the life I want with him and our twins.

Olivia was in Dominic's office, petrified when she saw me standing at the door. Her face turned ashen as she flinched and hit the desk with her hip.

To be honest, never had I ever imagined Olivia would feel scared of my presence. But seeing her panic in front of me gave me a sense of satisfaction and superiority I had never felt in my whole life. Sad that it didn't last, though. She glared at me after she had recovered and straightened her back.

"Expecting for Dominic?" I asked and smiled tauntingly at her. I knew she was hoping Dominic would change his mind and realized that it was her he needed.

She answered me with arrogance, "Don't think too highly of yourself, Samantha. You think you feel powerful because you are now back in Silver Crescent? Let's see what you're becoming once the people here would scream to drag you out of this place." She glowered and curled her lip with pure hatred, "You and your litter are not welcome here."

Olivia wanted me to snap in front of her but there's no way I would give her that piece of satisfaction. With a calm, cold look, I folded my arms on my chest as I tilted my head to the side. The pupils of my eyes dilated as I spoke, "I thought we already talked about this, Olivia. I thought I already made it clear to you when you tried to intimidate me back in the restroom of the council building."

"It's your fault why those kids suffer, Samantha. You are too selfish to think of yourself before their safety!"

"God! I can't believe hearing it from you, Olivia!" I exclaimed, both amused and enraged, "I can't believe you are talking about their safety after what you did to them!"

She grimaced, giving me that phony innocence on her face, "What are you talking about?"

“You know exactly what I am talking about!” I snarled at her. I had enough of her games. “Don’t give me that innocent stare! Dominic had already found a way to get that poor maid to admit who made her hurt Devon and Diana!”

There was terror on her face after she learned Dominic was involved. “I have no idea what you are accusing me of, Samantha. You are insane!”

I smirked, closing our gap step-by-step, and she flinched. I sensed her breath trembled as I cornered her, “Really? Perhaps I am out of my f*cking mind, Olivia. But I am here to become the Luna of the Silver Blade Pack, and I will make sure your father sees you being tied down in that murky, disgusting swamp outside the Omega village if you attempt to hurt my children again!” I snarled, baring my teeth at her.

She fought hard to keep her voice from breaking in front of me, but her fear betrayed her. “Y-you can’t scare me, Samantha.”

“Oh, yes, I can.” I hissed with an evil grin as I slammed my hand on the edge of Dominic’s table. The wooden furniture collapsed under my strength, and Olivia was startled at the power I displayed. “And believe me when I say I will do it, Olivia. I will f*cking make you suffer if you go anywhere near my Devon and Diana.”

I felt her tremble at the words.

“Go!” I barked at her and Olivia’s eyes widened in both fear and panic as she scrambled her way out of my mate’s office.

I let out a deep sigh and looked at Dominic’s wrecked table.

“Please, tell me this isn’t his favorite,” I murmured to myself.

****

“I felt Mommy somewhere. I think she’s angry.”

I heard Diana's voice as I walked to a room that Dominic prepared for the twins. Madison informed me they weren't in my office anymore, which surprised me because Dominic and I never talked about setting up a room for them in the pack house.

As silently as I could, I opened the door and was surprised to see my mate playing with them. The heavy feelings I had after I left Olivia with a threat somehow lifted when I found the three of them smiling and having fun. I even giggled as I watched Diana play with my makeup. She ran towards Dominic and asked him if he could be her first client in her made-up salon. Dominic hesitated at first but seeing his daughter's pleading face, there was no way he could say no.

*****

"Thank you for doing your best to distract the kids from what happened today."

I looked up and stared at my mate's handsome face. His hazel eyes looked silver under the bright moonlight piercing through the huge glass window of my room. Our room.

"It wasn't enough." The sorrow on Dominic's face turned into guilt as he caressed the side of my face. "I'm sorry, it's my fault, Samantha. The twins suffered because I was too confident that you are safe now that you are here under my protection. I can't believe Olivia would scare them just to torture you."

"She won't do it again," I murmured to him. "I made sure of it."

He felt him chuckle as my head bounced on his chest, "Yeah. I heard from Liam what you did to my table."

I smiled at him apologetically as I pouted my lips. "Am I in trouble?"

"Only if you won't kiss me..."

Dominic moved on top of me and pressed his warm, ripped body against mine. My hands felt every curve of muscle on his arm and adored the beautiful carvings of his abs as he kissed me fervently, demanding and with ache and I missed him. I missed him so bad I wanted to feel him inside me and fill me with his c*ck.

“You are so lovely tonight, Samantha,” he whispered in my ear as his lips trailed down my neck with soft, feathery kisses. His hands cupped my br**sts and a moan escaped from my lips.

I bit my lower lip hard as I let out a trembling breath. I remembered we couldn’t do this. Not tonight. “You promised Devon and Diana for a picnic tomorrow...”

Dominic paused as he remembered and then looked at me with a frown, with his hands still molding my soft br**ts. I laughed when he buried his face between my neck and shoulder with his lips pressed on my skin, trying to convince me like a sulking child. “It won’t take long, love.”

That was definitely Diana’s special technique every time I said no to her.

“I know,” I chuckled and kissed his lips with a huge smile, “But it’s late and we need to sleep. We need a lot of energy tomorrow for the twins.”

He groaned in defeat. His lips curled into a mischievous grin as he hissed at me with a warning gaze. “Fine! I’ll let you escape this time.” He then pulled me into a cuddle as I laughed with my face pressed against his broad chest.

Chapter 88
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Good morning, beautiful.”

I woke up beaming as I saw Dominic holding a tray of breakfast. When I looked at the wall clock, it was only six in the morning.

“Isn’t this too early?” I complained with a suppressed smile. It was the best sleep of my life, especially because I woke up in the arms of the man I love with all my heart.

“Love, I promised Devon and Diana we would go to a picnic today but they are still sleeping so I thought of serving you breakfast first so everything is prepared when they wake up,” he said as he kissed me. “You like pancakes, right? I did my best.” He winked and then poured me a cup of coffee.

I squinted my eyes at him, and he looked at me with innocent, large eyes. “What?” He asked as he licked his finger after he put some eggs on my plate.

“Nothing,” I chuckled and closed my eyes as I smelled the wonderful aroma of the coffee wafting around the room, “I’m not just used to this.”

His hazel turned solemn all of a sudden. He reached for my face and then kissed my lips softly. He smelled bath soap and the musky scent was so sexy I wanted to pull him onto the bed and wish we could spend the whole day together. But this day was for Diana and Devon. And it makes me happy that despite Dominic’s crazy schedule, he put me and the children first.

“Then get used to this.” His voice was deep and hoarse, and my heartbeat went frantic when his lips trailed down my jawline and to my neck. “Because you are stuck with me, Samantha. There’s no way I would let go of you again.”

Those words sent shiver down my spine and my little gasp made Dominic’s eyes half-closed as his lips went closer and closer to my lips—

“Gotcha.”

Dominic almost jumped off the bed when Devon’s voice filled the room. The tray almost stumbled on the bed, and lucky for me, I had a quick reflex and grabbed it before the coffee spilled on the bedsheet.

“You’re staying in Mom’s bed again!” Devon exclaimed accusingly as he pointed his finger at Dominic. “No one but me is allowed to embrace Mommy!”

“Devon!” We said in unison and found our son mischievously grinning at us. Diana appeared behind her brother and rubbed her little sleepy eyes.

“Okay, let’s go to the dining area and have breakfast together,” I laughed after Devon ran towards Dominic and wrestled with him. Diana carefully placed her doll on the bed and helped me with the tray to put on the table at the dining area as the two continued tussling on the sheets with laughter filling the house.

My chest felt so light. It was as if I was in a dream with my mate having fun with the kids. Before, I thought it was too much for a wish.

But here I am, living the best part of my life. Our home is brimming with love and laughter. We had a light breakfast and Dominic and I let the children help with the food we were going to pack for the picnic. Diana loves strawberry cakes, so Dominic made sure we have some, while Devon asked for his favorite ham and cheese sandwiches.

“Go to the car with Diana. Devon and I will take care of everything. Right, buddy?” Dominic fist bumped Devon and Devon responded with a beaming smile, thrilled that he was going to hang out with Dominic the whole day. Diana and I looked at each other and shrugged our shoulders with suppressed laughter.

“I love that song!” Diana exclaimed while we were on our way toward the place. Dominic turned the volume up and I watched how he enjoyed singing with Devon and Diana. His other hand was on the steering wheel while the other was holding my hand, squeezing them as he sang and smiling at me, wanting me to sing with them as well. And I couldn’t because I couldn’t stop giggling!

At the top of the hill, where we had a panoramic view of the entire city, the sun remained gentle on our skin, accompanied by a refreshing breeze.

There was a playground there, which looked so new as if no one had used it yet.

“Please don’t tell me you just prepared this place and turned it into a picnic area?” I whispered to Dominic as the kids ran to the playground with excitement. To my surprise, he kissed me on the lips and my eyes widened. “ I told no kisses in front of the—”

“They’re not looking,” he winked at me as he carried the baskets and the things for the picnic. “You make me so happy, Samantha.”

I couldn’t find the right words to convey to him how much he made me and the children happy, so I simply smiled and rested my head on his shoulder as we walked side by side to the location beneath a massive flowering crabapple tree.

“Eat first! Then you can play the whole day!” Dominic called the kids.

“Aww...” Devon and Diana pouted, but they walked toward us and helped set up the picnic mat, the food, and the utensils. After lunch, Dominic finally let them play and Devon and Diana ran with their arms spread, screaming they were birds as the wind brushed on their faces.

“How is the council meeting?” Dominic’s voice was quiet as he asked me, his eyes not leaving the children as they ran all around the place.

“They gave me a chance to prove myself to them and the people of Silver Crescent,” I answered as I leaned my head on his shoulder. “They expect so much, and I understand why they are being so hard on me. I promised I won’t let you and Lena down and will do my best to win people’s trust again.

He kissed my hair and whispered, “You don’t have to prove anything to anyone, love. I love you. And no one deserves to be the Luna of this pack but you, Samantha.”

His words were like music to my ears as I peacefully closed my eyes and leaned on his shoulder while listening to the soft whistle of the wind and the

rustling of the leaves. Not too long after, Dominic moved from his seat and I looked at him, curious why he stood up and smiled at me.

To my panic, he shifted to his werewolf form and the kids stopped playing and watched him morph. I stood with wide eyes as he turned into a beautiful silver wolf and approached me with his muzzle brushing the cheek of my face.

“Dominic! Why did you—”

I expected Devon and Diana to freak out, but to my surprise, they ran toward Dominic, thrilled to feel his fur in their small hands. Diana jumped on his belly as Dominic rested on his side and watched the children scream in excitement. Devon looked at Dominic like he was the coolest guy on earth.

“I know you hide something amazing from us! I can feel it!” Devon exclaimed to Dominic with glittering eyes. “I know you are like me and Diana! You also have a wolf!”

[Dominic—]

[It’s okay, Samantha. I know. Mom told me the kids have their wolves already.]

I wondered what Lena told Dominic about the children. What changed her mind to tell him the kids finally got their wolves? She was the one who warned me first.

Perhaps she realized Dominic had the right to know. And he showed the kids that they are not different from the rest of the pack. That having a wolf was a natural thing for us shifters.

Devon and the children played all day, and when they got tired, Diana and Devon slept on Dominic’s soft silver fur.

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Dominic drove us home. As we took the picnic stuff out of the car, I saw him looking upset on the phone, so I asked, “What happened?”

“It’s Liam. I told him I can’t be disturbed today but there’s a matter only I can handle.” He snarled quietly as he shoved his phone in his pocket. “I want to stay more with you and the kids.”

It was sad that he had to go, but I smiled at him and said, "It’s okay, love." You made the children so happy. This day is so perfect.”

He kissed the top of my head, still upset as he said goodbye to Devon and Diana and then drove back to Pack Manor. The twins were too worn out to ask, so Madison and Cynthia helped me tuck them into bed after they had their dinner.

Then my phone rang, “Ethan?” I asked, surprised because it’s already late.

“Samantha,” I heard distress in his voice. His breath was heavy as he spoke, “I need you in the pack manor tomorrow. One of my patrolmen told me there is a conspiracy against your return to Silver Crescent, and you need to show them your teeth to prove you are fit as the Luna of the pack.

“I understand, Ethan. I am working hard on the project Lena gave me. I will be there in the pack house tomorrow morning.”

I was about to go back to my room when I felt someone behind me—and it was too late to fight back as he or she pulled me into darkness, covering my eyes and mouth to prevent me from screaming.

Chapter 89
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

It was so dark and cold.

I couldn’t open my eyes. I couldn’t move. It felt as if I was underwater, only I wasn’t. I was trapped but I wasn’t sure where exactly. What I was sure of was that I wasn’t at home. The smell was musky. The place felt strange—as if something moldy was surrounding me. I was lying on something

metallic. It was hard and cold, and I shivered. The feeling was not because of the temperature but because I knew I was in danger. I was tied tightly against something that I imagine was like a hospital bed, restricting me from getting up.

Something itchy made me cough, and I retched at the stench somewhere. It smelled more like rotting flesh, a sensation I couldn't quite place. I grimaced as I whimpered in pain. Every inch of me ached, and I wondered how long I had been out unconscious in this place. A soft groan escaped from my lips as I tried to lift my head and open my eyes slowly, carefully.

Just as I expected, the room was pitch black, but my werewolf eyes adapted to the darkness quickly, like night vision. I was in a small room lying on an operating bed with my hands tied with thick silver chain against the bed. The rotting scent came from a dead rat in one corner of the room, and my stomach turned, making my head dizzy.

"W-what—" I whimpered as I looked at my hand; the adrenaline slowly subsided and the pain arrived at me, making me feel like I was in a train wreck. I moved my wrist, but the gashes burned like hell as the silver chains grazed my skin.

I made my hearing sharper just to get any noise that could make me determine where I was. But the only thing I heard as I fought to breathe was the sound of the trickling water somewhere. I looked around, and there was water dripping down the dilapidated ceiling. The place looked like an old building with molds and rotting parts everywhere. And I doubt I was in Silver Crest because I didn't know a place that seemed as old as this place.

"D-Dominic..." I whimpered his name as tears rolled down my cheeks. The only person I knew who could do a horrible thing like this was Oliva and her father, Richard Bennet. They were the only people who hated me enough to abduct me and incarcerate me away from my mate.

As I struggled to collect myself and think about what happened before everything went black, a silhouette of someone appeared in the dark and grabbed me, dragging me out of the kitchen with his hands covering my eyes and my mouth. I did my best to fight back. I kicked and scratched that

person with my long, sharp nails, but it was no use. He or she had overpowered me with a strength that measured like that of an Alpha. Until there was something sharp that stabbed me on the shoulder, and everything turned blurry before I blacked out.

And I wasn't sure how long I was being held in this place. Perhaps I could tell it must be around one to two days based on how famished I was and my throat feeling so dry with thirst.

I couldn't let myself rot in here. I had to get up and get out of this place before I got too weak to fight back! I had to find a way to get off the silver chains without my hands falling off my wrists!

"No. I can't stay here!" I clenched my teeth and forced myself to get up. But I screamed when the hissing sound of my burning flesh filled my ears as the silver chain tightened around my wrists. My feet automatically kicked from the pain, and it got intense as I found out that my ankles were bound with the silver chains as well.

My head fell back on the metal bed, and my forehead was filled with beaded sweat as I panted. I was trying to regain my strength, but my ankles and wrists were killing me.

The image of Dominic's smiles and Devon and Diana playing with him filled my thoughts. Tears rolled down my face as sobs emerged in my throat, making it so difficult to breathe. The kids were left with only Madison and Cynthia and they had no idea where I was. Dominic... did he know I was already missing? Was he looking for me? So many questions surfaced in my head as I stared at the rotting ceiling above me. I felt the despair like spiders crawling from my chest up to my neck—like darkness spreading all over me, freezing me to the point that I could feel my body no more.

But what I worried more about was my little Diana. My poor daughter couldn't sleep without me telling her stories. She couldn't put on her shoes without me helping her. Oh my babies... I'm sure they're already worried, sick, and crying, desperately searching for me. And I have no idea what Dominic was doing right now. Had he sent a search party for me already? Would he ever think Olivia and Richard Bennet could be behind all of this?

Olivia must have thought she could hide me in this place to rot until Dominic thought I was already dead, somewhere where he couldn't find me. But Silver Crescent had the most skilled trackers. And I was sure Dominic would do everything to bring me back to Devon and Diana no matter what.

"Please keep my babies safe," I prayed to the Moon Goddess as tears fell down my face. My throat was swelling, and it was difficult to breathe when my chest felt so tight knowing my twins were suffering without me. I looked at the silver chains around my wrists and thought about something.

Could I sacrifice losing my hands just to get away from here?

Chapter 90
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

"What do you mean she's missing?!"

I felt my blood run up to my head, making me dizzy and confused. I just woke up from a wonderful dream with Samantha and the kids finally living in the pack manor with her beside me as the official Luna of the Silver Crest pack. Samantha was already marked, which technically made her Luna.

But the elders and the council were still unconvinced that she was fit for the position and the responsibilities after she left the pack, which was my fault. She had to prove herself to the people of the pack, and that, I had no control over.

I wish I could make it easier for Samantha. It's just aggravating that even I, as the Alpha, couldn't persuade the people, and using the Alpha voice would only raise a rebellion, which Liam and I avoided happening.

Liam's voice was uncertain on the other line. He was flustered as well. "One of the maids in their house called and said Miss Samantha

disappeared since last night. At first, they thought she was at work. But they found out her stuff is still in her room."

He let out a sharp sigh as he paused. That expression of my Beta meant something disturbing was going on, and my heart tightened as I snarled, "What is it, Liam? Where is Samantha?!"

"I am not sure, Alpha. When I rushed here, I saw bloodstains on the kitchen. I fear the Luna was taken by someone stronger than her. I smelled something unusual as well. I have a terrible feeling someone performed a ritual to repel the protective spell the Mother Luna put around this house."

My eyes darkened. I jumped out of the bed with a growl escaping from my throat, grabbed a shirt from the closet and immediately dressed as I marched out of my room with the phone still pressed on my ear, "Call Ethan and the Gamma Patrol team and make sure to check every inch of the city. Track Samantha's scent, Liam! Find her!"

I stopped walking midway through the hallway, and I closed my eyes tightly in concentration. I tried to reach Samantha with our mate bond, but I couldn't detect her location. She was out of my range. I tried to make the bond stronger as I thought about her smiles, her scent, and her voice when she called my name, but my heart just shattered in the process, terrified of what happened to my mate.

All of a sudden it was so difficult to breathe. It was as if the world was caving in, and I clutched my chest as I panted. I had never been so scared like this in my whole life. With my mate missing, my thoughts were everywhere. I couldn't think of anything but Samantha. Where is she? Is she safe? Who the f*ck took my mate!? Who did this to her!!!

My wolf roared inside me like a wounded beast. Devon and Diana. I had to go to them and make sure they're safe. There's no way they would stay in that house after what happened to Samantha!

"Dominic!"

Mom rushed towards me with her face ashen with fear. I forgot to ask Liam to make this confidential. I couldn't let those people who hated Samantha celebrate, especially Olivia. I didn't know what I could do once I found out they were toasting for what happened to my mate.

I would put them on the guillotine and cut their heads off myself!

"We are not sure yet of what happened, Mom. I sent Ethan and his Gamma team to look for her. I will go there and check for the kids."

Without looking back, I went straight to the parking area and drove straight to Samantha's house.

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"This is not Samantha's."

I was relieved as I checked the scene. The kitchen was chaotic, and drops of blood were everywhere. Samantha didn't let the culprit get her without a fight. I looked at the door and it was wrecked by something stronger than a werewolf.

"There were burns on the edges of the wood," Liam uttered as he examined the door. "I am certain a witch did this. That bastard must have put everyone into a deep slumber the moment he attacked the Luna. The maids told me they couldn't remember or hear anything when they fainted while they were in the children's room."

"Any news from Ethan?" I asked Liam with a quiet, dangerous tone. "Did they find any unusual presence that could lead us to where Samantha is?"

"Unfortunately, Ethan hasn't reported yet, Alpha." Liam couldn't look me in the eyes. He knew the level of pain I was suffering, having no idea if Samantha was still alive or had been taken elsewhere, far from where I couldn't find her.

"He is Samantha's best friend. I am sure he's doing his best to find her, Alpha. Ethan is worried sick as well." Liam added.

“Dominic!”

I turned around and saw Devon and Diana, both of whose faces were red and swelling. They ran towards me and embraced me as they cried, looking for Samantha.

“What’s happening!? Where is Mom?!” Diana sobbed; her face was smeared with tears. She and her twin brother were still in their pajamas.

I didn’t know how to explain to them. Observing Devon and Diana in tears as they searched for Samantha was heartbreaking. I dried their tears with my hand, feeling so helpless as I watched them weep.

Ethan entered the house with a grave expression on his face. He looked down, his eyes full of dread as they failed to track down and find any trace of Samantha all over Silver Crescent.

I gave Devon and Diana a determined look as I put my hands on their shoulders. “I promise to bring back your Mom as soon as I can. Just stay with your maids and your Uncle Liam will escort you back to the pack house. It’s not safe to stay here anymore.”

“But what about Mom? Is she safe?!” Devon’s voice croaked, filled with fear and worry. I couldn’t answer Devon’s question so I gestured for the maids to bring the twins to the car and Liam followed them.

“What are you planning to do now, Alpha?” Ethan asked as he let out a heavy sigh, “Do you think Olivia and her father have something to do with this?”

“We will find out.” I snarled as my hands curled into fists.

Chapter 91
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I gasped violently, followed by the excruciating pain of the wounds around my wrists and ankles and body spasms, as I screamed in agony.

My body twitched to the side. I gritted my teeth as the flesh on my wrist hissed and sizzled under the burning effect of the silver chain. I looked at the wound and it was deep and white with the edges blackening like a toasted meat.

A tear ran down my face as I pursed my lips and suppressed a sob. My throat was so dry it felt like I was swallowing hot sand while my voice turned raspy and hoarse. There were terrible cracks on my lips and dry skin started to peel off of it. Every inch of me was screaming in pain. There were hours when I couldn't feel anything but to beg someone to just kill me and end this misery. I could feel myself slowly fading when the pain got intense and there was no one, nothing in this g*dd*mned place to help me. Or even hear my pleas.

I woke up again to the sound of the dripping water. My coughing reverberated all over the empty, dark place as I looked around. My brows deepened as I heard something strange. Something like a murmur of someone with words that were beyond my comprehension. Sorcery? Could it be a witch who got me and imprisoned me in this place? My senses sharpened, desperate to know more—hoping I could talk to the culprit and make a deal with him or her to get out of this place. But the question is, are they willing to listen?

They hated me enough to make me suffer like this. They used silver chains and left me to rot in here. They wanted me dead. They wanted me to erase from Dominic's life and never to come back to Silver Crest.

Another gasp escaped from my chapped lips when I heard heavy footsteps coming towards me. I held my breath when I saw a tall, huge silhouette of a man stepping out of the darkness. I squinted my eyes when he lit a small oil lamp, bright enough to see my worn-out face.

"W-Who are you?" My voice was raspy as I looked helplessly at the man. His face was covered with black cloth. I stared at him, trying to see the color of his eyes, but I was too dizzy that my eyes couldn't focus. My vision

was too blurry for me to see anything familiar on his features, and I was too weak to speak. A whimper escaped from my lips as I turned my head side to side and closed my eyes. The world seemed to be spinning when I focused my eyes on something. It made my stomach feel so sick and famished.

Something about the man made him look familiar to me, but I couldn't tell whether it's the feeling of his presence or his scent. I had a feeling I had met him before, but I was too weak to think. I was too exhausted to even beg the man to free me from the chains.

"Samantha." The voice of the man was deep. He even sounded like a robot—like he was using something to alter his voice to make it unrecognizable. "I bet you already have an idea why you are here."

"I don't!" I spat at him and grimaced. It was as if I was swallowing sharp knives down my throat. "Take these chains away from me!"

The plan was to convince the man that I was too weak to fight back. But my response was harsher than I intended. Great, Samantha. Good work.

"I'm afraid I can't," he answered, which dropped my heart to my stomach. "You are here because you think too highly of yourself to think you can be the Luna of the Silver Crescent after you ran away from your responsibilities years ago. And now you are here as if nothing happened? You are a deserter, woman! And that means you have no loyalty to the pack and to us, people! And a deserter deserves death! Slow, painful death!"

I even heard his quiet laughter as he stood beside the operating table with his lethal eyes glaring down at me. There was pure hatred that made me confused. What did I do to this man for him to torture me like this?!

"Where are my kids?!" I snarled. I felt like my throat was going to rip open as I glared at him with bloodshot eyes.

"Relax. I have no business with your children. It's only you I need." His voice was deep and guttural as he leaned closer to me. He did an

impressive job masking his scent from me. “You know from the very beginning that you have no future in Silver Crescent, Samantha. You shouldn’t have come back. You put yourself and your kid’s life in danger. I know what you are hiding from everyone, and I won’t think twice about killing your children if you don’t do what I say.”

“What do you want?” I asked croaking, “Why are you doing this? What secret are you talking about?!”

“I know you and your kids are descendants of the Primordials!” He snarled at me like I was some kind of a beast to him. A wild beast that he feared. I want you and your children to get out of Silver Pack and never come back. I want you to reject Alpha Dominic and swear you are never going to see him again! Silver Crescent does not want you here. Your neglect of duty as the former Luna of the pack only mirrors what kind of leader you are.”

“You have no idea why I was forced to leave!” I growled at him and groaned when the silver chains burned my wrists after I pushed myself up the operating bed, “You have no idea of the pain I went through to make me decide to leave Silver Crescent!”

“We don’t care about your pain!” He yelled at me and wrapped a silver chain around my neck.

The pain was so intense I saw dark spots in my eyes as my skin sizzled and burned. I screamed as the metal dug into my neck.

I didn’t know what happened next. Everything just turned black as I succumbed to nothingness.

Chapter 92
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

“The twins are in the Pack Manor now with the Mother Luna, Alpha,” my Beta, Liam, reported as he returned to the house where the incident happened. Ethan stayed with us and wanted to know the next plan after finding out Samantha wasn’t in the Silver Crescent.

Ethan suspected that Samantha was brought outside the pack. “My men and I searched for her all over the city, even in the slums where most of the Omegas live. But we couldn’t find a trace of her, not even her scent,” he told me as we examined the blood on the floor. One of the investigators had taken samples already and came back with a report that the blood was from an animal. A pig. And that made me more furious.

“This is f*cking crazy.” I snarled under my breath as I leaned on the counter with my eyes glaring outside the window. The wind was moving Diana’s swing. “How could a pig’s blood get in Samantha’s house?!”

“We are not sure, Alpha. It is indeed aggravating, but the Zetas in the laboratory said that the sample might have been corrupted with sorcery.”

“Sorcery? You think a witch did this?!” a low, guttural growl reverberated in my throat. My hands grabbed the edge of the counter so tight my knuckles turned white; the wooden furniture creaked under my grip. “I knew it was a terrible idea to let these witches stay in my pack. I should have banned them from entering my turf!”

“You know that’s impossible.” Liam was quick when it came to putting sense into my head, “Your ancestors signed a treaty with them many years ago, Alpha. You can’t wage a war against them when we are not sure what really happened. We don’t have enough evidence yet.”

“Liam is right,” Ethan seconded my Beta. “We are not sure if there is a conspiracy within the coven of witches or if it’s just one person who did this to Samantha, Alpha. From what we see here, only one witch could have done this.”

“Dominic.”

Liam, Ethan, and I turned and saw Richard Bennett standing on the wrecked door with a shocked look on his face. He looked around the house and then, with wide eyes, he asked, “What happened here?”

“Samantha is missing,” I answered with my eyes still staring at the blood. “And Liam and Ethna think a witch did this and abducted her.”

“I told you before we can’t trust those heathens,” Richard commented as he stepped inside the house. They have been causing so much trouble, especially with their illegal practices here in Silver Crest. You have to think about the people’s safety and get them out of your turf, Dominic.”

“I don’t f*cking care about that right now, Bennett,” I snarled. “I have to find my mate and kill that bastard who took my wife! I will make sure he suffers a slow and painful death for this. My voice was oozing with death and anger as I hissed. “If that witch ever hurt Samantha, I swear to the Moon Goddess—”

Liam’s hand patted me on the shoulder. “We will do everything possible to track the culprit, Dominic. Stay calm.”

“What if Samantha ran away for the second time?”

That comment from Richard made me snarl, and in a split second, I was already in front of him, breathing fire as my chest rose and fell rapidly, glaring at him with a warning: “Say that again, and I’ll forget you’re one of my advisors, Bennett!”

Liam and Ethan froze in fear as they saw the crimson orb in my eyes. But Richard Bennett stood without blinking an eye at me and stared back without fear.

“It’s just my opinion, son,” he answered back, and I sensed his sarcasm as he smirked at my face. “She had done it before. What if something changed her mind and she did it again?”

“And leave her twins here?” Ethan grimaced at Richard, “Samantha will never do that! She can’t do that to Devon and Diana!”

“Fine,” Bennett raised his arms in surrender and then laughed awkwardly. “I am just here to tell you, Dominic, that you are needed in the council meeting. The elders want to know what happened here.”

“Tell them I can’t,” I snapped at him. “I will go with Ethan to investigate. Tell them to wait until I have time to discuss this with them. They are my subjects. Not the other way around.” I said coldly as I straightened my jacket. “And tell them never to summon me again because it irritates me. I am the Alpha! Know their f*cking place!”

Liam and Ethan seemed satisfied as they grinned at my response to Bennett. Richard, who was humiliated in front of my Beta and the Gamma soldiers, scoffed and then turned his back on me.

That’s when I noticed something on his lower nape.

A bandage.

“Hey, Richard!” I called to him and he stopped and turned to me with a suppressed annoyance on his face, “Where did you get that wound on your back?”

“This?” He answered, and then reached for the bandage with his hand. “Oh, I got this yesterday at the pub. A b*tch hit me with a bottle yesterday, and the rest of the details are too personal. You know, Dominic. The man has his needs as well.”

Liam shook his head in disgust and Ethan kicked a small piece of debris on the floor, looking grossed out at Richard’s answer.

“Okay. Go and tell the elders not to get too inquisitive with the incident here. I will tell them once I finally find a lead. Don’t rush me.” I dismissed him with a wave of a hand.

Richard gave me a short nod before he went straight to his car.

Liam and Ethan looked at me as if they read what was in my head. “Dominic,” they said in unison.

“I know.” I answered while following Richard’s car with a glare. “Liam, I need you to follow Richard and investigate his every move. Ethan, monitor

the twins closely. Don't ever take your eyes off of them. Make sure they're safe."

"Understood, Alpha." They bowed and then left, starting with their missions.

I, as well, had somewhere to go and check.

*****

"Dominic!"

I didn't wait for her to open the door wide for me and pushed it, which made Olivia's eyes widen. "What brought you here?"

I looked around her luxurious, cozy condominium unit and slipped my hands in the pocket of my black jeans. Olivia looked at me with a smile on her face, pleased that I gave her a visit. But I gave her a cold look, and that smile on her face disappeared, along with her hope and assumption that I was here to have a little fun with her.

That was not me anymore.

"I need to know where your father went in the last 24 hours, Olivia. I went to the office and looked for his schedules, but the secretary told me you are the one organizing your father's appointments. It's the first time I learned he is not reporting to the office about his activities."

Her brows deepened. "What is this about, Dominic? Why are you suddenly curious about my father's agendas? You never cared about what he did before. He is one of your trusted advisors!"

"Just answer me, Olivia." I hissed with narrow, steely eyes. "Where was your father last night?"

Olivia flinched when she saw the impatience in my eyes and her voice started to tremble. "H-he's here. He went home from a meeting with the elders last night about the rebellion happening, Dominic. I told you

Samantha's return is terrible news for the Silver Crescent pack. The people don't want her here!"

"'I DON'T F*CKING CARE WHAT THEY WANT, OLIVIA!" I roared and her knees gave up. She sat on the floor with her wide eyes looking at me with terror. "I am the Alpha! And Samantha is my wife! And if I ever find out that you and your father have something to do with what happened to her, banishment is not enough for a punishment, Olivia! You and Richard will face something more dreadful than that."

"I-I have no idea what you are talking about, Dominic! I don't know what's going on! I swear to you!"

I let out a growl as I turned my back on her. There was panic in Olivia's eyes that disturbed me, but I couldn't waste any more time threatening her because she already knew how ruthless I was when someone defies me. I had to know if Richard had something to do with the witches. If he was affiliated with them and just masking his connection with those people with his fake hatred.

I grabbed the doorknob tight and glared at Olivia before I left. "You know me when I get so desperate, Olivia. You know me very well."

Her face paled as she swallowed hard.

Chapter 93
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I screamed as I felt my skin burning when water splashed on my face. But my thirst overpowered the pain and my tongue desperately reached for the water that was on my lips.

A shifter can heal fast, but with the silver chain around my body, my cells stopped from regenerating. The burns were unsightly, revolting to the eyes like fresh meat slowly getting infected with pus.

My heartbeat was rapid and my eyes blinked several times before I was able to open them in complete darkness. I let out shallow, swift breaths as I turned my head side to side, unsure where to look as I heard those heavy footsteps again like thunder, shaking my very soul with fear.

I coughed, and I tasted blood in my mouth.

“Good. You are finally awake, woman.” The person said in this deep, hoarse tone—a voice that came from the depths of hell. “You’ve been sleeping the whole day. You know that?”

“How many days have I been here?” I asked; my tongue was like sandpaper and talking felt like swallowing razor blades. “I need food. Water.”

“Oh, you need water?” he said in a mocking tone, making me almost sob, “I just gave you water. Didn’t you feel it?”

“*sshole!” I spat at him and he burst into a maniacal guffaw. It was the most evil laugh I had ever heard in my entire life.

“I don’t think you still need those since you are going to die here anyway, Miss Samantha,” he snarled with a wide, feral grin. “But perhaps you can change my mind if you do what I say.”

My desperation told me that I had to do whatever he wanted, but my pride as Luna couldn’t. I coughed and blood spurted out of my mouth, making me whimper in agony.

“Oh, you look terrible,” his voice was a poison full of sarcasm. “I guess you’ll die sooner than I anticipated.”

“Just kill me now,” I snarled, glaring at him lethally, “Because once I get out of these chains, I swear I will shred you into ribbons.”

“Oh, I’m scared,” he sniggered and then pulled something from his back. My body stiffened, waiting for the pain to come. But it wasn’t the silver chain he was holding in his hand but a piece of a photo. My eyes focused

on the thing as I frowned, and I started to feel anxious, terrified of what I would find out from that photo.

I felt the veins in my head throb painfully.

Not my kids. Please, dear Moon Goddess, not my kids...

He flipped the photo and my heart shattered into millions of pieces.

It was Dominic—and Olivia.

The photo was a stolen shot from outside Olivia's home. The photo shows Dominic inside Olivia's bedroom, with her on top of him and Dominic removing her shirt.

I couldn't breathe. I didn't know anymore whether the pain was because of my broken heart or from the wounds wrapped with silver chains. I looked away as sobs emerged from my throat. My lips trembled as I kept my mouth shut, not wanting the man to hear me silently cry in front of him.

That picture is not a recent shot! My wolf exclaimed to me in anger. Try to make sense of it, Samantha! He can't do that to you!

Even if it's an old photo, it still hurts! I snarled at her as my shoulders shook while sobbing. All the traumas and pain from the past came back as I turned my head, not wanting to look at the picture.

"What, Samantha? Does it hurt you to see your Alpha enjoying his time with another woman?" The masked man asked, "You are just hoping for nothing. Dreaming for nothing, Samantha. You are never his priority. The Alpha only brought you to Silver Crescent because he is BORED! Once he's done with you, he would go back to Miss Olivia again because he always knew she was more capable of becoming the Luna of the pack. She knows how to lead! She never ran from her responsibilities! Unlike you did!"

"NO. That's not true..." I murmured as tears kept rolling down my cheeks. "Dominic has changed! He can't do that to me again!"

“How certain are you that he won’t look for another woman again?!” he bellowed, impatiently. “You are wolfless! You are nothing compared to Miss Olivia, who had been serving the pack as a high-ranking Gamma! And what are you, Samantha? The Mother Luna arranged for you to marry her son because your parents are her friends! Other than that, you are nothing special! You even failed to pass your training when you were fifteen! You are not fit as Luna of the Silver Crescent!”

“If you want me dead, then just kill me now!” I barked at him, as I pushed myself from the operating table. The silver chains on my wrists and ankles rattled, but I barely felt the burns because I was overwhelmed with anger, fear, and despair, all spiraling into my chest and crawling up to my head—pounding violently until I was dizzy and sick to the stomach.

I believe Dominic has changed—Those smiles that reached his eyes when we were in the picnic area, the way he laughed together with Devon and Diana as he played with the twins. The passion in his every kiss and the stroke of his fingers on my skin at night when we were together—all of this was true and he loved me. I believe with all my heart that he loved me and his twins. He came back to set things right. Dominic came back for me. That’s what’s important for me and the twins.

“Dominic loves me. That’s what I know.” I hissed and glared at him.

The masked man scoffed and growled in anger. “You b*tch! "You deserve twenty strikes for your insolence!" he yelled.

My eyes blurred when a silver chain hit me on the thigh. It was so excruciating that I wasn’t able to scream. My eyes bulged as if they were going to bounce out of their sockets.

The dark room was filled with the rattling of chains as the masked man hit me on the body so many times that I lost consciousness before I finished the count.

Chapter 94
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

Olivia was obviously hiding something.

Liam did a nice job spying on Richard Bennett. It didn't take him the whole day to find out that Richard was having a secret hideout where Liam suspected that the old guy used it for his personal agendas and meetings with the elders.

It wasn't out of my knowledge that Richard had small company with the other elders and council members who conspired against me when it came to my decision making and it didn't bother me at first because Richard was never a threat to me.

But after the incident when Samantha was missing, I couldn't take things lightly anymore.

"Are you sure this is the place?" I asked Liam. We stepped down in an old car. I decided not to use any of the luxury cars I had not to get any attention from the people around the place. I was wearing a hooded jacket with half my face covered with a face mask. Liam, on the other hand, was wearing a trench coat and sunglasses. Sunglasses in the middle of the night! Goddess forbid me.

"We conducted a thorough inspection of the area," he stated with a calm demeanor. "I discovered that he and other council members visit this location every other day. I'm just not sure who among your advisors are playing allies with him."

"It doesn't matter. I'll know about it eventually. For now, I need to focus on Samantha. We are not sure she's safe where she is. I can feel she's in pain, but I can't reach her through the bond. We have to get some evidence that Bennett did it. I swear I'll make that son of a b*tch suffer once I find out he's behind all of this." I let out a deep, guttural snarl as we proceeded to the place.

The place was a twenty-story residential building with mostly Omega tenants who worked at factories and industrial sites in Silver Crescent. The neighborhood was dull, poorly developed, and dark. It was my very first time to visit this part of my turf, and I couldn't believe it had gotten this bad

when Olivia kept on reporting that she had been handling things well in the Omega communities.

It was a terrible sight of poverty. No wonder the Omegas and the workers of the pack had no faith in the council and their Alpha. Olivia was neglecting her duty to these people! If I didn't see it with my own eyes, I would never know that Olivia had been ignoring the needs and the demands of the Omegas of the pack! It aggravates me how the council favored her more than Samantha when she failed to look after these people!

Liam looked at me with concern in his eyes as he saw how my face darkened while we stepped down the stairs of the underground flats of the building.

"Are you sure he won't come tonight?" I asked Liam as we stopped in front of the door of Richard Bennett's place.

"Yes," he answered quietly as he pulled a pin from his pocket and started to open the lock with it. "He goes home before midnight so I am sure he just left when we arrived here."

"Good."

That's when I signaled the Gamma soldiers to get inside once Liam managed to open the door. In the corridors of the building, I saw Omegas peeking suspiciously. Rugged men stepped forward to check what was happening and Liam patted me on the shoulder, telling me he would handle them with a calm look on his face.

"Go and look inside," Liam whispered, "You can't make those Omegas identify you. This will make them more confused and upset."

I nodded at him and went inside.

I had to do it fast before one of them called Bennett and reported what was happening in his flat. Liam made it clear to me that it was a bad idea to

show force in this part of the pack, knowing that the Omegas were not happy anymore with how the council was treating them.

Any display of violence will make the Omegas rebel more against me. I couldn't allow that to happen.

Nothing in the g*dd*mned house seemed unusual. There were photos of me on the pin board at the sitting area with Samantha and the kids. I frowned. Was Bennett spying on me and my family?! On the table were minutes of meetings and records of recent statistics about the pack and other billing transactions, which were questionable. Why was he having these kinds of documents here in this place? What was Bennett plotting against me?

There was no scent of Samantha in here. None of her belongings was in this place. Liam approached me and he shook his head, telling me there was no trace of Samantha inside Bennett's flat.

"G*dd*mnit!" I yelled in frustration as I kicked the nearest chair. The chair flew against the wall and shattered under the force. "He's the only person who could do this to Samantha!"

"We have to go now, Alpha." Liam patted me on the back, trying to calm me down. "We can't stay here too long. The Omegas outside are getting scared and suspicious."

A snarl ripped in my throat, "Give me five more minutes."

Liam nodded and gestured for the Gamma Soldiers to get out of the flat. I studied the place more, looked for any suspicious items inside, and then noticed something in his closet. I peeked inside the partially opened closet. When I pulled open its door, a folder fell and photos scattered on the floor, petrifying me.

I bent down and my eyes widened as I saw Samantha's stolen photos. There were photos of her in the Moonstone pack when she was pregnant with the twins. My heart wrenched when I saw the photo of her smiling with

Killian and some others that was way before we got married. There was a picture of her with her late parents as well.

My eyes were filled with sorrow when I remembered the day Samantha found out her parents died in an accident. I was present when the news reached her—she had failed the final test of our training. People thought she bailed on the final test because she got scared, but the truth is, she underwent a deep depression that got her hospitalized for months.

I also considered the possibility that this could be the reason Samantha hasn't gotten her wolf. That she turned wolfless.

There were other documents as well that had information about the ancient werewolf Royal Family. Newspapers, articles, and torn pages of magazines. This made me confused. What was Samantha's connection with them? Or was it two different cases that Bennett was curious about? I wasn't sure.

I had a bad feeling about it. I checked the other papers along with the photos. I was appalled by what I discovered. Why did he have documents like her birth certificate, her parents' list of assets, and her family's genealogy?

There was something wrong here. Something I had no idea why the hell Bennett was so curious about Samantha!

Chapter 95
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I couldn't go on like this.

I couldn't give up.

My body already wanted to give up, but my mind never wanted to. I was exhausted and desperately wanted to end my suffering, unsure if I could endure another round of torture from the masked man. To be honest, I was surprised that when I woke up after he hit me with that silver chain, he

offered me water and food. Part of me wanted to refuse and thought that it was his way to prolong my suffering. However, my body betrayed me, allowing the masked man to feed me with a spoon while I remained chained to the metal bed. I was so sick mentally, but I needed it. I needed the energy to survive—to get away from here. I had to swallow my pride and the food to get more strength, just enough to get out of these chains.

Despite the sharp pain from my broken rib, I managed to breathe slowly and evenly. I looked down at my feet, and the tips of my toes were already black, as if they would fall off any moment if I kept moving them. I hissed when I tried to arch my aching back and looked around the dark empty room, hoping the masked guy wasn't around.

I breathed. In. Out. In. Out.

My chest rose and fell. I closed my eyes as I concentrated on my wolf and tried my hardest to ignore the pain all over my body. My tongue was like a piece of sandpaper in my mouth as I swallowed hard. My throat was raw and burning. Before, when I used to call my wolf and tried to reach for her from deep within me, it was like reaching for someone under deep, clear water. But at that moment, the feeling was as if I was in the mouth of an angry volcano. It was hellish, and I never wanted to linger, but I had to.

I had to reach my wolf.

Where are you? I need you now! I hissed at her. You can't leave me like this! You will also die with me!

Please!!!

Despite the burns and the excruciating pain of both the reality and the mental torture it caused me, I did my best to reach for her and wake her power inside me. It wasn't easy. My whole body was battered with silver chains and burns, and the only thing that was keeping me from giving up was my love for my children and my desire to see my destined mate again—to be with my family again.

There's no way I would let my enemies win without me putting up a fight.

I thought you already forgot about me.

Those cold, soft words from my wolf made me gasp.

My back arched as I felt the indescribable heat flowing throughout me, spreading from my chest to all over my body. Every muscle in my body relaxed as if I had received a lukewarm water bath. It brought me back to life.

Every pulse in my body calmed down and the torturing pain stopped for a minute as I felt the flesh on my wrists and ankles regenerate slowly, building tissues all over the exposed bones.

My eyes sharpened. My teeth elongated and my body shivered as the power surged all over me. For a second, I forgot the wounds, the unbearable pain that put me into deep despair for so many days.

My body was healing until I gained the strength to clench my teeth and fist. I managed to free my hands from the silver chains as my werewolf strength took over my small body. I let out a piercing scream.

I screamed all the pain and the agony of being imprisoned in that cursed place. Of me being taken away from my twins. I let out a scream filled with anger, followed by a vicious snarl.

Golden orbs appeared around my eyes as I searched for the masked guy in the darkness. My breath was swift and heavy. I wanted his blood. I wanted them to drip on my paws and claws, and just as I swore to him, I wanted him to be ripped into ribbons.

The metal shackles clanged on the cemented floor and echoed throughout the dark, small room.

“What the—”

His voice was enough for me to locate where he was.

The ground trembled when I leaped and shifted to my werewolf in mid-air. I landed on four feet, snarling like a wild beast as I headed straight to his position. His scent was so vivid, and it was making me wild. I had never felt so bloodthirsty before until I met this bastard. I wanted him dead! Oh, he was so f*cking dead!

“NO!!!”

I pounced at him, attacking fast in a single assault with my razor-sharp teeth ready to tear his shoulder apart. But he was quick and luckily dodged, but was sent flying and was thrown violently against the wall of the building. He gasped as the air was forced out of his lungs from the impact and he coughed fresh, crimson blood. I didn’t waste a second and aimed to rip his head off his shoulders, but he kicked himself away from the wall, putting distance between us, just enough for me not to be able to reach him with my sharp, lethal claws.

He couldn’t get away from me!

I roared. The masked man was petrified at the bloodcurdling sound that reached his very bones. It was my chance, and so I rammed him against the wall with strength that made fissures on it. His head hung between my sharp claws. The force was so powerful he coughed blood, and that weakened him enough for me to trap him and take his mask off, hooking the fabric with my teeth.

And I couldn’t believe my eyes as a familiar face displayed in front of me, bloody with his broken nose, terribly bleeding.

ETHAN! I exclaimed in my head.

Chapter 96
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

Liam and I searched for every old building surrounding the Silver Crescent pack. Ten hours had passed, and there was no trace of Samantha in any of them. No scent. No sign that she was brought there.

“Perhaps you should get some rest, Alpha. I know you are upset, but we can continue the search tomorrow,” Liam suggested as he patted me on the shoulder. I just shifted back to my human form and put on some pants. My face was dark with fear and worry while I stared into the woods with gritted teeth.

“No. There’s no way I can sleep anyway knowing she’s out the door and probably hurt Liam.” I snarled quietly as I slumped on a huge rock and rested my elbows on my knees.

I was indeed exhausted and was near my limit without having enough sleep for two days. I didn’t know what was happening to my mate and what the abductor was doing to her—what he wanted from her. I had a terrible feeling she’s in pain somewhere. I could feel it through the bond. I could feel her crying for help, and I’m so furious that I couldn’t do anything because I had no idea where that bastard brought her or hid her!

“You look awful, Dominic,” Liam, who was one of my closest friends in the pack, the most loyal Beta I got here, uttered my name, which meant he was deadly worried about me. “I know you are worried about Samantha, but Ethan and the Gamma Search Team are doing their best to find her. You have to get some rest because your twins need you as well. You can’t burn yourself out because we have no idea what kind of enemy we are dealing with here. We must be ready for strong enemies because we never know when they will appear.”

My eyes narrowed because Liam was right. We were not sure what kind of enemies we were facing as we searched for my mate. It must be someone powerful enough to make a deal with a witch.

Everyone in the pack knew that these kinds of services from witches were ridiculously expensive if it was about masking a criminal’s identity and erasing their traces. It wasn’t some kind of a cheap ritual they performed.

It was as if the abductor’s existence and Samantha’s were completely gone, and now we had no idea where we should start looking.

Richard Bennett was still the primary suspect, though. But I will extract that information right out of his own mouth once I have enough evidence.

I stood from the rock and studied the area around the thick forest. “No. We haven’t searched the east part yet. I need five men to follow me. You can go home if you like, Liam.” I hissed as I jumped down the rock, squaring my shoulders. I tilted my head to the side and the bones in my neck crunched satisfyingly.

Liam let out a groan and stood from his seat as well. He smiled at me helplessly, “As if I can go home without you.”

“Good,” I smirked at him and then gestured for five more Gammas to follow us to the east.

We all shifted back to our Werewolf form. Even without the silver light of the moon, the dark forest was still visible with my werewolf eyes. I led the team to search and study the area until I noticed something strange—the rustling of something moving that was not too far from our location.

It looked as though it was following us.

Then in a blink of an eye, it was already in front of me. A giant dark brown wolf with razor-sharp teeth was aiming for my neck.

[Dominic!]

The panic in Liam’s voice didn’t do me good. I managed to dodge the teeth but not the bastard’s huge claws. My eyes widened in pain and I roared when he drew a long line on my back with his claw, ripping it open. Blood gushed out from the wound and I fell on the ground, limping.

Liam attacked but the giant enemy rammed him straight against a tree. He let out a loud yelp, and I immediately moved to my feet to get the beast away from him, but he was so incredibly strong that the five Gammas around him were sent flying as he tackled them.

He glared at me with his crimson eyes, with his saliva dripping on his mouth. I thought I had seen this before. A hybrid? I looked for more signs but didn't see anything that made him look like a vampire as well. I noticed that the dark paint on the side of his belly was like a handprint.

I had seen it before, but my mind was too focused on fighting the giant beast. [Black Claws] I screamed at Liam through mind-link as soon as I remembered, [F*cking bastards! What are they doing in this part of the forest?!]

More of them appeared from behind the trees. The five Gammas did their best to stop the two while Liam was busy with the spotted brown one. The dark brown, whom I supposed was their pack leader, attacked, and I snarled. I used my Alpha strength as we exchanged attacks. He was swift and deadly but not on my level.

His strength compensated for his speed. He got slower, so I took the chance. He leaped and I caught his front right leg with my teeth, ripping the g*dd*mned thing away from his shoulder.

His howl of agony echoed all over the forest, alerting the rest of his pack. Liam looked at me, checking if I was still in one piece and was relieved when the bastards ran together with their leader, carrying his torn leg with his teeth.

My vision turned blurry for a second and I panted. When I looked down, there was already a pool of fresh blood underneath me.

[Alpha! You're bleeding!] One of the Gammas approached me and helped me lean against a giant old tree.

[Those *ssholes!] Liam snarled, his eyes filled with rage, [They coated their claws with silver!]

[Makes sense why my wounds didn't close.] I groaned. The pain was distracting, but I refused to stay in one place. [What are the Black Claws doing in this part of the forest?! I thought that organization was banned by the Shifter's Council?!]

[I don’t have any clue, Alpha.] Liam answered but was more concerned with the wound bleeding on my back. [We have to go back to the Pack Manor and make sure to treat that wound. You can’t go on like this, Dominic. As your Beta, you have to listen. I can’t let you go after those bastards when you’re heavily injured like this.]

[It’s as if they are following us.] I spoke to Liam, darting a glance at the area where the Black Claws had retreated. [They know we are looking for Samantha! I have a feeling they have something to do with what is happening, Liam!]

So it wasn’t just Richard Bennett who was curious about Samantha’s family background. There was more perplexing to it—to know that the Black Claws, a notorious group of criminals, were involved in this.

Where are you, Samantha... I whispered through our mate bond, but there was no response.

Chapter 97
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I was aghast—totally petrified at what I saw—and didn’t notice I shifted back to my human form. I grabbed a fabric that was hanging on a wall not too far from me and used it to cover my body. Ethan was lying unconscious on the ground after I rammed him against the wall; I wondered if I had broken all his ribs and punctured his lungs with it after blood burst from his mouth. There’s no way I would let him die that easily!

What made it more painful to know was that Ethan did those horrible things to me. My best friend! My childhood friend in Silver Crescent, whom I thought was the only person who was happy that I moved into this place, apart from my mate.

Tears streamed down my face. No physical wounds or any trace of injury were left on my skin after I morphed to my werewolf form and then back to my human self. But the trauma, the screams, the excruciating feeling of the

silver chains around me—it remained in my head like a nightmare. The trauma, the screams, and the excruciating feeling of the silver chains around me lingered in my mind like a curse, bringing misery to me. My whole body trembled as beads of cold sweat formed on my forehead. I remembered the feeling of the silver chains around my wrists, ankles, and neck. Sobs emerged from my throat. Why did he do that to me?!

“Why, Ethan!” My voice broke as I screamed at him, filled with rage and confusion. “I can’t understand why you did this to me! Did Richard Bennett order you to take me away from my kids?! Tell me it’s him, Ethan! Tell me that someone forced you to do this to me!

He looked at me with black, swollen eyes and then winced as he grinned. “No one ordered me to kidnap you, Samantha. It was all my decision. I hurt you because I had to. I had to take you away from your kids and Alpha Dominic because I have to.”

My heart shattered into millions of pieces as I hissed at him, baring my teeth with rage. “You are my best friend, Ethan! I trusted you like a real brother! Like a comrade!”

He scoffed, “Do you think I like that this happened as well, Samantha?!” He grimaced as he leaned more comfortably against the wall, then glared at me, "Do you think I enjoyed seeing you hurting on that g*dd*mned table?!"

“You bastard!” I kicked him in the gut and he coughed. “You f*cking bastard, I will kill you!!!”

“YEAH! KILL ME NOW, SAMANTHA! Kill me now so you won’t know who you truly are! Kill me and your life and your kids’ lives will be in danger!”

“What are you talking about?” I asked him with danger in my voice, “Why will my children’s and my life be in danger!? What do you know, Ethan! You and Lena are not making sense! Did Lena command you to do this to me?! Is she behind all of this!?”

“No!” His answer was swift with panic in his voice. “The Mother Luna has nothing to do with this, Samantha. It’s true; we know something about you,

but she has nothing to do with what I did to you. I did this to protect you and the kids. And because you are too stubborn to leave Silver Crescent and Alpha Dominic. This is serious, Samantha! This is why I had no choice but to f*cking scare you and hurt you like that!”

“And you think I believe you after what you did?!” I barked at him, “I peel your skin from your flesh and your flesh from your bones, Ethan!” The irises of my eyes turned golden orbs as I widened my eyes on him threateningly.

"That’s why, Samantha, despite your breathtaking beauty, I never fell in love with you," he grimaced. “You are always g*dd*mned scary!”

“Don’t make this a joke now, Ethan.” I bent down and leaned closer to him. “I will do what I said if you don’t tell me who these people are who want my children dead!”

He could barely open his blackened eyes as he stared straight at me, “Do you think after all the desperate things I did to you, that this is still a joke, Samantha?” he coughed and then continued. "You can’t stay in Silver Crescent because there are people there who want you dead," he said, wheezing in pain. “When I saw your children shift to their werewolf form, that’s the day I knew your life was in danger, Sam. I thought I could scare you to get out of this pack with your twins. BUT NO! You’d rather stay here and die than listen to me!”

“Then tell me who these people are and I’ll kill them myself,” I scoffed at him, “You f*cking tortured me, you *sshole!”

“As if you were not used to getting bullied before,” Ethan smirked, “Look what you did, though. You had awakened your wolf. Are you not going to thank me for that?”

I kicked him in the gut again and he whimpered in pain.

“Who wants us dead, Ethan! Don’t make me ask again! What is my connection to the primordial bloodline!? What will happen to me and the kids once everyone finds out about this!?”

“The Black Claws! They are after you and your kids!” he answered swiftly when he saw I was about to kick him again. “And about your connection to the Royal Family, I have no idea yet. What I know is they have so many enemies everywhere. Greedy individuals aim to seize power from them. And knowing you have a connection with the family means you are a candidate for the throne! And people from powerful clans are not happy about that! That’s why I had to do this to convince you to let go of Alpha Dominic and hide yourself from the packs.”

I was skeptical about everything that came out of his mouth, but Ethan would never lie to me. I saw the fear in his eyes as I glared down at him. “Then help me meet the Royal Clan, Ethan. Help me find out where I really came from.”

Chapter 98
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

“Alpha!”

“Shut up, Liam.”

“You’re literally bleeding to death, Dominic! Look at you! Your face starts to look so pale!” Liam lashed out at me as he dragged his hand on his face, “Please spare me from your mother’s wrath, Dominic. And let’s go home to treat that freaking wound.”

“I have a huge feeling Samantha is just around here, Liam,” I said to my Beta while panting. Cold beads of sweat started appearing on my forehead as I slowly felt my body weaken from the poison of the silver weapon the dark brown wolf used against me. “It’s a faint feeling, but I am sure she’s just here.”

“It must be the poison, Dominic,” Liam was starting to lose his temper, but I could see in his eyes that he understood my desperation to find my wife. And I understood that as my Beta, he was concerned about my safety as the ruler of the pack. That’s why he was anxious that I remained stubborn about staying in the forest.

But I had to. The more time passed that we hadn't found Samantha, the more I became convinced that she was somewhere out there, being tortured by someone who wanted her dead. And there was no way I'd stop looking for her, knowing she was in danger. She could face death at any moment. Alone. In the darkness.

"I can't go back, Liam. Maybe you take the others with you and seek the healers, but I'll stay here and look for my wife." I made myself clear to him, and he looked at me with a defeated look on his face and frustratingly dropped his shoulder. "Goddess help me, I am so dead when your mother finds out I left you here."

I grinned at him, "You are my Beta, Liam. Not my freaking babysitter." I threw him a darting look.

"I know. But remember the last time we got into a huge fight and you asked me to go back to pack manor and you said you could fight them on your own and you almost died?" He grimaced at the memory and then sighed, "Your mother blamed me for what happened to you, idiot. She told me I wasn't taking care of you as your Beta."

"Forget mom," I laughed at him and winced when I felt sharp pain in my back. "She's like Samantha. They tend to be too overprotective occasionally. That's why they like each other very much."

There was a smile on Liam's face when I looked at him, "Yes. Your Mom loves your wife just as much as she loves you." And that smile gradually disappeared and was replaced with horror. "That's why I am screwed if I go back without you and Miss Samantha, Dominic!"

"I will be fine. Just tell mother to keep an eye on the twins. I haven't heard from Ethan since we left yesterday, so make sure all of them are safe in the pack house." I said to Liam with full trust. "You're the only wolf I know who is capable of protecting my heirs if anything terrible happens."

Liam, thank the Goddess, was finally convinced, "Fine. But at least let me do something for the wound."

He asked for assistance from one of the Gammas to prepare the medkit. He poured disinfectant on the wound, made me grit my teeth and hissed in pain, then stitched it neatly.

“Go.”

Liam gave me a firm nod and then left with the rest of the Gammas, leaving me leaning against the old, tall tree. I looked around and sharpened my senses in the darkness and then closed my eyes. Aside from the sound of the night critters around me, there was something that gave me a nervous feeling. A feeling in the gut that was familiar but too faint for me to recognize. That’s when I opened my eyes because it was enough for me to hope that the mysterious presence I felt could be from Samantha.

Still limping with pain, I continued my search throughout the east part of the woods, hoping to see a clue. Perhaps there was something that could guide me toward my wife? I held on to that small feeling in my chest until I found an abandoned factory building.

In an instant, as my eyes lay on the premise, I felt the bond snap in place and my eyes widened.

Samantha...

That adrenaline rush in my veins made me forget the excruciating pain in my back as I ran with incredible speed inside the building. The feeling of my mate almost within my reach brought strength in me that I didn’t expect I still had after that deadly fight with the Black Claws.

“Samantha!!!”

I halted when I saw two figures in the shadow and recognized the one standing in front of me.

I thought my heart was going to explode with so much happiness.

Without any second thoughts, I went straight to her and embraced her tight. I didn’t have the chance to check if she was hurt or severely injured. I just

wrapped my arms around her and pulled her close to me, burying my face on her shoulder and filling my nose with the sweet scent of her skin.

She smelled so divine; no one would suspect she was held for days in this dark, dilapidated place.

“Dominic!”

“Goddess, I’ve searched everywhere for you, Samantha!” I snarled with worry as I cupped her face and stared into her ocean blue eyes. “What happened?! Who did this to you?” My whole body was trembling— happy and scared at the same time.

That’s when I noticed she was only wearing a torn, filthy rag, which was surprising because her skin was immaculately clean and glasslike despite the fabric. Samantha’s eyes were teary when she smiled at me and kissed me on the lips. “Goddess, Dominic, I thought I would never see you again.”

“I won’t let that happen,” I answered with a solemn look on my face. “I will find you even in the depths of hell if it means I can be with you again, love.”

Samantha’s eyes looked down and I followed where her eyes were. I was shook right into the core after I recognized the person who was sitting and leaning against the wall, looking at both of us with an ashen face.

“ETHAN! YOU SON OF A—”

“Don’t kill him,” Samantha stopped me when I let go of her and was about to swing a powerful punch, wanting to shatter the bastard’s face, “He said he only did this to save me and the children...”

“I can’t believe you’re behind all of this, Ethan!” I roared at him. “You were there with me; you saw how devastated and scared I was. You did an investigation in Samantha’s house, and you f*cking pretended like you didn’t know anything in front of all of us!” I snarled at him, but Samantha’s hand held my arm—not letting me get near Ethan. “You made your Alpha look like a fool in front of everyone and there’s no forgiveness for that, you f*cking bastard!”

Ethan didn't answer but wiped the blood on his mouth with the back of his hand. There was remorse on his face, but he didn't apologize. He was never sorry for what he did to me and Samantha!

"Ethan knows something about me and the kids, Dominic." Samantha stepped between me and her Gamma friend. She looked furious with him but remained calm despite what Ethan did. He was her f*cking best friend!

"Something what?! Does he have to do this to you?! To the twins!" I gritted my teeth as the orbs of my eyes turned crimson in anger. "What is wrong with you, Ethan?! You brought so much chaos after what you did to my mate!"

"If I don't take Samantha away, they will be annihilated in that house, Alpha," Ethan's voice was trembling as he answered, "It's the only way I can save Samantha! She has to get out of Silver Crescent or all of them will die!"

My brows creased into a deep furrow. "What do you mean they will die?! Who's after them? Who wants them dead, Ethan! Tell us what you know!"

Chapter 99
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

I was still in shock, and my heart was racing as I looked at my mate—my husband! He was here! He looked for me. He was limping, and my heart sank when I saw that long, stitched wound on his back.

As much as I wanted to ask what happened, all his focus was on Ethan, still sitting on the concrete, filthy floor. I could feel his terror as he was forced to look back at Dominic. He was trembling to the bones, and I didn't know if I enjoyed watching him pee on his pants while being interrogated by my mate or felt awful because he was still my best friend even after he almost got me killed and tortured for many days.

“P-Please don’t kill me, Alpha. I just did what I had to,” he pleaded as he grimaced. His ribcage must be healing already, and the process must be excruciating. “It’s the only way I can save Samantha! Believe me!”

A low growl escaped from Dominic’s throat. If only looks can kill, Ethan was already dead the second my mate threw him a glare, “I trusted you, bastard! I trusted you with the twin and my mate’s life! And look what you did!”

I was so glad all the horrible injuries caused by the silver chains were healed and disappeared after I shifted back to my human form. If Dominic had noticed that state of me, I was sure he would never stop ripping Ethan into pieces until he was nothing but chunks of flesh and bones on the ground.

And the Goddess would smite me for being an idiot, but I still felt empathy for the guy who made me suffer hell in this place. But he was Ethan. As much as I wanted him dead, I knew he had his reason. And whatever it was, it involved the children so I had to know.

“Who wants us dead, Ethan?” I asked, scared and nervous, when Dominic made a step forward with his fist ready to swing a punch on Ethan’s already bruised face.

“Ad orgadidation,” he answered; his pronunciation was messed up because of his broken nose. “You hag do know dit it layp and det—”

“Oh, shut up, you clown!” Dominic barked at him, “You will come with us and answer all the things you did to Samantha!”

“Love, wait...” I stopped Ethan before his fist landed on Ethan’s face, breaking the guy’s nose further. “Please don’t kill him. We still need him, Dominic. I have to know who these people who are after me and the twins. I need to know what they want from us and why they want us. What they know about who I really am.”

Dominic closed the gap between us and wrapped his arm around my waist. “I don’t care what they want, Samantha. I will protect you and the twins with my life. They can wage war against the Silver Crescent all they want, but I won’t let you and the twins leave the pack!”

“I know. But I need Ethan alive. For now.” I threw the Gamma a lethal glare, and my expression softened when my eyes went back to my husband. “I need him to explain. Unfortunately, with his broken nose, it will take time, so I need him to go with us back in the city—to interrogate.”

Dominic seemed unhappy about it, but he sighed heavily, “Fine.” Then he reached for his pocket and remembered he didn’t have his phone with him. “I can’t call Liam for backup, so guess I need to shift to my werewolf form to transport you both back to the pack.

“Wait,” I gasped, wide-eyed. “How are the kids? Are they safe, Dominic?”

His eyes softened as he caressed my cheek. “Nothing to worry about, love. They are safe with mom. Devon makes sure Diana is safe, so there’s nothing to worry about. You will see them when he heads back.”

Both of us looked at Ethan. I didn’t know what plan Dominic had with him, but I wanted to know what made him desperately do it.

*****

Three days after Dominic found me in that dilapidated building with Ethan, he insisted that we and the kids would go back to our house and said that we should stay in the pack house while the mystery of what Ethan told us hadn’t been solved yet. Dominic made sure that Ethan’s betrayal was a secret, not wanting the Gammas and the rest of the pack to think differently of him while we weren’t sure yet if Ethan was indeed an enemy or if he was really thinking for my and my kid’s safety.

“So are you ready to talk now, Ethan?”

Dominic poured a pail of cold water on Ethan’s face. The Gamma and Ethan gasped violently, awakened by the freezing water. His injuries were

already healed, and he had to talk before Dominic lost his patience and killed him.

“Talk!” I snarled at Ethan, pretending to look angry and dangerous, but in my heart, I still had faith that he wasn’t a total evil guy. “Talk or they will kill you, Ethan!”

There was fear in Ethan’s eyes and apology as he looked at me. But he glared straight into Dominic’s eyes as he uttered, slow and clear, “There’s a huge, criminal organization here in this region who had been conspiring to take over this continent, Alpha.”

He started explaining but was careful enough not to mention any names. “They are after the royal clan. They are going to seize power and kick the Werewolf King from his throne. But they realized there was a missing link. A link that brought them to Samantha and her twins. Because Samantha is a straight relative of the Werewolf King, Dominic! Her father is the missing son of the monarchs. They are the purebreds. The Primordial Bloodline that the elders thought was already extinct.”

Dominic froze. There was confusion and shock on his face that made Ethan smirk, satisfied at my mate’s reaction.

“If there are people after me and the twins, then I can’t hide anymore what I am really capable of,” I said with a soft voice, which made Dominic more confused. “We will fight them back. And this time, they will face the power of my wolf.”

Chapter 100
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“What’s happening here?”

Dominic’s face was filled with confusion and fury as he repeated his question, "Wolf? What do you mean about it, Samantha?”

Ethan and I exchanged worried glances before guiltily lowering our gazes to the floor. I began explaining to Dominic with fear that he would feel

betrayed after I hid this information from him for a very long time. “I already have my wolf, Dominic—right after I gave birth to the twins. The Moon Goddess granted me a beautiful, powerful wolf and that’s how I beat the sh*t out of Ethan.”

“She’s g*dd*mn terrifying. I don’t understand why men are so attracted to her, especially that Moonstone Alpha,” Ethan murmured, narrowing his eyes on me. “You all have a strange type toward women.”

Dominic stared at me, but this time, his face was relaxed. The tension on his shoulders and chest disappeared as he reached for my hand and squeezed it, his eyes full of understanding. “How come I didn’t feel your wolf, Samantha? It’s incredible that you can hide it from me when I am your—mate.”

Mate. Yes, he was my destined mate. I never had to hide that idea from anyone, including him. I smiled at Dominic as he pushed my hair behind my ears with that soft, loving gaze. Dominic leaned closer to me and inch by inch his lips aimed to taste my lips—

“I’m here. Just so you know.” Ethan said with his flat voice. His face was still wet from the freezing water as he glared boringly at me and Dominic, “Why don’t we focus here on what is important so you can get me out of this g*dd*mn cabin? Whose cabin is this anyway?”

“Who said you are getting out of here, *sshole,” Dominic threw Ethan a lethal glare as he and I averted our eyes from each other. Dominic became more irritated with the Gamma as the side of his upper lip twitched. I, on the other hand, couldn’t stop grinning awkwardly and just bit my lower lip hard, trying my best not to smack Ethan on the head.

“I’m just saying let’s focus on the real problem here,” he swallowed hard with his large, terrified eyes staring at Dominic’s raging look. “I mean, it’s time, Alpha, that you know Samantha’s situation is complicated now that so many people know she’s connected with the Royal Clan. If you don’t want the Silver Crescent to go into war and get involved in this huge catastrophe that you are about to face for keeping Samantha and the twins here, then

it's time for you to plan how you can retaliate against them—the organization that wants her dead."

"How can I know who I'm facing if you don't tell me who they are?" Dominic hissed. "I thought you cared about Samantha and the kids? Why does it seem like you are scared of telling me everything? What holds you back, Ethan?"

Ethan's face was ashen as he averted his eyes from me and Dominic.

I sensed he was hiding something deeper. Dangerous. And seeing that terrified look on Ethan's face made me nervous and more scared of what was coming to Silver Crescent because of me.

"Is it the Black Claws?"

Ethan lifted his face to meet Dominic's glare. "Is it them who's after Samantha and the twins? Because Liam and I fought them in the forest before finding you in that building. Those people never come close to my borders because they know I am not the kind of enemy they would ever want to have. But after seeing them in the forest, I am certain they are all after something. Something that was a huge deal to them that they would risk waging war against me."

"Tell us, Ethan. What makes you so scared of them? Did they threaten you?" I asked, wanting to know why he did what he did to me. I believe he had a strong reason.

Ethan was about to open his mouth and say something, but we were all distracted when Dominic's phone rang. Ethan's eyes blinked as if he was awakened from a dream and then slumped on the chair, looking relieved and exhausted.

"Liam! I told you not to—"

I used my werewolf senses to sharpen my hearing.

“You are needed here, Alpha.” Liam’s voice was full of urgency. I could sense the panic in his voice. And knowing Liam as a cool, composed person, it could be something serious and was too difficult for him to handle. “There are problems with some of our Gammas—”

Dominic’s troubled eyes turned to Ethan while the phone pressed on his ear. “Tell me what’s happening.”

“Something happened on the eastern flank of the border guards and patrol.” Liam started explaining. A witness said some vomited blood and others screamed and ran like they were on fire, but they weren’t. A healer suspected they were poisoned or must have inhaled something because one hour before that incident happened, there was a thick fog around the area. Do you think the Black Claws did it, Dominic? Why all of a sudden are they interested in attacking Silver Crescent?”

A feeling of guilt made the tips of my fingers cold as Dominic and I looked at Ethan. Ethan shrugged his shoulder as if saying, “I told you so” to us, and that made Dominic snarl as he gave orders to Liam, “Liam, listen. I need you to close all the gates. No one will enter and leave Silver Crescent without my permission! Call all the healers to find out what this chemical is and make antidotes as fast as they can!”

I looked at my husband and asked for the phone. I thought he would hesitate at first, but he gave it to me without a question and stared at me as I talked to Liam. “Liam? This is Samantha.”

“Luna,” Liam answered with a stiff voice, “Is there something you suggest?”

Dominic nodded at me, giving me his approval for whatever strategy I had in mind and uttered, “I need you to double the security around the borders. If you find any Black Claw people—”

There was tension in the air as Ethan and Dominic waited for my next words.

“Kill them on sight.” I snarled at Liam with my eyes, glaring at the scenery outside the small window of the wooden house.

Chapter 101
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"I'm sorry if we have to head back so soon. I know you still have so many questions you want to ask Ethan, but Madison already texted me that the kids are looking for me."

"You shouldn't feel bad about it, love. I know you want to focus on this matter as well. But the kids are important too. And after you were gone for days, Diana and Devon became too worried when they couldn't see you the whole day."

"It's alright, Dominic." I held his hand after he stopped the car in the garage of the pack house. "The kids are still anxious from what happened and you're right. The kids should always come first, then I can focus on the rest once I make sure they are well and safe."

"I'll go with you inside—"

"No. You should go straight to Liam and check what happened to the eastern borders. I have a feeling he needs you there badly." I squeezed his hand and gave my mate a firm look. "I will be alright. I am already inside the manor so there's nothing to worry about for my safety, love. You don't have to follow me the whole day."

He looked at me, still hesitating to go to his Beta. "I just want to make sure it won't happen again, love. If only you didn't stop me from tearing Ethan apart; he's already a corpse rotting and lying on that old building."

"I told you why you can't do that—yet." I gave him a warning look. "I don't want you to kill him yet, not because I still think he's my best friend. He's not anymore, Dominic. We need him because he's the only intel we have to know what is really going on. He knows something awful and dangerous will happen to Silver Crescent. And me and the kids—"

“I won’t let anything bad happen to you and the kids, Samantha. If it means I have to keep you all close to me just to make sure no one can hurt you again, I will.” His eyes sharpened and his hands tightened their grip on the steering wheel. I understood the frustration he felt and how hopeless and desperate he was when I was abducted by my idiot Gamma friend and I couldn’t blame him if he was paranoid all the time about me and the kids, knowing there was a serious threat in our lives.

“But Liam needs you at the borders, Dominic. You can’t leave this matter to him. You heard how anxious he is.”

He let out a heavy sigh and then leaned his head back in his seat. “Fine, But at least let me watch you get inside the door before I leave.”

I smiled at him helplessly and he landed a deep kiss on my lips before he let me open the door and hop outside his car.

*****

“Mom, you are two hours late!”

Diana pouted her lips at me and then folded her little arms on her chest as she frowned. I suppressed a smile on my lips as I saw she was seriously furious that I was late going home again. Diana is basically like her father when it comes to worrying and being overprotective.

“I’m so sorry, something urgent happened that needed my attention, kids.” I apologized as I carried Diana in my arms and then Devon approached me with a kiss on the cheek. He was worried as well but stayed collected and calm. I guess he spent too much time with Liam already.

“You promised you would be home before six.” Devon narrowed his eyes on me. “I don’t want you staying too long outside, Mom. We don’t want you to get hurt again!”

I chuckled as I cupped the side of his cheek, “I’m sorry. This will never happen again. Besides, that won’t happen again, okay? Mommy is now strong enough to fight back. I can protect myself now.”

“Once I am finished training shifting into my wolf, I will make sure you and Diana will be safe.” Devon said with a proud look on his face, “You don’t have to worry about the bad guys out there, Mom.”

“I am sure you will take good care of me and your sister when you grow up,” I patted the top of his hair and my son smiled at me so widely.

Madison and Cynthia helped me with the twins. Since I got home after Dominic rescued me from Ethan, they have become more clingy and needy, especially Diana, who was constantly looking for me whenever I was outside working on my duties as the Luna of the pack. It became more challenging for me to balance my life between being a mother and a leader.

I was busy preparing the kids for bed when I remembered checking on Dominic. I dialed his number quickly while Diana and Devon were busy changing into their pajamas.

“Love,” Dominic’s voice sounded exhausted and frustrated, and I had a feeling it was about the poor guards and soldiers who were affected by the poisonous fog.

"I am just worried about the situation there," I whispered as I watched Madison comb Diana’s long, wavy hair. “Did the healers find a cure already? Do you already have a plan how to get rid of the Black Claws and prevent them from getting inside the borders?”

Dominic must have sensed the panic in my voice. He cleared his throat and made his voice firm with reassurance that everything would be alright. “Yes. Everything is running here smoothly, love. Regarding the plan, I already arranged a council meeting for tomorrow, and I need you there. Liam and I had been working on it since I came here.”

While I was listening to my mate, I noticed a letter on Diana’s bedside table, which was unusual because all the letters I get go straight to my office. This one was lying on the desk near a slightly open window as if someone had sneakily put it there.

To Samantha.

My heart started to ram against my chest, and I didn't know I had already pressed the end call button and thrown the phone on Devon's bed. My brows furrowed. The adrenaline rushing in me made my head throb as I opened the letter with trembling, panicky hands and read it carefully:

You can't run from this. No matter where you go. Where you hide, we will see you. We will make sure no one will know what you truly possess and the truth will be buried together with your lovely twins.

Cold beaded sweat appeared on my forehead as I stared outside the window.

Ethan was right. We weren't safe no matter how tight the security is in Silver Crescent.

Chapter 102
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

My brain kept convincing me that I had to stay and solve this.

But my heart and feet wanted to go to where my car was parked, drive back to the Pack Manor, and stay with my mate and the twins.

I studied all the damage that happened at the eastern borders of my turf. I stood atop the concrete wall protecting this part of my territory from the wild beasts of the forest and felt the soft wind blow on my exhausted face. My hands slipped into the pocket of my black pants as I assessed everything that needed to be fixed and let Liam take care of all of this so I could go back to Samantha as fast as I could.

This poison infected twenty of my elite patrolmen and guards, causing them to go berserk and attack those around them. The healers were still working on it, and Liam told me they should report by this day while I still had time to attend to what happened in this place.

“Alpha,” Liam immediately approached me the second my feet landed on the ground. “The rest of the elite guards and patrolmen are already waiting for your orders. Most of them are convinced that the culprits who did this to their friends are still in the forest and they wanted to raid the place to get rid of those bastards.”

“We are not sure what these devils have in their minds, Liam. Gather our men and wait until I decide to deploy them. We can’t go into that forest and fight when we are not sure yet what kind of poison our soldiers got from that fog. We need to wait for the healers until they generate an effective antidote. That’s when we attack.”

Liam nodded. I understood how upset he was. Those men had been with him since he became the Beta of the pack and seeing them suffer from that f*cking poison makes him enraged. I turned to him and hesitated to go straight to the healer’s tent when I noticed the pain and perturbation in Liam’s eyes.

“Liam,” I said with a firm voice and looked at him with grim eyes.

“Yes.” His jaw tightened and he wasn’t able to look me in the eyes. As his Alpha, I felt his strong desire to avenge his men. “I know how badly you want to go out there. But you are the only person I trust here, Liam. I can’t lose you as well. I need you to stay here and let our soldiers do the raid. Have faith that they can do it. They are trained very well and we have the strongest soldiers on this continent. They can do this.”

Those words somehow eased the tension on Liam’s shoulders until his face relaxed and he looked at me apologetically but with resolve, “I will never forgive these bastards, Dominic. They will pay for what they did.”

“We will make them pay.” I patted Liam on the shoulder and nodded at him reassuringly. “However, we have to be cautious so there will be no casualty on our side. We will wait for the healers.”

“Yes, Alpha,” Liam answered, taking back his composure with his back straight. “I just can’t wait to get rid of those bastards.”

“Me too, Liam. Me too...” I snarled breathily as we headed to the tent of the healers who studied the poison.

*****

“Alpha!”

All the healers and the laboratory workers lined up and bowed their heads the second I stepped inside the tent. The other council members examined me with concern, wondering about my assessment at the eastern gates of the wall.

Everyone was scared and bothered by what was happening. The sudden attacks, the news about the notorious group called Black Claws residing in the forest of our territory. It was the day I feared the most. They think they are not safe anymore in Silver Crescent.

“What did you find, healer? Can this poison be cured?” I asked as I approached them with a grave expression. “We can’t let these enemies kill our men and weaken our defenses. You have to find something that will make our soldiers immune to this fog of poison before I deploy them to attack in the forest.”

“About that,” said one of the councils, uncertain of how he would deliver the information to me. “Me and the healers are convinced that it is not the first time we have encountered this poison, Alpha.”

My brows furrowed, perplexed by what I learned. “What do you mean this is not the first time? What’s going on here?”

One of the lab workers, the head of their operations, stepped forward with both his hands in the pockets of his laboratory coat. “I am afraid the substance is the same toxin we found on those wild rogues who attacked the Luna and the Alpha of the Moonstone Pack, Alpha Dominic,” he explained nervously as he tried to look me straight in the eyes.

The rogues... does that mean—

“They had been targeting Miss Samantha since then.”   Liam must have read the shock on my face as I looked at him. “It’s not a coincidence, Alpha. It’s not the first time Miss Samantha was attacked by rogues and her life was put in danger.”

I bit my lower lip and then looked down—my head full of thoughts. This is what Ethan had talked about—a huge conspiracy that dragged Samantha and my twins into danger. The Black Claws were desperate enough to kill everyone who was connected to the Werewolf King and I had to make sure Samantha and the kids were well-protected before they made their next move.

“I have to go back,” I murmured and Liam gave me a puzzled look.

“I have to go back to Samantha, Liam. I need you to stay here and wait until the healers find a way to immunize our soldiers from this poison fog. Make sure the gates are closed! Report to me right away if something strange happens outside the walls and wait for my orders.” I snarled at Liam with a dark look on my face. “I have to go and check on Samantha and the kids.”

“Copy, Alpha,” Liam answered. “You can leave everything to me.”

“Thank you, Liam,” I murmured and then I walked out to the tent, worried for Samantha and my twins.

Chapter 103
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

After I read that horrifying letter, I thought of searching for any suspicious things around the manor, especially the twins’ room. How could those people perpetrate the inside of the pack manor?! Did they have spies here? Should I tell Dominic? Or will it only bring chaos to the pack, knowing there are enemies inside my husband’s turf?

The panic made my stomach tighten, and I decided to solve this alone. Dominic was already dealing with the incident at the eastern gates, and I couldn’t distract him when he already had so many problems to attend to

with his Beta. This would only divert my husband's focus to the real problem of the pack.

"Miss Samantha, is there a problem?" Madison noticed my distress after I had slipped the letter into my jacket pocket. She looked at my pocket with a puzzled look and then at my face.

"N-Nothing, Madison. Nothing's wrong. How are the kids? Are they asleep?"

"Yes. Diana insisted she would rather not sleep yet, but Master Devon convinced her and told her she wouldn't grow into a beautiful lady if she kept on staying late at night." she giggled and then wiped her hands on her apron.

I squinted, "You look pale and sweating. Are you feeling alright, Madison?"

Taken aback, she awkwardly smiled, "Oh, it's—it's my stomach, Miss Samantha." "I think I ate something that upset my stomach today," she explained as she placed her hand on her belly.

I wanted to feel suspicious about her, but Madison, a gentle, sweet girl who takes care of my twins—couldn't be someone who has a connection with the enemies. No. I had to stop myself from being paranoid and making wrong judgments here.

"Alright, Madison. You and Cynthia can go get some rest." I smiled at her and let out a heavy sigh as I pushed away the ugly thoughts in my head. I shook my head a little, massaged my temples, and turned my back toward her. I couldn't let these fears control me. But I had to make sure that the pack manor was safe for Diana and Devon, so I kept my search.

The first place that came to my mind was the room I used to have in this place before Dominic and I got married. I can still remember the day when Lena asked me to live with them in this place and get to know Dominic more. But the harder I tried to reach out to him, the more aggressive he got. And it got worse after we got married.

But Dominic—he's more mature now. He has shown more thoughtfulness than I had anticipated, and to be honest, the changes have surprised me greatly. Good changes. And I thought maybe it was because of the twins. Fatherhood made him take things seriously. It gave him a new purpose. A new perspective in life with me and the kids.

I went straight to my old room and emotions started to flood in my chest—the day when I first moved here after my parents died, all the unbearable memories I had with Dominic and the day I decided to leave the Silver Crescent.

Nothing has changed here since I left. However, Lena must have made this place clean occasionally because every piece of furniture was dust-free. I felt the old wooden thing with my finger and sighed. Until I noticed something on the corner of the room that wasn't there before.

A heavy wooden chest...

Curious about the thing, I couldn't remember I had one before. Maybe it was Lena's and I just placed it in there because this room just became a spare room after I left Silver Crescent. But my instinct told me to look at what was inside. It was as if the object was tempting me to open it the longer I stared and stood in front of it with a heavy feeling in my chest.

I bent down and opened the chest. I was so surprised it wasn't locked.

"What are you hiding here, Lena?" I murmured, wide-eyed.

Pictures. The first thing that I saw on the stuff piled inside was pictures of me when I was a child, probably around seven years old to fifteen. It was weird because all were stolen shots while I was in my school uniform and training gear and when I moved here in the pack house.

My heart suddenly pumped fast and hard in my chest.

This box was filled with pictures and information about me and my family!

I rummaged for more. I saw Birth and death certificates. My parent's bank accounts. Cards. Invitations. Diplomas and school records. My eyes couldn't believe what I saw because Lena told me all of this was burned together with the ancestral house where my mother and father died.

Lena lied. She lied!

One piece of document caught my attention. The paper was old, had a yellowish-brown hue, and had a rough texture. My brows furrowed. I turned the pages and scanned them, nervous about what it was all about until I confirmed it was a contract.

A contract between my mom and an organization called The Fang Trinity.

With my heart racing, I read it was a contract about my mother swearing an oath for the secrecy of the organization. I found words like 'shifters with special abilities'. Royal bloodlines. Primordials. I didn't know how my mom was involved in this kind of dark conspiracy with these people but I had a strong feeling this was connected to what Ethan had been telling me and my Dominic—about these people who wanted me and our children dead, thinking we were direct descendants of the Primordial Clan. The Royal Family of the Werewolf King, who founded this land.

Was this why Lena didn't want Dominic to know? Was it because she was scared the Silver Crescent pack would get involved in the coming war of The Fang Trinity against the royal clan?

Lena knew from the very start the secrets about my parents. She knew. She knew my existence would start a war that my mom and dad had been trying to stop. But she still took care of me and gave me a home.

I had to know more. I had to know what part my mom and dad played in this game. I had to know it myself and find out what is waiting for me and the twins when this war happens.

Chapter 104
[DEVON's Point of View]

I sensed something wasn't right, and I knew Diana felt it.

I caught her looking at me the second Madison and Cynthia left the room. I was anxious and confused, but Diana's stare made me confirm that these feelings were not just uneasiness but an instinct that she and I had been feeling since Mom suddenly disappeared days ago.

"I'm scared, Devon," Diana whispered as she pulled her blanket halfway over her face. "Can you feel it too?"

I was scared, too, but I couldn't show it to my sister. "Yes, something is wrong. Mom and Dominic have been acting strangely since they came back. Liam said they are just dealing with something to help the people of the pack."

"I can sense Mommy always being anxious," Diana murmured, teary-eyed. "How long are we going to stay here? I miss home. I miss Annie." she pouted her lips, almost crying.

"It's okay, Diana. I believe Mom is doing her best to solve whatever is happening." I gave her a reassuring smile. "Things will be better."

"I am just so happy Mommy is back." Her voice was slightly muffled when she completely covered her face with the blanket. "I was so scared Dominic would never find her again. I was so scared, Devon."

"Dominic will never let that happen." My voice was firm as I stared at the ceiling that was filled with glow-in-the-dark stars, which Diane always loved. "Let's sleep, Diane. Everything will be fine." I reached for her head and patted the top of her hair.

*****

"Where's Mom?"

Madison's attention went to me as she did that strange, awkward smile she always did whenever she felt I had something to ask her. "I am not sure

where exactly your Mom is right now, Master Devon. But I know she's with Alpha Dominic, so I am pretty sure she is safe. You don't have to worry about her."

Diana gave me another sneak look and then her eyes went to her toys as she pretended to play with her doll. My twin and I were always excellent at these. We love to think we were little spies, collecting information from everyone around us. But if we wanted to know what was really happening, we had to get out of the little room Granny Lena prepared for me and Diana. We had to go out and see what was really happening. Diana and I needed to help Mom.

In any way we could.

"Oh, be right back, kids. I will go check the cookies I made for your snack. Wait for Cynthia, and don't go anywhere, okay?

Diana and I said in unison, "Okay, Madison!" Madison smiled her sweetest smile and patted my head before leaving.

Diana gave me a short, serious nod.

It was time.

Diana was faster than me. She got to the door first and prevented it from closing with her tiny hand. I grinned at her because we felt like ninjas! We will be Mom's little spies while she's out there working hard to solve the issues of the pack.

My twin and I headed to the left side of the mezzanine floor, trying to avoid the guards and servants who occasionally walked the hallways.

"Devon, let's go back to the playroom. I don't think Madison will be happy once she finds us we're not there anymore," she said, worrying.

I was surprised when Diane suddenly changed her mind. But I know she was anxious about Mom scolding us again. "It's okay, Diana. We can go back if you're too scared to go outside."

Her brow furrowed. "I'm not sure we should go anywhere, Devon. Remember what Mommy told us? We can't go anywhere without Madison or Cynthia..."

Diana was curious about what was going on in the pack house as well, but I couldn't blame her if she was scared that someone might hurt us. She had the hardest time when Mom went missing, and I will never let my twin sister suffer again. I promised Mom and Dominic I would protect her no matter what.

"Okay, Diana," I reached for her hand so we could go back together. "I'm here. Don't be afraid."

Before returning to the playroom, we saw two guards talking while looking at each other, but they didn't notice us. Since we got our wolf, Diana and I got really good at hiding our presence from the people around us. We always thought it was useful, especially when we hid from Madison when we didn't want to take a bath.

"It's just you who doesn't want to take a bath," Diana grimaced after she read what was in my head.

"Shh!!!" I shushed her. "I always hated that our minds linked the day we got our wolves," I murmured to her.

"Yes, because your thoughts stink." She complained, almost giggling but remained hidden behind me. We followed the two soldiers and made sure to hide our presence until they stopped. Diana and I decided to hide behind a giant vase and listen to the guards, curious when they mentioned the 'poisoned' patrolmen and gate sentinels at the east of the territory.

Madison told us Dominic went to the east to fix something. Was it about this?

Diana was about to say something else, but I silenced her and gestured for her to listen.

“Have you seen it?” said the guard that was shorter than the other. “I thought I had seen someone running past us in the garden, but I am not sure. So many guards had been passing through the garden after the incident so I wasn’t sure if I should be suspicious or not.”

“It’s probably just one of the messengers,” the taller one said. “But I heard the Alpha ordered every sentinel not to let anyone enter the pack house unless he gave his permission...”

An intruder! I have a bad feeling about this!

[We have to go back!] Diana was upset already but I held her hand as we carefully sneaked past the guards. I had no time to discuss it with her. We have a situation that we need to investigate.

[Change of plans, Diana.] I whispered to her in my head. [There’s something important we need to do first.]

Chapter 105
[ALPHA Dominic’s Point of View]

I was on my way to the pack house.

My eyes were focused on the road while my mind was on Samantha and my kids. Feathers appeared on the muscles of my jaw as I ground my teeth. I couldn’t leave them when things like this happened in the pack. Liam was right. It was worse than we imagined, and the first thing I had to ensure was my family’s safety.

Twenty minutes before I got to the manor, something caught my attention. My brows furrowed as I recognized the car parked in front of an old, dilapidated building that was once a public community library. The building was destroyed by an earthquake three years ago, and I decided not to use it again. I built a new one in the heart of the city, where it was much closer to public schools and universities.

I couldn’t be mistaken. That car was Richard Bennett’s.

What is this old man hiding from me?

I knew from what I had seen in his little hideout that Richard Bennett was up to something. He had been secretly investigating Samantha. He knew the secret about her past and her connection to the royal family. Could it be that he had something to do with the Black Claws as well? Was he helping them?

My wolf told me I had to go straight to Samantha, but my curiosity and my desire to know what Richard Bennett was doing in that old building won out.

I made sure to park my car far enough to not be seen if he was with someone acting as his lookout. I sneaked smoothly and fast through the woods, and it made my senses sharper to know if there were people aside from him around the area, but surprisingly, there were none. I made sure to hide my presence as I went straight to the entrance of the building, but no one was there.

I smirked, “You think you can trick me, Bennett?” I whispered mostly to myself. I used my ability as the Alpha to trace possible recent tracks inside the building and scanned the whole area. I felt my power concentrated in my eyes as it turned crimson red and wolf fangs lengthened my teeth. My muscles bulged and tightened as hairs appeared all over my body after I shifted halfway through my wolf form, just to prepare for any surprise attacks from the enemies.

There were fresh tracks on the floor, straight to the heart of the library, and—on the wall?

“What the—” I swore under my breath as I looked for something. Perhaps there could be a secret door or a button that would open a passageway to another room. But d*mn it! There was nothing!

A snarl ripped in my throat, frustrated and confused as to why his tracks stopped in front of this empty brown brick wall. There should be something behind it. I was sure that Bennett was hiding something from the council and me!

I looked around, hoping to get more clues. I searched every room, which was full of old, dusty, and abandoned books and furniture—until I found a locked one. The only area that was securely locked from the inside. I turned the knob carefully once again and saw that the thing was newly replaced, which meant someone was using it—a lot recently.

The question was, where did Bennett go? His car was outside, and I was certain he was there before I entered the place.

I had no time to waste so I was forced to open the room with a powerful kick, just enough not to fully destroy it. I closed the door carefully, waiting until Bennett comes back from wherever the f*ck he went.

My jaw nearly dropped on the floor at what I saw.

In front of me was a huge corkboard with pictures of every person in the council, including me, Mother Luna, Samantha, and the twins—an organigram. Samantha was in the middle of it all. Then I saw a very rare photo of her parents on top of her picture, with question marks on their faces. The insignia of the royal family and the symbol of the Black Claw organization were on each side of them.

Then the photos of my children below my photo with a red marker encircling their faces.

At first, I wasn't sure how to feel about this. I was so confused at first. Enraged. Scared after I saw how Samantha was interconnected with everything, especially the royal family and the Black Claws. But why was her mother connected with the Black Claw organization? Why did Bennett involve her with those dangerous criminals?

Then there was Ethan's photo with a huge X sign on his face. I had a feeling Bennett knew something about what Ethan did to Samantha the day she disappeared. After he witnessed that I successfully took my wife back to Silver Crescent, he assumed that Ethan was already dead.

There was nothing

Did Olivia know anything about what her father was doing?!

I crouched when I heard heavy, careless footsteps coming towards the room. I made a few strides in front of the door, ready to lunge at whoever was coming. My eyes sharpened as my brows went into deep furrows, concentrating on the sound of the clicking of the stranger's shoes on the marble floor. Was it a Black Claw? Olivia? Richard?

My fingers flexed as the muscles on my arms bulged and veins started to appear. Shadows cascaded down my face as I lowered my head down and glared at what was coming.

That's when the wooden door creaked open.

Before I was completely revealed, I lunged myself toward the person on the other side of the door and pushed it violently, sending the bastard to the other side of the hall. The sound of a loud thud of the body echoed everywhere, followed by the sickening crack of bones that I suspect were his ribs. With a roar, I shoved the wooden furniture away, and on the floor was the terrified Richard Bennett, looking at me wide-eyed with both horror and confusion. Both of his hands were shielding his pale, panic-stricken face as he realized the person in front of him. I pinned him against the floor with my claws, threatening to sever his throat open like a butchered pig.

"What the—Alpha Dominic!"

"What are you doing in this kind of place!" I snarled at him, my eyes crimson red in rage, "What are you hiding from me, Richard!? Tell me what's the meaning of those pictures on that f*cking wall!"

He was too flabbergasted to say a single word, so I pulled him off by the collar of his suit and lifted him into the air with one arm.

"Talk. Or I will kill you. Right here, right now." I hissed at him. My deep voice oozing with bloodlust made him swallow hard.

“You can’t kill me, Dominic. You know you can’t!” He grinned at me tauntingly, his hands resting on the side of his head in surrender. I saw the hysteria in his eyes as beads of cold sweat appeared all over his face.

“And what makes you think I will spare you after what I saw in this place?!” I snarled and lifted him higher, making him close his eyes in fear. His body trembled. “I can’t believe you betrayed me, Richard. For so many years I trusted you! I did everything you wanted, you bastard!”

“Because it was the right thing to do!” he yelled back with a quivering voice, “It was the safest choice, Dominic! But you never listened! You still brought that woman back to Silver Crescent despite everyone’s warning! She only brings chaos, Dominic! Silver Crescent will be in huge danger if you keep her here!”

“What do you mean?” I murmured in my most lethal tone as I pulled him closer to me, looking at him dead in the eyes. “Nothing will happen, Richard. Because I will kill every one of those *ssholes before they can even try entering my territory!”

“You don’t understand—“

“Shut your f*cking mouth, you pig!” I hissed, baring my perfect set of sharp teeth on his face, “What you don’t understand here is you’re dead! Who else knows Samantha is related to the royal family!?”

Please, Dominic! Put me down! We can talk about this calmly—”

“Let’s not waste any more time here, Bennett. And do you think I trust, you won’t run away?”

“He laughed awkwardly, “I know even if you let go of me, you will still kill me, Dominic. So why don’t we just calm down and take a seat? I won’t run. We can talk about this.” he said with a pleading face. “Please, Alpha.”

I exhaled angrily through the nose as I lowered him to the floor but didn’t let go of the collar of his suit.

“Now tell me everything, Richard.” My eyes darkened as I spoke. “How long have you been spying here, Richard? Are you working for the Black Claws!?”

Chapter 106
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I had to know what was really going on.

Why was my mother involved with those people? What was her part in what was going on at Silver Crescent? All I knew was that Lena was my mother’s best friend. They’ve always been together, discussing the issues in the pack, and Lena trusted Mom—her judgment and Mom’s advice were always appreciated by Mother Luna of Silver Crescent.

It was as if Mom was a genius or something. I knew little of what she really did. I just remembered she was always on business trips with Lena and the other members of the pack. It was Dad who basically raised me. He used to tell me Mom was an important person in Silver Crescent, and that’s why she was needed all the time, especially in every council meeting before.

And when Mom was home, she never let me in their room. Especially when she and Dad used to fight and yell after every ‘business trip’ she went on before.

I flipped the diary and read page to page but couldn’t find anything that could give me any proof that she was connected with the Black Claws. Maybe Black Claws and the Fang Trinity weren’t related at all? Maybe they were separate organizations with only one goal—to destroy the royal family and rule the continent.

I wasn’t sure, but what I was most concerned about was my mother’s involvement in this. If she knew my father was a direct descendant of the crown, then why was she helping these people who wanted all of us dead?!

“Victoria Davis.”

The name was mentioned in Mom's diary. The woman was her best friend and had been with her on every business trip. The only person who knew my mother very well aside Lena. And since Dominic's mother refused to discuss my mother, I had no choice but to find this woman.

But where!?

I searched and searched the diary. My brow furrowed as I flipped through the pages, and there, at the back of the notebook, was an address below Victoria's name.

"Not too far from here!" Breathlessly, I stood up and carefully placed everything back into the wooden chest, bringing only Mom's diary and a picture of her with the woman she called Victoria. I just prayed she was still a member of the pack and didn't move from the address that was written in the diary!

Her house was on the southern part of the territory, about an hour away from the Pack Manor. Those are rowhouses for the Gamma people of the pack and if I was not mistaken, was one of the oldest villages here in Silver Crescent.

Two One Five. The house number was Two One Five!

"Hello!?" I yelled as soon as I stood in front of the door and knocked several times, making it sound urgent. "Hello!"

No one answered.

I knew someone was in the house. I felt it with my werewolf sense. I wasn't sure if it was a man or a woman, but there was definitely someone in there who had been ignoring me.

"I need to speak to Victoria Davis! Is she here!? This is urgent, please!"

I was starting to feel desperate until I had no choice but to say it. "It's me! Samantha! Daughter of Dianne from Fang Trinity!"

One minute and the door abruptly opened, revealing a woman with long dark hair and a panic-stricken face. My eyes widened when she looked left to right first before she pulled me aggressively inside her house.

“Are you f*cking insane! You can’t yell those words in front of my house!” She hissed at me, her face inches from mine and full of fury, “Are you looking for a death sentence!?”

“Are you Victoria!?” I answered her with a deadly glare. “Are you that person who was mentioned in my mother’s diary?!”

She didn’t answer and turned her back on me with one, angry spin. I saw the panic on her face. The trembling of the fingers of her hands as she tried to stop them. The lines on her forehead and how her face ashen as she saw my face—like she had seen a ghost that had been haunting her day and night.

“You are not supposed to be in here!” she hissed at my face and then shook her head with her face filled with horror, “You shouldn’t have read Dianne’s diary! You are putting yourself and your children’s life in danger!”

“It’s too late for that,” I said, “I have to know what is really happening! I have to know why Mom was involved with such criminals, Victoria! What are you and Mom have been hiding from everyone here!”

“No. This is a mistake! You are not supposed to know!” she was hysterical. Her eyes were so wide as if she was talking to herself. Her hands went to her long, dark hair, pulling it as if she was in pain. “You are not supposed to know!”

“There are people who want me and my children dead, Victoria!” I glared at her, stopping her from walking around me like an agitated dog, and grabbed her hand so she could look straight into my eyes. “I have to know what you and my mother have been working at Fang Trinity! I need to know what had she been doing with them and why she’s being involved with the organization that wants us dead!”

“It’s better if you don’t know—”

I pulled her to me and grabbed her jaw as the orbs of my eyes turned gold. Her eyes widened in terror at what she saw.

“I know that my father is connected to the royal family, Miss Victoria. What I want to know is why my mother is involved with those criminals. Why did she pursue working with them? What made her so desperate!”

She stared at me, not knowing how to answer. Where to start.

“Tell me. Tell me she was only forced to work with them!”

“No. She’s not forced to work with them, Samantha,” she answered with a sad voice as she averted her eyes from me. “She’s not forced or blackmailed to do anything. Dianne volunteered to work with them, child.”

I was petrified at what I heard, baffled at the answer I never expected. “What?”

My hand went loose and she took the opportunity to get away from me as she caressed the part where my hand left a handprint on her arm. The sight made me feel awful but if I didn’t do it, there’s now way she would talk.

“What do you mean she volunteered?” I frowned, feeling so confused and hurt.

Victoria gave me a scared, cautious look and remained far out of my reach as she uttered with remorse in her voice, “Dianne was my friend. She was the brightest in our batch where we used to study and test werewolves who had the potential to become super soldiers. The project was once designed by the current Alpha’s father after he got a threat from a neighboring pack that they would claim Silver Crescent as part of their turf.”

“Then what is my mother’s part in this?” I asked her. “Why her?”

She gave me a side look in the eye before she continued anxiously, “Just like what I told you, your mother is a genius. She helped the Silver Crescent win that war as the Alpha’s advisor and strategist.”

“That doesn’t make sense—”

“And she had to work with the Fang Trinity because of you!”

I looked at her in fret, bewildered at what she said.

She let out an exasperated sigh and then slumped herself on the sofa behind her while I remained standing, gazing at her with a puzzled face. My shoulders drooped as I shook my head slightly in frustration.

“It was too late when your father admitted to your mother that he was one of the King’s sons who ran away to have a more peaceful life away from the throne,” she explained sadly as she stared at her fiddling fingers. “At an early age, you showed first signs that you are indeed a legitimate descendant of the primordials so your mother has no choice but to work with them to know how to seal your powers away from these people not to detect you. Because she knew that another war was brewing. And this time, it wasn’t just the Silver Crescent that was in danger. But the whole continent!”

“Seal what?” I repeated, still couldn’t believe what I was hearing.

“You powers as a Primordial being,” she answered without hesitation but with anger in her eyes. “Your mother had to sacrifice her safety and loyalty to Silver Crescent just to seal that power within you. And the only way you can use it again is the blood of your own blood. The only way to unseal it.”

“And why would I do that?! Why would I unseal it if Mom did her everything to keep it hidden from the enemies?!” I snarled at her.

“Because you don’t know what is coming, child!” her voice started to sound eerie and delusional. “You don’t know the destruction is coming to this pack and your family! And the only key to awaken you power to protect everyone is your children’s blood!”

I was horrified at what I heard. “There’s no way I would let that happen! No one can hurt my children!”

“You have no choice, Samantha!” It’s the only way to stop these evil men!”

“I will think of a way but no one is hurting my twins!” I answered anxiously and then bit my lower lip hard. “I will find another way, Victoria!”

“You have to be quick before it’s too late.” she said with a warning as she glared at me. “This time, no one can save you and your children but you, Samantha. Only you. So make your choice.”

Chapter 107
[DEVON’s Point of View]

“Devon, we have to go!”

“Shhh!”

“Madison must be already in the room!” Diana grabbed me by the arm and forced me to return to the playroom. ‘I don’t want to worry Mom, Devon!”

“Look.” I turned around to face my twin sister, hoping she understood it was important to me. “I am doing this because I need to help Mom, Diana. Do you want to help Mom as well?”

She nodded several times while pouting and then whispered, “But we are not supposed to go running around the manor. Mom told us not to leave the playroom no matter what.”

I smiled at her and held her hand. “I can take you back there, sis.”

“You have to go with me.” she insisted.

I looked back at the guards and I saw one approached them. The rest of the guards turned upset and anxious, though, making me more curious about what was happening. Could there be enemies inside? Was Mom in danger again?!

“Devon!”

I wanted to walk Diana back to the playroom but I had to know. There was something really wrong here. My wolf could sense the distress on those soldiers’ faces as they moved down the second floor of the Manor. Mom never wanted us to roam around the place so we mostly stayed on the second floor where our room was. She always told us we couldn’t play around because this was the place of the Alpha and we had to respect it.

This whole place was so different from what we knew at Moonstone. Mom told us before that Killian was also an Alpha. But he was so far different from Dominic which was confusing. I thought Alphas were cool at first but seeing Dominic almost not sleeping because of work, I guess I don’t want to be an Alpha anymore.

The guards stopped in front of a huge wooden door that was guarded by two more soldiers. There was a strange sign. I squinted my eyes. No. A symbol? Even Diana got curious about the strange smell coming from that dark place that she forgot she was mad at me.

To hide our presence, we decided to communicate through mind links once again. [So are you going back to the playroom now?] I asked her as I saw that curiosity in her eyes.

[We will look for a few minutes and then we go back.] Diana said despite the fear forming in her head as we hid behind a column, wide enough to cover us both. We knew Diana and I were really good at hide and seek. But we never thought we could hide our presence even from the guards of this place. I guess I had something to brag about to Liam again once he had time for visits.

[Sure.] I said with a smirk. My eyes widened when I saw the four guards left. I heard a word from them saying ‘rotation’ but I wasn’t sure what it meant.

[We have to go now and look.] I said to Diana as I held her hand tight. [Make sure to be careful in your steps. I guess it’s dark out there.]

[I think I don't want to go. I can feel there is something wrong down there, Devon.] Diana hesitated but didn't let go of my hand.

[It's okay if you want to go back. I can go alone.]

[As if I would let you.] She annoyingly rolled her eyes on me.

[Okay, then let's go!] I couldn't hide the thrill in my voice as Diana and I took the opportunity to enter the place while the four guards were gone.

Diana was right. It was pitch dark inside.

As we descended the spiraled staircase with our small hands holding tight on the metal rails, I made sure I was holding Diana's other hand as well, not wanting her to trip as we carefully stepped down. I could feel she was nervous. Her breath was trembling and I suddenly felt bad that I had dragged her to this but it was too late to go back now.

[What do you think are they hiding downstairs?] Diana asked her hand squeezing my hand tight.

[I am not sure but I can tell someone is not right. And we need to know.] I told her squeezing her hand back reassuringly. [Don't worry, Diana. We will just look and tell Mom what we found. Perhaps she doesn't know they are hiding a place like this here.]

[Mom knows everything.] Diana answered sternly. [You know that.]

[Yes. But what if she doesn't? We can stop those bad people from hurting and taking Mom again!] I said with a deep frown. [I can't let them hurt Mom again, Diana.]

[I know.] She said with her small voice. [But what can we do? We're just kids!]

[We can warn Mom. That's what we will do.] I smiled at her. [It's okay, Diana. I will protect you.]

She answered me with a smile as well despite being scared. [Okay, Devon. I trust you.]

We walked past a small table with sleeping soldiers. Their table was filled with drinks and food and Diana and I wondered if something happened to them or if they just eaten their full and were too lazy to do their job so they slept.

[Devon look!]

Diana pointed her finger at what was in front of us. At first, it was so dark I hardly see anything. And when I squinted my eyes, I saw there were figures of shadows—No. People. There were people sitting inside those prison cells!

It was a dungeon!

But they were curled into a ball. All looked weak and half naked with bruises and wounds all over them. [Do you think they are bad people? The ones who took Mom?]

[Of course, they are bad! They're in prison!] Diana exclaimed in a fret. [We have to go back!]

[Wait.]

They were weak and cold and hurt. [We can't leave them like this.] I said to my sister. I didn't know why I was doing this but I felt pity for them. [At least we leave them some bread or something.]

[Bread!? We don't have—]

I went straight to the table and took whatever I could from the table where the guards were sleeping soundly. I was so careful not to make any sound as I headed back to Diana.

"This is not a place for kids."

The hairs on my nape rose as a man with a scarred face looked at us with an ugly grin. He had a strange mark on his chest. It looked as if a hand was soaked in paint and printed on the man's chest. He had a bruised face and blackened eye.

"You don't want those guards to wake up," I said as I made a brave face in front of the prisoners who were staring straight at the food in my hand. "I want to ask a question any of you know who did those bad things to our mom."

The scarred face man tilted his face, looking amused and puzzled at the same time. "You're her children. Aren't you?"

"Answer my brother or you will not get any of the food," Diana winced sternly at the man and folded her little arms on her chest.

A growl reverberated in the man's throat but I didn't show any fear. I couldn't let them know I was scared and so was Diana. "We need to know what happened!"

He scoffed but I could tell her was desperate for the food. "It's not us who took your mother, child. A traitor. The man who was trusted to do his job but took your mother away and then disappeared!"

"Who is this person? Who are you? Why do you want to hurt us!?" Diana was the one who questioned the man this time.

"You possess something that our boss wants." The man replied with his eyes on the bread. Me and Diana gasped when he suddenly stretched his arm aggressively to snatch the bread from me but failed. "Give me that food you—"

"You are not making sense," Diana squinted her eyes on the man. "Who took Mom?! What do you mean we possess something that your boss wants?! We are not rich!"

He grinned. "Not money. You blood."

Those words sent goosebumps on me. I felt Diana's horror as well.

"What do you mean your boss needs our blood? What is he going to do with our blood?"

He remained grinning at me with the evil look on his face and the bread fell from my hands. I didn't know but I felt a sudden chill down my spine as I flinched, not taking my eyes away from that terrifying evil face.

Until my back hit something. A button and then a sudden whooshing sound. The prison cell was secured with thick glass walls and I accidentally pushed the button that lifted the glass box surrounding them.

And the scarred man howled with all his might, almost deafening me and Diana.

Chapter 108
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

"You don't understand the situation here, Alpha Dominic! I am helping you!"

I snarl ripped in my throat as I pushed him away, dropping his body on the dusty, marble floor of the old library. I started walking in circles around him like a predator ready for the kill and was aiming to slit his throat if he ever made a wrong move.

He pulled himself and kneeled as he desperately explained, "These people, Dominic! They want your wife and your children! And if you make Samantha and your twins stay in Silver Crescent, they won't think twice about destroying the pack! They destroy everything that comes their way, Alpha Dominic! And Silver Crescent is already on their list because of that woman!"

"Samantha is my wife!" I barked at him, throwing him lethal glares, "And this is not a negotiation, Richard. What you're doing here is atrocious! Spying on me and my family and plotting against us! You just proved yourself as a huge traitor to the pack!"

“So you are just going to throw everything into ashes?!” he screamed at me with rage in his eyes. “You will neglect this place, your people, and forget that you are supposed to protect Silver Crescent as the Alpha!?”

Bastard. “I can’t believe you think so lowly of me as your Alpha, Bennett. How long have I been doing this job!? Did I fail you and the council?! Did I fail to protect my people and take care of everyone for the past decades?!” I was exhaling fire as I stopped in front of him; my fingers flexing in fury as the muscles on my arms tightened, ready to break his f*cking jaw any moment. “The problem here is, you lost your faith in me as your Alpha. Look at you! You look like a trembling chicken kneeling in front of me, Bennett. What happened to the man who trained me before? What happened to you?”

Shame reflected on his eyes as he looked down on his shaking hands.

“You have no idea what is coming to us, Alpha Dominic,” he said with a quivering mouth and terrified eyes. “This is the Fang Trinity! The Black Claws! They will leave nothing at Silver Crescent but ashes and smoke once they decide to raid and attack us. If you can’t take Samantha and her kids, away from here, your people will be in danger!”

My eyes deepened into a deep furrow when I felt something distressing back in the pack manor. I heard the sound of the alarm of danger blaring and my eyes widened with horror, knowing that my twins were there with Samantha.

“You can’t stop this!” Richard Bennett grabbed me by the arm when he saw me looking at the exit of the building, preparing to leave. “You have to think of the pack, Dominic!”

I snarled in his face, “Shut up!” and then headed straight to the highway in my werewolf form, running full speed back to the pack manor.

My wolf could feel it. My twins were in danger!

I let my instinct lead me straight to the gates and saw the sentinels running back and forth in chaos as the alarm continuously blared inside. I was so furious I roared with all my might, making it heard by everyone in every corner of my territory and each of them stopped, petrified to see me standing in front of the gates.

[What the f*ck is happening here!? Where is Liam!? Samantha?! Where is my wife!]

[Alpha!] One of the elders approached me with a horrified look on his face. [The twins!]

It was as if everything just faded into view and I didn't know what the words the elder said. I tracked the scent of my twins and found them leading me to—the dungeon!

The dungeon!

It was as if all the blood on my face drained and my body paralyzed for a second before I moved to a blinding speed and found that the door of the dungeon was locked from the inside! I rammed the door using my huge, werewolf body and destroyed it in my third powerful attempt. With a roar, I went down the dungeon, almost bumping my body violently against the narrow opening of the cavelike underground prison of the pack manor, and was terrified at what I saw.

In front of me were Black Claw men pointing blades at the necks of my twins.

"One wrong move and I will make sure their precious blood will spill on this floor." The scared guy grinned at me while he held Devon by the neck. Diana was held by one of them as well. And her face was smeared with tears as she looked at me with a terrified face. She was crying silently, mouthing the word 'please' on me.

A snarl ripped in my throat, a threat for them to let go of the kids.

“Don’t you ever make a single step, Alpha of the Silver Crescent Pack,” the scarred face warned me as he pointed the knife closer to Devon’s neck. I was so scared I hardly breathe as I watched my son looking at me with frightened, pleading eyes.

[Dominic!] It was Devon’s voice piercing through my head through a mind link and I was surprised he was able to use it already, [Don’t mind me! Save my twin! Save Diana! It’s all my fault! She warned me and I didn’t listen!]

[We will talk about this later.] I snarled at Devon and I saw him more terrified at me than the knife pointed at his neck.

I knew there was no way I could move smoothly and freely inside that cavelike structure. There was a compartment in this dungeon that stored pants and sweatshirts so I shifted back to my human form behind a wall, tall enough to cover me.

The Black Claws weren’t moving when I came out and glared at them. The scarred face was about to lash out but I didn’t waste any moment and moved at a speed only my son, Devon was able to see.

In a split second, I was already on the back of the scarred-faced man and grabbed Devon away from his tight grip. I failed to tone down my strength, though, and my son flew to the other side of the room, slamming his body against the stony walls of the dungeon.

My eyes widened when I saw he lost consciousness but the scarred face grabbed me by the neck and started wringing it, thinking he could break it with his strength. I looked down at him with a cold, deadly glare and then grabbed his neck as I grunted with a smirk, “Good. Let’s see who’s neck will snap first.”

His eyes bulged as I dug my claws on his neck. Blood spurted and he tilted his head backward as his screams echoed all over the dungeon. The one that was holding Diana flinched and loosened his grip on my daughter, giving Diana a chance to run away from him. Before he could grab her, I

was already in front of him, giving him a powerful punch in the face and sending him flying to the other side of the prison.

Diana went to her brother and checked on him. Feathers appeared on the muscles on my jaw as my fist tightened until my knuckles turned white, ready to take them one by one.

To my bafflement, though, many more appeared from the other side of the dungeon, all were uniformed just like my sentinels. I couldn't believe my eyes at first and rage started to consume me after I realized that my pack was already infiltrated by the enemies and had been roaming in my very territory where my wife and children lived!

"Diana! Help your brother to get out of here!" I snarled as I stopped the Black Claws from charging and got to the stairs inside the pack manor. There was no way I would let any of them step into my own house!

I rained punches on each of them, all flew backward with fractured faces. I kicked one and he was flown to the ceiling, making a sickening crack in his spine, and fell on those who were ready to lunge at me. There were so many of them that the muscles in my arms and legs started to ache. But there was no way I would let them get near that door or my children.

Those marks, the way, and their techniques when fighting—

"Go get the children away from here, Alpha!"

From behind me, I saw Liam and his men jump toward the Black Claws, trying to push them back to the exit door of the dungeon. I was so baffled I couldn't move at first but then I remembered Diana and Devon and hurriedly scooped them on my sides and ran upstairs, and straight to the car.

"Dominic—"

"I don't know what both of you did and why you ended up in that dangerous place," I snarled at Devon and Diana sternly, couldn't stop the fear that burst in me. "We will talk about this later with your mom!"

Chapter 109
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I couldn't believe what I was hearing from my mate.

Diana and Devon stood in front of me; both faces were filled with guilt as they fiddled with their fingers and pouted their lips, too embarrassed and ashamed of what they did.

They had already received a good scolding from Dominic before I reached the house. Seeing Dominic standing at the door of the kitchen with his hands propped on the sides, furious and scared, made my stomach tighten.

"Is it true?" I asked mostly about Devon after I found out it was him who initiated this. "Is it true that you dragged Diana into very grave danger? You brought her to the dungeon?"

His eyes were teary when he lifted his face to meet my angry eyes. "I thought I could find the culprit who kidnapped you in that place." Devon's lips quivered as he explained desperately while he fidgeted with the hem of his shirt. "I am so sorry, Dominic, Mom! I thought I was helping!"

Diane was too scared to talk and she just covered her face and cried. Dominic's eyes softened as he saw his little princess and walked towards her with a helpless sigh. He sat on the sofa and put his hands on her shoulder as he asked her to look him in the eyes.

"I'm so sorry," Diana murmured as she sobbed, "We are just trying to help."

"I know." Dominic lifted Diana's tears-smeared face with his finger and gave her a soft but serious gaze—A fatherly gaze. "Your mother and I were so terrified at what you and Devon did. So...will it be okay if you let me and your mom do this kind of thing? Can you trust us to solve this on our own and promise to keep yourselves safe so we can focus on our jobs?"

Devon and Diana lowered their heads again and said in unison, "We're sorry..."

I bent down and embraced both of them with teary eyes, “We are so worried for both of you, Diana, Devon...” I murmured to them and kissed the sides of their head, “Don’t do that ever again...”

Both of them cried on my shoulder as their cries filled the house. Dominic helped me feed and prepare them for bed and went to my bedroom with a worried look and guilt etched on his face. He slumped on the edge of the bed as he dragged his hands down his face.

I saw how terrified he was when he scolded the two and I knew how awful he felt about it. I walked and sat beside him and hoped this unpleasant feeling would ease as I rubbed his back gently.

“I thought I was going to lose that that minute.”

It was the very first time I heard Dominic’s voice tremble and my emotions burst into my heart as I watched him looking so scared and devastated. “I thought... I thought I wouldn’t be able to save them.”

“You did, love,” I murmured to him, cupping his face so he could look into my eyes. “You got there in time. You saved them. You got them out of that dungeon.”

His body was tense. His jaw was stiff, and the muscles on his chest and shoulders bulged as if his face were on his hands. “I don’t know what I would do if something happened to them, Samantha.”

“I’m so sorry I wasn’t there.” I told him, full of guilt as I took away his hands on his face, “It’s all my fault as well. I shouldn’t have left them in the pack manor. I shouldn’t have let my eyes away from them.”

He looked at me, confused and upset, “Where were you, Samantha? I thought we already talked about that you are not leaving the manor without sentinels guarding you?”

I bit my lower lip tight. “I found something... something that brought me back to my past. To who my mother really was, Dominic. I found pieces of

evidence. Of how important she was in Silver Crescent as an advisor to your father and as the head of the former council..."

He looked at me straight in the eyes as he murmured, "Yes. I can remember all of it. And how some of the members of the council hated her, especially Bennett."

I told him how I found my mother's diary. How she was involved in an underground organization of criminals called The Fang Trinity, who wanted to kill the royal family and take over the continent. What role did she play just to hide me from those people after my father admitted to her that he was a direct descendant of the primordial clan, making me a member of the royal clan as well. And the only thing that could make me use this power was through the blood of my blood. Devon and Diana.

"I know you want to protect the pack and our twins badly, love. But I am not sure you can awaken this power without hurting the twins."

"I found something that we can do," I said to him with a little hesitation, knowing that this wouldn't be easy and dangerous as well. "I talked to my mother's former colleague and she told me there was another way to use my power without drawing blood from our babies."

"I don't want you to get into another danger, love. But I understand how much you needed this. So I will help. I won't let you do the work alone."

"This woman, her name is Victoria." I told him and I saw how focused he was on every detail I was saying, making me feel that Dominic was distressed about this: "She told me there is a herb in the Black Forest that I can consume to awaken this spirit sleeping inside me."

"Do you know what it looks like?" he asked me with determination in his eyes. "If this is what you want, love, I will support you with as much as I can."

"Yes. Victoria showed me." I answered with perturbation. "But this could be dangerous—"

“I don’t care how dangerous it is,” he murmured as he landed a soft kiss on my lips with his fingers on my chin. “If this is what you really wish, then we will find this thing.”

Chapter 110
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

“I can go with you.”

“No. You stay here...” I caressed her face and then pushed her hair behind her ear.

Samantha closed her eyes for a second as she savored the feeling of my skin rubbing against her cheek. With an anxious expression, she reached out and grasped my hand while tilting her head to the side. Her eyes sparkled with tears when she lifted her beautiful face to stare deep into my eyes as if begging me not to go.

“You know it’s dangerous out there. Liam barely controlled the situation that happened in the pack manor yesterday. You even had to call Alpha Vance to send more soldiers to stop the Black Claws from escaping the dungeon, Dominic.” Her voice was full of perturbation as she rested her hands on my chest. “There’s no way I would let you go into that forest alone.”

“It will be a lot faster if I go alone, love,” I whispered to her and planted a soft kiss on her pinkish, supple lips. I wanted to kiss her more. I wanted to pin her back into bed and spend the entire day in her arms, but I couldn’t. She was right. Those were dangerous times, and I needed to solve this problem before everything collapsed in front of my eyes.

Liam called me last night that I was needed badly in the meeting today. But I had to do what I promised my mate. I had to find the thing that she needed to protect the twins. She needed to awaken her ability despite the danger that would come after this. But if she thought it would help her keep the twins safe, then I believe Samantha. I believe she was capable of making big decisions for herself, for the twins, and for the Silver Crescent.

She is my Luna. And more importantly, she is my wife.

“You don’t know what is waiting for you there, Dominic! At least let me go with you!” She insisted, gripping my hand as if she didn’t want me to leave the room. “We can look for that herb in the Black Forest. That way, I am sure you could go back home to us!”

I smiled and held her arms, gently—slowly massaging downwards, stopping on her wrists. “It will be much better if you stay here with the kids, love. I need you to focus on them. Make sure they’re safe. You are the only one who can protect them, Samantha. Stay here with Devon and Diana until I go back.”

She stared at me for seconds until her shoulders relaxed and she sighed, “At least keep your phone with you all the time.”

I kissed her lips and smiled, “I will be back in no time. I promise.”

****

I was in my wolf form.

I made sure Liam knew I was after something Samantha needed before I left Silver Crescent and sneaked out of the gates without telling any of the council members where I was heading. As my Beta, Liam assured me he tripled the security around the gates of the turf and around the house where Samantha and the twins were staying. My mom, who was so furious about what happened yesterday, made sure that the prisoners met a horrible punishment after hurting the kids.

Mom could be the gentlest and the most ruthless at the same time.

As I went deeper into the Black Forest, I made sure to sharpen my senses and followed tracks around the eerie dark woods. Samantha wanted me to rummage for the herb in the daytime, but I told her I was needed in the council meetings, so the only time I could spare looking for it was during nighttime when beasts appear in this part of the forest.

Two hours, three, and I didn't see that strange flowering plant that Samantha showed me. The picture of the plant was drawn by unskilled hands; that's why I wasn't very sure if I would pick the right one if I ever found one that looked close to what it looked like in the picture.

I was baffled when I sensed something peculiar underneath the thick dry leaves. As swiftly as I could, I pivoted and somersaulted to avoid the spot. I carefully removed the dead leaf litter and my eyes narrowed at what I saw. It was an unexpected sight in a place like this.

[F*cking bear trap!] I snarled to myself as I looked around the forest. [Who would put such f*cking things like this here!?]

Not too far away, I hear a roar and howling of beasts. I crouched as snarls reverberated in my throat, expecting an attack at any moment. My eyes darted left and right as I heightened my hearing until I heard the strange rustling of leaves and light footsteps coming closer and closer—

It was fast.

Its fangs were aimed at my neck, but I was able to kick the bear-like beast away from me with my hind legs. The kick was so powerful that the ribs of the creature shattered against the old, giant tree and it dropped to the ground, heaving until it whimpered its last breath and died.

The second beast tried to grab me on the back but I swiftly dodged its giant claws and caught its arms with my razor-sharp teeth. I ripped its limb away from its body, making the monster roar in pain as it flinched away from me, its blood sprinkling on the bushes around it, painting the plant crimson red.

The third and the fourth ones surrounded me, spreading their arms and sharp claws as they glared and threatened me with their bare teeth. I answered them with a deadly snarl as I looked back and forth at them.

They started encircling me, waiting for the perfect time to attack. One swung its claws at me as it roared with all its might, its eyes as red as crimson with rage.

Then the one behind me took its chance to lunge at me and moved to ram its huge, heavy body against mine. I barely escaped from it, but a sudden, baffling, sharp pain made me roar in shock as I looked down at the ankle of my left hind leg, almost shattered by the bear trap!

The beast in front of me swung its claws again, and this time, it reached my throat. Fortunately, it wasn't deep enough to rip my throat open. I gagged as I felt the blood gush in my throat when the second beast rammed its claw on my back, puncturing my left lung and sending me lying on the ground, writhing in pain.

[F*ck!] I snarled, feeling a little panic and despair with the situation. I couldn't move. My feet were held by the bear trap, preventing me from lunging towards the beasts. Another surge of sharp, stabbing pain made my eyes widen when the bear-like beast behind me sunk its teeth into my shoulder, almost making my vision blacken for a second.

No. I couldn't let this happen!

As Alpha, I roared with full power, causing chaos in the Black Wood Forest. Trees shook, and the ground quaked. All the beasts surrounding the area felt there was an apex predator in the area and started running away, making the two bear-like beasts in front of me flinch in fear. I glared at them as I slowly stood, glowering at both of them.

With lightning speed, I tore their heads off their shoulders, not giving them any more chance to dodge or run away from me. The chain on the bear trap snapped and blood trickled down my feet as I limped and groaned in pain.

The f*cking trap was made of silver.

I could feel my power draining from the poison, but there was no way I would give it up now. I had to maximize my time and find that herb as soon as I could. The council needed me in the morning, and there was no way I would let Liam face all those upset elders. Like me, he was already working to the point of exhaustion and we couldn't stay like this if we wanted to keep the pack safe from the enemies.

Still limping and in agony from the wounds that weren't healing, I kept searching for the herb all over the forest, believing that if I didn't stop and had faith in the Moon Goddess, she would guide me to it. Before, all I used to believe was myself. I never bowed to anyone. But after taking Samantha and the twins back to my life, all I wanted was for the Goddess to show me some miracle and help me get through all the chaos that was happening in the Silver Crescent.

I gritted my teeth and breathed deeply and slowly.

"There's no way I would go back without that thing." I snarled to myself as I continued the search.

Chapter 111
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

After telling Dominic about everything I found out about my mother, it was my turn to talk to Lena and ask questions about it.

I needed her to explain why she chose to keep it hidden from me.

Lena and my mate's Beta, Liam, went to the house the day after the incident. Dominic hadn't come back from the Black Forest. With worry, I explained to them everything about why Dominic chose to go alone on that perilous search for the herb. The herb that held the key to unlocking my true potential as a direct descendant of the Primordial Clan.

The Mother Luna of the Silver Crescent stayed silent as she sat on one of the sofas in our home, and Liam was looking at her, worried and anxious. I suddenly hesitated if it was a mistake that I told her too soon about this, but despite Lena hiding it from me, she was the only person I trusted aside from my mate. She had been a mother figure to me since I became an orphan and a wonderful mother-in-law to me.

"Have you tried calling him?" Lena asked, pinching her lips with her fingers with worry. "Can you feel him through your bond if he is okay?"

“I tried to call him, but I believe there is no signal where he is right now,” I said to Lena as I pressed the palm of my hand on my forehead upward. “And the feeling of the bond is weak—”

“It must be because he’s in the Black Forest.” Liam interrupted as he saw the worry and panic in my face, “That place is filled with poisonous miasma. It interrupts with the mind link from the inside and outside of that place.”

“Should I go after him?” I asked; my eyes were heavy and worn out after not being able to sleep the whole night. “I shouldn’t have let him go alone.”

“No. It’s too dangerous out there. And Dominic is right. You are needed here. After what happened to the twins yesterday, there’s no way we would let the children go back to the pack manor.”

“But there’s a council meeting today, and I can’t leave them here with the babysitters,” I said, frowning at Liam. “I have to take them with me there. Will that be okay?”

Lena and Liam looked uncertain but understood that keeping my twins with me wherever I went would be safer. Liam straightened his back as he let out a heavy sigh and then smiled coolly, trying to ease the tension in the place. “Sure, Samantha. I believe there is nothing for you to worry about bringing them to the meeting hall. Besides, after what they did, there’s no way we could take our eyes off of them.”

“Yes. Bring them, Samantha,” Lena agreed as she folded her arms into her chest. “It’s time that the council acknowledge your voice in this pack. Liam and I will be with you; make sure the kids are safe and doing well.

I looked at Lena and she averted her eyes from me. The guilt was still there in her eyes, and I didn’t know when we could have time to discuss why she had to hide the truth from me.

Perhaps she wasn’t ready to tell everything yet.

But the question here is... why?

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[COUNCIL MEETING HALL]

Just as Liam and Lena told me, I brought the twins to the council meeting. The instruction Dominic left me was never to leave home. But since Dominic hadn't returned from the Black Forest last night, I had to face the council and the elders as his Luna. Lena was confident I could do the job well despite the hatred I get from these people, especially from Olivia and her father, Richard Bennett.

Even while my children and I walked past the great halls of the building, I could feel their piercing stares at me, the kind that could puncture holes if only they could. When we all arrived in the meeting area, all eyes were on me and my kids with both confusion and hatred. Maybe if I were the same Samantha as before, eight years ago, I would run away from these people. But I was different now. I was not the same weak, helpless child they used to scare before.

With my head held high, I walked with my kids, each on my side, holding my hands. Lena and Liam did the same as they walked behind us with such elegance and power.

"What are you doing here? Where is the Alpha? We are expecting him to come after the infiltration and the incident..." One of the council members looked at my twins as she said the words, "...happened, making the Silver Crescent so vulnerable from the enemies."

"Don't you dare blame my kids for what happened," I scowled at her. "Those who were guarding the dungeon at that time admitted enemies had infiltrated the garrison and pretended to be dungeon guards to release those prisoners!" I snarled, "It's just a curiosity that brought my kids to that place!"

Lena sighed in frustration and Liam averted his eyes, exhausted that the elders and the councils were after me and the kids again. Blaming me for everything awful that was happening to the pack. One of them asked with a distasteful look on his face, "And where were you while that was

happening? You are the mother of these children! As the future heir of the pack, it is your responsibility to be with them and protect them!”

What he said shocked me, leaving me speechless. Devon looked at me with pain on his little face. Even Diana got so scared by the angry tone of their voices that she buried her face in my lap and trembled.

My poor babies... I shouldn’t have brought them here.

“Silence! The matter is not about them!” Lena snarled at the people in front of us with a deadly glare. “What is wrong with you? Blaming a person who has nothing to do with what is happening to Silver Crescent!?”

“Are you sure she is not to blame, Lena?!”

That familiar voice.

Everyone turned their eyes to the one who spoke. My eyes narrowed at Richard Bennett, who was sitting on the other side of the long table. He continued with a dark look on his face; his eyes were still on Mother Luna accusingly. “You know what is happening here, Mother Luna. You know what is going on.”

Everyone got confused and curious about what Bennett said. I had a feeling he had already told his daughter everything as Olivia leaned her back on the chair and folded her arms on her chest with a taunting grin on her face.

“Stop making amusing controversies here, Bennett.” Liam snapped at him sarcastically. “This meeting is about how we are going to get rid of these Black Claw criminals out of our territories. Not to entertain people with gossip.”

Lena and I looked at each other, and I saw how her face turned pale, making the people on the council more suspicious about what Bennett was talking about. I pulled my kids toward me, but I was surprised when Devon broke free and glared at all of them.

“Leave my mother alone!” He snarled as his eyes glinted golden orb. He bared his teeth to them and snarled.

Diana, who saw her brother defending me, ran to his side as well and gave a deadly glare at them. “You are all bad people!” she screamed at them, “She didn’t do anything to any of you! You all are bullies!”

‘Devon, Diana—”

“Maybe you should take your kids away,” one of the elders said flatly as she stood from her seat. “They’re not supposed to be in here.”

“Just like every one of you said, they are the future heirs and heiresses of the Silver Crescent.” I gave her a cold look. “So why don’t we continue this meeting and get done with it?!”

Everyone was silenced as they witnessed how my and my children’s eyes turned into golden orbs—a sign of pure power that made them all tremble in their seats. Even Liam and Lena stared at the three of us with terror in their eyes.

Olivia, Richard, and their followers weren’t thrilled about it, but as their Luna, they couldn’t do anything. I reached for Diana and Devon and squeezed their tensed shoulders, telling them everything was fine and they didn’t have to feel scared because I was there for them regardless of what would happen.

Devon and Diana looked up at me with a brave expression on their faces, and I was surprised. I was so surprised I was raising little warriors who would do anything to defend their mother—who would defend who was important to them. I was grateful because I knew at that moment I was raising them well.

“Thank you,” I whispered to Devona and Diana full of love, and kissed the tops of their heads.

Chapter 112
[DEVON’s Point of View]

I would never let them do this to mommy!

This strange feeling of anger made my body feel unusually warm. No. Hot. I felt as though I was suffering from a fever. It scared me at first. I was scared at what I felt and I was scared of the anger I saw on those people's faces towards us and my mom. But there was no way I would let them get near her. I promised Dominic I would protect Diana and Mom with the best I could. And even though my hands were trembling, I just curled them into fists. I couldn't let them intimidate us. I couldn't let them bully Mom!

It confused me because I had never seen faces with such hatred before.

Diana was on alert as well. Despite our fear, we chose to follow our instinct and watched all of them with cold, deadly stares. We sat on each side of Mom. Both her hands were on our left shoulders as the meeting continued with more hateful words from those old, mean people.

I looked up at Mom's face and realized how strong she was and that she handled everything very well. I admired how she remained calm and cool despite the ridiculous rants these people threw at her.

Granny remained silent the whole time, as well, and I bet Liam was getting impatient with those people with the way he tapped his fingers on his elbow while he folded his arms on his chest. I didn't know what was happening and why Mom was receiving so much hatred from them.

[Stop looking so confused right now. I can see the fear on your face.] Diana made a biting tone as she sneaked a thought into my head, but her eyes remained fully alert to the people in front of us.

She was always like Mom. There were days when she wanted to be treated like a princess, and then there were days when she looked as if she could rip someone's head off using her teeth.

[You know I am trying my hardest here. I just don't understand why they're behaving like that to Mom. Are you not curious why they hate us so much?] I asked as I continued the mind-link conversation with my twin sister.

Could Mom hear our thoughts as well? Should we be careful about it?

Then I remembered how Dominic communicated with me through his mind when we were in that terrifying situation in the dungeon. His thoughts were so dark, scary, and unpleasant to the feelings as he glared at those monsters. It was the first time I felt that kind of terror in my whole life; I was petrified by the deadly thoughts I saw in Dominic's head.

And that's when I realized how grave the situation was.

But then I couldn't blame him. We were in a dangerous situation, which was all my fault, and he had to do everything to save me and my sister. I still felt awful about it, though, and I couldn't forgive myself for what happened. That's when I promised myself to trust Dominic and Mom to work on the adult stuff while I would only focus on protecting my twin sister, just like how they asked me to do.

[We just have to make sure none of them would go near Mom.] Diana said in her serious tone. I could tell Diana was worried, but she was good at hiding her emotions always. It was only when she wanted to be babied by Mom and Dominic that she still acted like a baby.

But we both knew after we got our wolves, we weren't babies anymore. We weren't humans, and we were destined for something much more important, just like what Mom always told us.

*****

After the meeting, Diana and I noticed that Mom was still feeling worried and anxious after Dominic hadn't responded yet to her messages and calls. She was so worried that she kept pacing back and forth in front of the door while holding her phone.

Liam came back and talked to Mom again, saying that there was an emergency, as she was needed by Granny to attend to some pack duties. I saw Mom look at us and was hesitating to go. Mom finally agreed after Liam reassured her that he would stay and watch over both of us while she

was away, and she kissed us on the top of our heads before driving back to the Pack Manor.

“We have to do something,” Diana whispered to me. “At least make Mom happy while she’s waiting for Dominic. And I mean we need to distract her, Devon.”

I frowned, feeling upset with the Alpha for making Mom so restless. “I wonder where he went, though. He hasn’t come back since last night. I heard he went to a forest. What is he doing there, though?”

“You know it’s okay to be curious sometimes, Devon. But remember what Mom told us, right? No, going anywhere unless we tell her.” She pointed her finger at my nose as she scolded me and then rested her hands on her hips with a grimace. “You are not dragging me anywhere again.”

“I know. And I’m sorry, Diana.” I said apologetically, and she just sighed, “You know, sometimes I feel like I can do things now that we have our wolves. But I was wrong. We’re not that strong yet. And that means we have to train to protect Mom always.”

“Yes, I guess we have plenty of time for that,” she shrugged her shoulder as she played with her doll. “But I want to make something for Mom. Shall we ask Madison to teach us how to cook something? Maybe Mom would forgive us for what happened yesterday as well.”

My eyes widened with excitement. “I hope I can be as smart as you, Diana. Because that is a brilliant idea!”

“I know I’m smart,” she smiled smugly and then giggled as she flipped her dark, curly hair behind her shoulders. “I got that from Mom.”

That reaction from her was the reason why I hesitated to compliment her that much.

Liam, on the other hand, stayed outside the house and joined the patrolmen to rove the area, making sure that there were no enemies around. My twin and I took the chance to prove to Mom that we could

help—just not the way I thought we could and make everything turn into a disaster again.

I learn my lesson fast.

Diana and I went to Madison that day and told her we wanted to make that meat pie Mom always loved. I couldn't count how many times Diana cut herself, though. But Madison always knew what to do and reminded us that we were werewolves—we heal incredibly fast but we still needed to be careful. That made me and Diana more confident that we could finish making and preparing food for dinner before Mom came home.

"Miss Samantha will surely love what you made for her." Madison smiled sweetly as Diana and I watched her taste the food we cooked. "These are actually good!"

Diana and I had cuts on our fingers, but seeing Madison approve of what we did made both of us almost cry with happiness. But then my eyes went to the whole kitchen because it was a real disaster.

"We should clean first," I said to Diana, who was already leaning on the table, looking exhausted. "We have to prepare the table before Mom comes home, Diana! Stand up there and help!"

That's when she gave me puppy eyes as she lifted her face to look at me, "But I am super tired right now," she pouted her lips. "I can't move my legs."

"It's okay children. I can—"

"No!" I didn't let Madison finish what she was about to say. "If Diana can't, then I'll do it."

"But Master Devon, you are already tired as well!" She was surprised by the determination in my voice as I began to lift the dirty dishes we used one at a time, bringing them to the sink for washing. She looked worried. "I can do this, and you and Miss Diana can have some rest."

“I can do this, Madison,” I said to her with a confident smile. She was right. I was worn out already, but I could do this. It was my apology for all the trouble I caused Mom and Dominic. It took me almost half an hour to clean, and I could tell Madison and Diana were very proud of me. It brought tears to my eyes, though. But I was a big guy now. I had to take responsibility as well. Liam told me that’s what gentlemen do!

“She’s here!” Diana jumped in excitement as Madison helped me light the candles.

“Surprise!!!”

I saw how Mom’s eyes widened with surprise when she saw the table and the food Diana prepared for her. I looked around and Madison was already gone. Maybe she just left so we could have this moment with Mom?

“You prepared this for me?” With tears in her eyes, she bent down and kissed me and Diana on the cheek. "You did all of this?" she asked, her lips quivering with happiness.

“Madison helped us.” Diana admitted as she looked at me with a huge smile on her face, “But Devon, he did most of the things, including helping with the cleaning.”

Mom looked at me with softness in her eyes, “Thank you, Devon, Diana. I am so speechless!”

“We just want to make you happy, Mom.” We both said and embraced her tight. “Always know that we love you no matter what.”

I didn’t know what happened, but Mom squeezed us both back in a tight hug and cried.

“Thank you...” She whispered and then kissed each of us on the cheek.

Chapter 113
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

Twenty hours since I stepped inside the Black Forest and eight hours after I fought and killed those bear-like beasts and the wounds made by that f*cking bear trap made of silver haven't healed yet. To lessen the pressure on the wound, I decided to morph back into my human form. I noticed that the wound was bone-deep, and I had to take an hour of rest to at least let some tissue regenerate around the femur. I had been walking half-naked around the forest after I tore my shirt and used it to cover the wound.

Blood squelched and spurted as I step my injured leg and I couldn't stop grimacing from it. The excruciating pain shot up to my thigh, causing me to drag my feet while I searched for the herb. I already went to places that were near water sources, but no plants ever looked like how they were described in the drawing Samantha had provided me as a rough reference.

Samantha and Mom must have gone to that meeting, and I felt bad that I couldn't go back yet when I hadn't made any progress with what I was searching for. I promised her I would go back with it, and I would never come back with an empty hand.

It was my chance to prove to Samantha that I would do anything for her. And if it meant I had to risk my life just to prove to her I could do it, then I would fight even the last beast lurking in this g*dd*mned place.

The sun was high and the forest was getting strangely humid. I looked up at the sun and squinted, blinking my eyes fast as the sharp rays almost blinded me. Beads of sweat ran down my face and my already dirt-smeared body, and I grimaced as I lifted my hand to shield my eyes from the glare of afternoon sunlight.

I let out a deep sigh. I was starting to feel hopeless as I dropped my eyes and there—not too far from me—a plant with a purple flower looking almost like a stargazer made my heart skip a beat. At first, I thought I was hallucinating because of the Silver Poison and hunger. But after blinking my eyes several times and confirming it was real, I immediately stood from my seat and stepped closer to it.

It sprouted between giant stones. A tiny flower that was softly blown by the hot gust of wind. I didn't waste any more moments and picked it carefully,

not wanting to damage the petals of the flowers since my mate reminded me that the petals were the most important part of the herb for her to consume.

“I can’t believe you are just hiding here...” I murmured as I stared down at the beautiful flower.

I put it inside a stainless steel container that I brought with me to keep it safe. A small smile tugged on my lips as I realized I finally could go back home and tell Samantha the good news! That the herb did exist, and I found it!

I turned around and was about to leave and go back to my family when I felt multiple presences surrounding me. My eyes narrowed as I placed the stainless steel case in the back pocket of my jeans.

“Now you found the herb, I don’t think we can let you go back to your Luna, Alpha Dominic.” one of them uttered in his rough, baritone voice. A tall man, about five more inches taller than me, long-bearded and with a huge scar across his face. He had ten—no. About twenty men with him surrounded me with silver weapons.

No hand marks painted on them.

They were not Black Claws!

“Who are you! Have you been following me?!” I growled at him, ensuring the plant remained safely in my pocket.

“It doesn’t matter who we are! We want that plant, Alpha of the Silver Crescent. You are not supposed to have that.” He responded with a mocking grin. “Hand it to me and we will spare you life.”

I scoffed, almost wanting to laugh in derision, “There’s no way I would give this to you. You have to kill me first.”

“Then get ready to die!”

The tall bearded guy lunged at me with his fangs, aiming straight for my head. I had no plans to shift to my werewolf form, but I had no choice. The last clothes I brought were ripped when I jumped midair away from the attacking enemy and swallowed the stainless steel case, hoping it wouldn't melt in my stomach.

The enemy's eyes widened at what he witnessed and roared. Good. Just like I told him, he has to kill me first before he gets the g*dd*mned thing.

Five of them attacked me at the same time and I ripped their limbs one by one, making the others flinch in horror. The largest one among them, the bearded one, which I supposed was their leader, watched the way I fought. As if he was trying to analyze my moves, my patterns and my Alpha abilities before he prepared himself to face me.

It was as if those men with him were like pawns to test my strength.

Their styles, their way of fighting, were so different from Black Claws. They displayed a high level of organization. They were much more powerful than those bandit criminals, and I could tell they underwent intensive training because of how tough they were in a fight.

One gash on the back. My right leg was already limping as well, and I could hardly get to my feet. I killed all the bearded guy's minions but that giant, scarred-faced wolf was too strong; I barely scratched his thick, tough body.

It was as if he was a soldier enhanced to execute high-ranking people in a pack.

Like an Alpha.

Could it be that these people were from the Fang Trinity that Samantha told me about? Could they be members of the Fang Trinity, the pack known for producing super soldiers capable of annihilating powerful clans?

It took me a lot of power to just stand and glare at him in the eyes.

I had to fight. I had to go back to my family.

I promised Samantha I would go back. Alive.

Chapter 114
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

Something was wrong.

I could feel it through the bond.

That heavy, strange pain in my chest made me realize my mate was in danger. With my twins' help and their dinner surprise, which I appreciated so much, I forgot this strange feeling I had since arriving home. I made sure to give them all the attention I had while this agonizing perturbation slowly ate my insides.

"Is something wrong, Miss Samantha?" Madison must have noticed the cold sweats beading on my forehead while I helped clean the dishes.

I leaned my hips on the counter and looked at her anxiously, unsure how to tell the kids that I had to leave again and go after Dominic. Madison must have read the situation in my eyes, as she immediately put the plates down on the table and held both of my hands to squeeze them.

"Alpha Dominic will be alright, Miss Samantha," she murmured, not wanting the children to hear how awful it was as she looked into my eyes, trying to lift my spirit. "I am sure he will go back. He won't let anything happen to him knowing there are people who want to harm you and the children."

"I have to make sure," I said nervously to her as I placed my hand on my chest. Fear was like spiders crawling over me, up to my shoulders and the back of my neck. "I need to go and find him in the Black Forest. I have a feeling he's in danger, Madison... It started this noon, distracting me from the meeting; that's why I got home early today. I feel something wrong is happening to him. I have to go."

Madison’s eyes widened in panic. “You can’t go out of the Silver Crescent, Miss Samantha! You know that those Black Claw Criminals want you dead! You can’t leave the children here and put yourself in danger as well!”

I bit my lower lip hard. As much as I hated the truth, Madison was right. There was no guarantee I would leave that forest alive when the Black Claws had been making it their hideout for many weeks since we arrived in Silver Crescent. Then a terrifying thought came to my head. Did Dominic encounter those wild criminals? Was this strange, scary feeling that had been torturing me a warning that his life was in danger as well?

There was no time to hesitate. It was my mate’s life that was at stake!

But what else could I do?

As soon as Liam entered the kitchen and saw the horror on my face, he asked, "What’s happening?"

The smile on his face disappeared as soon as Madison told him about my plan.

“No!” Liam hissed as his brows deepened into a frown, “You know Dominic will kill me if I let you go after him! Do you want me to be diced to death!?”

“Something is happening to him, Liam. We have to go and find him. Bring him back as fast as we can! I could feel through our bond that he was in pain! We can’t just wait here and wait until those criminals kill your Alpha!” I snarled at him as I pressed my hands on my head and smoothed down my hair to my nape, feeling restless.

“You know there’s no way I would let you,” Liam said in his firm voice as he stood straight and narrowed his eyes on me. “I would rather be killed by those Black Claws than face Dominic’s wrath, Samantha! Please have mercy on me.”

“There’s a way, though. But it’s the reason why Dominic went to the Black Forest alone.” I said to them as I slumped myself on the chair and bit the nail of my thumb, hesitating to tell them. But there was no other way. Liam

would never let me go after my husband knowing that I couldn't fight or protect myself from those criminals.

Liam got curious and leaned on the counter close to Madison. I saw my babysitter/cook blush and she averted her eyes from me, embarrassed that I noticed her little admiration for Dominic's Beta.

"No. I can't do this." I murmured, dropping my face on my hands. I couldn't tell them that it required the blood from my twins. There's no way I could hurt my children!

But what should I do? What should I do!?

"We can do it, Mom."

My eyes widened when I heard Devon's little voice with a brave look on his face. His fists were curled tight as he looked at my anxious face. Diana was standing beside him, her eyes full of concern for me, and that's when my eyes went teary.

"Devon—"

"We know, Mom. Diana and I know. I'm sorry, but when you and Devon talked about this ritual thing, I was about to go to your room and apologize again for what I did. I heard and told Diana everything."

"Ritual?" Liam frowned. "What's going on here? Can you explain the situation to me, Samantha?"

I stared at Devon, who didn't falter. Diana held his hand as she looked me in the eyes, and she said in her brave tone, "We want to save and help Dominic as well. We can do it, Mom."

"Diana and I talked about it already. You don't have to worry about hurting us. We are ready. If you need blood, we can give it to you. Madison told us we, as werewolves, heal fast. Like, incredibly fast. So we should be okay. We are not scared, Mom." Devon continued encouraging me as he stepped

forward and stood straight with his shoulders squared like a real warrior. “Let me and Diana help.”

Madison and Liam looked at the three of us, confused at what was happening. As I stared into my son’s face, I knew I had to do it. Dominic told me he would do anything just so as not to hurt the kids. But with Devon and Diana stepping up like real brave werewolves in front of me, I knew I was raising powerful leaders one day.

“Are you sure about this?” I asked Devon and Diana one more time. My chest was heavy. But I knew Devon and Diana were worried about Dominic as well.

They gave me a brave nod.

I looked at Liam and Madison with a new determination my children gave me and uttered, “I might need both of your help.”

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Madison and Liam were left speechless after I told them everything.

“I have instructions that I need both of you to follow strictly,” I said to them as I took a knife from the kitchen. My heart was wrenched when I saw Devon and Diana swallowing hard. They were scared. I saw it in their eyes. But it was admirable for my babies to volunteer just to save their father in danger.

They haven’t even known yet that Dominic was their biological father, and they already love him dearly.

“What should we do then?” Liam asked, looking nervous as we all sat in the middle of the living area. “I have no idea what is going on but I want to help if it means we can find and take Dominic back to Silver Crescent.”

My eyes went to Liam as I handed him the knife. My throat tightened as I looked at my kids again and then back to Beta as I gave him the instruction. “I need you to help the kids and extract blood from them.

Liam's eyes widened. Even Madison gasped and panicked at what I said. "What do you mean, Samantha?! You want me to cut them?!"

"It's the only way," Devon said to Liam.

"I can't do—"

"Liam, please! We don't have much time!" I yelled at him as tears rolled down my face. "Just like what Devon said, this is the only way!"

There was horror on Liam's pale face as he walked towards Devon and Diana. I couldn't bear to look, so I went to Madison and instructed her to draw the pattern on my back using my twin's blood.

I closed my eyes tight as I heard Diana and Devon's whimper of pain.

When Liam came to me holding the bowl of blood, his face was still and so upset that he glared at me. "I don't know what's going on, Samantha. But I hope their sacrifice makes this work," he said with a grave voice.

"Please take the children to their room and go stay with them." I pleaded with Liam. "I need to be alone with Madison once this ritual is finished."

Madison's finger was trembling as she drew the pattern on my back. I felt her finger trace the lines. She traced the lines slowly and carefully, following my instructions. And as the patterns slowly completed, I felt that warm feeling gradually building up from deep in my core, and the blood of Devon and Diana burst into dazzling golden light, which made Madison yelp in fear and quickly run away from me.

There was a whisper of someone in my ears... words I couldn't understand. They were so ancient that they sent chills down my spine.

When I opened my eyes, my ocean-blue irises turned into bright, liquid gold.

Chapter 115
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

As much as I tried to conserve my strength, the poison in my wound depleted my power after a nonstop fight I was having with this giant, scar-faced werewolf in front of me.

[You are not going anywhere. You will die here, Alpha of the Silver Crescent!] He snarled at me.

Despite my fatal injuries from his minions, the bear-like beasts, and the silver bear trap, I still managed to stand and fight the bastard.

He dealt a deep gash on his back, a new, ugly wound across his face that I made sure would scar him for life. He was limping after I broke his left rib and his right hind leg. But this one was tougher than I had imagined. If he were an ordinary Gamma, he would have already died from the wound on his back. But I could tell he wasn't just an ordinary wolf. Something was wrong with him—enhanced or drugged? I wasn't sure, but he was definitely not a normal wolf.

[Can't able to move now, Alpha?] he laughed in his raspy voice as he encircled me, even when he was already limping. [Don't tell me you are dying on me now. I am not satisfied yet! I need to see you begging for your life!]

The herb. I need to take it back to my wife.

I grunted in pain as I attempted to stand up and still fight. I had to finish this fight and go home to my family. Samantha was waiting for me. Devona and Diana—I couldn't make my twins worry. The case where the herb was was still in my stomach and I was starting to feel uncomfortable with it as I glared at the scarred-face guy. I couldn't waste any more time. I had to finish him. Now.

The problem was, I couldn't move. I was almost at my limit. And the only thing on my mind right now was to run and secure the herb. Make sure I could make it at least inside the gates. But seeing my enemy, I knew he

would do everything in his power to keep me from leaving this place alive. I had to think. I had to know how I could escape this.

It was very unfortunate that my body couldn't heal itself because of the poison. It was as if these bastards had sent me those beasts and the trap before deciding to face me themselves. They had thought this. They knew I would come.

They didn't take the herb because they expected I would come for this. They used it as bait to corner me. To make sure I would never come back again to Silver Crescent!

[What are you waiting for?] I snarled at him as I winced from the pain. I managed to get up but my body was trembling with exhaustion as the poison slowly depleted the remaining strength in me. [Why don't you come here and let's f*cking see who would get out of this g*dd*mned forest first?!]

He grinned mockingly as he stopped from walking around me like a f*cking hyena. [I like that look on your face, Alpha of the Silver Crescent. I like seeing that desperation and fear as you beg for your life.]

[No one is begging here, f*ck face.] I spat at him as I steadied my knees and ignored the excruciating pain of the poisoned wound on my leg. [If there is someone who is going to beg here, I will make sure it's you.]

He attacked me at full speed. My whole body tensed as I avoided his fangs and claws, trying to surpass his speed despite all of my injuries. I felt oxygen slowly burn my lungs as I breathed fast and deep. My shoulders and thighs sent shooting pain that almost made me want to scream in agony. I was one of the strongest Alphas on this continent.

I won many fights for decades as the leader of my pack. But this person, this dickhead—he's something that makes me worried the most. If he was some product of an experiment just like what Samantha had told me before, the super soldiers that her mother used to study—then this continent and the royal family would be in danger.

All I could do was evade his razor-sharp claws and look for any chance for me to get away as he burned all his strength with his speed. To my dismay, it was as if he was never drained of energy, and my eyes were slowly blurring until one wrong step and I stumbled on top of a boulder, losing my balance.

With one quick slash of his claws, he had reached and lacerated my chest before I stumbled down the boulder and fell flat on the rocky ground. My ears rang; my head was spinning, and the adrenaline in me made my heart beat so fast that I wanted to puke.

[You think you can outsmart me by thinking you can exhaust me with your little trick?] he snickered as he stood in front of me; his eyes were dark with a dead look in them as he glared at me through his nose [Like I told you, you will never get away from this place alive. So prepare yourself and say your prayers, Alpha Dominic. I will make sure your cold, lifeless body will come back to your pack and your family to mourn.]

He was right. I had nothing left.

But as despair started to gnaw inside me, I felt a strange warmth in my chest that brought light into my eyes as they widened with surprise. It was coming straight in my direction, swift and terrifying. And I knew, from this feeling through the bond, it was my mate who was coming. She was approaching swiftly and powerfully like a storm preparing to unleash her fury upon this forest.

It was my turn to snicker despite the pain. [Prepare yourself because you will die here.]

[Don’t make me laugh—]

Before he could finish his sentence, something like a ball of thunder came and slashed the side of his face, making the scar-faced werewolf scream in both shock and agony. My vision was blurred, but I stood up and collected every ounce of strength left in me as I crouched and roared. There, on top of the boulder on the other side of the river, stood my wife—her red-goldish

fur was glowing like celestial fire as she stared at me with her eyes that were now liquid gold.

She was beautiful and terrifying at the same time...

[What the—] The enemy growled as he gazed at my wife, his eyes widening with the same terror I felt. He was so dreaded that he didn't notice I was behind him.

And it was all I needed to give him to sentence him to his end.

As swiftly as I could, I grabbed the back of his neck with my long, razor-sharp teeth. I didn't give him the chance to struggle or break free and snapped his neck. I was so consumed with wrath that I didn't let it finish like that. I tore his head from his shoulder, spitting his head toward the river, and let the waters drift his head away, never to be seen again.

[Dominic!]

I dropped to the ground, gasping for breath as I weakly lifted my head to look at my wife's beautiful face. If I didn't feel her nuzzle me gently, I would think it was the poison that was making me see things. But she was real. Samantha came here for me—to save me. She knew I was in danger and came here despite the threats of the forest.

[You shouldn't have come here.] I murmured to her, smiling deliriously.

[If I didn't come, you are surely dead by now.] She said with teary eyes as she licked the side of my face.

The feeling of her body against me gave me a sense of relief, knowing that my wife was here and I was alive. I could go back to pack and see my twins. [What happened? You look—you have your wolf!]

[Yes, I do, my love.] She smiled as she sat beside me with love in her eyes. [Devon and Diana helped me. They knew and felt you were in grave danger, just like I did, so they volunteered bravely. Liam and Madison were there to help us and to take care of them after I left. We did the ritual,

Dominic. That's why I was able to come here as fast as I could. Devon and Diana are so brave. We are raising brave and powerful leaders for Silver Crescent.]

[Yes, they are. You are their mom.] I murmured to her and then remembered something. [I have the herb with me. But I had to swallow the capsule so those bastards can't get it. I just have to vomit it out.]

She was surprised and laughed at the idea and I couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed about it. [Don't be so cruel to me now. I almost died.] I chuckled.

[Let's go home.] She whispered and then chuckled once more teasingly.

Chapter 116
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I was so terrified.

My whole body was trembling with fear, but I managed to hide it from Dominic. I wasn't afraid of the werewolf that my husband had just defeated, but rather I was nervous that if I had arrived a little later than I did, I would never have seen him alive again.

"Alpha Dominic!"

It was one of the Gamma sentinels who saw us as we arrived at the gates. Everyone went into a panic after they saw that their Alpha could hardly walk after fighting with mysterious men in the Black Forest. All of them were confused and curious about how and why we got there, but no one questioned me. They immediately sent their Alpha straight to the infirmary, where the High Healers of the pack took care of him right away.

Lena rushed towards me as soon as we arrived at the Pack Manor. She must have seen her son's condition when the ambulance arrived. "What happened here, Samantha? I heard that you and Dominic went to the Black Forest! What the hell are you doing in that dangerous place?!"

I explained to Lena everything. About the herb, the ritual—she was so shocked she wasn't able to speak for the whole explanation I did and just stared at me, wide-eyed with dread.

"Tell me never to do it again, Samantha!" Lena stepped closer to me and hissed with a warning in her eyes. The very first time I saw her, she was aggressive with me, and I was baffled for a bit. "Tell me you are not risking your family's life just to prove something!"

That made me furious. "I am not proving anything to anyone, Lena! This is who I am! This is what my father and mother want for me! To realize my real strength! To use it to protect the people I love! I can't let those criminals harm me or my twins! If it means I can show them my real power, then I will. I will fight and kill if I have to!"

"You don't know what you are doing—"

"Oh, Lena, believe me, I do!" I said to her with a viciousness I never intended, and I saw the surprise in her eyes. "I am not just going to stay here and stand and watch those people hurt my family. I will not just listen and wait for what these council and elders will tell me. I have had enough of following their rules! My family is more important than anyone. More than this pack! And you can't change your mind about it, Lena. I have already decided, and it's time for me to choose what is best for me and my family!"

I didn't let Lena talk back again and left. I felt awful because I knew she was only scared and she cared a lot about me, Dominic, and the twins, but I had enough of her not telling her side of the story about my mother. It was as if she was hiding a critical detail from me, and I couldn't help but feel anxious and furious about it.

"Samantha, wait—"

I turned around and saw Liam. Everyone in the pack house, particularly the Gamma sentinels and the healers, was in a hurry. After witnessing what happened to Dominic, everybody was in a state of agitation as they all waited for the healers to tell Dominic's condition.

I could tell from the side glances of the council members at the main hall that most of them were blaming me for what happened. Again. It was as if I was becoming taboo in their pack, and I didn't know how long I could take it. But for Dominic, I would stretch my patience.

"What's wrong, Liam? Where are the kids? I told you not to leave them." My face turned pale as soon as he approached me and my mind was filled with perturbation; I automatically wanted to go home and check for them.

"No, they're all safe. They are with Madison and Cynthia and they are staying at my house—"

I was aghast. "You what?!" I asked with a deep frown.

"Look, I need you to come with me. Lena went to Dominic. But you, I need you to solve this problem. And I mean, this is really urgent, Samantha."

I didn't know what Liam was talking about, but I could see the gravity of the situation in his pale face. It was rare to see Liam looking disconcerted over pack problems and I was sure this was beyond his ability to make decisions on this matter.

As Liam led me straight to the infirmary, I immediately knew what he meant about this kind of emergency.

"Liam—"

My eyes widened when I turned around and we saw Dominic approaching us. He was limping, and his left arm was in a sling. Liam immediately helped him get to me, and I couldn't help but stare at my husband, who gazed into my eyes as if telling me he could do it—that he could still work despite all his injuries and condition.

"You have to go back and at least wait until you are fully rested and healed!" I said to him, full of worry, " You can't work like this, Dominic. You are still injured, and the poison hasn't left your body yet."

I was surprised when he landed a quick kiss on my lips. Liam blinked. “I can do it. I can stay and still manage everything. I am healing so there’s nothing to worry about. This matter is more important,” my mate said in a grave tone. He turned to Liam, “What is the situation here?”

Liam explained to us how the poison inside the bodies of the infected Gamma Patrolmen and soldiers was starting to deteriorate their minds, and the healers couldn’t develop the right antidote for them.

“Maybe we can use the herb,” I murmured to Dominic, and he looked me straight in the eyes as if I had said the most brilliant idea. “We can have the healers test it and see if it would work in the soldiers. I can give it to them.” I said with a smile, having a huge hope that this could help with the problem. “And Liam, please check on Diana and Devon for me.”

“I’ll stay here and wait for the result,” Dominic grunted and slowly sat on the sofa near him.

I nodded at my husband, and Liam patted him on the shoulder. He gave me a short nod before he went. He knew he was the only person I trusted with Devon and Diana. I rushed inside the lab and explained the herb to the healers. Luckily, they considered extracting the herb and testing it on the soldiers, telling me we had to wait for another three hours to see if the experiment worked.

When I went back to check on Dominic, I was shocked to see Olivia was already there embracing him.

Even though I couldn’t hear much of what they were saying, Olivia’s expression—her puppy eyes and her pouting lips—made it clear to me that she was trying to win my husband’s sympathy.

I expected Dominic to shove her away. Dominic didn’t snarl at her or tell her to go back to Richard Bennett, as I had expected. Maybe because there were other council members around them? There was a pinch of worry in my chest as I approached Olivia and my husband. Her eyes immediately threw daggers toward me as I glared at her coldly.

“What’s happening here?” I asked as I looked at Olivia’s face with distaste. “You are not supposed to be in here, Olivia. What do you need from my husband?”

“Samantha—”

Olivia cut him off. “I heard you put Dominic’s life in danger! How could you put the Silver Pack’s Alpha’s life at risk, Samantha!? The council finds this unacceptable!”

“Shut up, Olivia. You don’t know anything about what is happening here.” I spat at her. “Everything is under control and you are not to question me and Dominic’s decision.”

“You are not a fully pledged Luna yet so don’t you dare threaten me,“ she hissed at me and then glared and held Dominic’s arm. “Look at how she treats me, Dominic! Are you not going to say something!? I am just trying to help!”

“Olivia, I know your intention is good, but Samantha is right.” Dominic tried to remove his arm from Olivia but she refused to go. I was so furious that I took Dominic’s injured arm and I heard him grunt but didn’t complain. He looked so troubled as Olivia and I exchanged deadly glares at each other.

“Let go of my husband, Olivia.” I snarled at her. “Have shame on yourself!”

“I am not letting go of him. You will lead him to his death!” Olivia snarled back, provoking me more.

Chapter 117
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Why don’t you tell us what really happened, Samantha? Where did you drag the Alpha and he came here almost half-dead?!” asked one of the council members, baring his teeth at me. “What is really going on here?”

I ignored him and hissed at Olivia once again, my fists tightened, wanting to feel the skin off her face, “If you still love your life, Olivia, you take your hands off my husband.”

Three seconds passed while Olivia and I exchanged glares; Dominic finally moved and awkwardly took Olivia’s hand away from him. There was malice on Olivia’s face as she flinched from me and Dominic as she scoffed, looking so insulted that my husband didn’t choose her this time.

Then she gave me that evil grin as she lifted her face and looked at me arrogantly in the eyes. She uttered tauntingly, “You think you can hide everything from me, Samantha? Do you think I don’t know what’s happening here?”

I was stunned at what she said for a second, but I couldn’t let the council people see me looking disconcerted. “I have no idea what you are talking about, Olivia. Just go and do something useful. Not just poking around seducing someone’s husband.”

Everyone’s eyes widened in shock at the sharpness of my words, and Dominic held my hand, wanting me to ignore Olivia and leave the infirmary. “Come on, Samantha. This is not the time to do this—”

“No.” Olivia folded her arms on her chest as she gave me a sassy, superior look. “Let her talk. Do you think I am afraid of you, Samantha?” she scoffed and then tilted her head at me in a mocking grin, “You are a deserter to the pack and no matter what you do, nothing can change that.” She stepped closer to me and hissed, loud enough for me to hear, "Do you think I don’t know what secrets you are hiding about your kids?"

My eyes burned liquid gold as my body reacted to what she said, but Dominic was fast. He pushed me away from Olivia before my hands could even reach her and shatter her pretty face on the floor.

She giggled tauntingly before she left with the other council members. Aggravated, I pushed Dominic’s hand away from me and exhaled in exasperation, thankful that at least I had controlled myself. I never wanted

to show any violence in front of the council, no matter how much I wanted to give Olivia one smack on the face.

“Don’t start here, Samantha... you know the council is not happy with what is going on and I don’t want them to think you are the problem here because you are not. They have no idea...” Dominic whispered to me, putting some sense in my head. “Don’t mind whatever she is saying. I doubt Richard wants to drag his daughter to the dark side of what is really happening here so don’t fall for any threat or blackmail she’s setting up on you. She’s not worth it.”

I bit my lower lip hard as I inhaled sharply and looked at him in the eyes. “I am scared of what she knows about the kids, Dominic. If I have to—”

Dominic pulled me into an embrace as he buried my face in his chest, “Sshh... I will take care of this. Trust me.”

*****

Despite my husband’s reassurance about keeping Olivia away from me and the kids, my mind couldn’t rest from the fact that she knew something about my family’s secret—that my kids were not just regular werewolves, but rather descendants of the Royal Clan. I had a feeling Richard Bennett had been telling his daughter everything he learned about me and my family. I had a feeling Olivia knew everything and what she did—it was a threat that she could use it all against me.

“Where are you going, Miss Samantha?” Cynthia asked after she saw me snatch my hoodie and then went straight to the doors.

“I won’t be long, Cynthia. Make sure that you and Madison stay with the kids while I’m gone. I just need to go somewhere.” I smiled and then closed the door behind me.

I knew where to find her. I made sure to know her schedule this entire week when I went to pack manor and searched for her appointments and schedules. This time of the day, she had an appointment with someone she didn’t name. I found it suspicious, though, because the area was one of the

poorest places in Silver Crescent and Olivia would never go there unless it was very important.

I needed to know what kind of people she was going to meet. There was no way any of the council members would meet with her in those dangerous alleys. I had a feeling Olivia had dirty secrets I needed to unveil in case she was plotting something against me.

And my instinct was right.

I hid behind one of the buildings that overlooked Olivia and the people she was about to meet. I did everything to hide my presence as I waited for what would happen next. And I was right again. Those men who approached her were not from Silver Crescent. I sensed a dark aura on them. They evoked a sense of danger, just like the one Dominic had killed in the Black Forest.

They handed her something. An envelope. I saw how pleased Olivia was when she took the thing and then gestured for them to disappear. Like, she was so terrified to be seen with those men.

I had to know what she was up to.

*****

“Love.”

I turned and saw Dominic standing on the doorway of our room with a worried look on his face. I didn’t know how long I was spacing out while brushing my long hair. Had he been calling my name? I wasn’t sure. My head was so distracted by the scene I saw in that alley with Olivia and those suspicious men. I had been feeling so distressed since I came home and helped prepare the kids’ supper.

He closed the gap between us and embraced me from behind. I felt his lips touch the back of my neck, so gently it tickled me. “What’s wrong? Are you still thinking about what Olivia told you?”

“No.” A Lie. “I just went back to the infirmary to check if the antidote is ready. The healers told me they need more time.”

Dominic sighed, held my shoulders, turned me around to face him, and kissed my lips gently. “No one can harm you and the kids, love. I will protect you with my life. Nothing is more important for me than you and the twins’ safety.”

I gazed into his eyes, trusting him completely that everything would be fine, but his words couldn’t ease the anxiety in me. My mind wanders to the envelope that Olivia received from those strangers. And even while Dominic was embracing me tight, hoping to distract my mind from everything that had been bothering me since we came back from the Black Forest, I just couldn’t hide the fear in me.

I had to know what was in that f*cking envelope.

Chapter 118
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I shouldn’t be here.

I shouldn’t have followed her here, but my instincts and my wolf told me there was something wrong, and I needed to check for the safety of my kids. For the safety of the pack. Olivia was definitely planning something against the pack and me. Something much more dangerous than her father was hiding from me and Dominic, and there was no way I would let it slip when I was already gathering evidence for the council that she was a huge traitor to Silver Crescent. Just like Ethan and Richard Bennett!

It wasn’t difficult to track them. Fifteen men had been following her to a secluded place—an abandoned building on the west side of the gates of Silver Crescent. The old structure was a former council hall that was scheduled to be demolished this month.

Those men were the same people she had been transacting with since I decided to watch her every move and spied on her. They had given her

money in exchange for whatever was in the envelopes she had been handing over. Was it information? Photos? Was she selling pieces of information, plans, and strategies—selling the Silver Crescent to the enemies?

Olivia was wicked enough to do such things, and if she could lie and deceive the council with little pretty smiles and phony kindness, she couldn't do that to me.

I could see through her by just looking at her wicked grin. She couldn't hide her horns from me.

As she and the bunch of men walked to the building, I noticed five men were waiting for them. They all wore the same black outfit, giving off caution and wariness. I could feel the tension between the two groups, and I realized these must be the same men who attacked the eastern gates of Silver Crescent after seeing those grenade-like weapons on wooden crates—apparently the smoke poison they used on the patrolmen and sentinels.

I frowned. Was Olivia buying weapons from them?! For what?

For me?

I thought Richard Bennett was the worst. But I couldn't believe his daughter was more evil than her father!

"We have been waiting for over an hour!" snapped one of the men standing in front of the dilapidated building. "How dare you make me wait!"

"Stop ranting now, old man. At least I am here! I told you I can't just leave the council and take the risk of anyone following me," she grimaced and then raised an eyebrow at me. "Do you have it? The weapons?!"

"Just as you requested!" He yelled back and then showed her the crates his minions pushed forward for her to see.

My heart almost stopped when I saw the bombs of smoke poisons. Hundreds were put in crates, and just thinking they would be used on the Silver Crescent people would kill many. It would be too late for Dominic and me to save the pack.

I had to do something. I had to stop this!

“Now...”

I paused when I heard Olivia say the words.

To my horror, two men suddenly jumped behind me. They were too fast; they had pinned me already on the ground before I could jump away from them. They had me by both my arm and shoulder as they pressed the side of my face on the dusty floor of the building. I used my awakened strength, but four more wolves came and pinned my body and my legs, making sure there was no way for me to escape. My eyes widened in panic. They knew! They knew I already had my wolf and was strong enough to take two at the same time so they sent more!

“Look who is here.”

I tried to look up, but I was only able to see Olivia’s black boots as they pushed my face harder against the ground, making me grunt. “What are you doing with all these men, Olivia!? What are you planning against Silver Crescent!?”

She sniggered and then stepped to the side so I could be able to see her face. There was something crazy about her looks that made my stomach tighten.

“You are not supposed to be in here, Samantha. But let me tell you this. Good thing you came because I am exhausted of you spying around me all day like a curious kitten. And look what happened. You made me do it.” She gave me a taunting smile, then walked away with disdain as she uttered, “Kill her!”

My vision almost blurred when I felt that powerful kick on my stomach. Another one kicked me in the face and I almost passed out. They pulled me from the ground and a hit on the stomach knocked the air out of my lungs. A moan of agony escaped from my throat as they hurled me away and my body landed and rolled on the cemented floor of the building.

I coughed and tasted something metallic in my mouth.

“You shouldn’t have involved yourself in the issue of Silver Crescent, Samantha. Your life was better in the Moonstone Pack! But what did you do?” Olivia’s eyes were wide with calm rage. And then her eyes darkened as she bared her teeth at me. “You think you can get away after you took everything from me, Samantha?! After you take Dominic away from me!?”

I laughed dryly as I tried to get up from the floor. My jaw and stomach were so painful I could barely stand up without grimacing. “Don’t make me laugh, Olivia. I am the wife. The one he married. And who are you? Did he mark you after I left the pack? No! Because you are not worthy of him. You will never be!”

She raised her hand and was about to slap me on the face, but I grabbed her wrist, and her eyes widened.

“I won’t let you or any of your minions hurt me or my kids,” I snarled at her as my eyes turned liquid gold. In an instant, I transformed into my werewolf form, nearly severing Olivia in half if she hadn’t reacted quickly enough to roll away from me. Those men also shifted to their werewolf forms and started attacking me, aiming for my back, neck, and legs.

However, I gracefully dodged all of their attacks, delivering lethal strikes in the process. I got two on the neck, ripping large chunks of flesh from them. I ripped a leg off three of them, and I had a torn belly on the other four.

My shoulder was bleeding when I stepped forward and saw how Olivia’s face turned paper white as she watched how I fought those men. She has never seen my wolf before. And now she did, I wouldn’t let her get out of this place alive. Even with my strength, these powerful werewolves could

par with the strength of a Beta and my vision had started to go blurry with exhaustion when I had defeated nine of them.

She screamed in terror as she pointed at me. “Kill that b*tch! Kill her now!”

The remaining six started running towards me and shifted to their werewolf form mid-air. I could barely see them through blurry vision, but there was a shadow—and then a silvery thing that leaped above my head and dived headfirst into the one in front of him. The bleeding was bad, and I realized the dizziness was from the silver poisoning. I realized too late that they had weaponized their claws with silver blades.

[Don’t move, love. I’ll take care of this!]

It was my husband’s voice in my head, communicating through our bond link.

Olivia was petrified when she realized who it was who attacked her minions.

One by one they were ripped into pieces until those people who had the crates of poisons ran away in fear, leaving the weapons.

“Dominic let me explain—”

Dominic answered with a roar and Olivia trembled in horror. She fell on her knees with her eyes staring wide at Dominic. Her face was drenched with tears. My heart skipped a beat when I saw Dominic’s face soften for a second. But then he gave her another lethal look, and Olivia, to her dread, scrambled and ran away, screaming in both anger and fear.

That’s when my knees gave up and I fell sideways, panting.

[Love...]

[How did you find me?] I asked as I looked into his eyes full of worry.

[I felt you're in danger and tracked you using the bond link] he explained as he nudged me with his muzzle and licked the recently healed wound on my face. [You shouldn't have gone here alone, love. I was so scared you almost gave me a heart attack.]

[Olivia, she's planning to—]

[I know. Liam had been investigating her activities recently, my love.] he answered with softness in his eyes. [I noticed you had been following her the whole time so I sent someone to investigate what was happening. I am just happy I got here in time. I have to bring you to the infirmary.]

Gamma soldiers came not too long ago and gave us both clothing as we shifted back to our human form. Dominic embraced me as soon as he saw I was already dressed and kissed me on the forehead. "Don't do that again, my love."

I didn't know why but I felt uneasy when he embraced me tight. The way his eyes softened after he saw Olivia was something I couldn't forget. I love Dominic with all my heart.

But why was it so hard to forgive him?

Chapter 119
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I almost died yesterday.

The horror of yesterday's battle haunted me, especially after I discovered Olivia was plotting something evil against the pack. If Dominic hadn't come to help me, I would have died there already. I was reckless, and I shouldn't have gone there alone.

But knowing that Olivia was after me and the kids, there was no way I would let her have the chance to make whatever plans she had. I would give my life just to make sure the kids were safe. Even if it meant killing her in the process, I would do it.

I didn't care what the council or the whole pack would think about it. My children's safety would come first, and I would make sure of it.

While in my office at the pack manor, the restlessness brought me back to checking and rereading my mother's diary. I didn't notice the time and I had already spent an hour finding any information I could use until I noticed something on the last page.

A symbol.

It was a circle with a picture of fire in the middle. Around the circle were two red snakes intertwined and meeting on the top, facing each other. They have golden hexagon eyes and writings I couldn't understand.

"I have a feeling I had seen this somewhere..." I whispered to myself as I looked closer at the picture, studying every angle of it while tilting the diary, hoping it could provide me with additional information about the drawing.

But then I remembered and my eyes widened.

The crates! Those crates of poison bombs! They have that symbol!

I flipped the pages and looked for more information about what that symbol meant and what organization it was from, but there was no further statement. I looked around the room, feeling so frustrated. I hated that my mother wrote something weird in her d*mned notebook without leaving more explanation of what it was about!

"How am I supposed to connect all of this!" I shook my head and massaged my forehead. I threw the diary on the table and propped my hands on the edge of the desk, feeling so lost and scared. I didn't know what was happening anymore. The Black Claws, the Trinity Fang, Richard Bennett, and his bitchy daughter, who was planning a mass murder in Silver Crescent, and Lena not telling me everything she knew behind all of this. It was too much for me—too much to handle for a woman who only wanted was to live a peaceful life with her mate and her twins.

"What's wrong?"

I turned around and saw my husband entering the room. There was worry on his face as he unbuttoned the top of his shirt and approached me with a soft kiss on the lips. “How are you feeling? You are not supposed to be working yet. You should be home, taking some rest after what happened.”

“Liam and Madison are guarding the twins,” I said to him in a weak voice and slumped on the couch while massaging my temples. “I can’t stay at home when there is so much to do, Dominic. Have you learned what Olivia wanted to do with those bombs? Will there be a trial?”

His brows deepened and he averted his eyes as he explained, “There’s no trial, Samantha.”

I stood up and couldn’t believe what I had heard. “There’s no what!?”

“Olivia. There is not enough evidence that she was buying those bombs.”

I snarled at him, baring my teeth in complete anger, “What are you talking about!? I f*cking heard her! I saw her with those men trying to negotiate with them! How dare the council say there is not enough evidence!? What is happening here, Dominic!?”

There was panic in his eyes the second he saw rage in mine. He immediately closed the gap between us and held me on the side of my arms, hoping to make me calm, but I couldn’t! There was no way I could calm down after learning Olivia was indeed after me and my twins! Dominic saw it with his own eyes!

“I am working on it, love.” Dominic tried to caress my face, but I flinched away, feeling so disappointed. “Believe me, I doing everything I can to punish Olivia for what she did—”

“I—I don’t know, Dominic.” I shook my head again; my chest was so heavy I could hardly breathe. “Your council is getting so much power here, and I am not happy with what’s going on. You have to take control, Dominic! I don’t care if the council doesn’t believe the statement I gave them but this is about Diana and Devon’s safety—”

Dominic pulled me into an embrace and I pushed him. I was so angry that I never wanted to be touched, but he refused to let me go. “Love, I know how frustrated you are but trust me with this, Samantha.”

He was right. It wasn’t that easy to take Olivia down, knowing that she’s Richard Bennett’s daughter. It was the reason why Dominic was stuck with them. It was the reason why Olivia thought she was untouchable even after she thought she had kicked me from the pack.

“What’s this?”

Dominic took the diary from my table and frowned. “This symbol looks familiar.”

“You’ve seen it before?” I had no choice but to ask despite the hatred I felt. “It was on the crates of the poison bombs as well.”

“Yes.” His face turned serious as his eyes focused on the image. “Yes. I had seen it in one of the forbidden places in the Black Forest. That place was filled with a dark and evil aura; that’s why no plants or trees were growing around it.”

“How are we going to get rid of it? How can we destroy it?” I asked him, feeling worried. “I felt it too when I went after you in the forest. I don’t feel right making that—whatever dark power it is that is staying near Silver Crescent, Dominic.”

Dominic and I were startled when the door of my office suddenly opened and Olivia came marching in with a straight face and took Dominic’s hand.

All the hairs on my nape stood up, and my hand instinctively reached for Dominic’s other hand, with my eyes darting a deadly look at Olivia. The b*tch ignored me though and forced Dominic to look at her.

“I have had enough of Samantha manipulating you, Dominic!” she exclaimed angrily as she gave me a disdainful look. “I am not buying anything from those people! I was deceived into going to that place and

those men were about to hurt and kidnap me! Whatever she's saying, it's all but lies!"

"Then why the f*ck did you run!?" I scoffed at her. "I heard everything you said, Olivia! Stop lying!"

Olivia glared at me, but when she turned to Dominic, her face softened, and she was pleading. Goddess, I wanted to destroy that face. "Look what she's doing, Dominic! Are you just going to let her destroy my reputation?! I don't deserve this! I was with you for so many things, and I did everything you asked me!"

"Enough of it, Olivia!" Dominic snarled. "You don't talk to Samantha that way! Liam told me everything! You can't hide what you and your father have been doing! If you think you can fool the council, well, you can't fool me! I am gathering sufficient evidence to kick you and your father from Silver Crescent!"

Olivia flinched from Dominic, her face pale. "What are you talking about, Dominic? Since that woman came here, everything has just turned into complete chaos! Why am I the one who is wrong here!? I was there with you the whole time! I dedicated my whole life to you and the pack! And that woman?! What did she do? She left! She betrayed the pack and went to Moonstone! You can't do this to me when what I did, I did everything for you, Dominic! I never left your side for so many years, unlike that woman did!"

"Olivia stop—"

"I swear, if you don't leave, I will kill you here."

Dominic and Olivia looked at me as my eyes turned liquid gold. Dominic's eyes widened as he sensed that killing instinct in me and immediately pushed Olivia away from him.

"We are not done yet, Samantha." She snarled at me, despite the terror in her eyes. "I swear you will pay for what you did!"

That resentment in her eyes brought fear in me. I knew that look before—that look of desperation.

Olivia slammed the door shut and that's when all the tension on my shoulders relaxed. Dominic held my hand and I looked at his face with teary eyes.

This time, he chose me. This time, it was me who he defended.

My shoulders shook as sobs emerged from my throat.

That's when I let my mate hold me tight in his arms.

Chapter 120
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I had to know more about this mysterious symbol.

I needed to know the origin. What it meant. Why was it involved in dark sorcery and what kind of people nurture this dark force lingering in the Black Forest? I had to know what the connection was between this thing and my mother and the criminals who wanted me and my children dead.

Fortunately, Devon and Diana had gotten fond of staying in Liam's house with Madison, as they loved playing with Liam's nieces and nephews. And I am pleased my kids can make friends and not have to experience a lot of bullying in school. I made sure they wouldn't return to that place after I told Dominic that I wanted the kids to be tutored at home together with the children in Liam's house.

After making sure the kids were safe and comfortable, I went straight to the pack library to find a certain book that could have the symbol drawn in my mother's diary. However, I was hesitant to approach the librarian, fearing that she might already be aware of the symbol and be suspicious of my curiosity. Instead, I began to examine the ancient books stacked on the opposite end of the facility, searching each one, hoping I could find the same symbol that could lead me to more information and explanation about its existence.

“Oops!”

My feet slipped on the marble floor and two strong hands caught me without hesitation. My nose caught that familiar, muscular scent that made my eyes widen, and I looked at the stranger.

Only it wasn’t a stranger but the Alpha of the Moonstone Pack!

“Killian!”

He helped me regain my balance and gave me a huge smile, with his green eyes looking bright as he stared at my face. ‘It’s been a long time, Samantha.”

I couldn’t help but stare at him as well. His black, unruly hair was cut neatly, which I was never used to seeing on him. “You cut your hair.” That’s the only thing I could say after not expecting to see him in the very library of Silver Crescent.

“Wow, that’s the first thing that came to your mind?” He chuckled and pulled a book from a shelf. It was a book of witchcraft. What was he doing with a book of witchcraft?

I frowned and then shook my head a bit, hoping I wasn’t just dreaming. “I mean, what are you doing here in Silver Crescent, Killian? Does Dominic know you are here?”

“Of course, he knows.” he shrugged and then smirked, “You know that Silver Crescent has a coven of witches here and is the only continent that shelters their kind. So I thought maybe your libraries here also have something about witchcraft. That’s why I immediately sent a request for a pass and called Dominic to tell him I needed to come here and hope that you have the information I need.”

“Witchcraft? Is there something serious happening at Moonstone? Are you being attacked by witches after those hybrids tried to steal your lands?” I asked with worry.

“No,” his face turned serious, though as we walked the aisle. “I heard something is happening here in Silver Crescent and the Black Forest. I heard that the dark entity living in that place is getting stronger and I need to know what’s going on. Why did that thing suddenly awaken in the middle of the chaos that is already happening here?”

I paused. Halting my steps, I looked at the grave expression on Killian’s face and anxiously lowered my eyes to the floor as I bit my lower lip hard before I spoke, “I don’t really know what is really happening but I am after the same issue, Killian. I need to know what this symbol means.”

I showed him my mother’s diary and the symbol that had been bothering me since last night. But Killian’s eyes just furrowed as he studied the image.

“Have you seen this before? Somewhere?” I asked, my heart beating fast.

“No.”

My heart shrank and I rolled my eyes and sighed in exasperation, disappointed that I hoped he knew about it.

“What’s that anyway?” he asked, suppressing his smiles.

“I thought you had already gone to the Black Forest?” I asked him, a little annoyed but smiling, “Dominic told me he saw this same symbol in that place; that’s why I am looking for something here that can explain to me what this symbol means and what this stands for.”

“I don’t know. I’m not sure I’ve seen one,” he answered, shrugging his shoulders. “Besides, I don’t linger too much on that place because of the wild and magical beasts staying there.”

I sighed. “How am I supposed to find this thing? This place has hundreds of thousands of books! I can’t look through them one by one!”

“I am here if you need help,” he murmured and winked. “I am still pissed that you didn’t go to Moonstone even for a brief visit. You have already forgotten me.”

“Forgotten who?”

Killian and I turned around and saw Dominic standing on the other end of the aisle with that darkened expression on his face. His hazel eyes stared at me as if questioning why I was in the library and then rage appeared when he glared at Killian. There were feathers appearing on his jaw as he slipped his hands into the pocket of his black suit.

Sometimes, I hate that Dominic used the bond link like a GPS just to locate me anywhere in the pack territory.

“I have a feeling you are already told that I gave Silver Crescent a short visit,” Killian smirked at Dominic. My mate scoffed in return and I eyed him as a warning not to make a scene inside the library.

Instead, he approached Killian and me and pulled me away from the Moonstone Alpha. He tilted his head to the side and grinned.

“I hope you are enjoying your short stay here, Killian.” he snarled, gently pushing me out of the aisle and eyed me not to argue with him.

“She’s not going if she doesn’t want to.” Killian grabbed my other arm and then glared at Dominic.

Chapter 121
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Stop it, you two!” I hissed at both of them.

“Take your hands off my wife,” Dominic gave Killian a deadly warning. “I only allowed you six hours to explore the library and get what you need but not roam around like a f*cking tourist.”

“Whatever you say,” Killian smirked tauntingly. “You asked for my help, Dominic.”

I was surprised at what I heard. Dominic, asking Killian for help!?

Dominic averted his eyes, looking so irritated as he sighed, and then ran his fingers through his hair. “This is not just about Silver Crescent. This mission is about the safety of the whole continent, and you have to play a part in it, Killian. It’s not only you who I asked for help.”

There was satisfaction on Killian’s face as he saw the discomfort in Dominic’s eyes, and I had to push them both away gently just to get some space from their little bickering. “This is not the place to argue, okay? Maybe I should leave you both here and I have more important things to do—”

“NO!” they both exclaimed and the people in the library looked at both of them. Dominic and Killian looked away from each other, feeling bad to disturb the peace of the place but still not wanting me to leave.

“Is it true that you are building an alliance against Black Claw?” I asked Dominic. He had never mentioned it to me before, and I was surprised that Killian was among the Alphas he asked to fight the criminals. “Why didn’t you tell me you are making an army against the enemies?”

“I was about to tell you, but you are so distracted by following Olivia’s whereabouts lately, love,” Dominic explained, making Killian grimace. Dominic gave him a disdainful look and then his eyes softened when he turned to me again. “I just wait until you are fully recovered from the poisoning. I didn’t know you would come straight here to investigate and gather more information regarding the symbol. You should have just told me. I could have let my secretaries do that for you.”

Killian frowned with concern. “Poison!? What happened?! Who did that to you, Samantha!?”

I looked at Killian for a second and then sighed and held my husband’s hand gently. “I should do this alone,” I said to him, hoping he understood

that this was personal to me. “I can’t let anyone know I am studying this, especially the council. I feel like they are watching my every move here, Dominic.”

“Wait—what do you mean Dominic’s council is watching you? Is there something going on here? Are they giving you a hard time here, Samantha?”

Dominic ignored him and my husband’s focus was only on me. He leaned and stepped closer and squeezed my hand gently. “I am working on it, love. You just need to be a little more patient. Liam and I are gathering evidence on who conspires with Richard Bennett and Olivia. We must gather enough evidence to expel them and punish their treachery.

“Wait, Wait!”

Dominic and I looked at Kian with huge eyes as he stepped between us. “What is really going on here, Samantha? Are these people hurting you and the twins?! Are you in danger?!”

Killian didn’t know. And there’s no way I could tell him that there were people who wanted me and the kids dead—aside from Richard and Olivia.

“Tell me,” Killian asked again with a grave look in his eyes. “Are you in danger, Samantha?”

I looked at Dominic and he averted his eyes as he sighed. “No, Killian.” I lied. “Me and the kids are fine. Dominic, make sure of it.”

He seemed unconvinced when he stared me in the eyes but then relaxed his shoulders when I didn’t blink. He inhaled through his teeth as he uttered. “Good. I feel there is something wrong going on in Silver Crescent after I heard that poison bombing. I just want to make sure you and the kids are safe.”

“Know your time is limited here, Killian,” Dominic warned. “Go find what you need here. Samantha and the kids are safe. I make sure Liam and the Gammas are guarding them twenty-four-seven.”

Killian's eyes narrowed. "Of course. You will be a huge failure if something happens to Samantha and the twins."

Dominic's eyes turned crimson red at what Killian had said. So before he could land a punch in the face of the Moonstone Alpha, I had already pushed Dominic away from him.

"Dominic, no!"

"Let him come to me, Samantha!" Killian snarled as his eyes burned emerald green and then flexed his fingers and squared his shoulders. "It's been a long time since I had a good fight with someone as powerful as the Alphs of the Silver Crescent."

"Don't me regret I let you—"

That's it!

I marched away from both of them and didn't give a single glance as I headed to the door. I heard Dominic call me to come back, but I didn't. I was too pissed; I wanted to throw them both out of the windows of the library.

On my way home, I couldn't help but bite my lower lip hard, feeling so scared and depressed at everything that was happening with me, the children, and the life that I thought would be peaceful once I finally came back to Silver Crescent. However, despite my efforts to gain the council's approval and be accepted as the Luna of the pack, things took a turn for the worse.

And I have no idea what to do anymore. How to fix this.

I wanted to believe in Dominic— that he could do something to stop the Black Claw criminals. But there was this uneasiness I couldn't understand. The fear that I might lose everything—that my kids might get hurt if I became too reckless with my decisions.

Why was this happening? All I wanted was to start a new life with Dominic... the life that we had been wanting. I have been dreaming of this since I left the Silver Crescent.

Tears rolled down my face as I focused my eyes on the road with my chest feeling so empty with despair.

Chapter 122
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I got home so exhausted that I didn't even make it to my room.

I slumped on the sofa after I threw my bag on the floor, grunting in headache as I buried my face in the throw pillow. I was hungry, but I had no energy to go to the kitchen to get some food. What time did I last eat? Last night? I couldn't even remember if I ate breakfast. All I had was water throughout the day while I tried to focus on finding that symbol in the library.

My head ached more as I remembered Dominic and Killian's bickering. I was thrilled to see my friend again after I left the Moonstone Pack. But I understood, too, that Dominic was still threatened whenever Killian was around me, and I couldn't blame him if he still felt very possessive when I was with the Moonstone Alpha.

And I couldn't believe Dominic felt that way when he couldn't get rid of Olivia even after she tried to kill me in front of him.

The thought brought a heavy feeling to my chest. The disappointment, fear, and anger spiraled down into my stomach, making me so sick the whole day. All I wanted was for Olivia to be kicked out of the pack! Dominic saw her and her hired assassins attacked me! I was poisoned by silver blades from their claws and remained oblivious to what happened. Was it because he still had feelings for Olivia? Was he trying to still keep her in the pack?

Dominic switching the topic from Olivia to the symbol he saw in my mother's diary is just a sign that he's trying to avoid the issue, and that gave me a bitter feeling. A feeling I never thought would bring back all the

awful memories I had with Dominic as the cold, ruthless man I had ever known my whole life.

I closed my eyes as I suppressed the sob that wanted to escape from my throat. I would rather not cry anymore over a memory I shouldn't have remembered. Dominic had changed. He had become a better person, and most importantly, he loved me. My heart knew that he loved me so much and the kids, and the happiness I saw in his eyes was so genuine that it sometimes overwhelmed my heart.

And I love him. I chose to be with him despite all the backlash I received from the people who hated me from the start. The people who think I was not good enough to be the Luna of the pack and who supported Olivia with her plans over Dominic and the pack.

*****

So many things played in my head that I didn't know I had already fallen asleep.

"Mom?"

I woke up to a sweet voice and small, soft hands caressing my face. When I opened my eyes, it was Diana who was staring at my face with worry, with Devon standing beside her and Madison on the other side of the sitting area.

Blinking several times as I pushed myself from the couch to sit, I murmured, "Oh, you're all home. Thank the goddess..."

"Are you alright, mom? You look sick." Devon asked as he stepped closer to me and felt my forehead with the back of his hand. His shoulders relaxed as he said, "You don't have a fever, though. How are you feeling, Mom?"

"I—" I tried to smile at Devon and then caressed Diana's hair. "I feel okay, sweetheart." I pulled them closer to me and kissed the tops of their heads. "How is your day? Did you enjoy playing with your new friends?"

Devon gave me a huge smile but Diana was still looking at me with concern. She always had the sharpest instinct of the two of them and I knew Diana could feel I wasn't really in good shape at that moment.

"Well, I love learning new things with them," Devon answered and then looked at Diana and his smile disappeared. "Diana seems a bit distant. She's not always in the mood to play or participate in the activities."

Madison panicked a little as she explained, "Diana is still adjusting to the place, Miss Samantha. She's excellent at her studies, though. In fact, she's the smartest."

Devon grimaced as Diana stuck out her tongue at her brother. I chuckled at the bickering between the two, but then Diana held my hand and squeezed it gently as she murmured, "Is there a problem that's bothering you, Mom? I can feel there's something wrong."

I knew it. "Nothing, love. There is just one small problem in the packhouse. But nothing that Mommy can't handle." I smiled at her and then winked.

Diana finally smiled as she kissed my cheek and then the twins pulled my hand and asked me to go to the kitchen with them to have some snacks. Madison prepared us food with a smile and made sure the children had eaten well before they kissed my cheeks and headed to their rooms.

I mouthed to Madison, 'Thank you,' and she shyly responded with a slight nod and a smile.

I sipped on the hot coffee in my hand and looked outside the window with quite a bit of sadness in my eyes. I missed Dominic and I wasn't sure if he was able to go home tonight after all the endless appointments he had at the council meetings and the need for his presence in every place in Silver Crescent.

Perhaps I should trust Dominic more. He was working hard, trying his best to keep us and the pack safe from the enemies. He had been defying the council and despite being the most powerful man in the pack, despite being

the Alpha, he never abused his power and still believed that he could process everything in the right way.

Even Olivia and her little minions, he believed he could kick them out without the Council of Shifters questioning his judgments.

That's what he had been pleading to me. To trust and believe in him.

And there was no doubt in my heart that I loved Dominic with every fiber of my being. My heart began to cherish him from the first day I met him in the training camp.

I sighed. I still couldn't forget that look on Dominic's face when he let Olivia run away after she tried to kill me. The way his face softened when he looked at her before he roared for her to run away. I wanted to believe my husband. But how could I if he still had a soft spot on that woman?!

Chapter 123
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I decided I finally had to confront these unpleasant feelings I harbored for years.

After my twins boosted the self-confidence I didn't think I still had, I got up with a light feeling in my chest and did my daily morning routine with a sweet smile. Devon and Diana always knew how to make me feel better when I was confused and scared. They are the very source of my strength, the reason I still wanted to make things work between Dominic and me despite Olivia's continuous attempts to flirt with my husband.

Even now that Dominic didn't go home last night, I couldn't help but think they were together somewhere. And that brought a tight feeling in my chest—to imagine my mate in the arms of another. I would have known if it had happened, though. But my cautious heart was still paranoid about what Olivia could do and how Dominic would handle being around that snake.

It was a half-hour drive back to House Manor. Just as I expected, everyone was busy working with the healers while they made the wounded their

priority. I got nervous and horrified at what I witnessed as I saw multiple Gamma soldiers being carried back straight to the infirmary.

“What’s happening?” I asked one of the healers that walked in front of me. She looked nervous, though—no. She was agitated. It was as if something horrible happened not just too long ago.

“It’s the Black Claws, Luna. They attacked the East Gates again and killed ten of our men,” she answered after she pulled down her face mask; the color on her face was drained, leaving her eyes looking bloodshot. “I’m sorry, but I have to go now. They need as many healers there as possible.”

“Yes. Yes, of course,” I murmured, my mind in complete panic as I realized the chaos that had occurred. I watched the healer rush inside the Pack House with someone yelling something I couldn’t comprehend because of the disarray that was happening in the main hall of the building.

I felt as if my head was on a cloud. All I thought about was my husband. Was he okay? Was he hurt? I needed to find out, so I rushed inside. I tried to reach for my husband through our mind link but he was silent. I couldn’t feel or hear him. Was he in another place that was out of my reach?! Was he in the Black Forest?!

I dashed straight to his office, slammed the door open, and watched with wide eyes as two healers treated my husband. They were putting bandages around his upper torso and another on his right arm. Blood stained the bandage, though, making me more worried.

“Dominic!”

“Samantha—”

My heart was drumming violently in my chest as I approached him with eyes wide with fear and panic. “What happened? Did you go with them on the raid? Why didn’t you tell me about this, love? What happened to you?!”

His face was dark and etched with deep sadness and exhaustion as he gestured to the healers to leave us alone in his office. My husband sat at

his desk with a heavy sigh and caressed my cheeks gently while staring into my teary eyes.

“I’m fine.” his voice was heavy with grief. I felt that unpleasant feeling as he averted his eyes from me and stared down at the floor.

I felt so helpless that I couldn’t do anything to make him feel better. And there I was, sulking around, thinking the worst things about my husband when he almost died at the raid outside the gates. I castigated myself silently as tears rolled down my cheeks.

“Everything is under control now, love. There is nothing to worry about.” he dragged his fingers through his dark hair as he snarled. “But we lost ten soldiers in the battle, and I have to make sure their families know how bravely they fought for the pack.” The rage was there as he spoke. His back was hunched and his elbows were resting on his knees.

He appeared like a dark, fallen angel in the midst of his misery.

“It’s okay. We will recover, Dominic. We will not let these people destroy Silver Crescent.” I assured him, cupping the side of his face with my hand. “We will fight back.”

Despite the sorrow in his hazel eyes, Dominic’s lips pulled into a small smile and he pulled me by my waist to kiss me softly on my lips. I kissed him back—letting him know that this wasn’t just his fight—that we were in this together.

“I am happy you came here for me despite what happened yesterday, love,” he murmured as our kiss broke and our foreheads touched. “I thought of going home after they treated my wound, though. I miss you terribly.”

“Tell me when you go into a fight next time,” I said to him, my throat swelling as I suppressed the sob that wanted to escape from my throat. “You know I can help.”

“No. You should be there with the twins.” he smiled at me weakly. “You are the only one here in the pack I trust that can protect them.” he caressed the side of my face with the tip of his finger and then held my chin with his thumb and index finger gently. “I have to make sure they are being guarded by one of the powerful she-wolves in the pack.”

I couldn’t help but smile as he planted a soft kiss on my lips.

To our surprise, the door slammed open, and there was Olivia, standing and still panting. Her eyes were the same fear and concern I had when I entered the office, and that completely pissed me off. How dare she show herself here as if she were someone important in my husband’s life?!

Frowning, I pushed away gently from Dominic’s arms. I felt him hesitate to let go of me, but I gave him a warning glance, and that was when his arms loosened around me.

“You are not needed here, Olivia. My husband and I are having an important moment here. You should go back when there are matters that concern you.”

She had the audacity to give me an adamant look as she approached Dominic. Before she could even reach my husband, I had already blocked her way and shot her a deadly look. “I said, f*cking leave.”

“I need to know how Dominic is doing.” She snarled at me. “I heard she went into the Black Forest and fought with the enemies! I need to know if he’s doing okay!”

“I am alright, Olivia. You don’t have to run straight here to my office. You can just ask the healers about the situation.” Dominic said to her with a hoarse, angry voice.

Olivia seemed shocked at the angry expression on Dominic’s face. She flinched and then glared at me. “This is all your fault! If you didn’t come back in the Silver Crescent, none of this would happen!”

“Stop it, Olivia!” Dominic yelled as he jumped off the desk and glared at her.

“No,” I spread my arm to stop my husband from dragging Olivia out of the room. “Let her speak, though. Allow her to express whatever the f*ck is on her mind! I want to know why she keeps on following when it’s already clear that she’s been a traitor to the pack.”

“Watch your mouth, you—” she stopped when I lifted my face and glared at her coldly through my nose. Despite her anger, terror appeared in her eyes. We both knew that even if we fought, she was no match for me anymore. I wasn’t the same weakling she used to bully several years ago. She couldn’t touch me anymore.

“Say it, Olivia.” I stepped closer to her with my eyes turned golden orbs. “Say it!”

Chapter 124
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Say it!”

Olivia’s eyes widened as she looked at Dominic as if waiting to see if he would stop me from snarling and threatening her. But Dominic remained silent and then said in his hoarse, weak voice, “Just get out, Olivia. There’s no reason for you to check on me anymore.”

It was like a strong slap on the face and Olivia’s eyes went teary as her shoulders drooped from what she heard. I wanted to feel satisfied with what Dominic said to her, but I wasn’t that kind of person. I felt awful for her.

She had dedicated her entire life to the pack and Dominic, with the hope that my husband would reciprocate her devotion to him. But that mating bond made Dominic realize the missing piece he had been searching for. And too bad that was something Olivia couldn’t give—that deeper kind of connection, like how my husband and I had.

“Tell me this is not happening, Dominic!” Olivia’s desperation only made her more disturbing. “Tell me this is just a dream! You promised me! You told me I can be your Luna if you want to! You told me you will make the Silver Crescent’s queen!”

“Stop being so ridiculous, Olivia! I never said something like that! "You are being delusional again!" Dominic snarled at her as he threw her a dagger-like look. “Stop telling lies here!”

I looked at Dominic and I saw his face grow pale.

“No!” she screeched and her voice rang in my ears, making my eyes wide in bafflement. “You told me I am the only one! I gave my whole life to you! Gave you everything I have! And this is what I will get!? You will set me aside because of a hapless woman like her who brought so many disasters to the pack?!”

“This is my decision, Olivia!” Dominic snarled.

“No! I can’t let you do this to me!” she yelled back with tears trickling down her face. Dominic’s eyes softened as I saw guilt in them; I couldn’t blame him for it. He was guided by rage during that time and was confused with his feelings. Olivia’s presence made him think that she was someone he needed when I wasn’t sure how to handle myself in that kind of situation.

We were all so young and confused about what we really wanted.

“I never left your side, Dominic! She did!” Olivia pointed her finger at me as she bared her teeth. “And now you are choosing her!? What the f*ck did she ever do to you!?”

“I am his mate! His destined mate!” I hissed at her. “I bore his children in my womb. His bloodline will continue because of me! There’s no other explanation why I can’t be his Luna. You know that he marked me, Olivia!”

"This is not fair!" she cried, wiping her tears with the back of her hand. That pure rage was there, giving me a tight feeling in my stomach. “It should be

me you choose, Dominic! I should be the one who is staying beside you and not her."

I turned around, putting a hand on my forehead in frustration. The more she screamed, the more she sounded like a brat whose favorite toy was taken from her. "Stop it now, Olivia!"

As I saw her panting in anger, that's when I started to realize it was a waste of energy.

I exhaled slowly and then looked at her with sad eyes.

Even Dominic looked nervous when I started to calm down and tilted my head to the side while staring at Olivia. She was right. She was there when I wasn't and gave everything she had for her dream of becoming the Luna of the pack. And I felt awful for her that she wasn't able to get what she wanted because fate had other plans.

"She's just after your f*cking money, Dominic. She's only after the title because she thinks she's better than me! Well, she's not! Look at what happened here! Look at what she has done to Silver Crescent since she moved here! There's nothing here but death and chaos! That is all because of her! She's a jinx, Dominic!" Olivia snapped as she grimaced and looked at me from head to toe. "Everyone knows that!"

I couldn't feel any more anger now I knew how desperate she was. I just looked at her with a blank expression as I listened to the awful words and accusations she hurled at me. I folded my arms on my chest as Dominic and I looked at her and watched her burst into anger in front of us. She just kept on repeating the same accusation like a broken phonograph record, making me and Dominic feel tired of her and her screams.

"Just go, Olivia. Please." Dominic massaged the space between his eyes as the situation became increasingly absurd. "I am getting tired of this. I have already explained to you many times, and I thought you finally understood and respected my decision!"

"Never!" Olivia raged as she bared her teeth.

“Then get the f*ck out!” Dominic finally lost his patience and screamed, gesturing towards the door. Even I was baffled when he burst into anger. All the veins on his neck appeared as he roared. “Get the f*ck out and never show your face again here, Olivia! I am f*cking tired of this sh*t! You never know how to accept things and listen! I don’t want to see your face here again in front of me or my wife, do you understand?!”

“You think you can get rid of me?” Olivia tilted her head to the side and smirked evilly at me and Dominic. “You don’t know what is waiting for both of you, Dominic!”

Dominic frowned. “Are you threatening me?”

Olivia stepped back and then grinned with that crazy look on her face before she decided to turn and walk straight to the door while whistling and humming a lullaby.

Her gesture left a sickening feeling in my stomach. Like, there was definitely something wrong with Olivia. There was an unsettling feeling that caused the hairs on my neck to stand on end.

I knew what she was capable of.

I had to be ready whatever it was she was planning against me and my family.

Chapter 125
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

Everything was black.

I stepped deeper into the darkness, trying to familiarize myself with the place, but it was clear that it wasn’t Silver Crescent or the Black Forest. I had never been here. I was sure of it.

There was no threat of danger—only pitch darkness and eerie silence as I continued walking, still having no idea where to go. It was as if my heart

told me to go on until I found something. Perhaps it was a beacon of hope. Something that could guide me out of this darkness. A light so I could find my way back home.

For many years I was blinded by wealth and ambition to become the most powerful. The most popular and the youngest Alpha to take over this region. I had so many plans. I set so many high standards for myself and the people I wanted to be around me. I was a cold bastard. I was a fool to believe it was the most essential aspect of life. My life was guided by arrogance, and I didn't know who or how to trust anymore. All I knew was that I needed them all to bow to me. To submit themselves to everything I say and that was it.

I thought it was the meaning of becoming a true and powerful Alpha.

Until I lost part of myself when Samantha left Silver Crescent.

That's when I realized the biggest mistake I made. That without my mate, I was nothing. Just a f*cking ruthless Alpha who ruled his land with fear.

And I never wanted that. At least I needed a change, and I needed Samantha by my side to do this—to make everything right.

After that awful argument with Olivia, Samantha had become more silent than she already was. I could sense that there was a strong perturbation coming from her, and I wished I could do something to ease her mind. I knew she needed space to think about the situation, so I remained silent and let her linger in her thoughts as I drove us home. What Olivia did was beyond terrible and despite the mate bond, I still dreaded what was in my mate's thoughts after Olivia's sudden burst and threats against her.

Letting Olivia live after what she did was the only thing I could do for her after she stayed for me for years. But if she hurt Samantha again, I would not hesitate to put her head on a stake together with her father, Richard Bennett.

When we both got out of the car, I held Samantha's hand and looked her solemnly in the eyes.

“I think we need to talk about something, my love,” I murmured to my mate as she stared straight into my eyes. Her face was full of confusion, and I could sense her uncertainty. She was I was upset with what happened, and I understood. I had no control of the situation. I couldn’t make Olivia stop going after her.

“You need to get more rest, my love,” Samantha replied with a soft voice. Despite that suppressed upset on her face, she managed to give me a small, sad smile and caressed the side of my face. “You are badly hurt. Let’s just not talk about Olivia’s outburst in the pack house. It is not worth our time.”

“I just want to assure you there is nothing between us anymore, Samantha.” I gazed deep into her ocean-blue eyes as I pulled her by the waist, wanting her to get closer to me. “The moment I marked you, that’s the moment I fully dedicated my life to you and the kids, Samantha. You know my loyalty; everything I have is also yours now. You are my Luna.”

“I’m alright,” she replied with a smile and then kissed my cheek before she pushed away from me gently and then went straight to the doors.

That night, another nightmare made it hard for me to sleep. It was the horror of that fight that happened in the Black Forest, where I lost ten men. It was an unexpected attack coming from the Black Claws after we made a quick patrol around the gates. The enemies were everywhere. I could see them getting stronger as the weeks passed, and I still had no idea how to stop them. How to drive them away from my territory.

I’ve been feeling so down since I went back to pack manor the next day. We didn’t discuss the incident much, and I respected Samantha’s desire to spend the entire night alone with her thoughts. It bothered me, though, knowing she still had fears about what was waiting for us in the future. That’s why I had to do everything possible to ensure her safety here with the twins. I had to solve the mystery surrounding her life.

“Alpha!”

“Leave me, Liam. I am still busy.” I gestured for him to leave without even looking at him.

“Please don’t panic, Dominic. I need you to come with me!”

I didn’t know, but I felt as if my heart dropped to the floor the second I saw the dread in my Beta’s eyes.

*****

Perhaps I was having a nightmare.

I didn’t know what to feel as I stood there, glaring down at the body lying on the grass stained with dried blood. The attacker had seemingly mangled the body before deciding to deliver the fatal blow.

I felt Liam’s hand on my shoulder, but the rest of my body was paralyzed with shock and a sense of emptiness that I couldn’t explain.

“Dominic—”

Bending on one knee, I caressed the side of my mother’s bruised, pale face. It was cold. It was so cold that it brought chills down my spine and a sick feeling in my stomach. Her wide, glassy eyes were staring blankly at the sky, with her long black hair spread wildly underneath her.

Her clothes were completely stained with dried, crusty blood.

My body trembled as my hands curled into tight fists. Everyone flinched as they felt the pure rage in me, surging all over my body like I was a volcano ready to erupt any moment.

“Investigate what happened and who did this,” I snarled at Liam as feathers appeared on my tightening jaws.

I glared at the forest in front of us and then hissed. “I have matters that only I need to attend to.”

Chapter 126
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

That loud noise of something shattering in the kitchen made me almost jump out of my seat.

"Madison?"

"I-I am truly sorry, Miss Samantha! The plate slipped from my hand! I am so careless. I am so sorry," she said with a trembling voice as she picked up the broken pieces on the floor. I immediately ran towards her and helped her with pieces, telling her to be careful of the sharp edges.

"Don't mind about it. I am more worried about you hurting yourself as you pick this." I said to her, smiling gently. "You can leave this to me, though and just check if Diana or Devon is already up from their nap. They will surely look for you and ask for snacks."

"But Miss Samantha—"

"It's fine, Madison." I held her hand to stop her from what she was doing. "I can do this. Just check on the kids and see if they need something."

She gave me a nervous smile and nodded at me as she headed straight to the children's room. There was hesitation on her face as she left me, but I gave her one last smile to show that it was alright.

Maybe I was only looking for something to do after I left the packhouse this morning. Devon was feeling a little sick so I had to go back and make sure he was comfortable and had everything he needed. Diana said that she would be absent from her tutorials as well and wanted to take care of her twin brother.

They were both overprotective of each other.

"Ouch!"

I looked at the blood trickling down the tip of my finger when a pointed shard punctured me. As I saw the blood, my stomach tightened and a wave of anxiety hit me, feeling like a spear piercing my chest. My eyes widened as the sharp pain throbbed, causing my heart to beat rapidly and agonizingly with each passing second.

And then the door opened.

“Dominic?” I stood up from the floor after ensuring there were no shards left. I noticed the face of my husband. That same, blank expression I was terrified to look at before I had the twins. Before my life was doomed to leave the Silver Crescent.

“What happened?” I asked him again after I got rid of the dangerous trash. “Why do you look like someone had just died—”

He gave me a dark gaze in his hazel eyes and I stopped. That’s when all the colors on my face drained as I realized that gloomy expression on his face.

Someone indeed died.

But who?

I followed him straight to our room, my head filled with dread as I fumbled with my fingers. I noticed how tense his body was. He slipped one hand into his pocket, and old blood stained his shirt. There were shadows under his eyes as he sat on the edge of the bed with his back hunched and his elbows resting on his thighs.

I was so nervous my hands were shaking.

“Tell me what happened.” I made my face look adamant as I watched my husband drag his fingers through his dark, unruly hair. “Who died this time?”

When he lifted his face to me, his eyes were already red with tears brimming in them. My heart shrank as I closed the gap between us and

cupped his face between my hands. “Tell me what is happening, love. You are scaring me.”

“It’s mom,” he answered. “Mom is gone, Samantha.”

I thought I just misheard him.

I blinked and then suddenly, I became lightheaded as my surroundings started to swirl around me. Dominic noticed the paleness on my face and immediately carried me onto the bed and felt my forehead. I curled myself into a ball and buried my face in the pillow as violent sobs emerged from my throat.

Dominic lay beside me and pulled me into a tight embrace as he let me cry on his chest.

“What happened? Who did this to her?” I asked when I finally could breathe and gently pushed myself slightly away from him so I could look into his eyes, which were full of grief. “Why is this happening, Dominic?”

“She must be tricked to get outside the gates. Or maybe she was investigating something important out there,” he explained, his eyes fixed on the white ceiling, unable to meet my gaze due to the pain. “

“I can’t explain what they did to her, love. I’m sorry I can’t picture it without breaking my heart into millions of pieces. But all I knew was that they didn’t make it easy for her. Her body was mangled. She bled to death.”

“Mangled,” I murmured. Then I recalled that time when there were multiple victims of sick murders that happened in Moonstone pack that even now, Killian couldn’t resolve. Could it be connected to the murders that happened in Killian’s pack?

But how does this happen here? Did the killer come from the Moonstone pack? Why did they target Lena!? Why was it supposed to be her!?

Dominic frowned. “Do you have any idea who could do this, my love?” he whispered, almost croaking. “Do you know someone who could do this to my mother just to think they are punishing me?”

I looked into his eyes, which were already full of rage. How could I tell it to him without my husband waging war against the Moonstone pack? "I don’t know," I replied hesitantly. “I have heard there are murders like that in every pack but I...I could never imagine they would do this to Lena, Dominic.”

Tears welled down my eyes as sobs emerged from my throat. “I have to go and see her.”

“Whenever you are ready, my love,” he whispered as he kissed me on the forehead. I felt his body tremble against mine as he embraced me. He pulled my head into his chest, not wanting me to see him crying. “But we can’t tell the kids yet.”

“We can’t tell them yet,” I repeated as he squeezed me against him.

That’s when his shoulders shook as sobs finally escaped from his throat.

Chapter 127
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

My head felt like it was splitting in half.

Every time I closed my eyes, I could see my mother’s smiling face. And then the surroundings suddenly got dark. Shadows around her gathered and grabbed her violently, dragging her underneath the ground as she screamed in terror.

She was screaming for help. She was screaming my name.

I felt like dying. Dying from the inside and the outside. My wife prepared breakfast for me this morning and I felt awful that I couldn’t even touch it, let alone swallow it down my throat. My stomach had been feeling sick and I didn’t know if I could still recover from it. The nightmares, the guilt, the

screams in my head—I was trying my best not to break in front of everyone. Especially not in front of Samantha. She was already devastated after she found out what happened to Mom and her, seeing me in agony would only make her feel more miserable than she already was.

While sitting on my swivel chair and staring at the huge window, I couldn't help but clench my jaw in both rage and pain. I had to be strong. I had to know who did that horrifying thing to my mother and make them pay! I had to focus and make sure I didn't miss even a small detail of the investigation. I had to know who did this or, goddess forbid, I would wreak havoc on anyone who had any connection to what really happened.

A few light knocks on the door distracted me from my thoughts, and I felt my Beta's presence on the other side; perturbation filled his head, and I wondered what it was again. Liam had become a little restless since he delivered the terrifying news, and since then, I have hated that everyone couldn't even look me in the eyes. I resented their perception of me as a wounded creature, unable to rationally process the disturbing things happening in Silver Crescent.

Everyone was questioning my capacity to rule at this level. They think after my failure to handle the Black Claws and losing ten elite Gamma soldiers in the forest, I wasn't the Alpha they believed could protect them from those criminals.

The worst part was that they blamed my wife for everything. Olivia succeeded in convincing the council and the people that Samantha was responsible for bringing those bastards to destroy the pack. I should have banished her and Richard Bennett from the pack the day they stopped me from taking back Samantha in Silver Crescent. And now it was too late to rectify the situation.

But my eyes were open now to who truly cared for the pack and who didn't.

"Get in."

"Dominic."

“How’s the investigation going, Liam?” I stood from my seat with a grave expression on my face. I unfastened the uppermost button of my shirt and exhaustedly loosened the collar. With slow steps, I walked away from my table and slipped my hand into the pocket of my pants. “Do you have a lead?”

Liam sighed heavily as he massaged the part between his eyes. I knew what that meant already. The hesitation in him made my chest tighten. It was suddenly so hard to breathe but I couldn’t let Liam see the panic in my eyes as he straightened his back and inhaled sharply.

I was starting to lose patience so I shot him a dark look. “What is it?” I snarled.

“I don’t know if this is true, Dominic. I have some leads from an anonymous source who sent me these photos. I am not sure if this will convince you, though. It was really hard to process when I saw these pictures.

“What are you even talking about?” I frowned at him and then took the folder from his hand.

That’s when I couldn’t believe what my eyes were seeing.

It was my mother talking to a woman with dark hair whose back was on the CCTV. But there was no mistake with this. My mind told me that a pin in her hair was very familiar, but my heart denied the thought. Her small frame, her clothes—

“Liam,” I uttered, confused and worried at what I was seeing. I stepped away from him and looked at the other photos. “There’s no way this can be true. We’re not sure yet if this is from a reliable source. Who the f*ck sent this to you? What if it’s a trap? Could it be someone who just wants to blackmail Samantha? We can’t be sure yet. Samantha can’t do this! She loves my mother like her real mother!”

“I am not saying Samantha did this, Dominic. But as I dig deeper into the investigation, it all points me to Samantha. Someone had witnessed her screaming and snarling at Lena in the waiting room at the pack manor. I

heard it was about a diary or something. They told me Lena was so pale and looked terrified."

"NO!" I panted as I propped my hands on the edge of my wooden desk. My razor-sharp teeth were bared in anger, fear, and denial. "This can't be true!"

The photos were shot from the CCTV outside the eastern gates where the patrolmen found my mother dead.

I couldn't breathe. I kicked my table and stepped away. I saw dark spots as I grabbed the photos and threw them away. My hands violently covered half of my face in shock and disbelief. But There was no way Samantha could do this to my mother. My mother loved her like she was her own, just like how Samantha loved her. There's no way my wife could have done this. I couldn't find any reason why she had to.

"How did you find these photos, Liam?" I asked, snarling with anger.

"It was on my table when I got there, Alpha," he answered with a pale face. "Just like I said, it was sent anonymously. No one had seen someone enter my office but I found out my window was forcibly opened. Someone barged in and left that thing."

That's when my shoulders relaxed as I stared at the photos on the floor. There was a dark, anxious feeling in me that told me this couldn't be my wife. There's no way Samantha could kill my mother. She would never!"

"I have to go," I said to Liam as I stepped over the photos and grabbed the jacket from a chair.

"Where are you going, Dominic?!" Liam grabbed me by the arm with fear in his eyes. "What are you going to do? We have to discuss this! We can't let these photos go public! We have to find out who put these things on my table and make sure they don't get them public! This is about Samantha and how we can save her from this someone who wants to destroy her completely!"

I wanted to go home. I was eager to hear directly from Samantha about really happened and if she had indeed visited my mother on the night of the incident. What were they talking about outside the gates!? Was the woman in the picture really her?!

A guttural snarl escaped from my throat when I decided that Liam was right.

We had to look for the source and destroy it.

Chapter 128
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

There's no way I would believe this.

I studied the timeline. I ordered the guards to send me the video captured by the CCTV and studied it. I locked myself in the office the whole day and watched it repeatedly. I meticulously examined every aspect of the scene, attempting to determine if it truly represented my wife. I studied the reactions on my mother's face as they conversed, my mother looking so pale and terrified as that person with her back to the camera screamed and waved her hand at her with anger.

My eyes were focused on the back of that woman who Liam suspected was Samantha. I knew Liam had no ill feelings about my wife and he loved the twins. But based on his calculations and how the witnesses described the last time Samantha and my mom fought in the pack house, his suspicion could make sense—especially because my mother couldn't be beaten so easily in a fight like that. Not unless she didn't fight back.

That thought made my stomach tighten. No. There's no way Samantha could do this. It wasn't her. It wasn't my wife...

I couldn't think of a reason why Samantha could be that angry with my mother. But I noticed that recently, Samantha never told me what was going on with her—about that diary, that symbol—could it be that my mother knows something that made my mate upset?

I rested my chin on my fist as I watched the video for the fifth time. I knew Samantha. She couldn't hurt mom. She couldn't.

*****

"Is it true, Alpha Dominic? Is the news true about your mother?"

I frowned when I was approached by one of the elders. His face was pale and full of wild curiosity as he stared into my eyes. He was so close that I grimaced unintentionally.

"I don't know what you are talking about." I hissed as I proceeded to walk through the hallways. But the old man insisted on walking with me and was still desperate for answers, which made me more pissed.

"The news is everywhere, Alpha!" he continued with a hushed voice as his eyes looked around the place as if scared someone might hear him other than me. "Everyone thinks Miss Samantha killed your mother!"

Horrified by what I heard, I immediately halted and glared at the old man with despise in my eyes. "What did you say?!" I snarled at him.

Despite the obvious panic on his face, he raised both of his hands in front of him, seemingly attempting to calm me down. "I know the idea is ridiculous, Alpha Dominic. But this rumor had been spreading all over Silver Crescent!

"Who did this?" I glared at him, cold and deadly. "Who's been spreading rumors about my wife like this?!"

"I am not sure yet, Alpha. Everyone is anxious and needs answers about what really happened. Is this really true?"

I growled at him and he flinched. That's when I decided I had to go straight to the council hall and hold an urgent meeting. I needed Liam, so I ordered a Gamma soldier to bring him to my office as soon as he arrived at the

pack manor. I need to know what was happening! I need to know how the f*ck this information leaked all over the turf!

“Alpha Dominic.” Liam was almost out of breath as he entered my office and stood in front of my desk. “I am sorry for making you wait. I was trying to deal with some problems in the infirmary.”

“I need you to go with me to this meeting, Liam,” I said with an irritated voice.

“Is this about this rumor?” his face paled when he looked me in the eyes.

I didn’t answer, though, and went marching straight to the doors with him following me anxiously. We were in the hallways heading toward the council hall when I saw the Omega servants looking at me with worried eyes. Their expressions conveyed a mixture of fear, worry, and sympathy for the situation affecting my family and the pack, and it only added to the pain that weighed heavily on my chest.

“Alpha Dominic!”

Everyone in the meeting room rose from their seat and bowed their heads nervously in front of me as I walked swiftly to the head of the table. But those who sided with Richard Bennett stared at me with suspicion and confusion as to why I still hadn’t acted on the matter.

They believed it was really Samantha who killed my mother.

“We are waiting for your words about what is happening, Alpha—about the passing of Mother Luna and the culprit who ended her life! Some photos were posted on social media and everyone thinks—”

“Shut up!” Liam snarled. “There is no proof yet that it was Miss Samantha who could be in that CCTV video! Stop assuming it is she who killed Mother Luna! All of you know how they love and protect each other even after Miss Samantha left the Silver Crescent pack!”

From Liam, who first suspected Samantha, I didn’t expect that.

“I told you from the very start that woman is a taboo! She’s not supposed to return here! Look what happened when she moved here with her twins! Everything just turned into misery and chaos! The people are scared! They are losing faith in the pack Alpha and the council! How are we going to convince them that everything is under control?”

“As if everything is under control here.” One of them stood, staring directly into my eyes with a rebellious look on his face. “Since they arrived, there is no peace in this place anymore!”

The room was filled with quarreling, blaming, and yelling, and Liam and I couldn’t do anything about it.

It seemed there was no way to calm all these people down but to prove to them that my wife was innocent. That she wasn’t the girl on the video and she didn’t kill my mother. There was no way Samantha could do that to mom. She was devastated already. Once she found out that she was being accused of the crime that happened—

I had already decided.

I had to go and arrest my dear wife to find the answer...

Chapter 129
[SAMANTHA’S Point of View]

His warning was not to get out of the house no matter what.

I watched Devon and Diana outside through the open window as they played on that small playground their father had prepared for them. They looked beaming and innocent, and it wrenched my heart because I couldn’t tell them that their grandmother had already passed away. I couldn’t tell them she died outside the gates.

My heart shattered at the thought that Lena died while thinking about all of us—about Dominic, Devon, and Diana. About the last time, I screamed at

her for keeping secrets from me about my mom and all the twisted things she did just to save me from the people who wanted me dead.

I still had no idea why Lena was so terrified of the truth. I didn't understand why she decided not to speak of it to me. But I understood she was trying to keep me safe from the enemies. She wanted to keep it a secret until she couldn't stop it from spilling anymore because I would do anything to know the whole truth.

How was I supposed to protect us if I didn't know the true enemy?

I never wanted this to happen.

"Miss Samantha? Is there something that's bothering you?" Madison came to me with a plate of cookies. She placed it on the side table with a worried look on her face. "Is this about—"

"Not here, Mads. I haven't told them about the incident yet." I stopped her from saying it. She nodded, a little embarrassed, and whispered an apology.

"It's okay..." I whispered to her and reached for her hand to squeeze it. The tension on Madison's shoulder disappeared as she smiled at me with sad eyes. "I still need time to tell the kids. I just need Dominic to explain it to them together. They will be both devastated if they find this out and I need Dominic to be with them when that happened..."

"I understand, Miss Samantha. But please, you need something to eat. You haven't eaten anything since last night. The Alpha will be worried if you lose weight and he finds out you are not taking care of yourself."

"Thank you for reminding me, Mads." I smiled back at her. "Just leave it there. I will eat it later."

Madison nodded, pleased that at least I let the food be left on the table, and then went outside to look and play with the kids.

I was baffled when the door suddenly opened and turned to find it was my husband standing with Patrol guardsmen behind him. I first noticed the dark, grave look on his face as he stepped inside and the men behind him followed.

“Dominic,” I smiled at him nervously, confused about what was happening. “What’s going on here? Why are you with these people?”

Instead of answering me, he gestured to the guards to go straight to the playground. My brows deepened into a confused frown as I stared at him and found he couldn’t look me in the eyes.

“Dominic! What is this!?” I yelled at him as I stood from my seat.

That’s when I heard Devon and Diana scream from the backyard and a guard stopped Madison from going after the kids. My eyes widened in disbelief as I quickly turned around and looked at my husband, but he had already grabbed my wrist before I could get away from him.

“Don’t, Samantha,” he growled as he glared at me with both pain and pleading in his eyes. “I need the kids in their room so we can talk.”

“What is this?” I snarled at him with disbelief and anger in my eyes. “At least you should have let me handle the kids! Don’t f*cking scare them, Dominic! What is wrong with you!? Why are you doing this?!”

He didn’t answer though and looked to his side, where I followed his stare. Behind the guards stood some of the elders and council members, waiting outside impatiently and shooting me judging and frustrated looks.

“What the f*ck did they say to you this time?” pain etched all over my face, hurt that he believed them more than his own mate. “What lies did they force you to believe this time?”

“We don’t have any time for this,” he hissed at me, so close that I felt his lips touch my ear. I was so angry I pushed him away but he didn’t budge. “I am doing this for your sake, my love. Please trust me with this.”

I glared at his eyes. And despite my anger, I found sincerity in them, which made me finally convinced to go to him in the room where he wanted me and I to talk.

“The living area is okay for both of you to talk, Alpha Dominic. Please let us know what you wish to say to the accused.”

Accused?!

That’s when Dominic’s eyes turned sharper when he saw the shock in my eyes.

“Stay here,” he snarled threateningly at the elders and council members behind him, and they flinched from his glare. “I will talk to my wife first.”

There was disappointment and displeasure on their faces when my mate pulled me straight to our room, which I assumed would make them more agitated because our room was designed to be soundproof. Dominic wasn’t on their side, but I couldn’t understand why he was doing this.

“Is this about Lena? Are they accusing me—”

“I don’t believe them if that’s what you think, my love.”

“Then why are you here!? Are you going to arrest me? Is that why there are so many guards out there?!”

He dragged his hand down his mouth as he exhaled in exasperation and then glared into my eyes. “You have to go with me, my love.” he couldn’t look me in the eyes as he explained further. “I know it wasn’t you who was in that CCTV footage as the one who my mother last spoke with. Someone must have manipulated the situation and spread false information about you. I need you to come with me to prove your innocence, my love.”

“I can’t believe you can’t defend me against those people, Dominic. You are the Alpha! Why are you letting them do this to me!” I said with teary eyes, “There’s no way I can hurt your mother. I love Lena with all my heart!”

He pulled me to him and embraced me tight as he kissed the top of my head. I was so upset that tears started to roll down my eyes and stained his shirt with them. “I know... I believe you, Samantha. But these people will not stop until they see you dead. I need you to calm down and listen to me. I won’t let them hurt you; that’s why I need you to come to me.”

“But the kids—”

“I will take care of them. Liam will make sure they’re safe. Madison and Cynthia will stay with them while the trial is held. I won’t let Richard Bennett and Olivia win, Samantha. I will not let them hurt you and spread their lies about you. I will make sure they will pay for doing this.”

“Do you think they could be the ones who killed Lena?” I asked him with terror in my eyes.

His jaw stiffened as feathers appeared on the muscles of his strong jaw. “We are not sure about it yet, my love. But if I find strong proof that Richard is behind this, I will not just banish him from the pack... I will tear him limb by limb and make the beasts living in the Black Forest eat his remains.”

I looked into his face. That anger, misery, and grief brought so much stress to his features, making those dark circles under his eyes look awful and worrying. I could tell Dominic was suffering from the inside and just collected himself not to crumble after the consecutive losses that the Silver Crescent had been experiencing. He was losing control over his pack, and the last thing he would ever want was to see me sentenced to death after being falsely accused of a crime I never committed.

Dominic was the one who was suffering the most and I couldn’t make this more difficult for him. My husband needed me...

“Trust me with this, my love. I will do everything possible to prove to Silver Crescent that you are innocent. That you are a good person who can lead them to peace and prosperity just like I do for them. We can’t let Olivia and Richard destroy us. We have to fight back,” he whispered to me as he

cupped my face, his eyes pleading with me. “I need you to be strong for me.”

Tears rolled down my eyes. Yes, I was scared for me and my children, but it was time for me to fully trust my husband.

“I trust you...” I murmured to him and he kissed me deeply on the lips as tears rolled down my face.

Chapter 130
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

I had to get her out as fast as I could.

It broke my heart to watch my wife being incarcerated in the dungeons of my Pack manor, and what worsened it was that I couldn’t do anything about it. I f*cking hate when I am the Alpha of the pack and there’s nothing for me to do to save my wife from the people who wanted me and her to be executed in this very place.

My eyes darkened and sharpened as I walked towards the hallways. My aura gave death as I walked past the omega servants and gamma soldiers, who flinched and bowed their heads to me in fear and reverence.

I swore I would never be the same man Samantha hated several years ago. But seeing my wife being treated like an animal on my turf, it was as if a little of that dark, ruthless side of me slipped, not to punish the woman who loved me with all her life, but to destroy the enemies who wanted to destroy her—us.

And it was the time that I wish I could take back that ruthless guy whom everyone feared.

But I wasn’t like that anymore. Samantha changed me. She transformed me into a better version of myself. And I promised her I would never revert to my old ways. I wanted to become a man worthy of her.

First, I had to kill the enemies and prove my wife’s innocence.

“Alpha Dominic!”

I halted in the middle of the hallway when I heard that cursed voice. My eyes immediately shot the man a deadly look in the face as I slipped my hands out of the pockets of my pants and tightened them into fists.

The audacity of him to show his face here!

Feathers appeared on the muscles of my jaw as I turned around and glared at Richard Bennett. I gritted my teeth. My knuckles turned white. And all I had in mind was to kill the bastard right on the spot where he stood. I barely controlled my anger until I noticed I was already shaking from it.

“How dare you show your face here, Bennett!?” I hissed at him, my eyes narrowing with cold anger. “I should have killed you in that old library building.”

“You have all the reason to kill me now, your Grace,” Richard Bennett grinned as he approached me with his hands clasped behind him. My eyes narrowed as I saw that he was taunting me with that amusement pasted on his old, ugly face. “But you know that there are more important matters you have to work on besides staying in your wife’s cell the whole day. The council needs you to solve the chaos that is happening all over Silver Crescent, Alpha Dominic. And all of them are already questioning if you still care about the pack. You are so focused on your lovely little wife that you already forgot your duties and your responsibilities for your people.”

“You have got to be kidding me,” I scoffed as I gave him an insulted grin. “Who are you to tell me what to do, Richard? I don’t f*cking need your advice on what I should do. Liam is taking care of everything. And I will make sure everyone here knows what kind of traitor you are. Maybe you have cleaned the pieces of evidence well. But I still have one to use against you. And I will make sure the truth comes out once I find out you are also behind this manipulation that brought Samantha to prison.”

“I don’t know what you are talking about, your Grace.” There was sarcasm oozing from Richard Bennett’s mouth like poison and toads escaping from

it. “I am just doing my job as one of your advisors. And the way I see it, it is not healthy anymore that you spend so much time with a criminal instead of protecting and making sure your people are safe in your turf.”

My vision darkened. I grabbed the neckline of Richard’s shirt and then lifted him a foot higher from the floor. He wasn’t even surprised by what I did and grinned instead, making me more aggravated.

“What the f*ck do you want, Richard?” I hissed at him menacingly as I lifted him higher with one hand. “What the f*ck do you want from Samantha!?”

“You know what I want, Dominic,” he answered as he glared back at me. “I want them out of the pack and marry Olivia, just like what he talked about before you decided to think otherwise. You can have the kids. But I want you to banish Samantha away from the pack and make sure to make my daughter the Luna of Silver Crescent.”

“You’re f*cking crazy to think I would do that,” I snarled at him, wanting to tear him apart at that moment.

“Alpha Dominic!”

I threw Richard Bennett on the other side of the hallway, and his back hit the wall, making him groan. Liam’s eyes were wide as he swiftly approached us with his eyes glaring at the old man.

“I’m sorry. I know you are going to see Samantha, but you are needed at the eastern part of the gates. There is another attack, and the Gamma Commander told me they lost another two soldiers. You need to take control of the situation, Dominic. I am truly sorry. I told the elders I can handle it, but they wanted you there.” Liam was apologetic and was so worried when I answered him with a deep sigh and then turned to Richard Bennett with an irritated look.

“Fine,” I growled in a low, menacing voice. “I need you to send five hundred more to the eastern and southern gates and ensure they conduct tight rotations while defending the wall.”

“Roger, Alpha,” Liam answered firmly as he nodded.

When I went to the situation, it was worse than I had imagined it was. The walls had been taken down, bombed by the enemy, resulting in the deaths of two soldiers who were guarding them. The elders had so many demands I could barely keep up with them until I didn’t notice—

It had been five days since I last saw my wife, and I wasn’t sure if she was alright in the dungeons of the pack house...

Chapter 131
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

Freezing water splashed on my face, and I thought my heart stopped from the shock and the numbing feeling it left me after the water stung the bare skin of my back.

I huffed. A white cloud emerged from my mouth as I trembled, taking deep breaths. The prison was cold. It was as if it was designed to put powerful wolves into slumber and prevent them from getting out of this freezer-like prison. No silver chains, but the muscles in my body were so stiff and aching that I wasn’t able to move even a few steps away from the wall where I was held by thick ropes that were starting to burn my wrists and ankles.

The water made it hard for me to breathe. I turned around and glared at that person standing behind me with a bucket in her hand. That grin on her face made me want to grab her by the neck and tear a huge chunk of it with my teeth. My nostrils flared with both anger and pain, and my hands curled into fists as snarls reverberated in my throat, grinding my teeth until my gums bled. The metallic taste spread all over my mouth and ran down the side of my lips.

“What are you glaring at, criminal? Are you not satisfied with killing Lena, and now you want to kill me?” Her taunting grin made my blood curdle in anger as I bared my teeth at her and snarled.

“Look what kind of savage she is!” she exclaimed with a dramatic fear as she threw the bucket on the floor and flinched. She couldn’t hide the amusement in her eyes, though. That sickening satisfaction was pasted on her face as she smirked at me. “Now you see what kind of monster she really is! This is what I had been telling all of you! That she’s a beast that is out of control!”

I glared past her and saw some of the elders and members of the council watching me inside the cell like I was some kind of animal in captivity. My chest suddenly hurt when I remembered my children and wondered if they were doing well, if Dominic was doing his best to keep them safe while I was being incarcerated in the dungeons of Silver Crescent.

Dominic was right. It was blackmail. A trap that Olivia and her father planned to capture me and destroy me in front of the people of Silver Crescent. I didn’t see this scenario coming. I thought I had scared her away after so many of her attempts to win my husband back. But my instinct was right. Olivia would never stop until she got what she wanted.

She would never stop until I was dead.

“What do you want, Olivia? Why don’t you just stop!”

“Stop?! No! You stop, Samantha!” Olivia snarled as she closed the gap between us. Her face was so close to me I could see the dark ring around her eyes. She grabbed my jaw and forced me to stare at her furious face as she hissed at me. “You think I am scared of you, Samantha?! You forced me to do it! I warned you not to go back! To stay away from Dominic! I never wanted to do this to you or your children, but you forced me! You took him away from me, Samantha! And now you are paying the price!”

“He is never yours, Olivia! He is my husband! My destined mate! Stop convincing yourself that you deserve him because he doesn’t love you! Dominic doesn’t love you!”

My eyes widened when I felt a sharp sting on my face and then grew numb as I glared back at her menacingly: "You kill me here, and I assure you,

Dominic will search for you even in the deepest of hell and make you suffer."

“I don’t f*cking care... as long as I see you dead, I don’t care whatever Dominic thinks of me,” she grinned at me evilly as she raised an eyebrow. “So you think I f*cking care what he thinks of me anymore? As long as I see you suffer, I don’t care about anything in the world anymore.”

“You twisted little c*nt.” I hissed at her. “Just wait until I get out of here and I will make sure you’re dead!”

She scoffed, “Ha! If you ever get out of here, b*tch. I will make sure you will be headless within this week!”

Before my mouth could open and yell back at her, a sharp sting pierced my neck, and my eyes widened as I saw her arm on my neck. She stabbed something on me! Injected something—

“What the—”

Even she was shocked at what she did and flinched away from me as dread started to spread all over my face. “What the f*ck did you inject into me!”

“This is what happens when you upset me!” She barked at me and tossed it away in disgust.

Olivia stared at me for minutes as if waiting for something to happen. My heart started to beat so fast that I hyperventilated in fear; to my surprise, nothing strange happened to me. I waited in fear, anticipating any pain.

“What the hell—” Olivia murmured as soon as she noticed there was no effect on me from whatever she had injected. “How could this happen?”

“What the f*ck is that, Olivia!? Is that a poison!?” I yelled at her with both fear and anger.

She looked terrified and disappointed at the same time. “How could you be immune to the poison? Someone told me that you didn’t got infected when the poison got you before as well... what the f*ck are you, Samantha!?”

Was it about when a rogue attacked me? I recall being hurt by that beast’s claws, which the healer said had deadly poison. But it didn’t affect me even a tiny bit.

Was it because I indeed come from the clan of Primordials?

“How did you get such poison?” I asked her with gritted teeth. “Where the f*ck did you yet it, Olivia!?”

Chapter 132
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I could feel the warm blood dripping down my back.

The Gamma, who unexpectedly entered my cell and ordered me to face the wall, gave me so many lashes that I almost passed out in pain. Twenty ruthless lashes on my back, and the flesh turned swollen and raw. My knees trembled as tears rolled down my face, questioning life and why I had to suffer like this.

Every inch of me ached, and I couldn’t move. It was so cold, and every joint in my body felt stiff while the wounds were burning despite the extreme drop in temperature inside my isolated cell. I couldn’t remember the last time I had water or decent food. I was deteriorating here, and I didn’t know what my husband was doing or if my kids were safe with their babysitters at Liam’s. I had to find a way to get out of here.

I needed to ensure Devon and Diana were doing well. They must be distressed now that I have suddenly disappeared again. What did Dominic tell them this time? What would happen if they discovered that I was in prison? I never wanted them to get into trouble, just like the last time when I almost lost them in the hands of the Black Claw criminals... I couldn’t stay here and wait while my kids were in danger.

How many days had I spent in this place? Five days? A week? Since day three, I haven't heard anything about Dominic. He stopped showing himself. Did he get tired of me already? Did something awful happen that he couldn't spare a minute to show himself to me or check if I was still breathing or what?"

Did he know what Olivia was doing to me in this place?

My chest hurts more than the wounds on my back could inflict on me.

"I can't stay here..." I whispered to myself as I looked up at the frozen ceiling with despair in my eyes. Tears rolled down my cheeks as I did my best not to sob, but it was too much, too much to bear knowing my children were out there like easy targets for my enemies.

And I had no idea what was going on with Dominic. Did Richard succeed in kicking him out of his title? Did Olivia and her father use tricks to make the council and the people of the Silver Crescent believe Dominic was not fit to rule the pack anymore?

But that would be impossible... Dominic knew what he was doing.

Could it be that he had finally abandoned me?

[Pull yourself together, child.]

My wolf's soft voice reverberated all over my head. Her sudden presence brought warmth to my chest, which spread throughout my body, warding off the chill. I let out a deep sigh as the pleasant feeling improved my breathing, and I felt the wounds on my back slowly heal.

I huffed as I whispered to my wolf, "I've been calling you for days, and I can't feel you. What happened?"

[I need to gather strength after I got fatal injuries, dear. The silver poison weakened me for days, and I am still recovering from it.] she explained with a soft, ethereal-like voice. [You tell me why we are in this kind of place.]

“Something happened,” I told her about the setup that happened after we all discovered that Lena was killed brutally, and everyone thought it was me who did it. “And Dominic—I am scared of what happened to him. The walls of this prison are so thick that I can barely feel the bond. I am afraid he had already forgotten us. What if the council and Olivia had completely poisoned his mind? What if he had totally abandoned us—”

[Or maybe he is just out there dealing with more dangerous people,] my wolf answered, trying to soothe the perturbation in me. [You think too negatively of the situation, dear. We should wait for your mate. He knows what to do.]

My eyes sharpened as I gritted my teeth and glared at the door across the cold, boxed room. “He promised me he would come to get me out of here. He promised me he would save me and prove to everyone I had nothing to do with Lena’s death!”

[I understand how you feel, child.] My wolf whispered with sympathy in her voice, which only made this pain in my chest worse. [But this is not something that you can do by yourself. There are people in this pack who want you dead so badly that they were able to bring you into this place. And thinking badly about your mate is not helping. Waiting is the safest option we have for now.]

“I can’t wait anymore. The longer I stay here, the more dangerous it will be for Devon and Diana! There’s no way I can let Olivia get close to them! She will kill my children!”

I studied the room and looked for something that could help me get out of this place. “I need your strength to get me out of these ropes. I have to get out of here.”

[This isn’t a smart choice—]

“I don’t f*cking care what they would do to me!” I snarled at her as tears trickled down my face. The desperation to see my children again was slowly eating my insides, and it was terrifying and agonizing at the same time. “My children need me!”

[They don’t need you dead, Samantha.] Her soft voice suddenly turned grave as I saw her in my mind glaring at me through her nose. Her liquid gold eyes swam with sorrow and perturbation, but she remained firm with her belief that going out from here was a stupid plan. "You know better than this." Trust your mate to rescue you from this dungeon. You have no other choice. Breaking out of this place only makes you look more guilty of the crime that you never committed!]

I slumped my body on the floor and my searing back against the freezing brick wall. The cold made the pain numb, but the healing was so slow it was making me more impatient.

“I hate it when you make sense.] I snapped at her and dropped my tear-drenched face into the palm of my hands as I wept silently.

Chapter 133
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I had to curl into a ball to keep myself warm.

This savage coldness was deceiving me. Every thirty minutes, Olivia’s minions went inside my isolated prison cell to splash me with water, making the situation even worse for me.

I didn’t know how long they were going to do this. I didn’t know how long I could tolerate what Olivia was doing to me. But if I ever heard her say anything about my children, I would never think twice about tearing her head away from her pretty little neck. I would make sure her head would roll down in front of her bastard dad.

Every muscle in my body trembled with ache. I stuck my tongue to the roof of my mouth, worried that I might bite it as my teeth gnashed and my jaws trembled at the cold. I pressed both my hands against my chest, between my breasts, to shield the tips of my fingers from any potential frostbite. I couldn’t lose a hand. I need them to rip Olivia’s eyes out and make her scream for mercy as I torture her and make her pay for what she did to me.

Another thirty minutes and I braced myself from the stinging pain of the freezing water splashing on my already burning skin. I held my breath and closed my eyes tightly, waiting for the pain to come, but all I heard was a scream and the banging sound of the metal pail dropping loudly on the cement floor.

I looked up with a trembling face and half-closed eyes. The image was blurry, and there were only silhouettes I could see. A body was lying face down on the floor, while there was a giant silhouette of a man standing on top of the unconscious body. My first instinct was to push myself against the wall and defend myself from whatever the man would do to me. But I was so exhausted I could barely move a muscle. It was as if my joints were locked into place, and it was excruciating to move even an inch from where I was lying.

“What—” I whispered in fear as I kicked my feet in a hopeless, desperate move to get away.

“Samantha! Samantha, it’s me!”

I didn’t know if I was just hallucinating, but the voice was so familiar to me—the voice of a man whom I would never expect to hear in a place like this.

No. It could be just my mind’s trick.

“Samantha!”

My eyes widened when I realized it was real. He was real! I immediately pushed myself up to look at his face, and then tears rolled down my face as soon as I recognized the man who was kneeling in front of me.

“Killian!” I exclaimed. I wanted to throw my hands around him in a tight hug, but I couldn’t move. Tears brimmed in my eyes as he embraced me tightly and took off his coat to wrap it around me. “What are you—what are you doing here?!”

“Saving you, silly,” he growled at me as he carried me into his arms. “What do you think I am here for?!”

“I mean,” I grimaced when I swallowed hard and then whimpered softly. Killian looked down at my face with anger and worry. “How did you know I was here...?”

“It doesn’t matter, Sam. What matters is for us to get out of this place as fast as we can without the guards seeing us.”

“That’s impossible. This place is guarded twenty-four seven, and Olivia makes sure there are guards everywhere in this place. How did you barge in without being detected?”

“Do you think Olivia is the only person who has loyal connections here?” Killian grinned at me, but failed to hide that fear and worry in his eyes. “I will get you out of this place even if it means I have to wage war against Silver Crescent. You told me Dominic would take care of you, and look what he’s f*cking doing right now. He lets you rot in this place while he’s busy worrying about other people at the eastern gates. F*cking moron.”

I couldn’t answer back. I couldn’t defend my husband from him as tears rolled down my face. Because he was right. Dominic had already forgotten me.

As Killian carried me out of the cell, two other guards were waiting for us and led us straight into a narrow tunnel, which I had never seen before. I was so surprised to see that Killian must have been communicating with these men to spy against my mate’s pack.

As we got out of the tunnel, Killian decided to put me down, and I grimaced, feeling so scared and uncomfortable when I felt the grass tingling the soles of my feet. Two horses were already prepared for both of us as the two guards nodded at Killian and returned to the narrow, dark tunnel.

“I need to go to Liam’s house and get the kids,” I begged Killian as I walked towards him, almost limping. “I have to know if my children are safe and not being held or hurt with Olivia and her men!”

“You can’t go back, Samantha.” His face was grave as he said the words to me with both his hands on my arms, trying to steady me. “You know how dangerous it is that you left your prison cell. I know these people are accusing you wrongly, and you are just trying to prove your innocence. But f*ck it, Samantha! Olivia is torturing you there! She is slowly killing you and that d*ckhead—I mean your excellent husband—has no idea what they are doing to you!”

“How did you know what happened here, Killian? Who told you?” I asked him, still wondering where he got the news from. “How did you know that I was arrested because they think I killed Lena?”

“I have eyes everywhere, Sam,” he patiently explained as he put his hand lightly on top of my head with worry in his eyes. “I told you... If that bastard failed to take care of you, I will! That’s why I am here—to make sure you can get out alive from that place. I couldn’t let Devon and Diana suffer if ever you died in that dungeon, Sam.”

It felt as if every part of my body weakened, and I couldn’t help but cover my mouth to muffle my cries.

Chapter 134
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“What’s this place?”

Killian stepped inside the cabin I didn’t know stood in the middle of the western forest of Silver Crescent. I had been silent the whole hour we were on the horse as Killian led me to this secret place, he said he had been using since he started hunting in this part of the forest.

I looked around the house. The woods looked old and moldy as the fresh, musky scent of them filled my nose. Everything in it was made of wood. The benches, the tables... There was no kitchen in this place.

Only a king-sized bed that made me a little conscious, which I was sure Killian felt as well.

“Uhh, I guess you have to stay here for a few days until this issue is solved, Samantha. Like I said, I won’t let you stay in that prison in the hands of those people who want you dead. I am not Dominic. I can bend the rules if I have to.

“You are risking your life and your people for helping me, you know that?” I said to him as I sat on the edge of the bed and felt its softness as I bounced slightly on it. The fur felt silky as I smoothed it with my hand. “You are being reckless, Killian. What would Brianne think after you took me out of prison? She must be worried.”

“We already talked about it,” he answered as he gazed into my eyes. Killian sat down on the bench in front of me and then leaned his back on the edge of the table with a heavy sigh. “Actually, it was she who sensed you were in danger, Sam. We both decided to get you out of that situation. After I learned what really happened and how you ended up in that situation, I came straight here."

“Brianne wants to save me?” I didn’t understand why it sounded funny. “I thought she hated me.”

“Well, she does,” Killian answered with a smile as he folded his arms on his chest. “But she’s not a bad person, Samantha. She saw in her vision that you suffer in Silver Crescent, and she wanted to help. She told me that Silver Crescent is filled with negative energy right now, and I need you and the children to get out of that place.”

I gazed at the grave expression on his face with worry. “You know I can’t do that. I can’t leave Dominic when so much is happening in Silver Crescent, Killian. It’s not about the place. It is about me and the kids. We brought this to Dominic’s pack, and I have to do something to stop this.”

He grimaced, “That’s f*cking b*llsh*t, Sam! You almost died in that dungeon, and you still want to go back!?”

“All of this that is happening to Silver Crescent is because of me, Killian. Because of the secrets that were hidden from me since I was a kid! I

thought those enemies here... I am the reason why they attacked Silver Crescent, and I was probably the reason why Lena died in the hands of those people." My eyes were wide with dread as I continued explaining to him. "I have a feeling she went outside to confront someone from that organization and died trying to defend me! I am the reason why she's dead, Killian!"

I trembled from head to foot as I bent my knee up to hide my face and embraced myself. Loud sobs emerged from my throat as I rocked back and forth, trying to process the overwhelming grief and fear that started to consume me. It was too much. It was way worse than the torture I received from Olivia and her men.

It was something that would leave me traumatized until the end of my life.

I felt Killian's arms around me as he stopped me from rocking myself on the bed. He kissed the top of my head to soothe the agony that had been tormenting me since Lena died.

"I'm sorry, Sam," Killian whispered so softly in my ear. "I'm so sorry this happened. You don't serve all of this. You don't deserve this pain."

"This is why I have to go back." I pushed gently away from Killian and looked at him with pleading eyes. "I have to go back and fight beside Dominic and make sure Devon and Diana are safe. Dominic can't do this without me, Killian. He needs me."

There was displeasure on his face as he looked down on me through his nose. I understood why Killian was upset, though. He thought I was the most foolish person he had ever met. But I don't care about anything anymore. Dominic couldn't face the situation alone. I couldn't run away from the chaos I caused in this place. "Dominic is doing his best—"

"Are you even hearing yourself, Samantha? Telling me he's doing his best after I saw you half-dead in that prison cell?!" Killian aggravatingly stood from the bed and paced away with his back to me. "Don't f*cking tell me he's doing his best when you're suffering like this! You told me he's going to take care of you; that's why I allowed you to leave Moonstone Pack! But

look what is happening, Samantha!" he turned around with angry green eyes. "Look at you!"

"You don't know what is happening, Killian—"

"All I know is you are suffering, Samantha!" his voice boomed all over the house, and I was so baffled I almost jumped out of bed. "All I know is that you and the kids are not safe anymore in this place, and I have to take you away from Silver Crescent just to make sure you won't die, just like what happened to his mother!" his teeth were grinding as he yelled, "I will never let that happen!"

Killian didn't understand that it was because of me that the Trinity Fang and the Black Claws were after the Silver Crescent. He didn't know the whole truth about my identity, and I couldn't blame him. He was just scared for me and the kids, and as my true friend, Killian cared about me like family.

As if he had read whatever was in my head, Killian snarled in his deep voice, "If you are thinking I don't know about what is really happening here, Sam, then you are wrong. I know everything. But I am not as stupid as Dominic. I won't risk your life fighting those criminals."

I bit my lower lip tightly as I lowered my head with tears in my eyes.

Chapter 135
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

I was trapped.

I wanted to return to the pack manor so bad, but I couldn't leave the eastern gates. How many days have we been under attack by the Black Claws? Five days? Had it been a week already? Liam couldn't fight and manage this barracks with me because I wanted him to focus on guarding the twins. There was no one I could trust and rely on but Liam.

I looked outside the tent, exhausted and with heavy eyes. I haven't had any sleep for three days. Everything here was chaotic—a battlefield full of dead bodies. One massive explosion brought down a portion of the wall,

preventing me from leaving the place, and even though I wanted to go back to Samantha so badly, a minute of me being gone from this place would take the whole pack down. There was no way I could let that happen.

The worst thing that could happen was for these bastards to enter my turf and destroy everything. But I was more concerned for the twins and Samantha. Once they entered the place, I knew my family would be their first target.

So as long as I can hold them away from the gates, I would do everything, even if it meant I had to die in the process.

“Alpha!”

I stood at the edge of my sleeping cot and watched as the worried face of one of my Gamma commanders approached me. “What is it?” I asked, and feathers appeared as my jaws tightened. “Are they not stopping yet?”

“There are new troops on the other side of the forest that are gathering, Alpha. And according to our intelligence estimate, around five thousand more troops are marching toward us,” he stated with a pale face.

All my forces had been fighting tirelessly since a part of the wall was destroyed to hold back the enemies. I could feel their morale getting weakened as days passed, and we couldn’t do anything to close that giant gap in the wall. We made twice, thrice an attempt to block the hole, but we needed a gigantic boulder to close it.

“But I have more grave news for you, Sir.”

My brows deepened. I didn’t know why, but I suddenly felt scared, and my chest went heavy. “What is it? Is this about Richard Bennett? Is he after something despicable again?”

“No. This is not about the Bennetts, Sir,” he said with a low voice, which made me more anxious. “This is about your wife.”

My eyes widened with both perturbation and fear. “My wife?! What happened to her?!”

There was hesitation on his face, like he didn’t know how to start or how to deliver the information without me exploding in front of him, so I already assumed it was really bad. I inhaled sharply and exhaled heavily as I rested my hands on my hips while glaring at him. “I should go back to the pack manor. I should check on her—”

“I am afraid you won’t find her there, Alpha, ” he answered without looking into my eyes. “I was informed that someone broke into the dungeons and took the Luna away.”

“Someone what?!” I felt as if I could erupt at any moment. “What the f*ck do you mean someone took her away!? I thought they were guarding the whole place well?!”

“I am not sure what happened—”

I didn’t let him finish, though. I shoved him out of the way and shifted to my werewolf form, where I ran as fast as I could to get to the pack manor. I covered the distance in five minutes instead of the usual fifteen.

When I arrived at the gates, everyone was in shock and panic from my sudden appearance. I went straight to the main hall, where the butler ran towards me with hysterical eyes and immediately covered me with a bathrobe as soon as I shifted back to my human form to investigate what happened in the dungeons.

“WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE! WHERE IS MY WIFE!?”

“Alpha Dominic—”

I halted, and my eyes turned crimson orbs when I glared at the butler with blazing rage. My sharp teeth were bared as I snarled at him. “I am asking a f*cking question! Where is my wife?!”

“She was taken!”

My head turned sharply around, and I saw Olivia approaching me with her hands folded on her chest. I was so pissed that I growled at her and she just stared at me with a blank, unbothered expression on her face.

“Why are you here, Olivia?! What are you even doing here?! I told you not to show your face here anymore!”

“You can’t get rid of me that easily, Dominic. I am still a member of your council and a major investor in your company. I have every right to be in this place, and you know that.”

“I said, where is Samantha?” I hissed at her through clenched teeth, my voice shaking with anger.

“She was taken... away,” she answered with a bored but amused look on her face as she checked on her nails. “One of the guards saw who took her, though. The council is unhappy with the incident, Alpha Dominic. They wanted to wage war against the Moonstone pack for trespassing and for taking Samantha out of the Silver Crescent dungeon! Meaning they are both f*cked up right now, Dominic. The people want your wife dead.”

I couldn’t believe what was happening. I stood there for a moment, contemplating the situation. Samantha was gone and I didn’t know if I should be happy knowing she was out of the dungeons. But the thought that she was with the Moonstone Alpha tormented me.

“Dominic! Where are you going!? You are supposed to handle the situation and take Samantha back!” Olivia’s furious scream echoed all over the hallways.

“I’ll deal with it later!” I snarled back at her and gave her a warning look. Olivia seemed unhappy about my reaction and expected I would go ballistic on taking my wife back to the pack.

But perhaps it was better that Samantha was out there somewhere with Killian. Despite my fear, I trust my wife even when she was with that man.

She was better off out of this place, and I'll deal with the council myself later. If I had to.

When I went back to my office, I was aghast at what I saw.

The whole room was in chaos! All the evidence, the traces, and the maps that were displayed on the corkboard were destroyed and set on fire! I didn't know what to feel as I walked toward it, studying the remains of the investigations I had done to find out who that demon was who killed my mother outside the gates of the pack.

There was only one answer to what happened to all the evidence that was burned into ashes in front of me.

There was definitely a spy in my place. Someone who didn't want to be caught for what he or she did. Someone who wanted to pinpoint everything to my wife so they could get away from what they did!

My eyes narrowed in pure anger as my breathing turned slower and deeper. My stomach tightened from the sickness I felt as I smeared the ashes on my hand.

The culprit was just around this place. Someone who can get in and out of my own packhouse.

Someone who has access to my personal office.

Chapter 136
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"How long are we going to stay here?"

I was frowning while looking outside the window. It was already dark, and the whole forest was filled with the nocturnal sounds—from soft noises and gentle rustling of branches and leaves to the snarling and screaming of wild beasts in the heart of the pitch-dark woodlands.

“I have to go back and see Devon and Diana, Killian. I can’t stay here any longer and just hide like a coward. If they want me dead, then let them fight me. I can fight back. I am not the weak wolf you used to know before. I know how to protect myself now.” I said to him with a grave look on my face.

Killian was still sitting on the bench and didn’t even leave or move from it, scared that I might run away straight to my enemies. He knew me so well. He knew I would do anything just to get to my kids, even if it meant I had to risk my life just to know they were safe.

He frowned back at me, but there was anxiety etched on his face as he leaned his back against the edge of the table and then sighed heavily. “You know I can’t let you go away from here, Sam. It’s too dangerous. Once Olivia and her minions find you, they will kill you on sight. I would never let that happen.”

“I told you I can fight—”

“Yes, I believe you can fight, Sam.” he looked unhappy with my stubborn reply, “But you barely survived the last time you were pinned down by fifteen wolf-men during that time you were spying on Olivia. If Dominic didn’t come for you—”

I was baffled that he knew about it as well. “How did you know that, Killian?! What else do you know about what is going on here in Silver Crescent?”

He shrugged his shoulder and then smirked, “Well, my intel inside is excellent, so I guess I know a lot more than you do. I must tell you, Silver Crescent is no longer a safe place for you and the twins. I want to go inside and get them myself, but it would be impossible for me to enter the gates again. After they found out you were missing, they had tripled the guards on the gates and had been searching for you all over the forest.”

I almost jumped out of bed with panic in my eyes when I heard gentle knocks on the door. Killian was on full alert as well, but I saw how his shoulders relaxed as soon as he stood from his seat.

“Who is it?” I hissed at him with wide eyes. I crouched in a fighting position with his jacket still hanging around my shoulders, and then ground my teeth in anticipation of any attack.

“Relax,” he chuckled as he walked to the door and then winked at me. “She’s here.”

“She who?” I snarled at him, scared of who he was referring to.

My heart almost exploded when Killian reached for the knob and slowly opened the door. His face changed from serious to soft, though, when he saw the person outside, and my body relaxed when he smiled so widely at our strange visitor.

I caught that sweet scent, and I swear I knew that smell somewhere...

“She’s been wanting to see you, Sam. She’s really worried.”

Killian pulled the door wide open as he welcomed his visitor, and I couldn’t believe who I was seeing.

It was the witch from Moonstone Pack.

It was Brianne.

Her long, dark, wavy hair cascaded down her back as she walked inside with a shy smile on her face. Those cold, arrogant eyes she had shown me before were replaced with softness and elegance I never thought I would see on her. Killian must have changed so much about this girl, and I could tell he took very good care of her since I left the Moonstone.

And Killian’s eyes. They were wide and bright as he stared at her beauty.

He was in love with her, and I was happy for them.

“It’s Brianne. She insisted on going here and meeting you, Sam.” Killian explained as he led her inside the cabin with a gentleness I had never seen in him before. “She needs to know if you are safe.”

My brows raised at what I heard: “I never thought she’d be concerned like this about me.”

“Well, you are a direct descendant of the Royal Family.” It was Brianne who answered this time with shyness in her eyes. She couldn’t look straight at me. How would I be able to trust a person who couldn’t look me in the eyes?

“I am here to give you a warning.” As she lowered the hood of her black jacket, Brianne’s softness gave way to an adamant look. “This is something far more complicated than you can imagine, Miss Samantha. Both the death of your mother and the mother of the Silver Crescent Alpha were connected to your real identity.”

“I already suspected Lena’s death is connected with my mother’s death, Brianne. I just need to know who did this to her and make them pay.”

“The path will never be easy for you.” She replied with worry in her voice. “I saw in my vision more powerful enemies surrounding you and the people you care about. You can’t face these forces alone. Not when there are always people who would corner you and your mate to the edge of your despair. Alpha Dominic is already losing it, Miss Samantha. You two should work together to defeat this common enemy you have. And stop this brewing war and the imminent destruction of Silver Crescent from the hands of the Black Claw pack.

“I have to go and get my twins,” I said to Brianne with a dread-filled face. “I need to prove my innocence to people and take my twins back!”

“I can help.” Brianne took a step forward toward me but then stopped when she saw the fear on my face. I wasn’t yet recovered from the torture that happened to me in that dungeon, and being close to other people makes me feel as if they want to hurt me. Like what Olivia did to me. This made Killian even more upset when he saw my reaction.

“We can perform a ritual. This will help you learn new skills to use against your enemies and save your twins.” Brianne’s voice turned soft as she tried to convince me. “I can improve the abilities you already have.”

“Why are you helping me? Why are you doing this?” I asked Brianne, and couldn’t help the suspicion in my voice. The last time we saw each other, she was resentful of me. And my instinct told me I couldn’t trust anyone anymore.

“You can trust her, Sam.” Killian’s eyes were pleading as he looked at me. “She’s concerned about you and the kids. I told her everything. She wants to help.”

I stared at Brianne for a minute, studying the look on her face. All I saw was genuine kindness and worry as she tried to smile at me.

With a pale face and weakened knees, I looked down and curled my fists on my knees.

“Fine. Let’s do this.” I snarled in low, desperate voice.

Chapter 137
[DEVONS’s Point of View]

“Devon, I have a terrible feeling about what is happening right now.”

I looked at Diana as she combed the hair of her doll, which Liam brought to her yesterday. It’s been days since we last saw Mom, and we were both starting to feel worried about her and Dominic. What was going on with them? I heard from the guards outside that there was an attack happening at the eastern gates, and a wall there collapsed from a giant explosion. Diana and I just assumed Mom and Dominic were busy controlling the matter while they assured Diana and me were safe in Beta Liam’s household.

Beta Liam hasn’t left the house since Dominic asked him to bring us here. Perhaps Diana’s feelings were right? Well, based on our past adventures,

she was usually right, though. And that made me even more concerned for Mom's safety.

"We should trust them, Diana. Mom said she will be okay, right?" I said to her, but I wasn't sure if I could convince her when I couldn't convince myself either. "We promised them both we would not do anything reckless after we almost died in that dungeon."

"But something's not right." she was looking restless as her shoulders drooped and then threw her doll on the side, which surprised me a little because she was obsessing over it for, like, the whole day. "I can feel Mommy's in danger and my stomach confirms it."

"Perhaps you're just hungry, Diana. Do you want me to call Madison so she can prepare us food?"

I knew what she was saying. I could feel it as well. That twisting, uncomfortable feeling when there was something wrong, when you were scared and nervous. But we promised Dominic and Mom. Even though I was certain there was indeed something wrong happening outside the doors of this house, I preferred ignoring it for Diana's safety. I wouldn't put her in danger again, just like the last time when I let my curiosity win over my instinct.

But just like Diana, it bothered me to the point that I couldn't focus on my homework.

I closed my eyes tightly, trying to ignore the feeling and Diana's heavy sigh and her mumblings. My ears were ringing and I felt uneasy and strange, and my chest was heavy that I could barely breathe—

Frustrated and confused with my feelings, I slammed my pencil against my desk and Diana almost jumped from the bed as she looked at me wide-eyed and surprised.

"Are you okay, Devon? Does your tummy hurt as well?" she asked, bewildered and worried.

“You know what? I think you are right. I think there is something wrong that is happening with Mom.” I said to Diana with a heavy chest. “I think we should go to find out.”

Her eyes widened again in fear, but then, as she stared at me and saw the determination on my face, her shoulders relaxed, and then she sighed deeply, “We promised them, right?”

“Yes, we did. But we can’t just stay here and do nothing, Diana. No one is telling us what is happening, and we don’t know where Mom is!” I answered furiously, “Can you stay here and just wait for Dominic? He’s been away for over a week, and we don’t know what’s happening to Mom. What if she’s in danger? What if she were kidnapped again? What if she’s—”

“Oh my goddess, Devon, calm down,” Diana approached me and then placed her hands on my shoulders, shaking me gently, “We can’t do this if you’re panicking like a little girl!”

“I am not panicking like a little girl!” I grimaced at her, but she was right. I was panicking. My eyes were a little teary because I knew what would happen next.

Diana narrowed her eyes at me suspiciously. “Sure you’re not,” she answered with a flat voice, and I did my best to swallow down the sob that was trying to escape from my swelling throat.

She then gently patted my head with a soft smile on her face as she whispered, “There, there, sweet Devon. Don’t cry.”

“Do you think we should go and find Dominic and Mom by ourselves?” I asked, observing the serious look on Diana’s face. She was always the intuitive one between us, and I trusted her decisions more than mine.

“We can try.” It was a safe answer for my twin, but I knew what she meant. She also wanted to go and find out what was happening.

We both stared at each other and nodded in unison.

*****

Going out of the house was never easy.

Liam was always on the phone, so he was basically staying in his office the entire day, and it was already dark. My poor best friend was still buried with hundreds of pieces of paperwork piled on his table, which Diana and I took advantage of as a good opportunity to get out of his place.

But Madison was always busy in the kitchen, where the back door was.

“Hi, Madison.”

My eyes widened when Diana approached her with a casual smile. I didn’t know what was in my twin’s mind, but I trusted her with her plans. Madison smiled back at her when my twin approached her, and then Diana whispered something to the babysitter, which made me curious and nervous.

As soon as Madison heard what Diana wanted, she immediately left and went straight into the room Liam had prepared for both of us.

“What did you say to her?” I hissed at Diana as soon as we got out of the back door and ran straight into the woods.

“I just asked her to look for something for me,” she answered with a worried face. “She and Liam will find out soon that we’re gone, so we should probably run as fast as we can and hide our presence from anyone.”

“You’re a genius, Diana!” I laughed at my twin, and she just shrugged her shoulders. I grimaced when she then flipped her hair sassily on her back, though, looking so proud of herself.

As we got deeper into the forest, something weird happened. I didn’t know if it was just me, but I was hearing strange noises, and I started to feel worried. I pushed Diana behind me as I looked around sharply, searching for any danger around us.

“What is it, Devon?” Diana asked with a trembling voice as she saw how my eyes narrowed in the middle of the darkness. “Did you hear that?”

“I thought it was just me,” I whispered to her cautiously as I looked around, my arms protectively spread for my sister. “I can feel we are not alone in here. Something is whispering in my ear, but I can’t understand the words. It’s more like mumblings.”

“I can hear it too!” Diana hissed back, scared and nervous. She hid behind me with her knees trembling. “Should we head back? Do you still remember the path where we came from?”

“No. It’s too late to go back.” I said to her as I held her hand and we continued walking through the dark forest. With my werewolf eyes, everything was clear and vivid. I knew the way back to Liam’s house, but I had to lie to Diana because we needed to go find Mom. There was no stopping us now.

There was rustling of leaves and branches near us, and Diana and I almost screamed in total fright when a white rabbit jumped in the middle of our way and stared at us with crimson eyes.

“Diana, stop! You make me dizzy!” I hissed at her when she shook me violently out of shock and fear as she closed her eyes tight. “Calm down!”

“I am so scared, Devon! We have to go back!” She begged me with tears brimming in her eyes.

“Mom is out there and she is in danger, Diana.” I held her by both shoulders and steadied her, wanting her to look me straight in the eyes to calm her down. “We have to make sure she is safe, and we will head back home after that.”

Diana understood what I meant, so she put on a brave face and wiped her tears with the back of her hands. “Okay. But this is the last time, okay? I am really scared.”

“Don’t worry,” I smiled at her as I patted her head gently, “I am here to protect you little sis.”

Chapter 138
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

I gathered the evidence that the fire failed to destroy and kept it somewhere safe. Somewhere, no one can find even Samantha.

After giving orders to the butler to take care of what happened in my office area, I went straight to my room and then slumped my heavy body on the edge of the bed. My shoulders were stiff, and every inch of me was aching. There were dark circles under my eyes, and my eyelids were so heavy that it was as if I was going to faint any moment from extreme exhaustion.

“I had to go back to the barracks,” I murmured to myself while my eyes were closed, resting them for a bit. I massaged the space between them and sighed heavily.

[If you want to die, then maybe you should go.]

My wolf emerged from my thoughts as I saw him lazily lying on the top of my bed like a projection in my head. He looked unsatisfied with everything that was happening in the pack and the fact that my mate had still been missing. And I had no idea where she was staying or if it really was Killian who took her away from the dungeons of the Packhouse.

“I am needed there, and you know that. I have to defend my people and make sure none of those criminals can enter my turf.” I snarled at him, but he just scoffed at me while licking his muzzle.

[You should go after your wife,] he replied with impudence as he narrowed his hazel eyes on me. [You should be taking care of her and your twins. Let those bastard people who are so greedy to claim power in your pack lead that war. Let them taste the terror those Black Claws spread in your city. You make all of them rely on you so much.]

“It is my duty to—”

[F*ck your duty to these people who doesn't even know how to be grateful for all the things you have done for them!] He snarled at me as he glared, showing his bared teeth, and stood from the bed. He slowly approached me like a predator toying with his prey. [Your duty is to protect your mate and the twins! You should be with them, Dominic!]

He was right. My wolf was right. I should be with my twins and Samantha, and here I was, killing myself. While the elders in my council gathered and engaged in pointless discussions, wasting valuable time, my soldiers sacrificed their lives to safeguard the pack.

There was no balance anymore. And I failed them both—my people and my family.

My heart and mind tortured me heavily, so I decided to go to the small courtyard of the manor to get some fresh air and see if I could reach Samantha through our mate bond. But as I walked through the silent hallways, I sensed a sneaky shadow—a presence I was so familiar with that my jaw tightened the second I recognized who it was.

With my Alpha ability to hide my presence from people around me, I followed the rat through the hallways and almost scoffed when I confirmed who it was.

[Richard f*cking Bennette!] my wolf exclaimed in pure anger and hatred. [I thought you already banished him!]

[He's one tough guy to deal with,] I said to my wolf through mindlink. [I have a feeling he's still up to something here and that we will find out.]

[Do you think he could be the one who killed Lena?]

I didn't answer, but anger surged in me as I followed Richard with a menacing glare. I didn't know what he was still doing in Pack Manor at this hour of the night, but whatever it was, I had a strong feeling it could lead me to a more interesting story about why Richard still wanted to stay in

Silver Crescent despite my threat that I would end his life once I saw him again.

I couldn't believe he didn't take my warning seriously.

[Do you think we should end him right now? You already warned him, right?]

[Shut up.] I snarled at him and then focused on Bennette.

I narrowed my eyes as I saw him exit the back door towards the courtyard. He even searched the surroundings, checking if there was someone who would see him sneaking around the place.

Richard went straight to the woods.

[What do you think he's doing in the woods?]

I ignored my wolf's comment as we both followed Bennett quietly, hoping I could see more evidence that he was the culprit behind the frame-up that happened to my wife. That he was behind my mother's murder.

That f*cker! I could tear him into bits!

Richard was cautious and continued walking in the heart of the forest. I was never surprised when he went back to the old library where I caught him and threatened him never to show his face again.

Multiple presences were sensed with my werewolf instinct, and I was surprised that those were the same men in black suits who Samantha and I fought after we caught Olivia having a strange transaction with them.

Some stayed in their convoy while others entered together with Richard. I saw how one of them, probably their leader, patted his shoulder and laughed with him as they walked inside the old building. Five more followed them and served as bodyguards for the strange guy.

It seemed Richard and that bastard were very close...

With my ability to conceal my presence, I easily sneaked inside the building without being detected. I saw how all of them gathered in the middle of the library hall, where they sat at a long, extravagant table, which looked so strange in a place as dilapidated as that building.

The table was well decorated with long candelabras and amazing food, as if those people had prepared it for Richard. It seemed that the man, who was one of my advisors and council members, had a special connection with those criminals.

A huge traitor. He and his daughter.

“So what now, Richard?” The leader of the men in black suits smiled at Richard, as the old man had done something that pleased him. “Are you able to deliver us the thing we needed the most?”

The thing?

Richard smiled awkwardly at the guy as he averted his eyes and then turned to the side, not being able to look straight at the man’s face. “There is a problem, Nathaniel.” he swallowed hard. “She isn’t in her cell anymore. She was taken.”

There was rage on the man’s face as he stood from his chair and slammed both of his hands on the table, rattling the utensils and plates on it. “What do you mean she was taken?! I thought you and Olivia had already trapped her in the dungeons of the Silver Crescent!? What is happening here?”

“Someone took her! The Alpha of the Moonstone Pack! The council is already talking about waging war against them, and I am working on how I can get her back, Nath! You know I am f*cking doing my best to make this plan work!”

“Your efforts are not enough!” the guy, Nathaniel snarled at him. “I thought we were already celebrating here! And now you are telling me she escaped!?”

“I am doing my best, Nathaniel. Believe me. I just need time!”

The man scoffed and then glared at Richard through his nose. His deadly glare made Richard look tiny compared to the gigantic body of the leader of those people.

“I need you to give her to me the next time you call me, Richard Bennette. You are f*cking wasting my time!”

“I will make sure to bring her to you, Nathaniel. It’s just... what happened in the dungeons of Silver Crescent was so unexpected. Even Olivia couldn’t believe Killian got inside that place when it was well guarded by the Elite Gamma guards.”

The man roared in anger, “I don’t care! Just f*cking bring Samantha to me!”

My eyes widened at what I heard. They wanted Samantha! They were after my wife! It was they who were behind all of this frame-up!

[I can’t believe you just realized that, Dominic.] My wolf snapped at me with a disappointed look on his face, and I couldn’t help but feel ashamed of myself. He was right. I should have suspected them first. It was they who wanted Samantha dead so bad that Olivia almost had her by the neck the last time she set a trap to kill my wife!

Just as silently as I got into the place, I stepped out of the building as silently as the dead night and then rushed back to Silver Crescent.

[I need to find Killian! I have to find my wife!] I screamed at my head as I ran to the west side of the forest.

Chapter 139
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“This might take a little longer to complete, so I hope you will be patient enough.”

“So let’s do this right now,” I anxiously said to Brianne. “I have to return to my twins as fast as possible. I know my kids. They must be looking for me already.”

“You said they are staying with the Beta,” Killian patted me gently on the back to calm me down. “They will be safe with him. I know Liam. He will take care of them.”

“I know,” I sighed, looking and feeling so restless as I slumped onto the edge of the bed and wrapped my arms around my stomach. “But you know Devon and Diana. They can be really sneaky sometimes...”

“Yeah... They get that from you, so I’m not surprised at all.” Killian chuckled as he and Brianne looked at each other and smiled. He scratched the spot under his chin, which surprised me because he only did that when he was shy. I had never seen Killian appear so self-conscious in front of a girl, and I believe he truly fell deeply in love with Brianne.

And I couldn’t help but smile and feel so happy for him.

“So are you ready? It might hurt a little.” Brianne stepped forward and reached for my hands. When I let her touch them, I felt her squeeze them as if she were trying to encourage me that everything would be alright.

I was scared, but I had to do this. There was no other choice.

“I am ready.” I nodded at Brianne with determination, and then she suddenly was the anxious one.

“It’s okay, Brie.” Killian held her on the small of her back and smiled, “Samantha is a strong she-wolf. She can take it.”

“First, I need you to shift to your werewolf form,” Brianne said softly as she stared deeply into my eyes.

*****

[It hurts!]

My teeth clenched as I felt the excruciating pain coming from all over my body as the smoke from Brianne's ritual swirled around me like thin, stingy clouds that pricked my skin like a thousand knives.

[I know. But you have to endure it, Samantha.] Brianne said through grinding teeth as she spread her arms wide to control the power that was surrounding me. [I never expected you to have this kind of power, and I am scared that if you can't handle it well, you might succumb to the darkness inside you!]

Darkness inside me? I asked myself as I closed my eyes tightly. The pain was too much. Too unbearable as I roared inside the bubble barrier that Brianne made just to contain my voice inside and not attract any beasts and enemies lurching in the area.

[What do you mean by darkness inside me?] There was a panic in me that was hard to control, and I yelped when I felt this terrible pain that made me almost faint. [Brianne! What is happening to me!]

[I am sorry!] Brianne yelled at me through mind link. I looked at Killian, who was standing beside her and was watching me with a pale, paper-white face. I knew at that moment that it was terrible. I was looking terrible.

[We have to finish the ritual for you to control your powers, Samantha! I need you to be brave for your twins and your mate! You need this!] Brianne yelled, and I could tell she was suffering from the difficulty of the situation as well. My eyes widened when blood dripped down her nose and from the tear ducts of her eyes.

[Brianne—]

[Don't mind me!] She hissed through her gritted teeth as she kept her hand high above her head. Trying to continue the ritual despite the agony she was suffering. [We have to do this! I need you to do this, Samantha!]

I had no idea why Brianne sacrificed so much for me, but I had a feeling there was something behind this. A reason why she was so desperate to help me. And Killian wasn't telling me everything.

One final surge of pain, and my body went rigid as I looked up at the sky with my eyes pleading to the Moon Goddess to give me more strength to endure it. I had never expected that level of agony as I howled through the night, using all my remaining strength for that short prayer.

And then everything went black as my exhausted body fell on the cold, hard ground.

*****

"Samantha?"

My eyelids fluttered as I forced them to open, but it was hard to focus. I looked up at the face of the person in front of me as a soft moan escaped from my lips.

"D-Dominic?" I murmured as my brows deepened into a frown. I felt someone's hand help me get up from the cold ground and then hold me by my shoulders to keep me from falling on my face again.

I felt so weak, like I was in the middle of a stampede by a thousand bison.

"No. It's me. Killian. How are you feeling? Can you stand up?"

"Ohh..." I grunted in pain, and that's when I saw Brianne helping me get up as well. She looked just as terrible as I was, but she handled it better than I did.

"What happened? Why does it hurt so much, Brianne?" I grimaced as I tried to regain my balance and stand without holding any of them. "Was it successful? Was the ritual a success?"

"Yes. But it isn't completed," Brianne said with a worried voice. "Your power isn't fully awakened yet, and with the ritual, it might hurt you to shift into

your werewolf form because your power would overwhelm you. You need something that can channel this power so you can use it without a problem. A medium. Something that can store this immense force living inside you."

I was still panting as I listened to her explanation, confused and still agitated from the pain that I was still suffering. "W-What do you mean?"

"Meaning, if you want to fully equip your powers after Brianne awakened them from inside you, you have to find an item that can help you use your powers without feeling like you're being torn in half."

I glared at Killian as I calmed my breathing while baring my teeth. "Then where can I find this thing? I need it!"

Killian and Brianne looked at each other with worry on their faces.

That's when I knew the ritual wasn't the hardest part yet.

Chapter 140
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I wasn't sure if I was doing it right.

I could still remember Brianne's warning—that this would never be easy since I had to break into the house of someone who had hated me for all her life. I never expected that the item she wanted me to get was in the possession of the Bennettes. I knew where Olivia was living, but I wasn't sure if the thing Brianne was talking about was being kept by Olivia or by her father, Richard.

"Remember," Brianne said to me with a hand on my shoulder, and her eyes were grave and dark. "It will never be easy to break into their home, knowing that Olivia and Richard are both hiding secrets from the pack. There could be traps or powerful guards roaming around their place. You need to be careful."

"I can do it. I have sneaked inside Olivia's place many times before. It's nothing new to me." I said to her with a little shaken confidence. I knew the

security in her place would never be as easy as before, but I believed I could do this. I had to.

“I can go with you.” Killian volunteered with determination on his face, but I saw the flash of worry in Brianne’s eyes. Killian must have felt it too, as he looked at her and held her hand to calm her down.

‘No.” I shook my head and smiled at the Alpha of the Moonstone pack. “I can do it, Killian. I need to do it alone. It will be faster if we don’t have to worry about each other’s backs. Besides, the Silver Crescent Council is also after you now. They must have already found out who broke into their dungeon and the culprit who set me free.”

Killian just smirked as if amused at what he heard, “Well, let them come, Samantha. You know I have always wanted to end those greedy people. I know Dominic will thank me for this.”

I raised an eyebrow at him. “Don’t provoke these people, Killian. You are not sure yet what they are capable of. They all want us dead, and I am scared for you and your people. This isn’t your war.”

Killian looked at Brianne with loving eyes and then at me with a smile. “You have been my friend for a very long time, Samantha. You know you are like a family to me. You, along with the twins, Brianne and I, will do everything to help you and Dominic. That’s what I promise you.”

Brianne nodded at me with kindness on her face as if telling me she agreed with Killian as well.

I stood straight and squared my shoulders as I prepared myself to go. “I should be leaving. I have to get this thing and get Devon and Diana to bring them here with you. They are not safe in Silver Crescent anymore.”

“We will stay here and wait for the three of you.” Killian nodded and then handed me a blade in a scabbard. “You might need this.”

“Thank you.” I nodded at him and smiled before I turned my back on both of them and then sprinted to the heart of the forest, back to Silver Crescent.

Brianne was right. The most elite guard in Silver Crescent was securing Olivia's mansion round the clock. I wasn't sure how she managed to have them stationed there, but I sensed that they weren't exclusively from Silver Crescent. She could have hired rogues to ensure no one could enter the place.

And that only meant that Olivia was indeed hiding something precious in her mansion that she never wanted anyone to see or know about. Olivia was hiding a valuable secret in her mansion, one that could help me in gaining power without causing me to get overwhelmed by its greatness.

I knew Olivia's mansion. I had been there so many times because most of the parties and grand balls were held in her place. If she were hiding something important, then it should be somewhere in her bedroom.

Just as I expected, after I made myself look invisible to the guards with the use of the new ability that Brianne enhanced after the ritual. Sneaking around Olivia's place became effortless for me.

But the way to her room was not easy.

Five giant men were roving around the hallways while four were posted in front of the door. All of them were armed with silver blades and silver weapons.

Whatever was inside that room was very important to Olivia.

The only way I could get inside was to go through the windows, which I immediately did, as quietly as possible. The elite sentinels guarded the door strictly, so it was surprising that one of the windows was open.

"What the—"

I squinted when all the lights in the room exploded the second my feet touched the marble floor.

"Samantha!?"

I lifted my face to see the horrified look on Olivia's face. She was wearing a nightgown with a silver blade on her hand, pointing at me. "What are you doing in my room?! What do you want from me!"

"I need something from you, Olivia. Something you're hiding in this place!" I hissed at her. She was about to scream, so I immediately sprinted towards her and pointed my blade at her neck. "Scream or I will cut open your lovely little throat."

"I don't know what you are talking about—"

"This! A kind of jewelry that has this symbol!" It was the symbol in my mother's diary that Brianne confirmed that I needed to balance my strength. "Someone told me you have it! Where is it, Olivia!?"

"I don't have any clue what you are talking about!" she screeched at me as her eyes stared at the blade with a dreaded look. "I have no such piece of jewelry! And that symbol is so ancient, there is no way I can have one of those!"

I was so shocked at what I heard that I loosened my grip on her. Olivia seized the opportunity to push herself away from me, shooting me a deadly glare.

"You are so out of your mind, Samantha! You are a f*cking savage!" she snarled at me. "How dare you break into my home!? You are not just a traitor to the pack but a thief as well!"

The insult was like a punch in the stomach, and it was too late for me to hold back. I bared my teeth and hissed at her. "Don't you dare play the traitor card on me, Olivia. Both of us know who the real traitor is! I can't believe you got away with what you did to me!"

"You will never get rid of me, Samantha. I have my claws around Dominic's neck! Maybe you have him for now because he thinks you are some kind of savior who could deliver him from all the terrible things that are happening in Silver Crescent." Her eyes widened in pure rage as she bared her teeth

back at me, “But you are f*cking not! You are not helping him, Samantha! You brought all of these nightmares to Dominic, and I can’t believe he still f*cking chose you! I don’t know what you did to him, but you are just making things worse! Dominic doesn’t deserve this! You have to let him go!”

“This is not the decision I should make, Olivia. Dominic loves us. He chose us! And we will face the future together until we eliminate all the enemies in our paths, including you and your father!”

She scoffed and laughed maniacally, “And you think Dominic will still choose you once he finds out you went running with the Alpha of the Moonstone Pack? After what you did, I have a huge feeling that Dominic thinks you betrayed not just the pack but him, Samantha!”

Olivia tilted her head to the side as soon as fear and sadness filled my eyes, and I saw her enjoying it. Savoring it. “Aww... look at my sad little Samantha. Do you think you can get away from all of this after you broke out from the dungeons of the Silver Crescent? You have no idea what a huge problem you are causing him now, little lady. Dominic must have already dispatched his men to go after you and your dirty knight in shining armor.”

“Killian is my friend and my true ally!” I snarled at her dirty remarks on mine and Killian’s connection. “You don’t know anything, Olivia!”

“Maybe I don’t,” she snapped at me as she squinted her eyes, “But everyone knows you are a sl*t, so it shouldn’t be me who you have to convince, but Dominic and the people of the Silver Crescent.”

“I will find that thing and end this chaos,” I hissed as I glared at her coldly while I stepped backwards until I felt the window on my back. “I will clear my name and take my kids away from here!”

Before Olivia could scream for the guards, I had already dived out of the window of her room and run straight into the woods.

Chapter 141

[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

It took me half an hour to get rid of the guards who ran after me. I thought one of them would never give up, but they must have sensed there were more dangerous forces surrounding the Black Forest that they never wanted to handle.

They must have thought I would never survive here, knowing I ran away without even bothering to shift into my werewolf form. I guess they knew the beasts lurking in the woods, given their hesitation when they stopped chasing me.

And then I realized, as I stopped and leaned against the old oak tree, that I had no idea where I was going. I looked around, catching my breath as I felt the chilly breeze against my bare skin, and tears started to brim around my eyes, scared and confused about what to do next.

The thing I needed wasn't in Olivia's mansion. And I wasn't sure if going to Richard Bennette's house would guarantee that the item was there. If Olivia's mansion was at that level of difficulty to enter, then I had a feeling her father's home would be like double or triple when it came to security. These people were cautious as skunks. Too bad they weren't aware that they leave their stink whenever they do something suspicious around Silver Crescent.

"But where is that thing?" I murmured to myself as I looked up at the starry sky above the Black Forest. "I need it. Please, Moon Goddess, I need the thing to fight alongside my husband and to protect my children."

Just as a tear rolled down my face, I saw something glittering—no, sparkling—that fluttered in front of me. Like butterflies, but their wings were glowing, shimmering in the dark. It was breathtaking! I had never seen such beauty before, especially not in a dark, cruel place like the Black Forest.

It was a line of shimmering butterflies, and I didn't know why, but I was so attracted to follow where they were going. There was a huge smile on my face as I watched their glowing wings flutter softly towards the part that I

had never seen before. I was so focused and mesmerized by their beauty that I didn't notice my surroundings.

As if awakened from a wonderful dream, I looked around and found myself in the bald part of the forest. Dominic had mentioned this area to me before as one where no plants could survive due to the acidic soil and the dark, filthy spirits that lingered in it.

"What the—" I gasped as I turned around with wide, dreaded eyes. And then I looked at the butterflies that left the place as if someone had sent them for me to lead me into this place. That's when I looked up at the sky and the full, silvery moon and smiled awkwardly, not knowing exactly how to feel.

"Are you showing me the way to where this thing is?" I asked the Moon Goddess in a whisper. "Are you watching me from up there?"

Then I felt a light feeling in the chest when I saw a falling star in the sky, as if the Moon Goddess had answered me herself.

I studied the place, and Dominic was right. It was reeking with dark magic. My wolf was feeling uneasy with the place, as if telling me not to go anywhere near the door that looked like an underground cave.

There was something strange in the mouth of the cave—like something, someone was calling me. Like something was seducing me to go inside and look at whatever it was hiding. A force that was inviting me to get inside and explore its place.

My eyes widened when I stepped closer to the mouth of the cave and saw the symbol carved artistically at the upper center of it.

The same symbol in my Mother's diary.

"So this is it?" I whispered to myself as I stared at the symbol with a heavy feeling in my chest and then sighed heavily. "This is where that thing is."

I was scared. Scared to get into a dark and evil place like this, but I had no choice. I was careful in every step I took— careful not to make any kind of sound as I walked inside the cave. My ears were ringing as I went further and further, the air getting colder and drier as I continued walking through the darkness. With the help of my werewolf eyesight, it wasn't that difficult to navigate around the cave. I just noticed the symbol engraved everywhere on the walls.

"Samantha?!"

I turned around, shocked and petrified at the voice I heard from behind me.

I thought I was hallucinating at first. Maybe the dark magic around the place was messing with my head? But his voice sounded so pleasing in my ears, and the more I stared at him, the more real he seemed to me.

"D-Dominic?!" I asked, still couldn't believe that he was standing right behind me, and was still panting. I studied his face, and he was red with rage as he glared at me. Why was he glaring at me?

"What are you doing here?" I asked again, still bewildered by his sudden presence. "You shouldn't be here, Dominic!"

"What are you doing here, Samantha!? What is going on here?" He snarled at me as he stepped forward in my direction. I felt how ferocious his presence was, and it made me flinch, which brought pain that was displayed in his eyes.

"I need to do something important here, Dominic. I can explain everything to you, but I need to get it quick so I can take the children to safety!" I didn't know why, but the panic in my voice made me sound and look hysterical, which made Dominic's brows furrow deeper.

He straightened his back as he exhaled in exasperation. "Do you even realize what you just did, Samantha!? You broke out of the dungeon! You just made yourself look guilty in the eyes of the people of Silver Crescent!"

“So this is what has been making you furious all this time!?” Pain surged through me like a hot knife stabbing into my chest. Tears glimmered in my eyes as I saw how my mate’s face softened at the pain he saw on my face. I wished I could just yell at him about how frustrated I was with him, but I couldn’t. I knew how stressed Dominic was about his people and their hatred of me, and he was also dealing with serious problems in the pack. But goddess, what should I do? Make him choose between us and his people?!

“Is it true that Killian was the culprit behind this?” he snarled at me with an accusing look. “Is it true that you went out of the dungeon with him?”

“He was there to help—”

“I thought we already talked about this!” he yelled, which made my eyes widen in shock. “You said you trust me, Samantha! That you will wait until I deal with this problem!”

“That’s the funny thing,” I smiled at him dryly and scoffed, “It made me think you have almost forgotten about me. How many days had passed, Dominic? Five? A week? Ten days?”

Guilt was etched on his face as he averted his eyes from me, but his jaw was still stiff, and his hands were curled into fists.

“I am doing my hardest to get to you as fast as I can, Samantha,” he said with a calmer voice but still couldn’t look me in the eyes. “But there was a problem with the wall, and I had to control the situation. I couldn’t leave it without worrying that the Black claws might succeed in entering the turf.”

I understood Dominic. I knew he was suffering from balancing his priorities for the pack and me, and the kids. “I know what you are going through, Dominic, but I want you to know that I can’t just wait in that prison until something bad happens to the kids! I have to do something to make this all stop! To make sure Devon and Diana will never be in danger again.”

“Then what are you doing here, Samantha? I had been searching for you in the entire forest until I felt you here through our mate bond. I told you the

forest is a dangerous place! You shouldn't be here!" He reached for my hand, wanting me to go with him.

"I can't." I shook my head, and he frowned at me, confused and worried. "I need to do something to make things right, Dominic. And I have to find it here! I know the Moon Goddess is guiding me here. She wants me to come here, Dominic."

"What are you—"

But Dominic's words were cut off when the cave started to shake, and small debris from the roof fell on us. Panic surged in my brain as Dominic immediately ran towards me and stood over me with his arms protectively.

"Whatever it is you are looking for, Samantha, we should find it quick!" he snarled in my ear, but this time, he didn't sound frustrated but more concerned about my safety.

"Thank you..." I whispered to him,

"I'm sorry I got upset with you," he replied with gentle eyes. "I just thought I might lose you again after you disappeared, Samantha. You scared me to death."

"I'm sorry I made you worry." Tears brimmed in my eyes as we locked eyes during the earthquake. "I am just glad you are here..."

"Me too, my love..." he whispered, and he planted a soft kiss on my lips as we walked deeper into the cave.

Chapter 142
[SAMANTHA'S Point of View]

The inside of the cave was trickier than we expected.

Dominic's ability to find old tracks, even those from weeks or months ago, was essential for us to navigate to the depths of the place. It was pitch

black, and I couldn't see anything even with my werewolf sense. I felt like we were floating in nothingness, unable to feel our hands or feet. Only my husband's whispers made me able to follow him as we headed to the deepest part of the cave, and as the air grew thin and heavy, that's when I started to worry.

[You think it is here? You're sure about it?] Dominic asked. I could sense the anxiety in his voice as he walked in front of me.

I knew he was still holding my hand, but I couldn't feel it anymore. I couldn't feel him. Only his voice in my head made me aware that he was still with me—that he never left me, no matter how strange and scary the situation was. I was not certain what we were doing, but he still had faith in my intuition, and that's what I loved most about Dominic. He believes me.

[Yes,] I answered as we continued navigating through the cave. [I have a huge feeling the Moon Goddess guided me to this place, Dominic. I feel like what I need is in here. Brianne told me it was in possession of the Bennettes, but I went to Olivia's house, and she had no idea what I was looking for.]

I felt him frown. [You went to Olivia's—what do you mean you went there?! Do you know how dangerous that is?!]

I didn't know why, but I couldn't stop chuckling as I heard how worried he was. [Yes. I went there and I wish you had seen her face after I sneaked into her room.]

[You don't cease to amaze me, Samantha. No one can get inside Olivia's room because of how strict the security is there, but you did. I don't wonder why she really freaked out after she saw you.]

[But the thing I am looking for is not there.] I said to him with a soft, uncertain voice. [And when I asked the Moon Goddess for some answers, she led me here.]

There was a pause of silence, and then I heard his voice full of remorse. [I'm sorry, I wish I hadn't listened to the council, Samantha. I thought I could handle all of this until—]

I stopped walking, and that's when I finally felt him squeezing my hand. [There are so many things we are not sure about, my love. But in the end, I am just thankful we still have and believe in each other. And I guess that's a beautiful thing. That we still hang on, no matter how hard the situation is. We belong together.]

[You are lucky we are not in a situation now where I can just pin you anywhere, love.] I sensed desire in his head as he squeezed my hand again. [Wait until we get home.]

My lips tugged into a smile, and then I bit my bottom lip hard. [Focus!] I laughed at him.

[How can you make me focus when you are so near me, Samantha?] His voice in my head was getting rough and hoarse, and so sexy I couldn't help but gasp a little. [You have no idea how bad I want you right now...]

But as his hand brushed up my arm, we both heard rustling and heavy footsteps coming towards us. It went louder and louder—like they were getting near, fast and deadly.

[What's that?!] I screamed in my head as my eyes widened in panic. I felt my husband's arms around me as he pushed me gently against the cave wall, anticipating the stampede that might happen. Dominic shielded me with his body and waited for the incoming running beasts, but the stampede didn't happen. We were both baffled when balls of floating fire lit the cave, and there, in front of us, we saw a pack of ferocious wolves with crimson eyes standing in front of us.

Veins, like purple live wires that pulsed as they glowed in the dark, protruded from their black-painted bodies, like lava flowing down a newly erupted volcano. Their eyes promised death, and their unnatural, long fangs protruded from their mouths.

“Samantha...” Dominic whispered to me with tension in his voice. “If I tell you to run—”

“Do you think you can run from us now?” one of them uttered it with a sinister voice that sounded like it was booming from the underground.

Before Dominic could push me out of the way, one of them had already pulled me away from him, and four attacked him at the same time. There was no way for us to fully shift into our werewolf forms, but Dominic, with his expertise, managed to partially transform, his body rippling with bulging muscles. His fangs elongated, his eyes were crimson, and his hair grew longer to the back of his neck. I had never seen him transformed like this before, and it made me admire the control over his power more.

He easily got rid of the four that attacked me, but another batch of four jumped over him, and they were stronger as they dragged him away. I pushed the ones that grabbed me from him and tried to get away, but even with my newly awakened power, I still wasn’t strong enough.

“Dominic!!!” I screamed, but one of them covered my mouth, and I had never felt so terrified in my life as I watched my husband being held down on the ground with the side of his face pressed on the cold, rocky floor of the cave and his hands on his back. My heart hammered as I scratched my way away from them, but their grip hurt me like silver chains. Their nails dug into my soft skin.

To my surprise, the four that were dragging me to the depth of the cave flew one by one, and a roar made my eyes widen with both fear and delight as I saw my husband throwing all of them violently against the cave walls like they were blocks of bricks, with the sickening sound of their bones snapping as they hit the rock-hard surface.

But then we didn’t see it coming.

One of them was holding a silver knife that glimmered from the lights coming from the fireballs. He was so fast that I wasn’t able to run away from him. The next thing I knew, he was already grabbing me by the neck as he held the knife above his head.

Everything was in slow motion as I realized there was no way I could escape death. I blinked when I saw Dominic behind the giant werewolf. Both his hands were on the side of its head, and he snapped the neck of the strange creature in a quick, powerful twist.

“Samantha!”

He ran to me after he killed the werewolf with the silver blade. But I frowned and turned confused when Dominic stopped midway and then looked at me with dread in his eyes.

I followed where his eyes were looking.

A silver blade stabbed him in the back. The poisonous weapon sliced through his stomach.

“NOOOO!!!!”

My roar of pain reverberated all over the cave, and the earthquake turned intense as tears rolled down my face, and I jumped on the werewolf who stabbed my husband. I grabbed the weapon from his hand and used the blade to stab him in the chest multiple times until blood spurted from his mouth and ran down his face like thick ichor.

Dominic fell to his knees as he looked at the open stab wound on his stomach, and I quickly ran towards him. My heart was racing as the adrenaline pumped all over me, watching my mate grimace in pain. My fingers trembled, and my breath was shallow, fast, and uneven as I panicked in front of him, not knowing what to do.

“D-Dominic!” I burst into tears as I ran towards my husband. “Oh goddess, the poison!”

He shifted back to his human form and was starting to weaken. His face went pale as he stared into my terrified face. “We have to get out of here, love. I need to take you away from this place.”

I yelped when the ground shook so violently as debris fell from the ceiling of the cave. This time, huge rocks started to crumble from it and were falling above us.

“There is no time for us to head back to the outside!” I screamed at him in the middle of the chaos. I helped him get up by putting his arms around my shoulders as we went forward, finding somewhere safe to go.

“There’s a passage over there!” Dominic pointed to a small, dark path, which I hesitated to go down. “We have to go or we will be buried here like these bastards!”

I glanced back and saw gigantic rocks falling on the bodies behind us. Blood and flesh splattered from the bodies that were hit by the boulders, making me panic more.

“Let’s go, Samantha!” Dominic screamed at me through the deafening roar of the earthquake, and I reached for his hand.

“Goddess, help us!” I murmured a short prayer before I followed my husband through the small, dark passageway.

I was more scared of where this would lead us.

Chapter 143
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“DOMINIC!!!”

I heard him yell and grunt in pain as we fell into a spiral rabbit hole down the cave. The sharp stones protruding from the ground caused stinging and piercing pain, making me wince. My face and hair were filled with dust. And I knew I would be covered with bruises in just a few minutes.

But I was more concerned about where this rabbit hole would lead me and Dominic!

The tunnel seemed endless for over a minute as we fell and slid down the unknown part of the cave. Dominic was fast. He landed strongly on his feet and caught me gently in his arms. We were both wide-eyed when our eyes locked. Both of us were so baffled at what happened as we panted—both filled with cuts and bruises—but grateful that we were safe and alive.

“F*ck...” Dominic panted as he stared into my eyes with a wide grin, laughing softly at me like he couldn’t believe we made it out of that place. “We’re alive!”

I stared at him with a smile, panting, and then planted a soft kiss on his lips as I cupped his face. “Yes. We did it, love. We’re alive!”

“F*ck!” Dominic kept on cussing as he put me gently down on my feet and studied the place we were in. I followed his stare and was surprised when we both saw a small community with houses made of wood and animal skins. They looked more like tents than houses.

He then looked at me as he pulled me closer to him. “I have a terrible feeling about this,” he hissed in his rough voice, glaring and studying the place.

We were in an enormous chamber inside the cave—about a thousand feet high and four thousand feet wide. I had never seen such a thing before! The ceiling was so high and dark I thought it was the sky at first, and then I realized we hadn’t found the exit yet. We were still inside, but in a more vast and dark cavern.

“Where are we?” I asked as I brushed off the dirt from my arms and hair.

I was baffled and flinched when I saw people starting to come out of the strange tents. Their skin looked like the men who attacked us in the cave, but their eyes weren’t crimson, bloodshot, and bulging. They had regular dark brown eyes as they stared at us with curiosity and fear.

Men as huge as the ones we fought in the cave stepped forward, all their eyes on Dominic. One of them, a bald one with a long, white beard, spoke

in his deep, rough voice as he paced in front of us with threatening, deadly eyes. “Trespassers!”

Dominic sensed the danger first. “RUN!” He yelled at me and grabbed my hand as we sprinted toward the forest.

I had never seen Dominic so agitated in my entire life that I had known him. If he looked like this, it meant there was no way we would get out of this place alive if those men caught us!

“Dominic! We have to get out of here!” I screamed at him as we headed deeper into the forest. He knew. He knew there was no way we could hide from them. There was no way we could escape those beasts. They live in that cave. They knew every inch of this place. We’re so screwed!

[There is still a way,] he whispered in my head as he pulled me to him after we halted and hid behind the giant trunk of an oak tree.

[What do you mean? There is no way out of this place!] I was panicking as I stared into his eyes, looking so terrified. [We’re trapped! You are right! I wasn’t thinking straight when I went into this—]

[Hey, Hey...] He cupped my face so I would focus on him. [There is another way, love. Just calm down and listen to me.]

Dominic explained everything to me about his plan, and I was skeptical about it at first, knowing we didn’t know anything about the place. But what other choice do we have? Besides, his plan might work. We could get out of this place if I had faith in my husband’s plans.

We both heard their heavy footsteps coming towards us.

“Now!”

Dominic was fast. He ran first to lure the enemies away from me so I could find a way out of the d*mned cave. I wasn’t sure how long Dominic could hold the enemies back, but I had to be quick to find any tunnels or doorways that would lead us out so we could go back to Silver Crescent.

My hands were shaking. My head was dizzy and I wasn't sure where I should look first. All in my head was my husband doing his best to distract the enemies away from me, risking his life so I could find us a way to get out of here. But where? Where was the door? A passageway? Why did the Moon Goddess lead me here if there was nothing here but danger? Was I just hallucinating when I saw those glowing butterflies? Was I deceived by the dark spirits so they could kill me here?

But then I remembered something weird about these people. Something I believe I had seen before...

Those marks on their body. That symbol. I thought at first I was just hallucinating, but when I finally realized I wasn't, that's when I believed something wasn't right was happening in the territory of Silver Crescent.

The mark. I had seen it before. Not just on the people here, but on some people I saw who were serving Dominic in the pack house as soldiers and members of his council.

I stopped running as my brows deepened into a furrow. My eyes went blurry as I touched my forehead, trying to remember clearly those memories that suddenly popped into my mind. It was as if something or someone was trying to put these images in my head, but I wasn't sure where they came from. Then I recognized the faces of those people in my memory, and most of them were men and women in my husband's council. The mark—they were tattooed in places that I didn't notice I had seen on them before. Or maybe I did, but I wasn't paying too much attention to them, thinking they were just random symbols that didn't mean anything.

But I was wrong. Everything in this place meant something, and those marks were the marks of the people living in this hidden place. Those people whom my husband trusted with his pack, they all came here!

The enemies didn't just infiltrate Silver Crescent! They were destroying it from the inside out!

I looked around to find my husband, but he wasn't anywhere near me. Perhaps he was somewhere on the opposite side of the cave? Should I tell him what I had found out? Should I tell him that, after all this time, he was being pulled by a string like a puppet by the people who served as his councilmen? The individuals who had been striving to gain control over the Silver Crescent?

There was a sickening feeling in my stomach that was telling me that perhaps those were the same people who killed Lena, Dominic's mother.

How could I tell my husband without him losing his sanity?

Chapter 144

[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

I had to find him.

I had to tell my husband that everything happening in his territory was part of a huge conspiracy, and we needed to stop it as soon as we got back to Silver Crescent!

Could it be why the Moon Goddess led me into this place, and not because of the thing Brianne told me that could help me with my newly reawakened powers as a primordial werewolf?

"Dominic, where the hell are you?" I whispered under my breath as I hid behind the tree where we stayed before we split up.

To locate him, I had to use my special connection with him through our bond. He wasn't too far away, but he was surrounded by the powerful tribal werewolves who wanted both of us dead. I had to go to him, but he saw me, and I sensed that warning coming from him through our bond.

[Don't!] Dominic snarled; his eyes were on high alert, glaring, ready to down anyone who would pounce on him. [Don't go anywhere near here, Samantha! Stay where you are hiding!]

[You can't fight them alone! You'll die!] I screamed in his head in panic. [There are too many of them here!]

[It's the point of luring them away from you, love. This way, you can leave safely and take the kids with you. Go anywhere away from here! Away from Silver Crescent!]

[Are you insane!? Do you think I can leave you to die in here!? No, Dominic! If you die, then we will f*cking die together!]

With all my strength, I kicked the one who was blocking my way to get to my husband. The tribal guy slammed against another, and they both rolled to the ground with everyone looking at them with baffled eyes.

"Get away from my husband!" They looked at me with a lethal glare, their throats reverberating with snarls, as I snarled back at them.

"Samantha! I told you not to—"

"No! I won't leave you here!" I hissed at my husband as I ran and crouched beside him, shooting cold glares at the enemies in front of us. "We will get out of this place together, Dominic!"

Dominic looked at me from the side of his eyes and then grinned.

I was confused and surprised at that expression on his face until he grabbed my arm and jumped so high that my eyes widened. I never knew Dominic could spring this high, even in his human form, and that stunned the tribes of werewolves below us.

"Dominic!" I screamed at him, bewildered at what he was going to do. "What's the plan?!"

"The plan is for us to stay alive!"

Dominic asked me to wrap my arms around his waist as he jumped from tree to tree until we reached the other side of the cave and found a smaller chamber, a hole in the wall that was big enough for both of us to fit. I

checked if someone followed us, and there wasn't. Dominic must have totally petrified them, seeing him as if he were flying.

I frowned. "How did you learn that?" I asked, grinning with annoyed amusement. "I had never seen you do that before."

"I used to do that a lot during our training to get away from the mentors who wanted me to spend extra time working on more physical training," he laughed softly as he looked at me with that boyish grin. A bead of sweat trickled down his chin, which meant that the trick he just did cost him so much strength and energy. "It has been years since I did it again."

If we were in a different situation, I would laugh at what he did. But what I learned while I was away from him was more important. Biting my lower lip hard, I couldn't look into my husband's eyes. Would I tell him? Would he believe me?

"Samantha?" His smile turned into a deep, worried frown. "Are you hurt?"

"I need to tell you something, love." I swallowed hard as I looked down at his hand when he squeezed mine. "It's critical, so please listen carefully, Dominic."

His eyes focused on my face as he saw how grave-looking I was, and that's when I breathed out heavily and decided to finally tell him. "I think you are being surrounded by enemies, Dominic. And I mean not just outside the walls, but in the council. Your council was infiltrated by people who want to destroy Silver Crescent!"

"What are you—"

Without any hesitation, I explained to Dominic everything I found out about the other members being a part of a much bigger conspiracy that was rooted in this very cave—that the downfall of Silver Crescent was already planned as soon as the people from this cave turned successful at taking over his pack.

All he did was stare at me, both dreading and pale as he thought about all the realizations I told him. All the people who were part of the Silver Crescent council were already members since his father became the Alpha of the pack. And that meant they had held onto the pack's power for decades, which my husband had worked so hard to become one of the continent's best.

They had been using Silver Crescent as leverage for their plans to destroy the Royal Clan.

"Alpha of the Silver Crescent Pack!"

My husband and I were both baffled after we heard that deep, booming voice coming from someone below. I looked down and saw a pack of werewolves waiting for us to go down. A muscular guy was in front of them—a giant who was the biggest among them.

"Either you go down here and let us kill you both, or everyone you know in Silver Crescent will be dead!" he yelled at both of us with glowing crimson eyes full of bloodlust and anger. "Get down here and we will make sure not to let your children suffer when we kill them!"

I saw how Dominic's eyes widened in rage. If I hadn't grabbed his hand and held him back, he would have already lunged at the giant guy. There's no way he could fight all of those werewolves below who wanted to rip us apart like ribbons.

But hearing him threatening us about our children...

My heart skipped a beat when Dominic pulled his arm away from my grip and dove down headfirst, shifted into his werewolf in midair with his claws stretched, ready to rip the leader of the tribal werewolves.

Chapter 145
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"DOMINIC, NO!"

But it was too late for me to stop him.

I thought my soul left my body when Dominic and the leader of the tribal pack clashed and both of them rolled to the ground, reaching for each other's necks. The minions around them stepped back, watching the powerful warriors exchange lethal attacks with wide, terrified eyes. I couldn't do anything. I was in total panic as I knelt at the mouth of the small cavity on the wall of the cave.

[Don't you dare go down here, Samantha![he snarled in my head as he received a deep gash on the side of his torso, making me grimace in pain as I felt it through the bond. [I need you to stay there.]

My heart and mind were fighting over whether I would dive down and help my husband or stay where I was hiding, just as he wanted. I knew Dominic would be furious if I went down there, but did I have a choice? Just as I told him, if he dies, I die. So I sucked in a deep breath between my teeth and glared at the leader of the pack, waiting for a good chance to lunge at myself and land a critical hit on the beast.

But it wasn't that easy. Dominic and the leader of the tribe were so fast that I could barely follow them, even with my werewolf eyes. That's when I felt awed by the power a real Alpha had. Dominic was indeed one of the most powerful Alphas on the continent. Despite the size and the enormous ancient dark power the enemy had, Dominic could fight back without a struggle, like his own power was adjusting, arising, and developing as they dodged and exchanged deadly strikes on each other.

As my eyes adapted to their speed, that's when I felt a tick, and my body just moved on its own.

It was like a burning furnace in my chest. That power that Brianne awakened in me felt like a wildfire spreading all over my body as I shifted to my werewolf form. I saw how all of their eyes looked at me as if they had seen a goddess. My fur shining and glimmering in the darkness like the wings of the butterflies I saw in the forest.

[DOMINIC!]

Dominic knew. As I lunged towards them, he immediately jumped away as I aimed for the beast's neck. The leader of the tribal pack was so focused on Dominic that he didn't notice my presence. When it was too late for him to dodge and get away from me, to protect his neck, he tilted his body and the part that my teeth landed on was his back, sinking them deep and ripping a large chunk of flesh from it, making the beast roar in agony.

F*ck. He tastes awful!

[I told you—]

[You die, I die, remember?!] I hissed at him. [We have no time for this, Dominic. We need to get out of here as soon as we can! We don't know what's going on on the borders of Silver Crescent with Olivia and her father being left there! We have to go back and find the kids!]

My eyes widened as I watched the leader of the beasts stand on his wobbling four feet, his eyes glaring straight at me with a wide, mocking grin. It was like he was taunting me for failing to take that one chance of killing him.

All his minions surrounded us, and Dominic and I looked around, calculating how we would fight fifty of them with just the two of us. Dominic trusted me; I could fight back, but he stayed protective over me as he stepped in front of me with snarls ripping in his throat.

Three of them attacked at the same time and jumped towards my husband. Four tried to pin me to the ground. I could tell they were more cautious of me based on the aura that my wolf was giving out, and after I shifted to my wolf, the leader of the tribal pack's attention turned to me as he slowly approached us. That hideous wound I caused him was healing at a baffling speed, and even Dominic was perturbed by it.

I was stronger than before, but these cave people—they were different! All of them were at the level of a Beta's strength. And ten of them in front of me, trying to pin me to the ground, wasn't that easy!

[So the rumors are true. That the new key... or, let me say, keys came from two powerful werewolves on this continent. I am not surprised, though. One came from a powerful Clan of Silver wolves, and another from the Primordial Clan. What a magnificent force of nature for both of you to be united and have offspring! I have a feeling the new keys are not that easy to deal with as well. But luckily, they are still kids, so it won't be too difficult for the tribe to deal with them.]

[What are you talking about?] Dominic glared at him as he pushed away and dodged the ones who were attacking him. [What do you mean, keys?!]

I looked at the leader of the tribe and saw that sickening grin on his face. And somehow deep inside me, I knew what he meant and it terrified me deep into the bones.

And that old man knew I knew who he was talking about, which made it more infuriating!

[Tell me! Is Richard Bennett one of your people?!] I asked instead, wanting to know if those people who wanted me dead were one of them. [Are they part of these?!]

Dominic didn't look surprised, but he looked at me and then at that giant guy, and I saw how his eyes widened as he realized what was happening.

[Well, those two are just small pawns for a bigger plan!] the giant guy answered. [They serve us! All they need is to distract you and the Alpha so we can get what we want! And this night, it will happen!]

Adrenaline pumped through my veins as I heard all his plans. The kids! No! There's no way I would let them!

At the same moment that I lunged towards the tribe leader, Dominic was already attacking him, his deadly teeth aimed at the neck. Four pushed me back from them, but Dominic was faster and stronger, and because of the injury, the man wasn't able to get away from him anymore.

There was a sickening ripping sound of flesh and cracking of bones. I blinked my eyes twice, and there, in midair, was a head spinning and dropping on the ground, rolling down to my feet.

[No one threatens my family!] Dominic snarled and spat the blood from his mouth.

As the tribal werewolves saw what happened to their pack leader, all of them flinched away from me and Dominic with fear on their faces and started running away, screaming a warning to the rest of their people. I stood there, my eyes fixed on my husband, who was still gasping for breath as he gazed at me.

[We have to find the kids.] He snarled in his raspy voice, his fur emitting smoke—a sign that he had already spent so much power and was shifting back to his human form.

[Yes.] I answered, my eyes fluttering with both awe and admiration for my husband. It was as if I fell in love with him all over again. [We need to find our way to go back to Silver Crescent and go straight to Liam's home. The children should be there.]

I shifted back to my human form and picked my husband up from the ground after he fell, looking all pale and dizzy. "Let's go, Dominic. I got you, my love." My eyes welled with tears. "Let's get out of here."

Chapter 146
[SAMANTHA's Point of View],

I filled my lungs with the musky and fresh scent of the forest trees, and a deep sigh escaped from my lips the second a cold, soft breeze brushed my bare skin. My husband took half an hour to recover. As we dragged ourselves out of the cave, we realized time had stopped when we entered the place—like we had gone into a strange dimension, and the glowing butterfly I saw when I went to the cave was still there, fluttering around in front of it. I knew it because of the position of the huge, silver moon.

“What happened?” Dominic asked, his brows deep in a frown. “It should be around noon.”

“I don’t know exactly,” I answered softly as I looked around. “But it seems like time stops inside that place. Like it’s being protected by something dark and ancient. I just don’t know why it allowed us inside.”

“Perhaps it knows you are looking for something and wants to stop you, believing that it can kill you inside that place,” Dominic answered with a slight grunt as he felt a sharp pin on his left rib. “Or perhaps the Moon Goddess wants you to see all that is happening in this forest. Who are the real enemies are. I am not sure, my love, but at least we know who their real targets are. And we have to find the kids as soon as we can.”

That’s when I worried more. “What do you mean? They are in Liam’s house, right?”

His face turned grave as he locked his darkened eyes on me. His jaw stiffened, and his shoulders were stiff. “As soon as we got outside, Liam’s mind linked into my head immediately.”

My eyes widened in terror. I took off his arms around my shoulder and breathed fast and shallow as panic struck my head. “Stop making me scared, Dominic! What happened to the kids!”

He dropped his gaze with fear and guilt and then looked at me as he hissed. “He said the kids are gone.”

“No...” I muttered as I flinched away from him, throwing my hands to my head, my nails on my scalp. “What the f*ck does he mean they are gone?! He promised us he would protect them, Dominic! We have to find the—”

“Hey, hey, love.” Dominic’s hands grabbed and cupped my face and forced me to look into his hazel eyes. “Samantha, look at me.” He was panting as he tried to compose himself, despite the panic spreading across his face. “We have to calm down and work together. You know Devon and Diana. We were separated from them for weeks, and I am sure they sneaked out

to look for us again. Liam is already doing his best to find them. I just need you to calm down, okay?"

He was right. It wasn't the right time to let the panic consume me. I had to think clearly! I had to calm down to find the kids!

"We need to split up to find them. I'll go around the forest. You go back to Liam and send patrols and trackers to find them."

His eyes widened with anger as he disagreed with my plan. "No, you are not going to the forest alone, Samantha!"

"I have to, Dominic!" I almost yelled at him, my hands on my forehead as I paced away, not wanting to snarl or blame him for what happened because I knew it wouldn't help the situation. "You have to trust me that I can take care of myself! I need to find them and make sure they are safe!"

"You know they are also after you, love." Dominic remained adamant as he glared at me. "How am I supposed to think straight and focus knowing you are out there, in danger, and looking for the kids?"

"But—"

"We will find them. Together." Dominic closed the gap between us and kissed me on the lips. "Let's go back to Silver Crescent and do it together. I know they are both just around the area. They can't go far from the forest."

I hesitated, but Dominic was right. Our enemies were after me and the kids, and without him, I don't know if I would have ever survived the cave. I had to stick with him. I had to trust my husband that he got this...that he could get the kids back to me.

As soon as we got to the Pack house, Liam was already there waiting for us. His face was so pale, and his eyes were wide and scared when he looked at me.

To my anger, I marched straight to him, but Dominic stopped me. "Let's hear his explanation first before you kill him, love," he uttered as he gave

Liam an anxious look and then nodded for his friend to explain what happened and how the twins got out of his house.

He explained to us that he became so busy giving instructions on dealing with the enemies at the eastern gates that he didn't notice Devon and Diana were no longer in the house.

"Believe me, I did everything to find them. I went to the forest myself, but we can't find any trace of them, Dominic! I am really sorry—"

"If something happens to them, I swear I will cut your throat, Liam!" I snarled at him and then at Dominic. I saw how my husband swallowed hard.

"Look at what happened. I told you she is not good at anything. She can't even protect the children of the Alpha! How can she be a Luna if she is unable to perform even a simple task?"

My eyes darkened as I watched Olivia walking down the grand staircase with her hand on the railing and her lips tugged in a taunting grin. She was wearing her fighting gear with her giant bodyguards behind her.

"Are you behind this?!" I snarled at her. "Where did you hide my twins, Olivia!?"

"I have no idea what you are talking about!" She winced and gave me a disgusted look while scanning me with her squinting eyes from head to toe. "How dare you accuse me of something that is your fault! You failed your duty to the Alpha, and then suddenly you blame it on me?! What are you, Samantha? A huge moron?"

"Be careful with your words, Oliviia! That is my wife you are talking to! Your Luna!" Dominic snarled at her with a threatening look.

Olivia's eyes shot to Dominic, then to me, filled with pure hatred. "What if those children are already in the hands of those freaks!? That's on her! She should be safeguarding the Silver Crescent's future, but where was she? She was somewhere running away with the Alpha of the Moonstone pack!

She's supposed to be arrested already for being a traitor to the pack! Why haven't you locked her in the dungeons yet?"

"You shut your f*cking mouth, Olivia!" Liam warned her. "You are not helping here!"

She scoffed with a mocking grin. "For all we know, those kids are already dead."

I thought something had snapped in my head.

My vision darkened, and before I could realize what was happening, I found myself in mid-air, lunging toward Olivia and knocking her down to the floor. As our bodies collided with the wall during the struggle, she grabbed my hair, but I seized her neck and quickly pushed myself up to straddle her stomach, my fingers wrapped around her small, pretty neck.

"You don't shut your f*cking mouth, Olivia." I snarled at her through gritted teeth. "One more ugly word about my kids and I will break your neck."

"F*cking let go of me, Samantha!" she screamed as she gasped for air, her eyes turning red as I tightened my grip. "Get off me!"

Her bodyguards moved to rescue their master, but Liam and Dominic blocked their way as they threatened the two giant werewolves. Olivia's eyes grew terrified as she tried to pull my hands away from her neck. But I was stronger than her. Much way stronger than her now.

"Where are they, Olivia!?" I asked her with my eyes wide, letting her see that I won't hesitate to kill her if she doesn't answer me. "Where are Devon and Diana!?"

"I told you I have—"

I pushed my palm on her throat and she choked with her eyes bulging. Dominic and Liam witnessed my attempt to kill Olivia and tried to separate us, but I shot them a deadly glare and halted before they could grab me away from her.

“Samantha, stop! She’s not even worth it!” Dominic snarled at me sounding scared and nervous. But I was so angry I barely understood the rest of what he said. All my focus was on Olivia. How I wanted to rip that beautiful face from her head.

“I ask you again, Olivia.” I hissed at her as I leaned closer to her face so close that my lips almost brushed her cheek. “Where are Devon and Diana?!”

“F*ck!” she spat and then uttered in her hoarse, choking voice, “They are both brought in an old mine! You will find them there!”

“Old mine!?” As I looked at her, my eyes fluttered and my grip loosened slightly, allowing her to breathe more easily. Before I could even ask more questions, Olivia had already flipped me down the floor and got up to her feet as fast as she could... Her eyes were fixed on Dominic, and her face displayed both guilt and fear as she ran away from the main hall of the pack house and straight into the forest.

“We have to go there,” I begged Dominic with teary eyes.

Chapter 147
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Samantha, wait!”

I was so angry that I pretended I didn’t hear him yelling at me as he begged me to stop leaving the main hall. All I knew was that I had to go to that f*cking old mine to find my twins. I would kill Olivia after!

“Samantha!”

Dominic grabbed me by the arm as soon as I stepped down the stairs out of the main hall. “I will go with you. Don’t let Olivia get into your head!”

“What the f*ck are you saying?! It’s Devonn and Diana who are in danger, Dominic! Are you scared for them?” I snarled at him and pulled his hands

away from my arm. “If you are not that worried about them, then I will go alone, and you can’t stop me this time! Just make sure to hide Olivia, because once I return with the kids, I will ensure that she won’t see sunlight again!

“Don’t say that, Samantha!” He blocked my way, his eyes narrowed, showing me a dark expression. “I worry for them, but you need me there too! I won’t let you go alone!”

“You are needed here, Dominic—”

“No. You need me and the kids,” he muttered as he leaned in to me, his face so close I felt his breath on my lips. “I will go wherever you go, Samantha.”

Our eyes locked, and my heart and mind fought. I hated Dominic so much because my jealous self thought that he still cared for Olivia after he let her flee when she clearly had something to do with what happened to Devon and Diana. But I had to think rationally, and he was right. I won’t survive all the dangers of the forest. Not now, when our enemies knew we were going to that old mine.

“You have to go now, Dominic, Samantha,” Liam approached us with worry etched on his face. “I will make sure those bastards won’t get inside the gates. I will take care of everything here. Just go and find Devon and Diana. Bring them back here.”

I saw how apologetic Liam was, and I couldn’t help but feel my heart shatter because deep within me, I knew he never wanted this to happen.

With swift steps, I walked towards Liam and gave him a tight embrace. “I’m sorry I blamed you for what happened, Liam. It wasn’t your fault. I’m sorry I got mad at you.”

His body relaxed as soon as he heard my apology, and then I felt his arm gently pat me on the back. “Everything will be okay, Sam. Go with Dominic. He will keep you and the kids safe.”

Dominic reached for my hand, and after a moment of hesitation, I decided to take it. I still hated that he let Olivia get away, but Liam was right. For us to save the kids, my husband and I needed each other.

We ran straight to the forest in our werewolf form as fast as we could until we got to the old mine with an aching heart, thinking about how the kids were so terrified right now while calling out to us, hoping to save them.

I couldn't blame anyone but myself. As much as I hated what Olivia said, she was right. My sole purpose was to take care of and make sure the kids were safe. And I failed Dominic. I failed my twins.

[Samantha! Look out!]

It was so fast that I had no time to dodge whatever was hurtling toward me. But Dominic was on full alert, and he had already pushed me out of the way before the spear struck me in the face.

My eyes widened in shock as I stood after Dominic and I rolled over the ground. [What was that!?] I gasped.

[Traps!] he snarled under his breath as he waited for me to get up. [I have a feeling there are more as we get closer to the place. Sharpen your senses, love. I have a feeling they won't make it easy for us.]

Many more spears came before we were able to get to the entrance of the mine. It took me a lot of focus not to be grazed by any of them, knowing that these enemies were specialized in poisons.

[Can you feel them inside the mines? Devon and Diana?] I asked him as we both caught our breath, the second we knew we were finally safe from the spears. [Why are there no guards outside the mine?]

[It can be a trap.] Dominic answered as he looked inside the cave mine. [But we need to make sure if the kids are there or not. I know Olivia can be bluffing, but I have a feeling they are hiding something here that they don't want us to see.]

[Just stay close to me] I said to him as I looked him in the eyes full of worry. [A witch from the Moonstone pack enhanced something about my power that will make me detect any danger that will come to us. I don't know if I could use it well this time, but I will try. We can't die in this place.]

[It's the reason why I am here, love.] I felt him smile at me through the mate bond. [To protect you and make sure you will get out of this place safe. We will get the kids and we will go home.] As Dominic stepped closer and buried his muzzle in my fur, he promised me, "I won't let them hurt you, Samantha." [I won't let them hurt you, Samantha. They have to kill me first.]

I could see Dominic doing his best to make this better between us, but my heart couldn't put my whole trust in him. If I were to rely on him again, would he be there for me this time?

Because I wasn't sure anymore...

[Let's not talk about death for now.] I muttered to him nervously as his scent filled my nose. His body was so warm, he made me swallow hard. [Let's go find the kids.]

Chapter 148
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

Dominic and I had been silent since we entered the cave. With my new ability to sense traps and dangers that would come to us, we dodged deadly snares and ambushes as we went deeper and deeper into the mine, reminding me of the cave that we just survived in the same night we got into this g*dd*mned place. Liam was right. Even with my new power that Brianne awakened, there was no way I would survive this. I couldn't count how many times Dominic had to save me so I wouldn't lose a leg or two.

[I can sense the kids, but their presence is everywhere.] Dominic muttered under his breath as we kept walking inside. It had been fifteen minutes since we last encountered a trap—a hole in the floor that suddenly opened, with spikes underneath, waiting for us to be stabbed like barbecue meat.

Dominic nearly fell, though I was fast enough to pull him back, away from that terrifying trap!

I got more anxious when the path split into three passageways, and Dominic and I were so confused—we could feel Devon and Diana in those three as if the enemies were trying to lure us into something more deadly. And Dominic and I had to choose right or we would never get out of this place alive.

[Where?] Dominic asked as his face filled with fear after looking unsure of what we would do next.

I stood beside him and then looked at the ceiling of the cave mine, looking for any signs or symbols that could lead us to the kids. But I noticed Dominic stepping closer to the door at the right and sniffing something.

[People use this passageway.] Dominic uttered with confidence in his voice. [The tracks here are still fresh... more footprints here than the two despite these people trying their hardest to hide them.]

There was something strange in my chest. Something that I couldn't explain. As I tried to reach out to my children through the bond, something interfered with the connection, and it frustrated me, making my panic grow. But my wolf didn't let me lose hope as my instinct kicked in.

[Not there...] I muttered to my husband. [They are in the left passageway.]

Dominic was surprised as he looked at me, wide-eyed. [Are you sure?]

[Yes....] I couldn't explain to him that it was my motherly instinct that was telling me, because I knew it was something he would not understand. It was a special connection that my children and I shared.

Dominic stared at me for a few seconds and then nodded with a soft smile. [Okay, love. Let me go first in case some beasts are waiting at the other end of the tunnel.] He then sprinted inside, and I followed him, maintaining the pace.

At the end of the tunnel, there was nothing but total darkness. Even after Dominic and I sharpened our werewolf sight, it was still hard to see things inside the place. It was as if we were transported into a different dimension where we were unable to hear and see... a place like a vacuum where even time didn't exist. It was as if I were in a black hole—the air was so thin and I couldn't breathe. I fought my hardest to fight back the dark entity that was trying to drown me in its power, but it was as if I was being pulled down into the depths of the ocean floor. Something was pulling me down and I couldn't swim back to the surface for air.

[DEVON!? DIANA!?] I made sure my kids would feel my presence as we entered that strange, dark space. [WHERE ARE YOU!?]

It was as if I was being sucked in inside that space. My ears were ringing. I felt my skin stretching. My head ached so bad I was scared it would explode any moment.

[Goddess, what is happening?! What is this place?!]

[Wake up, Samantha! This isn't real!]

My forehead creased into a deep frown. A dream? An illusion? I didn't know what my wolf was telling me because she didn't make sense. I was certain that I was awake when we entered this domain. But something was not right. Like I was being tortured slowly as I felt my heartbeat getting slower and slower...

[Samantha, wake up! WAKE UP!]

[WAKE UP!]

[WAKE UP!]

"W-What..." I muttered under my breath as I opened my eyes and frowned, pushing my exhausted body from the cold ground. "What happened—What's going on?"

"MOMMY!"

My head felt like it was about to split into two, but when my nose was filled with that familiar scent of my kids, my heart suddenly flooded with emotions as I felt their little arms wrapped around me and their heads on both of my shoulders; both were crying with fear on their faces.

I realized I was in my human form, wearing a shirt and jeans. When I looked up, there was my husband, standing in front of me with a huge smile on his face.

“What happened? How—”

My tears rolled down my face as I embraced Devon and Diana back as tightly as I could. I was still confused about what happened, but I set aside all the questions in my head as I held my babies in my arms.

“You dispelled the trap they set here,” Dominic explained as he watched me and the kids embrace tightly. “You saved us all from being devoured by that dark smoke, love. I wish you saw yourself, how you expelled it out of this chamber while I fought with the enemies that guarded this place.”

“You are so amazing, Mom!” Diana looked at me with awe, her eyes twinkling with pride. “It’s the first time I’ve seen your wolf, and you are just so beautiful!”

“You are beautiful too, sweetie... beautiful and brave,” I said to my daughter as tears ran down my face. “You and your brother. Devon, thank you for making sure your sister is safe.”

“I did my best, Mom... I did my best,” Devon said as he cried on my shoulder.

Dominic knelt in front of me and wrapped us all in his arms.

“You are all safe now,” Dominic whispered to the kids.

“And we will never leave you again. No matter what.” I added as sob emerged from my throat.

Chapter 149
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"We have to go back. We should leave while the enemy doesn't know we are here." I said to Dominic as soon as I recovered from the emotions that surged in my chest after finally seeing my children safe and unharmed. "Devon, you stay with Dominic. I will take care of your sister."

"But mom—"

There was a protest on Devon's face when he looked at me. His clear hesitation to stay with Dominic made my mate sad, causing him to lower his gaze to the ground and sigh. I suddenly felt awful for him, though. I knew the kids started to doubt if he could really take care of us after everything that happened since we moved here to Silver Crescent. And as much as I want to defend Dominic and pick his side, I couldn't disregard my children's feelings.

"It's okay, Devon. Just listen to me for now," I pleaded to him, and he just lowered his face and pouted his lips as he walked towards Dominic.

Dominic, on the other hand, despite the hurt on his face, tried his hardest to smile at little Devon and knelt in front of our boy. His hands were on Devon's shoulder as he uttered, "It's okay, buddy. Mom will keep Diana safe. I will keep you safe. We won't let anyone hurt you or take you away from us again. I promise you."

Devon looked at Dominic, but he didn't say anything. He just pouted and nodded as he held his father's hand. Dominic looked at me with worry on his face as he let out a heavy sigh. I wanted to comfort him as we both nodded to signal we were ready to leave the old mine, but there was not much time to waste. We had to get out or the enemies would be here any minute.

With full speed, Dominic and I sprinted out of the cave, signaling each other about the traps we encountered when we entered. I felt Diana shivering in

fear and cold as we got out of the cursed place and went straight to the forest, where my husband and I jumped from tree to tree just to avoid the wild beasts that were hunting on the ground.

“Dominic! Samantha! You are back!” Liam’s exhausted face brightened as soon as we entered the pack house, and we immediately went to his office to inform everyone that we had brought the kids back to Silver Crescent. He stepped closer to Devon and Diana, embracing them tightly while he sighed heavily with relief. “Oh, thank the Goddess, both of you are safe!

I looked at Devon and Diana and then gestured to them about what they should do.

It was Diana who stepped first as she pouted her lips apologetically, “I am really sorry for Devon and I did, Liam. We never intended to worry you. We just wanted to know where Mom is and what happened to Dominic.”

“She’s right,” Devon stepped forward as he lowered his eyes to the floor with a sad look on his face, “And it was really my idea. I just dragged Diana into this.”

“It doesn’t matter.” Liam ruffled Devon’s disheveled hair and then pinched Diana’s chubby cheek. “As long as you are both safe and unharmed, I am happy.”

Dominic and I looked at each other and smiled as we watched the two embrace Liam once again.

That’s when the door banged open and showed some members of the council my husband and I never expected would march inside his Beta’s office after they confirmed we were already back in the pack house.

“What is the meaning of this? Who told you to go in here without permission?!” Liam snarled at the people in front of us.

They all stood straight, though, unapologetic for barging into the Beta’s office without notice, and then all of their eyes went on me synchronically, like someone was controlling them at the same time; it was so creepy.

“We are here to take Samantha back to prison for murdering the Mother Luna of the Silver Crescent Pack!”

Dominic stepped in front of me, shielding me from the guards who were about to drag me back into the dungeons. “You stop this! She is my Luna! You touch her and you’ll die!” my husband snarled as he gave them a deadly glare.

“That woman killed your mother, Alpha Dominic!” Another one of them snarled at my husband, and I sensed a hint of desperation in his voice that made them all look suspicious. “You have to surrender her to us to give her the right punishment for all the laws she broke in this pack! She is a criminal!”

Devon and Diana’s eyes widened at what they heard.

“Samantha didn’t kill Mother Luna,” Liam answered with an adamant look on his face. Everybody here knows how Lena adores and loves her. She is basically Samantha’s guardian since she stayed here in Silver Crescent! There should be someone behind this! Someone must have orchestrated this setup and framed her!

“She is trying to deceive you again, Alpha Dominic! Open your eyes! She is clearly using your feelings for her so she can do whatever she wants!” The bald guy in the council said it with disgust in his voice while pointing his finger at me. “She is the reason why this catastrophe is happening to the pack! She must be exiled so we can get rid of those rogues and those bandits from attacking our homes!”

“I am not going anywhere!” I snarled at them as I pulled my children against me, my eyes shooting them lethal looks. “This is my home now! And I didn’t kill Lena! There is a big conspiracy happening here, and I will find out who the people who really killed her are! I swear I will kill them myself!”

All of them were silenced as my eyes and my children’s eyes turned glowing, like liquid gold, as Devon, Diana, and I stared at the members of

the council flinching away from all of us. All of the anger on their faces disappeared and was replaced with terror.

“They better prepare for us.” I snarled as all of them stared at the power that surged in me and my children’s blood.

Chapter 150
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I should say something.

I should say something!

I glared at their pale faces and held my kids tighter against me. Diana and Devon remained glaring at them as well. Their little faces warned those people not to go near any of them or me.

At a very young age, they learned how to be so protective after all the horrible things that happened here in Silver Crescent.

“Samantha, go and take the kids with you. I’ll deal with them.” Dominic spoke softly as he stepped closer to me and kissed me gently on the lips. Devon and Diana’s eyes widened at the gesture, and I tried hard not to smile because it was not the right moment to feel tender while we were facing real danger.

“You know you can’t let her get away, Alpha!” one of the council protested with detest in his eyes. “She is a criminal! You can’t let the woman who killed your mother get away with what she did, even if she is your Luna!”

“You are not listening!” Liam snarled back, losing his patience. “I told you, Samantha has nothing to do with Lena’s death! We have leads! And Samantha wasn’t there at the time of the incident! This matter is an investigation that I and the Alpha are working on right now, and while there is not enough evidence, no one will be convicted!”

“The thing is, I already know who the bastard is. And I have enough evidence to prove it.”

All of us looked at Dominic with surprise. However, I was already aware that he had been actively working on this issue since my arrest and incarceration in the dungeon. But who killed Lena? Was it Randalf? Or his daughter, Olivia? Could it be one of the people in his council, the ones who bear the symbol of the ancient tribe we encountered in the caves?

Dominic talked to his Beta about the folder that was in his secure vault, and Liam immediately went to my husband's office as we all waited for him. I could feel the tension in the room, and I didn't want my kids to be with the people who wanted me dead, so I looked at Dominic and was about to say we had to get the kids away. But seeing how the feathers on his jaw appeared, I knew something was happening that was beyond my understanding. Something that only he and those people in his council knew.

And I had a feeling those people already knew that we knew they were part of a bigger conspiracy that's been happening in Silver Crescent since Dominic's dad ruled the pack.

"How long has this been happening?" Dominic asked as he glared at them. "How long had you been trying to use this pack as a lever to destroy the mainland? To kill the Alpha King? How long had you been tricking me to play in the palm of your hands to start your f*cking plans against the Royal family!?"

"We have no idea about what you are talking about, Alpha Dominic," one of them answered with rage, as if he couldn't believe what Dominic was saying. "What conspiracy are you talking about!?"

Clearly, he wasn't one of them, I said to myself as I looked at their face. Others tried to maintain their gaze, but my werewolf instinct allowed me to discern who was lying and who was telling the truth. I knew Dominic could feel it too; that's why he was trying his best not to throw a fist at the traitors who had been manipulating him and his family for decades.

I wonder what they did to hide that hideous mark on their body.

Liam came back with the folder.

“There!” Dominic threw the folder onto Liam’s desk, which piqued the curiosity of the council members and the elders. “There is the evidence you badly need!”

“What is this?!” one of them exclaimed in horror as they found the picture of the symbol that Dominic and I found in the cave. “What does this mean, Alpha Dominic?! What is this symbol about, and what’s the relation of it to the case of your mother!?”

Three of the members of the council’s faces went totally pale and flinched from what they saw. It was the bald man, an elderly man with a heavy white beard, and a middle-aged member of the council. Dominic and I fixed our gaze on them, realizing they could no longer hide their true identities. That they were f*cked now that Dominic knew all the treachery they had been doing inside Silver Crescent.

“I believe Kevin, Arian, and Finn know what I am talking about,” Dominic uttered in his cold, frustrated voice as he glared at the three who looked back at him with terrified eyes. “Am I right?!”

“What is happening here?”

To my husband’s and my surprise, Richard stepped inside the room, and his eyes immediately went to the pale faces of Kevin, Arian, and Finn that Dominic mentioned.

“We are all here to discuss all the treachery that you and these people did to me and the Silver Crescent pack!” Dominic snarled at Richard and then gestured to the guards behind them to arrest Richard and the other three he suspected as members of the Fang Trinity.

“You know you can’t do this, Dominic!” Richard snarled at him and then glared at me. “It should be her in the dungeons! What is she doing here!? She is a murderer!”

“Shut up or I will cut your throat, *sshole!” Dominic hissed as he stepped closer to Richard Bennette. “There is no point in lying your way out now. I have been working so hard to collect evidence so I can finally lock you up in my dungeons and watch you rot there, Richard! After everything you did to me and my wife, I will make sure nothing will remain in you but bones in those cells!”

“This can’t be true! There is no way Richard can be a part of this c*lt!” one of the elders exclaimed in disbelief. “He’s been nothing but loyal to you and your father, Dominic! He did so much for the people of the Silver pack!”

Dominic scoffed and then grabbed Richard’s shirt and lifted it, revealing the mark of the Trinity Fang on his left chest, the same symbol we saw on that evil cave in the Black Forest.

Everyone’s eyes widened in horror, including Liam’s.

“He’s been one of them since he joined the pack!” Dominic snarled, “And I didn’t just catch him one time but twice! Plotting something against Samantha, my wife!”

“You are talking nonsense—”

“What your Alpha is saying is definitely true!”

All of us went to look at the door, and my eyes widened with excitement and happiness when I saw the Alpha of the Moonstone pack, my best friend, Killian, standing at the door with Brianne in front of him.

“Brianne! Killian!” I exclaimed, full of hope, as I watched them enter the room. Both nodded at me and Dominic and then glared at Richard Bennette.

“What are these scumbags doing here! That man entered Silver Crescent illegally!” Richard Bennette snarled in anger and desperation. He knew that Brianne and Killian knew something! I could tell the fear in his eyes!

“He’s one of the Fang Trinity. My men and I had been spying on him for weeks since the first attack.” Killian said as he glared at Bennette and made sure Brianne was safe beside him and out of anyone’s reach. He was making sure she was safe with him. “That old man had been helping the enemies to destroy Silver Crescent and use all your resources to fight against the Royal Clan. He’s been tricking all of you to think he cares for this pack!’

“That’s not f*cking true! There’s no way I am—”

Brianne brought something out from her pocket. She pointed a strange purple crystal at Richard, causing it to shine brightly in front of him.

“This crystal only reacts to those who are possessed by the power from that cave where the Fang Trinity people live,” Brianne uttered with detest as she pointed the thing at Bennette. “Your people killed so many of my people! You all deserve to die!”

“F*cking witch!” Richard Bennette snarled as he crouched, feeling so cornered when he saw the horror on the rest of the members of the council, finally convinced that he was indeed a member of the c*lt that wanted to destroy their pack.

“You are not going anywhere from now on, Bennett,” I snarled at him as I smirked. “Now that everyone knows your stink and your secrets, you will rot in the dungeons of the Silver Crescent pack!”

Chapter 151
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Is everything settled? Did the guards really catch Olivia?”

“Yes, Luna. They cornered her inside one of her penthouses in the city. We caught her packing her clothes with papers, her passport, and a ticket to Norway. Good thing we arrived in time before she left the building.”

“Thank you. Good job, then.” I smiled at the officer who brought me the news. I was in my office, watching Devon and Diana play with their

toys and watch shows on their gadgets. Dominic made sure I would go back to my duties after he proved to the elders and the council that I was innocent—that there was no way I could murder a person who was closest to me and treated as my mother for years.

“How about her father? Is there any news about him? Have they found him yet?”

I hated the idea that Richard Bennette, who was already in the hands of the Silver Crescent guards, still got out of the dungeons after one of his loyal minions got him out of his cell and fled in the middle of the night. Olivia must have heard that their Alpha had finally revealed their true identity and tried to flee from the pack, but failed. I made sure she won’t be able to get out of this place while I breathe.

“Her father will try to rescue her, so make sure to triple your security all over the place.” I reminded the guard. “Make sure you patrol the whole area twenty-four seven. All gates closed. No one enters, and no one gets outside the borders. Just like what the Alpha, my husband, orders.”

“Yes, your Grace. I will make sure everything is implemented as you ordered,” he replied and then nodded gently. I replied with a nod and a smile as I dismissed him and turned my attention to my kids and the paperwork on my table again.

But I couldn’t bear to concentrate. My eyes kept drifting toward the children, while the letters of the words I had been reading seemed to jump and jumble together. I leaned back in my chair and massaged the space between my eyes, feeling so frustrated and angry that Richard was still out there, posing a threat to my family. I felt as if I was sitting on the edge of a precipice, and with one wrong move, I would fall straight to my death.

Something was not right, and I needed to ensure that Olivia would go directly to the dungeon after all the torture she inflicted on me.

I would never let her get away.

Liam entered the room with a grave look on his face, and I knew immediately what that face meant. So I stood from my seat and asked him if he could stay with Madison and the kids, which he immediately accepted as he walked to Madison with a huge smile on his lips.

“Luna,” the guards bowed their heads as soon as I got into the dungeons to check if Olivia was already in there. “We are not informed of your visit—”

“I was informed she’s already here,” I said to them with my hands on my back, still trying to control it from shaking. I could still remember all the horrible things that Olivia did to me while I was incarcerated in this same prison. The tables had turned. Now she will see the monster she made me.

“Where is she?” I asked as soon as we arrived at the cell where Olivia was supposed to be incarcerated. My eyes widened in panic for a minute of confusion. “What’s happening here? Where is Olivia!?”

Even the guards didn’t know what happened. “We assure you, Your Grace! She was just here a minute ago!”

“F*ck!” I cursed under my breath as I reached for my husband through our mate bond to alarm him about what happened and what I found out in the dungeon. [DOMINIC!!!]

[Yes, love?] he sounded exhausted on the other end of the bond, but he sensed the rage in my voice and all his attention focused on me. [What happened?]

[Olivia! She got away! There are still loyalists of the Bennette staying under our roof, Dominic. We have to do something about this!]

[Yeah, I just got the report that someone was seen here with Richard on the southern part of the territory. I am on my way after them.]

And the connection with our mind was cut off.

As I entered the prison cell, I noticed a piece of paper on the cot that read, “You can never win against the real darkness.” My heart suddenly filled with terror as I crumpled the paper in my hand.

Many of the elders and the council were still frustrated and disappointed about how the Bennettes escaped from the Silver Crescent dungeons. Dominic failed to track them and just focused on tracking down the loyalists of the Fang Trinity and Black Claws inside the pack. He needed to clean his territory of traitors and enemies as he and Liam slowly worked on the walls of the eastern gates.

All of us high-ranking officials were at the funeral service of my husband’s mom, Lena—the woman who treated me like her own after my parents died. I still couldn’t believe she died after the last argument we had. It was ugly, and the guilt has stayed with me, keeping me awake all night since the murder happened.

But it was Domini who was devastated the most...

My twins placed wildflowers they picked at the back of our house and said they wanted to give them as a farewell to their Grandma. I was heartbroken that they had to go through this pain so young, but I couldn’t protect them. All of us are warriors and children of the Moon Goddess. We fight for our people. And death is a part of the cycle of life we have as soldiers.

Devon walked straight to me and said, “I dreamed about Grandma last night, and she told me the moon will illuminate those who lie,” and I had to hold back my tears because I could feel Devon could understand what those words meant. He knew the horrible things that happened inside Silver Crescent, and after their dreadful experience in the mine, I was scared my kids would never be the same again.

And I would make Olivia and her father pay for all of this!

*****

“Love...”

I turned around and saw my husband walking towards me, closing the gap between us. There was a solemn look in his eyes as he wrapped his arms around my waist and planted a soft kiss on my lips. I felt that deep sadness in him as I tiptoed and kissed him back, wanting him to know that I was here with him and he could talk to me about how he felt.

Tears rolled down my face as I murmured, “I am so sorry about your mom, Dominic. I wish I could do something to avenge her.”

“Nothing that happened is your fault, my love. They used and framed you, and I apologize for not being able to handle everything on my own. I put your and the children’s lives in danger. I made terrible choices, Samantha. If only I were a good Alpha—”

“You did everything you could. Everything that is happening to Silver Crescent is too much, Dominic. You trusted those people, but you and your father didn’t know anything. I have a feeling your mother investigated this, and after she found out, they completely silenced her so they could still hide and continue destroying and robbing the pack with the resources they need to attack the Royal Clan.”

“It’s insane. I never, in a million years, thought a c*lt like them would have infiltrated the pack and walk and talk among us, under my very roof, and what made it worse—”

“I know. I know the information isn’t easy to process, Dominic. But we are both working on it.” I murmured to him and then pressed my cheek on his chest. “No one would ever think of it, too, so don’t blame yourself about everything, Dominic...”

He reached for me and cupped my face as he stared into my ocean blue eyes. “When we got married, when you walked down that aisle with that wonderful white dress, I actually smelled the jasmine on you. I just didn’t dare to admit it—”

I didn’t know what he meant by it, and I wanted to ask what he meant. But the sound of the alarm, blaring all over the village, brought panic in me as I pushed away from Dominic and looked outside the windows.

Both of us ran outside the house, and one of the patrolmen approached us with a pale face. My husband's face was filled with dread upon discovering what had happened.

"What is it?" I asked him, wide-eyed with terror.

"The Black Claws," he hissed under his breath. "They attacked again—and they are after my Clan and relatives."

Chapter 152
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"What's happening, Dominic?" I asked him, eyes wide as I saw his face full of dread.

He seemed confused when he stared at me blankly as if he could see something other than me. The terror had spread in his mind like dark ink, contaminating him with thoughts of murder. That confusion turned into panic, panic into rage, and rage into despair.

"Dominic?" I asked him again as I started to feel worried and scared for him. I had never seen him lose control over his emotions like this. "What happened? What happened to the southern border? What do you mean about your relatives—"

"I have to go, love." Dominic was not himself when he walked away from me and shifted into his werewolf form. I watched him run towards the southern part of the village and didn't glance back even for a second.

That's how grave the situation was.

"I have to go there..." I murmured to myself as I watched my husband fade away from my view and head back to the house to inform Madison that she and the kids had to go to Liam's home. Devon and Diana weren't happy about the idea that I had to leave them again, so I knelt in front of them and put my hands on both of their shoulders.

Filled with guilt, I kissed both of their foreheads. “I have to go after Dominic, kids. I have to make sure everything will be okay and no enemies can enter the borders again. It’s for your safety. I will not let anyone hurt or take you away from us again.”

“We will go with you,” Diana pouted with fear in her eyes. “Don’t leave us again, Mom!”

I helplessly looked at Madison, and she understood the anxiety on my face as she knelt on Diana and pinched her chubby cheek. “It’s okay, baby girl. We can play with Beta Liam’s niece and nephew while we stay there. Mama has to do her duty as the Luna of the pack. Someday, you will understand...”

Diana’s eyes were teary when she stared at me and did a gentle nod. Devon was silent beside her and stayed brave as he nodded at me, telling me he understood the situation.

“Thank you so much,” I whispered to both of them and embraced them tightly. “I will be back as soon as I can. I will call Liam to take you into his home. And please...” I looked at Devon and Diana with pleading eyes. “Don’t try to run away this time?”

“It depends,” Devon smirked, but when he noticed I wasn’t joking at all, his smirk turned into a face full of guilt. “I’m sorry, Mom. I will make sure Diana is safe. Don’t worry.”

“Not just Diana. I want you both safe, okay? You watch each other’s backs and make sure you stay close with Madison and Liam.” I reminded them before I stood and kissed them on the tops of their heads. “Mommy will come back as soon as she can. I love you both so much.”

I lunged and shifted into my wolf form, taking a final glance at my kids. I hated to leave them. I hated to always worry about whether I would see them again or not. I hated this feeling.

*****

“What happened?”

I marched towards the gates and saw a crowd of soldiers looking outside. My husband was on top of the wall and was looking down at something that was behind the twenty-foot concrete barrier that protects Silver Crescent from enemies and beasts outside of Black Forest.

Other members of the council and the elders that Dominic believed weren’t members of the Fang Trinity gave me a suspicious glare as I pushed my way through the top of the walls where my husband was.

Dominic was still in a state of shock when I approached him and didn’t even notice my presence. It hurt me to see the grief on him as I looked down and saw five silver-furred werewolves lying on the ground that was tainted crimson with their blood. All the colors on my face drained as I realized what happened, and when I was about to hold my husband, one of the council members rushed to us and asked us to follow him back to the pack house to show us something.

My mate was still not himself, and I could feel that grief eating him away. I felt terrible that he had to experience another loss when Lena just died.

We all looked at the big television screen in the sitting area, which one of the council members turned on, and my eyes widened after I saw a very familiar face—that man I had been wanting to kill since we left the mine cave!

“This is for my beloved people of Silver Crescent, whom I dedicated my whole life to serving and protecting!” he exclaimed. I could tell he had lost pounds, and his eyes went deep with dark circles, making him look like he hadn’t had sleep for a week.

“This is to inform you that all the news that spreads all over the pack is not true! I am not a member of a conspiracy against the pack that I had been serving for decades! It is that woman! Samantha and Killian, the Alpha of the Moonstone pack, had been framing me for actions that were against my will. They had been planning to kill Alpha Dominic and take over the pack!

She and that bastard are behind all of the terrible things that are happening in our place, our homes, and we will never let them do this!”

“What the f*ck is he saying?!” One of the soldiers cursed under his breath, and I couldn’t believe what I was watching. It was live, on air, and every home in the Silver Crescent was probably watching it!

He’s trying to defame me once again—to destroy my reputation with the people of Silver Crescent!

Then a video of Killian and I meeting with Brianne in the forest started playing. How could he manage to take those videos!? I would know if there was someone who was nearby at that moment!

Could it be one of the people of Fang Trinity?!

*****

“Diana!”

I rushed towards the backyard after I saw my daughter’s nose bleeding. Devon stared in complete shock, and Madison went inside in panic to get ice for her. I kneeled in front of her and wiped it with a towel as I tipped her head backwards.

“Mommy!” she cried in panic as I held her hand, making sure she wouldn’t faint.

“It’s okay, honey...Mommy’s here now,” I whispered to her. My chest was heaving with fear for my daughter. “What happened? Did you hurt yourself?”

“Mom,” Diana uttered softly as she looked at me with sad eyes. “Mom, I seem to see a black wolf... biting the moon.”

I stared at her and couldn’t make sense of what she said. But I was more concerned about the bleeding, so I didn’t think about what she said that much. After the bleeding stopped and Madison made Diana and Devon

take their afternoon nap, I sat down on the couch, my mind filled with what Brianne told me. They were the key. Did those explain the mysterious things they had been telling me? And Diana... I knew she was special. But it scared me that she sees and feels things that they shouldn't be dealing with at this young age...

While I was deep in my thoughts, I was surprised when the door opened and Dominic entered the living room with a heavy sigh.

"Dominic? What's happened?" I immediately approached him and helped him take off his jacket. His eyes were worn out, but he looked at me and gave me a soft, loving smile, which melted my heart.

"There will be another funeral to give respect to the ones that the Black Claws killed last night. I was never close to any of my relatives, I will make sure they will be buried in the Clan cemetery."

"I am really sorry for what happened. I wish I could do something to help, my love."

"This is what I have been wanting to tell you, my love..." he said with a soft, pleading voice.

His exhausted eyes gazed at me with reluctance, but he decided to say it in the end. "I need you to stop working in the packhouse to focus on the kids. After what I had seen today, I think I would never sleep worrying about you and the children. They are after us, love. They want us all dead. And I would never let them."

I stared at him for seconds, measuring things in my head. And after seeing Diana's nose bleeding and Devon's terrified face, I decided he was right. I couldn't do Luna duties and be a mother and a wife. I had to focus on one duty. And that was to make my children safe from the enemies and to always be there for Dominic every time he gets home, exhausted from all the work he's done for days.

"If that's what you think is best for the kids and our family," I smiled at him and kissed his lips gently. Guilt spread across his face, and although he

was about to say something again, I decided to take his jacket into the room and pretend that nothing was wrong.

But deep inside, I was hurt.

When I got into our room, I noticed the diary of my mom and flipped through the pages. I saw something that caught my attention. It was a picture of my mom and Lena when they were younger. And a man between them wearing a wolf totem, which made me frown. I knew I saw this symbol somewhere—

My eyes widened.

That was the same symbol I saw on the dead bodies of the wolves lying on the other side of the southern gates!

Chapter 153
[DEVON's Point of View]

I saw how Dominic rushed out of the door after returning, just long enough to check on us and Mom and change clothes. I could tell Mom wasn't herself the whole time after witnessing Diana's bleeding nose, which worries me. I wish I could do anything to help her feel better during this difficult time. I wish I could make her smile. But how? Everything that was happening in this city was just so scary. After Diana and I got abducted, it became a nightmare to me day and night, and sleeping became something I was scared to do. Occasionally, I would stay up until I passed out, and it wasn't a very pleasant feeling, especially since I had to make sure my twin sister was safe.

I promised Mom I would always keep my sister safe.

"Devon?"

"Shhh..."

“What are you doing?” Diana asked while rubbing her sleepy eyes. “Are you looking for Mommy? Why don’t we just—”

“Shhh, Diana!” I hissed at Diana, and she looked at me with an annoyed expression. She hates it when I interrupt her when she speaks. “I’m sorry. I just... I am worried about Mom.”

“All of us are worried for Mom,” she snaps at me and then pushes me gently a little, just enough for her to see what Mom was doing. She frowned. “Do you think you know what that notebook is?”

“I am not sure...” I whispered to her, wishing I had sneaked inside Mom’s room before to check it. But even if I could, I wouldn’t know what it was about.

And I couldn’t read.

“Do you think we should go and cheer Mom?” Diana whispered, her eyes getting teary. We can’t just let her cry alone like that.”

“We can, but we are not sure if that will help her,” I said to her as I slumped my back against the wall, feeling upset, mostly to myself because I couldn’t do anything. “Mom has gone through so many terrible things since we moved to this place. I just wish we didn’t leave Moonstone.”

“This is not our decision to make, Devon. You know that,” Diana said softly, as she understood my feelings. She felt it too. She is my twin. “She loves Dominic. And this is the place where she grew up. She is supposed to be here with us.”

“I know. I just hate—”

Both of us hid behind the curtain after we sensed multiple presences of werewolves outside the door. With our ability to hide our aura, we were able to hide behind the curtain without Mom noticing us. I guess she didn’t know yet that we were able to use that ability. After we gained our wolves, Diana and I had been learning a lot of things, and I thought it was cool. But

as Diana and I got exposed to scary things that were happening around our family, the more I wished we just didn't leave the Moonstone pack.

"Who are they?"

"Shhh!" Diana eyed me as she shushed me.

I wanted to know how the people were on the other side of the door, but Diana grabbed my hand so tight I winced. I thought my heart would explode with fear as I turned to look at her face. I had never seen Diana so terrified like this.

Her eyes were wide with terror, and her little hand, grabbing mine, was shaking just like her whole body. It was as if her jaws were locked because she murmured something that I wasn't able to comprehend.

"D-Diana!" Are you alright?!" I asked in panic. "What happened to you? What's wrong?!"

I looked at the other side, where the door slammed open and men came rushing inside toward Mom. She looked confused as she clutched the notebook on her chest, her knuckles white as she confronted them. My mind was in complete panic! I wasn't sure if I would stay by my twin's side or if I would go sprint toward Mom and stop the men from scaring her! My feet were ready to run for Mom, but my mind stayed with my twin. I didn't know what to do!

"I can hear something."

I frowned and then turned to look at the pale, terrified face of my sister. "What? What do you mean, Diana? What is happening? We have to go to Mom. Something just happened, and she looks scared—"

"Under the ground," Diana said again, her eyes so steady as if she was seeing something I couldn't—like she was having illusions. Or visions? Mom said they were visions, but I wasn't sure why it happened to my twin and not me.

“Under the ground, Devon! Something is calling us from the underground!” she repeated as she pulled my arm to go somewhere, which made me more frightened. Diana needed help! Mom needed help! And I couldn’t do anything to either of them! I was in a panic, scared, and I felt useless.

Tears rolled down my cheeks as I looked at my twin sister’s delirious face. I wish I knew what to do so I could help her. But we were just kids. We were kids, and we had no idea why all of these mysterious, weird things were happening to us!

“Tell me where it is, Diana,” I whispered to her as I wiped my tears with the back of my hand and exhaled, making a brave face for her. “Show me,” I said, my throat swelling as I swallowed the sob emerging from it.

I gave Mom one last look before Diana showed me where that creepy voice was coming from. Mom was arguing with the men at our doorstep, but I couldn’t hear them anymore. My heart was so loud in my ear as my sister led me to the kitchen and then to the cellar.

The underground. She was talking about the cellar!

“Wait, Diana, you want us to go down there?” I asked her, terrified. “We don’t know what’s in there!”

“There is a sound underground,” Diana repeated in a voice that sounded like a robot. There was no fear or worry. Just... very emotionless, and that’s when I started to shake her shoulders, hoping I could wake her up from something that possessed her.

But I failed.

“It’s calling us, Devon. It is waiting for us downstairs. We have to go.” She murmured, her eyes weren’t blinking. She only stared blankly at my face as she murmured words I couldn’t comprehend.

I wasn’t sure what was waiting for both of us under the cellar, but I had to save my sister from whatever it was that was controlling her. I had to know

what it was. I had to know if it was the same evil people who abducted us in the forest. I had to know how I could break this curse from my sister!

“Okay, if you want to go down, we will go down together. Do you hear me, Diana? I will not leave you alone with this. We will face it together, sis.” I said to her softly as I patted the top of her head. “I will never leave you, no matter what. I promised Mom I would protect you.”

Just as I expected, there was no reaction on her face, but she pushed me again toward the cellar, this time a little harder, making me almost lose my balance.

“Fine, fine!” I hissed at her, opening the cellar’s door so she could get inside. I watched her as she carefully stepped down the steep stairs, scared that she might slip.

But despite whatever was happening to my sister, she seemed to be still conscious of her surroundings, and she went down fast and safely.

When I went down, my eyes widened after I saw that faint blue light that was seeping from the cracks in the walls.

“Diana! Don’t you dare touch that—”

But she did! She walked straight to it and touched the wall. I thought my heart would drop through the floor when a massive circle appeared in front of her, the same color as the ring around our eyes. Liquid Gold.

I almost jumped when the door of the cellar slammed shut. My heartbeat went faster when I turned around and heard a deep, strange voice of a man coming from the walls. All the hair on my arms, neck, and legs stood as I tried to pull my sister away from the walls. She won’t move. She was stuck there, murmuring something I couldn’t hear.

“Little keys, it’s time to go home.”

“No! No, Diana! Fight this!” I screamed at my sister, feeling all hopeless and scared. I remembered the whistle Mom taught me in case of an

emergency, when we needed it. The whistle would alert Killian as well. I just wasn't sure if Killian or any of them upstairs could hear us, but I had to try, or my sister and I would be in real trouble.

"Diana, please!!!" I cried to her.

I didn't know what to do anymore, so even though it didn't make sense, I just tried to whistle, hoping anyone could hear us. Save us from what was happening with my sister!

But before I could make a proper sound of it, the ground started to shake, and clouds of dust started to fall from the ceiling of the cellar. Bricks and stone started colliding above us, giving me no choice but to jump over my sister and wrap myself around her, protecting her from the debris falling on us.

Diana's hand illuminated, and she pressed her hands against the wall. I lifted my face and saw words engraved on it.

"Save Mom." I heard her whisper before everything turned black.

Chapter 154
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"What is this? What are you doing in my house?"

I frowned, confused and upset that I was being summoned again by the elders and the council for questioning at the pack house. I was getting tired of their endless questioning. Their endless drama and complicating things when it should be me and Dominic who should face this, and my family issues shouldn't be any of their business.

But I am the Luna of the pack. I am their Alpha's wife and the mother of the future leaders of Silver Crescent. My life was for them to talk about. My issues were their issues. They should know every detail about me and the kids, and the secrecy Lena protected with her life.

“The Alpha sent us for your security; he told us to get the kids to the house of the Beta, where they can be safe, Your Grace. The elders need to know your side of the story about Mother Luna’s case.”

“I thought Liam had already explained to them everything? What else do they want to know?! They are just slowing down the whole investigation! They already have the suspects dancing on the palm of their hands, and they let them escape!”

“I’m sorry, Your Grace, but we are just doing what the council told us.” The Gamma wolf told me, a little awkward and worried that I wouldn’t do as the council wished. I understood that they were only doing their job, but I couldn’t help but feel upset with how those people tried to manipulate my and my children’s lives.

I couldn’t tolerate this anymore!

“Devon? Diana?”

The Gamma soldiers waited patiently as I went inside to look for my twins. “Diana! Devon!”

“Lady Samantha!” Madison rushed towards me from the kitchen with wide eyes full of panic and fear. She was panting as if she had been looking for something all around the house, and that’s when I started to panic as well.

“Where are the kids, Madison? Where are Devon and Diana?!” I asked her as I grabbed both of her shoulders.

“I had been looking around and I couldn’t find them!” she cried as she burst into tears, dropping her face into her hands. “I am so sorry, Lady Samantha! They were just here when I left them to prepare their lunch! I don’t know what happened!”

“No...” My hand automatically went to my forehead and my stomach as I ran around the house screaming for Devon and Diana, hoping that they were just pulling a prank and were just hiding somewhere.

But I couldn’t find them anymore.

They disappeared.

*****

[COUNCIL HALL]

“Are you certain they are just playing somewhere inside the house?”

“Yes! Diana’s nose bled, and I had to put them to bed to rest. But Madison told me they weren’t in their room, so she looked around, and the last time she saw them, they were sitting across the living room, behind the curtains, talking about something! When I went back to look for them after I was informed about the summons of the council, they weren’t in the house anymore! They... they...”

I slumped down in the chair as I held my forehead. I was feeling dizzy. I was so confused about what was happening, and I didn’t know how I could process it. My twins were gone! In the house where I was with them! I didn’t know how that happened. Madison and I searched everywhere, and we couldn’t find any trace of forced entry. If they took the twins, we would know! Diana and Devon would fight back. They would scream! I would know!

“Calm down, Sam. We will find them.” It was Killian who walked toward me and rubbed my back gently as I massaged my forehead with my thumb and index finger. “If they just disappeared, just like what you said, there should be a trace somewhere. I can help you check if you want.”

“You are not going anywhere near my house, Killian.” Dominic snarled at him as he approached us, his eyes glaring at the Moonstone Alpha. Brianne stepped in front of Killian, though, ready to throw a spell at my husband, but I stood protectively in front of Dominic, stopping the commotion from happening.

I can’t blame Brianne if she ever hurts Dominic. I would do the same if someone threatened my mate.

“I am just trying to help here,” Killian snarled and glared back at my husband.

“Trying to help?!” Dominic snapped at him, “Tell Samantha what you saw in the library when you went there! Why don’t you tell her that?!”

“What is he talking about, Killian?” I asked my friend about what Dominic was talking about. I was so confused, and my head was pounding hard, making me dizzy.

Killian was unprepared for what Dominic had said and stood with his back straight as he tried to evade my gaze.

“What is it, Killian?” I asked again with an adamant voice. “I need to know!”

With hesitation, he took something from the pocket of his pants and then scoffed at Dominic and grimaced. He threw that piece of paper on the table, and I took it with shaking hands.

“The dark forces want the royal blood in your twins, Sam,” he said with a soft voice, scared that any wrong word would send me into a full-blown panic again. “If it’s those men who took them, I am not sure where they brought the twins—”

My eyes widened, and everyone stood from their seat when Dominic attacked Killian at blinding speed and grabbed the Moonstone Alpha on his neck. Brianne was so shocked she wasn’t able to move for seconds until she realized what had just happened.

“You knew!” Dominic snarled and tightened his grip on Killian’s neck. “You knew the secret behind all of this, and you decided to hide it from us, you—”

“Stop it, Dominic!” I stepped between them, snarling at both of them.

Then I smelled something familiar on Killian. I turned sharply towards him, seeing his hand stained by something that smelled metallic and lavender. That smell—I smelled Devon's blood on him!

As I looked at the stain on his hand, something flashed in my head, something that I couldn't understand why my wolf showed me that moment. It was that one memory of me, him, and the kids in the middle of summer five years ago. We were in a camp to celebrate the harvest for the Moon Goddess. Under the clear, starry sky and the full moon, I laid my twins underneath the silver moonlight and bathed them with it, believing that the Moon Goddess would see them and would protect them in any circumstances.

Then I remembered Killian, staring at my babies with full awe. I could still remember that strange expression on his face, which made my stomach twist. I didn't know what was in his mind at that time. But I knew something was strange with Killian. There was something he was hiding from me, and it was scaring me.

Why did he have blood on his hands that smelled like my son's?!

I was about to confront him if he knew something about what happened to my twins, but the alarm blared all over the hall, making everyone jump in fear and surprise. A Gamma soldier immediately approached my husband, all tense and distressed, as he whispered something to Dominic. The sound of my heartbeat was louder than the alarm ringing all over the building, and as I watched my husband's eyes grow wider as he listened, I knew something terrible had happened.

"Dominic—"

"We have to go." He grabbed my wrist to lead me out of the council meeting room and forcefully pushed the door open, swinging it wide. "They found a weird passage from the cellar of the house, and it led them directly to the Black Forest."

"Cellar!?" I burst as I walked with him out of the building. "How could the kids go into the cellar?! The last time I checked on it, it was tightly locked!"

“Love, they are werewolves,” he stopped for a bit to look at my worried face and caressed my cheek, “Not just ordinary werewolves but gifted ones. Nothing is impossible with our kids.”

Tears brimmed in my eyes. “How could someone get into our cellar?”

“So it’s the only place in the house you didn’t thoroughly check?” he asked with that dark expression on his face. He opened the car’s door for me as he drove as fast as he could back to the house.

When we arrived, Liam was already there trying to comfort Madison. He led the investigation and the patrol group to track the twins if they ever tried to run away again to the forest, but it seemed they found something strange, and Dominic and I needed to know!

I didn’t waste another second and went to the cellar. It was already open when Dominic and I went inside, and I was horrified at what I saw—Silver furs everywhere, mixed with purplish-black strands of hair.

And the only one who had that hair color was my husband.

“It’s not mine,” he immediately said as soon as I looked at him. “It must be from someone else, love. But who? Only my family has this color of hair...”

My hands were shaking. My husband was right. The hair wasn’t his. The smell was different from my husband’s. It wasn’t him. It wasn’t Dominic...

But who took my Devon and Diana!?

Where are my twins!?

Chapter 155
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“Sam—”

Killian and Brianne barged into the house and approached me and Dominic. My face was so pale, and my eyes couldn't focus on what was happening. Everything around me seemed to slow down, and my heart pounded in my chest, throat, and ears.

I was so dizzy I had to grab onto the wall to steady myself.

It was as if the world was caving in...

"Lady Sam, My Lady, are you alright?" Brianne grabbed me by the shoulders and looked at my face closely. Her eyes were wide with worry as she tried to help me regain my equilibrium. "You should know that the children are still alive, Lady Samantha. Focus. You have to reach out to them through the bond."

"I-I don't know," I said to Brianne with panic. "I can't reach them through the bond! I can't feel them anywhere around here! It's like they disappeared in thin air—"

"Hey, hey, Alpha Dominic and Alpha Killian will do their best to track down these abductors, Lady Samantha. We will take them back. We will take back Devon and Diana. They will be safe."

That exploded something in me, and I grabbed Brianne's shoulders so tight she grimaced and then pushed her with her back on the wall. I never intended to be that aggressive to her, but something was going on with my head—something that was hard for me to control, and it scared me. Our eyes locked, both were baffled, and I lowered my eyes to the floor, feeling so apologetic.

"I'm so sorry," I whispered to Brianne and left her on the wall as she stared at me like I was a monster.

"Samantha—"

"We have to go find them, Dominic! I am tired of all of you telling me what to do! I need to know what happened to my kids! Kill those who took them!

If something happened to them, I swear to the Moon Goddess I would go straight to that cave in the Black Forest and kill them all by myself!"

Dominic was stunned by the fierceness in my tone, and even Killian was shocked by the anger that burned in my eyes. Brianne stayed staring at me as if measuring the situation, knowing that she couldn't be a lot of help after she failed several attempts to track the beasts that took the twins.

"Lady Samantha is right. You have to go down that passage in the cellar to find the twins. I have a huge feeling it's the Fang Trinity who did this. They have a big desire to take the kids, knowing they are the keys to this power that they had been trying to unlock for centuries. They won't kill them, Lady Samantha. They need the kids alive."

"Then let's go!" Killian said with urgency in his voice as he curled his hands and tightened them into fists. "We can't waste any more time arguing here!"

"Who said you are coming with us?" Dominic snapped at Killian, throwing the Moonstone Alpha an annoyed look. "This is none of your business, Killian. It's my family."

"Well, Samantha is family to me too!" Killian snapped at him and then marched towards my mate as they glared at each other, grinding each other's teeth in suppressed anger. "You know you need all the help you can get, Dominic. Stop acting like a kid here and focus on what we should do. Save the kids from those bastards."

I looked at both of them and saw Dominic's face soften at what Killian said. My friend was right. It was not the right time to argue about anything anymore and just focus on finding Devon and Diana. Dominic let out a heavy sigh; his darkened eyes were etched with exhaustion. It's been so many nights since he couldn't sleep well with all the terrible things that happened in Silver Crescent, especially after his mother died. And after the Black Claw massacred numbers of his relatives, Dominic had become paranoid and restless—that rage in him was growing and I found it dangerous. He was getting more uncontrollable and dangerous.

And I had a feeling it was what the enemies wanted. For Dominic to lose it until he gives up on everything.

But I would never let that happen.

“Let Killian go with us, Dominic. He is right. We need all the help we can get. But I won’t risk taking Brianne with us.” I said to them as I approached them and massaged my forehead. The throbbing pain never left my head. “If this tunnel leads us to Black Forest, then Brianne can be right. It is either Black Claw or the Fang Trinity. We need to know where they hide the kids.”

“Let’s go, then. Like I said, there’s no time to waste.” he hissed as he glared at Dominic, who was looking down at the floor.

I felt awful about how it shook my husband’s confidence. That he always fails to protect the kids. I wanted to tell him it wasn’t his fault at all but mine. I hated to admit that Olivia was right. It was my sole duty as the Luna to protect the future of the pack. But no matter how cautious and protective I was with the kids, the enemies always stayed one step ahead of me. They were unpredictable and powerful and I didn’t know what I could do if they ever hurt my children.

“Let’s go then,” Dominic snarled under his breath as he held my hand gently and led me straight to the cellar, leaving Killian kissing Brianne goodbye.

*****

[You know you don’t have to be so cranky like that to Killian. You know he’s into Brianne already.] I said to my husband through our bond, hoping he would stop from being too rude to my friend.

[No matter what you say, I am still not comfortable when he’s around.] he answered, trying his best not to snap at me. I could tell he hated the idea that Killian was just behind us, making sure the rear was safe and had been keeping an eye on me, making sure I was safe. [It’s a family matter. He shouldn’t be here.]

[he's trying to help...] I tried to make Dominic understand that Killian had no ill intention about it. [He's not gloating or anything. He's kind enough to offer help. He cares for the kids.]

Dominic snorted, still detesting the Moonstone Alpha.

The tunnel was cold, and I had been exhaling on my palm to keep myself warm. My eyes widened when someone grabbed my hands and tried to warm them. I thought it was my husband first, so I wasn't bothered. But when I lifted my face, it was Killian, smiling and enclosing my freezing hands between his warm hands.

"Always having cold hands, Sam? You never changed. It's just like before, when you used to visit home in the winter for Christmas with the kids. You used to always forget your gloves so you always needed my help to warm your small hands." Killian smiled as he rubbed his hands against mine, making me blush. "I miss those days."

Dominic saw what he did and my husband's brows deepened. He then looked at me with a warning and that's when I pulled my hands away from Killian with an awkward smile.

I didn't know if Killian was trying Dominic's patience. If I didn't know Killian so much, I would think he was enjoying making Dominic angry. However, I could tell that he was sincere in his words and genuinely worried. Only it wasn't appropriate to act like that toward me anymore because he knew I was already marked. And he was mated to Brianne. Maybe it was just a friendly gesture? I wasn't really sure why Killian was behaving like this whenever I was around.

Killian sighed as he continued, "I can still remember when we went to a raid one time and I was terribly injured by silver chains and your blood dripped onto my wound, making it miraculously heal fast. Do you think it has something to do with you being a descendant of Primordial bloodline?"

"You know what?" Dominic stood from his seat as he stepped close to Killian with a deadly threat in his eyes, "How about you keep your hands to yourself and stop touching my wife?" he snarled in a low, deadly voice.

“Stop it, both of you!” I snarled as I ran between them, pushing them apart from each other.

While I tried to keep them from destroying each other’s faces, I heard a faint sound of children laughing through the tunnel, and the musky smell of the forest filled my nose. We were the end of the tunnel! And the kids—

“Sam!”

“Samantha!”

I ignored both of them and continued running until I saw the light from the outside. The intel was right. It led us straight to the Black Forest, where I saw a floating castle in the middle of a wide, crystal blue river!

I didn’t waste any more seconds. I knew in my heart my kids were there! I had to know if they were still alive! So I ran to the bridge that led me to the giant door of the dark castle. As I got nearer to it, I noticed the thick vines resembled the birthmarks of my twins on their backs! The patterns, resembling cascading lines, caused the hairs on the back of my neck to stand. It was so eerie that I felt something in my stomach twisting.

“Devon... Diana...” I whispered under my breath as I panted, hoping they could hear me and respond through the bond. But my head was silent. No voices. Only despair.

As soon as the tips of my fingers touched the door, a fragment of memories came flashing in my head. Lights blinded my eyes as I squinted to peek at them and there, I saw my mother, holding me in her arms, carrying me as a baby in her arms. We were surrounded by silver wolf totems that were kneeling around us. A flag waving above her head—that same symbol in Richard Bennette’s video when he lied in front of thousands of Silver Crescent citizens about me.

I touched my aching head, feeling as if it was about to split into two.

What was that about?! What's the meaning of those images that flashed in my head!?

Chapter 156
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"Samantha, no!"

I knew what I was doing was stupid. Stupid and dangerous. But I knew my kids were here. I could feel them! Their presence was felt throughout the entire place! My wolf told me to wait for my husband and Killian, but I had had enough of waiting! I had to know where they were! I had to save my kids and take them back home. Their terrified faces and screams for me filled my mind, causing my eyes to brim with tears and my chest to feel heavy.

"Sam, you can't just go into places without being cautious! What if there is a trap!?" Killian snarled at me as they both got a grip on both of my wrists and pulled me back. "What if you die?!"

"You know I won't let that happen. My kids need me!" I cried to him as sobs emerged from my throat. "Just f*cking let go of me. Both of you."

Dominic understood the pain I felt, and he let go of my hand gently.

"Just don't rush inside, love," he pleaded as he caressed my face with solemn eyes. "Let me and Killian check the place first. We don't know what is in this place yet. Killian is right. They might have set traps here, knowing we will come after the kids."

I looked around the castle. It looked like a centuries-old building surrounded by vines, cracks, and fissures that made it look as if it would collapse from the ground. But the columns were huge and strong, and everything was made with marble, crystals, and precious metals, which made the whole structure shimmer when it was struck by silver moonlight. Above us was a grand crystal chandelier that illuminated the whole space, giving off soft, dim light, just enough for us to admire the surroundings.

In front of us was a grand staircase that led to the mezzanine floor. However, what caused the hairs on my nape to stand was the banner before us, which displayed the symbol of the Fang Trinity—a circle that displays an image of fire in the center, with two red snakes intertwined and facing each other at the top. The golden hexagon eyes shone in the shining moonlight.

“It’s them,” Killian murmured under his breath as he examined the symbol. “The Fang Trinity took them again.”

“I am not surprised at all.” Dominic snarled as he glared at the banner. His jaw stiffened until feathers appeared on it, impatience etched on his face as he flexed his fingers that were ready to tear his enemies into ribbons. “They’ve been after Devon and Diana since you moved here to Silver Crescent. If only I knew...”

I reached for my husband’s hand and squeezed it as I gave him a soft look in the eyes. “Nobody predicted all of these terrible things could happen to Silver Crescent, love. This is something that we couldn’t control. We tried everything we could... and we are still trying. But the kids need us. And we have to get them back as soon as possible...before they put their filthy hands on Devon and Diana.”

Killian and Dominic squared their shoulders as we went deeper into the castle. We went straight up the mezzanine, wary about any dangerous feeling we might feel inside the old, but majestic, castle of the Fang Trinity. After living in Silver Crescent for many years and patrolling the Black Forest area, I never imagined that a structure like this was simply standing in the middle of the river, which had served as a water source for Dominic’s people for centuries. Could it be that this castle had been hiding underneath the waters and just ascended after the Fang Trinity rose again from the caves they’d been hiding in?

Because there was no way anyone would not notice such a huge building in the middle of this forest!

The hallways were as silent as death. The silver moonlight pierced through the gigantic crystal windows as the red curtains cascaded down the floor,

like a reminder of how grand and sophisticated this place was. The giant precious vases were empty, and the naked statues were covered with dust and fissures as we walked silently, still waiting for any danger that would come our way.

Nothing happened, though. It was as if the castle knew we were here, walking inside its premises, and was welcoming us to admire its beauty.

Only we weren't there to admire its beauty.

But to punish the bastards who did this to my kids!

Killian came back from patrolling around the area to see if there were suspicious rooms where the enemies had hidden my kids. As my husband and I approached Killian, our hearts raced and our pulses throbbed, filled with worry and hope that he had finally found the twins.

"I saw a door. It's made of stone, though—heavy and massive. I have a feeling they put the twins there. It was the only door that was different from the rest in this building. They should be there."

Dominic took my hand and squeezed it while giving me a look that seemed to ask if I was ready to enter that place. I gave him a short, brave nod and bit my lower lip hard, uncertain of what was waiting for all of us inside that mysterious room.

"Do you think we will be able to infiltrate it?" Killian asked as soon as we stood in front of it, staring at the massive structure. He was right. It was made of stone! So huge and thick that there was no way we could enter it unless we used a bomb to destroy the whole thing!

"I think I can let us get through it," I said to them.

Both Killian and Dominic looked at me, puzzled at what I meant. Of course, there was no way I could move that door with pure strength. Even with Dominic and Killian's strength put together, they wouldn't be able to move that thing even an inch!

They waited for me until I uttered the word. “Give me both of your hands.”

“You make me scared, Sam,” Killian said with a nervous smile. What will you do with it? Float through the door like ghosts do?”

I just rolled my eyes at him as I held both of their heavy hands and then told them to step forward. Dominic gave me a gentle smile, giving me his whole faith that I could do whatever I was planning in my head.

Brianne gave me abilities that I never thought I would learn in such a short time. And this was one of them.

I thought that maybe the Fang Trinity was confident we wouldn’t get past this door; that’s why they were so assured about not putting guards or traps all over the place.

They were wrong.

I felt Killian and Dominic squeeze my hand, scared of what was coming. In my head, I imagined us as air particles that can get through anything, even a door as heavy and massive as this one. When we opened our eyes, we were already in a dark room that was surrounded by coffins and dead, mummified bodies.

My twins were in one of them.

I was about to run over and save them, but Dominic pulled me aside and covered my mouth. A second later, a cloud of dark purple smoke appeared all over the place, and from it emerged Olivia wearing tight fighting gear. The smoke billowed from her fingertips as she walked towards the coffin where my twins lay unconscious.

“Do you think you are the victim here?” she smirked as she stared at my kids. “Your mom is the reason why both of you are here! Your sacrifice will serve a noble purpose.”

Olivia threw a crystal ball that I realized was a memory ball that displayed something like a projector on the white ceiling of the room. My eyes were

wide as I watched, my heart almost exploded in my chest with an overwhelming feeling as tears rolled down my face. It was the memory of my mother, all covered in blood. The memory shows her passing me to the arms of my father. I was a baby in that memory. All swaddled with white cotton cloth, stained with fresh blood.

“Take her to the human world and tell everyone she is your lost niece,” that’s what she said as she sobbed in pain.

I heard Dominic murmur into my ear, “That’s why I noticed Richard Bennette and how he gave you such a suspicious look when you were first introduced here in Silver Crescent. I feel like he knew who you really are, my love. He knew and decided to investigate it further. That’s why I saw those papers and your photos in his house and the old library. He’s been eyeing you, knowing you are a real descendant of the Primordial Clan.”

My chest felt as though it was breaking apart from within. I wanted to scream. I wanted to lunge toward Olivia and tear her head off her shoulders, but I couldn’t. One wrong move and she can kill the twins. I would never risk it.

To my surprise, Diana opened her eyes, and fear spread all over me, making me shake from it. I saw how my little daughter’s eyes opened and stared at Olivia’s smirking face with a sad look in her eyes.

Then I noticed Diana was staring at Olivia’s neck.

“There is a black claw mark on your neck,” Diana uttered and pointed at Olivia’s neck, which she hid with the collar of her fighting gear. Diana’s eyes closed into a deep sleep after saying the words.

That’s when I understood what my daughter meant.

Olivia’s eyes widened with rage as she hid her neck. I saw those dark spots on it. Wounds that were so bad they looked as if she were rotting alive! A festering wound that she had been hiding from everyone. The contract mark of the Fang Trinity was slowly eating her from within!

A poison she couldn't get rid of was slowly taking its toll on her body.

With a scream, Olivia disappeared again into the billowing clouds of dark smoke, enraged by what Diana had told her...

Chapter 157
[DOMINIC's Point of View]

"Diana! Devon!"

Once Olivia disappeared, we ran straight to the coffin where Devon and Diana were lying. To my surprise, the coffin closed, covering both my twins with a heavy and thick crystal lid. My wife's scream echoed all over the hall as I punched the crystal lid with all my strength. Killian and she did the same in panic. But it was so tough that Killian broke his knuckles, and blood sprayed on the crystal lid from my busted fists.

"Enough!" Samantha cried as she dropped her face into both of her shaking hands. "Enough! You are both just hurting yourself!"

I stepped away from the coffin, panting and full of frustration. I covered the upper half of my face with my busted hand, smudging my forehead and my eyes with my blood like war paint. Killian cursed under his breath as his eyes brimmed with tears, feeling so angry and scared for the twins, scared that we couldn't do anything to get them both out. My teeth ground in anger as I roared and then looked at my wife. She was devastated, and I didn't know what to do. I didn't know how I could comfort her...

I was f*cking useless.

"What are we going to do now?! How are we going to get them out of that—that f*cking thing?!" Killian snarled in anger; he rested his hand on his hip, the other dragging down his face. I wanted to tell him to go the f*ck away and we didn't need him. But I knew the last thing that Samantha would want to hear at that moment was me and Killian fighting.

So I shut my mouth and looked around, hoping I could find anything that would help us get the kids out of that crystal coffin.

“Do you think they can breathe inside?” Samantha cried; her eyes were red and puffy, and it killed me to watch her in that kind of agony. “Are they even still alive!?”

“I can feel them through the bond. They are just sleeping, my love,” I whispered to her as I held her hand. Her puffy eyes gazed up at me, and my heart shattered into a thousand pieces once more. “We will get them out,” I promised her.

I wasn’t sure how. But I would do anything to save my twins and take them away from here...

I walked around the place. The corners were dark, and only small torches illuminated the place, dim enough for normal eyes to see the faces of what was inside the coffins. Then I looked up and squinted my eyes and noticed something strange on the ceiling.

My eyes widened, and my heartbeat went fast. I noticed carvings, engraved symbols, and letters on the ceiling that looked very familiar to me. Then, deep into the darkness, I stepped closer and saw an altar behind a thick, black curtain that was draped to hide it.

I pulled the fabric away and revealed the structure in front of my wife and Killian. When I looked up again at the ceiling, that’s when I realized it was a genetic tree diagram of Samantha’s Clan... all carved down to her and our twins, Diana and Devon. There were two symbols of keys from above the coffins where my twins were imprisoned, and then I realized it was referring to them as the key to whatever was inside or was hidden in this place.

My forehead creased as I frowned. Under Samantha’s name on the diagram was a symbol of a cylinder, like a lock or something. What does it mean? I asked myself, as I stared at my wife, who was sitting on a protruding rock in the middle of the circle, where the coffins encircling it were. Despair was etched on her face, and I wished I could just fucking

destroy that crystal lid, but I was scared something might happen to the kids inside.

And it was so f*cking hard, like that of a diamond.

Samantha stood from her seat and then wiped her tears with the back of her hand. I wanted to approach her. I wanted to go check on her. But I worry she might push me away or snarl at me. She was upset and hurt, and I never wanted her to feel weak by constantly trying to be there for her. I knew Samantha. She wanted to face her fears and pain alone.

Despite trying hard not to go near her, I couldn't help but walk towards my wife and hold her hand. Samantha turned her head towards me slowly and then sadly smiled. Her smile felt like a thousand knives cutting my insides.

"I am here, love," I murmured to her. "We will get them out..."

Samantha reached for the crystal lead again with tears in her eyes, and both of us were baffled when the thing illuminated, letting out a faint, crystalline light that pulsed like a heart.

Then something unexpected happened.

The rest of the crystal coffins pulsed and illuminated! Like Samantha activated something when she touched the coffin where Diana and Devon were, and then the rest of the coffins opened, except theirs.

"What the—"

Killian almost jumped in fright when the eyes of the mummified corpses opened. Even Samantha gasped and nearly screamed when she saw one almost snatching her from the back.

The dead bodies looked more like zombies. Were they the people who had been protecting this place from their enemies? I still had no idea what that place was, but I knew it was filled with evil forces and spirits.

What were they hiding here that made Olivia and Richard want my children so desperately?!

Killian started pushing and kicking the walking corpses and I noticed right away that they were also after my wife. So I pulled Samantha behind me and made sure none of them made even a small contact with her. My wife and I had seen crazy stuff for the past few days and I wasn't sure what would happen if she touched any of these walking dead bodies!

"Don't make any physical contact with these monsters, Samantha! We have no idea what would happen if they managed to touch you!"

"What would I do?!" she said in panic. "We are surrounded, Dominic!"

"Just stay behind me!" I hissed between my teeth as I glared at the dead bodies walking unsteadily towards us. I kicked one in the gut and I expected it would fly from the other side of the room. But to my surprise, the monster was tough! It withstood the power of my kick and just flinched a little from it. I cursed under my breath as I pushed Samantha back, making sure she was safe behind me.

Even Killian was having a hard time pushing them away and we were getting cornered by a bunch of them!

"Do something! We can't let them touch Samantha!" I snarled at him as he gave the one in front of him a roundhouse kick, but the corpse didn't even budge.

"What the f*ck do you think I am doing?!" he almost half shrieked in panic as he kicked it again, but it kept on stepping forward like it made the Moonstone Alpha's kick look like a kid's kick.

Bring the Moonstone Alpha. He will be a huge help.

The f*ck he is!

My eyes widened when one of the corpses lunged towards Samantha, and I had to jump and stop it midair. When I moved away from her, Killian made

sure to pull her behind him, so that's when I felt relieved and kicked the dead guy in the face, almost twisting its neck, and its head turned into a gut-sickening position.

When I landed, I punched the two of them in the face. I saw from the corner of my eye how Killian smirked at Samantha as he whispered, "Your blood can heal wounds. Why don't you just kiss me right now? Maybe your lips can heal injuries too?"

This sh*thead!!!

I thought he was already mated to that Moonstone witch!?

I rammed the corpse out of my way, but when I lifted my face, I saw how Samantha leaned her head closer to lick Killian's wound on the back of his hand. I felt my rage explode like wildfire in my chest. My eyes focused on the wound she licked and it let out a light that pulsed just like the crystal coffin lids did and I landed on my two feet, a few steps away from them, wide-eyed and baffled at what I had seen.

Even Killian was petrified at what happened.

[F*ck. It's supposed to be just a joke, Dominic! I swear to the—]

Killian stopped explaining through mindlink when all the corpses around us kneeled in unison in front of my wife. My luna...

And the second all of them knelt, the stone in the middle of the coffins rose. The ground shook and dust and small stones fell from the ceiling, making the three of us almost stumble to the ground. As soon as the quaking of the floor stopped, that's when I noticed that the stone in the middle was a statue that was buried underneath and resurfaced the second the corpses knelt.

Like what they had witnessed was enough proof that Samantha was something worthy of whatever was on the statue.

A Diadem—sitting on the top of the head of a maiden statue.

I thought I was blinded by something but a thick, purplish black smoke suddenly appeared near the statue and a voice screaming with anger as a hand reached for the diadem that was the same color as my wife's werewolf eyes.

"THAT DIADEM IS MINE! I AM THE SOLE HEIR TO THE THRONE!"

Chapter 158
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

It was as if my body moved on its own.

The second I saw the purplish-black cloud of smoke, I knew instantly what would happen.

I lunge away from Killian, who was trying his best to protect me from the corpses after Dominic was forced to ram them out just to make sure none of them would ever touch me, scared that another supernatural thing would happen. I bet my husband had enough of that sh*t already.

But I would never let Olivia take the diadem! After what she did to Devon and Diana, there was no way I would let her win!

"Samantha, no!"

Despite my husband's warning, I still went after Olivia and put all my strength into my legs as I jumped towards her at a speed that even Dominic failed to follow. The head of the statue was destroyed and crumbled into pieces after I snatched the diadem before Olivia could. Her ear-splitting scream of rage filled the hall, and Killian and Dominic immediately ran towards me. My husband's hands were gentle on my arms as he helped me get up, and then he glared at Olivia.

"THAT IS MINE, SAMANTHA! GIVE IT BACK!"

"Nothing here is yours, Olivia Bennette!" Dominic barked at her as he shot her a deadly glare. His hazel eyes glowed in the darkness as his Alpha

power awakened in rage. “You will pay for what you did to my children! You and your father! You are both traitors and enemies of the Silver Pack!”

“I don’t f*cking care about any of you!” Olivia snarled at Dominic, and her fierce retort surprised me. It was as if she was possessed by something and wasn’t the same Olivia who was desperate for my husband’s attention for so many years. “Just f*cking give my diadem back and I will let you get out of this place alive!”

Killian scoffed, “Don’t make me laugh, Olivia. Do you hear yourself? You are starting to sound like a lunatic, like your father.”

“You don’t know what you are doing!” Olivia snarled as she bared her perfect, sharp teeth at us. Her slender body looked thinner than the last time I saw her. The dark bags under her eyes and the lines on her forehead made her a few years older, and I wondered why Olivia had to suffer like the others for a thing that was never meant for her.

“You have no right, Olivia Bennette! After you kidnapped Devon and Diana, don’t you f*cking dare say we don’t know what the hell we’re doing!” I snarled back at her, giving her one deadly look. “Go. Before I wring your lovely neck, Olivia. I will never forgive you for what you did to my children!”

“Give me back the diadem!” She hissed at me, stretching out her hand for the crown. “That is mine, Samantha! Give it to me and I will go!”

Killian and Dominic stepped in front of me protectively. Their wide bodies and height completely obscured me from Olivia’s sight.

“You are not getting anything here, Olivia. Didn’t you just hear what Samantha said?” Killian hissed at her.

“GO!” Dominic barked at her as he pointed to the door out of the hall. “Before I tear your limbs apart, Olivia! This is not a threat! After what you and your father did, I won’t hesitate to kill you, right here, right now!”

Olivia’s eyes were wide with terror. She was crouching into a fighting position, but she knew there was no chance of survival against the Silver

Crescent and the Moonstone Alpha. Her bloodshot eyes glanced back and forth between Killian and Dominic, as if calculating her next move, before shifting to me, with desperation etched all over her face. Her gaze landed on the diadem in my hands. I knew deep within me, when she glared in my direction, that she would never go despite my mate's threat against her. Her desire to get the diadem was bigger than her desire to live, and that was a dangerous thing.

I glanced behind me at Diana and Devon, who remained unconscious inside the crystal coffin. I then turned my attention to the diadem in my grasp. Something inside the thing was calling me—like a faint whisper—like it was calling my name and wanting me to do something.

That voice whispering from nowhere wanted me to wear the diadem.

Wear it. Wear it. Wear it.

Wear it!!!

I watched my trembling hands move on their own as I put the diadem on top of my head, and Olivia's scream was fading in my ears as fragments of memories flashed in front of my eyes.

Memories that weren't mine.

I felt all the muscles in my body tensing, my heart beating rapidly as adrenaline rushed all over me, and then seconds later, I felt myself shudder. As my body heat rose, my eyelids fluttered so quickly that my eyes rolled to the back of my head. My arms and limbs went rigid, and the veins in my neck protruded, making Dominic's eyes widen in horror.

I saw myself sitting on a throne. I blinked. No. No, it wasn't me! My eyes had the same ocean blue hue as my dad's! Then I squinted and realized who it was. It was Mom in her younger days, almost looking like me with long, dark hair and a heart-shaped face. Only her eyes were amber gold, and she was so gorgeous!

The I looked around and everyone in front of her was kneeling. I recognized the throne she was sitting on and then my eyes widened at once! It was the throne of the Alpha King! Why was my mother sitting on the throne of the King!?

Then the memory faded like ink on water, and the image reformed, revealing how my mother fled from the palace with some of her servants and friends. The palace was under attack, and one of the people who were running away with my mom was Lena! I realized Dominic looked like his mother in her younger days.

“You have to go to the Silver Crescent pack,” Lena begged my mother as she grabbed my mother’s hands tightly. You and your child will be safe there! You have to make everyone believe she is a wolfless youngling!”

“She will marry your son one day, Lena.” My mother murmured to her with worry in her voice, “I am not sure it is a good idea for Samantha to be branded as a ‘Wolfless Luna’ of an Alpha like your son.”

“This is to protect her,” Lena rested her hand on my mother’s shoulder. Her eyes were teary. “For her safety, my friend.”

Then another image appeared and it was Richard Bennette conspiring with the Black Claw Pack and the Fang Trinity after betraying the Alpha King. The diadem showed me the old man’s desire to revive the dead king with the use of Devon and Diana’s blood, the blood of the direct descendants of the Primordial Blood Clan.

That’s when my eyes opened as I gasped sharply for air.

Like I was pulled into the deepest part of the ocean and reached the surface to fill my lungs with air.

“Samantha!” Dominic’s hands were grabbing me by the shoulder and violently shaking me to wake me back to my senses. How many minutes did I pass out? Five? Ten?

“W-What happened?” I asked my husband as I took off the diadem from my head, still feeling dizzy and weak, “What happened, Dominic?”

“The diadem,” he answered, his hazel eyes clouded with worry, “ was consuming you, Samantha. Your soul. I saw the diadem take your life aura; if you hadn’t woken up, it would have devoured you!

“What—”

I looked around with my blurry eyes and saw Killian struggling to fight off Olivia, while Dominic ensured that she wouldn’t come anywhere near me. I glanced to the back, where Devon and Diana were still lying unconscious in the crystal coffin, and tears started to swell in my eyes.

To my shock, the crystal lid slipped down the coffin and landed on the marbled floor with a loud thud, shattering it from the impact. Even Olivia and Killian paused their fight, while Dominic and I stared anxiously, our hearts beating frantically in our chests as we waited for the twins to move.

My heart was slamming against my chest every second.

Would they wake up?!

Thud.Thud.Thud.

Please... Devon. Diana...

I thought my heart exploded when Devon suddenly woke up and opened his eyes wide as he pointed somewhere. A wall. A wall that had a weird pattern on it.

“Mom! He’s there! He has grandmother Lena’s earrings with him!”

Dominic didn’t waste another second and ran straight to where his son pointed. He crouched and concentrated all his power in his fist; his every muscle flexed. Dominic punched the wall, revealing a secret compartment where we all saw Richard Bennett standing inside with terrified eyes.

“YOU BASTARD—”

Dominic searched Bennette’s pockets and saw Lena’s earrings still stained with her blood!

All of us were petrified at what we saw, and I was so confused and disconcerted. I didn’t know if I would go and tear the old man to pieces first, avenging Lena’s death, or if I would go to my twins and bring them to a safer place before Olivia could think of attacking them. Dominic had already grabbed Richard by the collar of his shirt and swung him, causing half of the old man’s face to collide with the stone-hard wall.

“Stupid bastard!” Killian yelled at Dominic in anger, “You can’t kill him! You want him to have a quick escape from everything he did!?”

Killian was right. Dominic couldn’t kill Richard yet! I wouldn’t let the bastard get away with what he did to Lena and the people of Silver Crescent!

I was so distracted by the thought of Dominic killing Richard that I forgot about Olivia. One quick move and she had snatched the diadem away from me. She sprinted to the far corner of the hall and then wore it with two hands while staring at me with a mocking grin.

“OLIVIA, NO!!!”

She shuddered like I did, and her eyes turned all white as her limbs turned rigid. But seconds later, the black mist swirled all over her and she slowly shifted into a half-human, half-wolf monster that I had never seen before. The wound festering on her neck grew and looked like a second head attached to her.

All the hairs on my nape stood in dread.

But what almost gave me a heart attack was when she moved so fast she was already standing in front of my twins.

Her long, sharp claws were poised to sever them.

Chapter 159
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

No!

It was as if time turned everything into slow-mo—or was it me that surpassed the limit of my speed? In a split second, I dashed straight in front of my twins, my legs stiff, my body trembling as I shielded both of them with my body. I heard my husband's scream as he lunged forward to us. Killian's cry as he tried his best to reach us echoed in my ear, together with the thundering beat of my heart, a painful hammering in my chest that reminded me I had to keep my children alive.

I had to keep them alive!

"SAMANTHA!"

There was no other way. Not enough time. I wrapped my arms around Devon and Diana and buried my face between them, ready to accept my fate. My twins were both in shock at what was coming as they stared at Olivia in her beast form with wide eyes. I squeezed them, felt them in my arms, wanting to make them feel they would be safe no matter what—that I had them. Mommy was there to keep them safe.

"I love you both..." I whispered as a tear rolled down my cheek.

Gasping, I waited for it. The pain—for Olivia's massive and razor-sharp claw to slash across my back, severing my skin, flesh, and spine. I waited for my warm blood to gush out. My sacrifice would be enough for Dominic to reach us. In my head, I prayed that I had given my mate enough time to drive Olivia away from my kids, kill her, keep our twins safe, and take them out of this place. Dominic and Killian could destroy her. They had to.

I sucked in a deep breath and held it as I embraced my twins tight.

My eyes opened when nothing came. Confused, I glanced back and saw a white barrier thing that protected me and the kids from Olivia's claws. My eyes widened at what I saw, and then I looked at Devon and Diana. They

were both glaring at Olivia, focusing on materializing the shield that kept us all alive from Olivia's deadly attacks.

Breathing hard and fast, still baffled at what my twins did, I slowly stood between them and then glared at Olivia. I had no idea how Devon and Diana did it. But Dominic was right. They weren't just ordinary werewolves. They were both from Promordial Blood and from the Clan of the Silver Wolves of the Silver Crescent pack. Devon and Diana came from two powerful bloodlines that these people feared so much.

Olivia's eyes widened in confusion and terror as she screamed and kept on slashing against the light shield. As I watched her, I noticed that the shield had the same pattern as the vines that covered the castle. Her shriek of anger echoed all over the hall as Dominic and Killian froze and watched in shock, as if seeing a miracle happening in front of them. Both their mouths were parted in awe and distress. Richard, on the other hand, was half unconscious. Dominic beat him half dead as he destroyed the old man's face.

"You failed, Olivia. Even with the diadem taking over you, making you the monster you really are, you can never hurt us." I snarled at her as I put my hand behind my children's backs. I stood with my back straight, lifting my chin as I glared at her through my nose. She kept on slashing, piercing the shield with fear and despair on her half-rotting face.

"Why don't you just all f*cking die!" She screamed as she kept on trying to destroy the shield with all her strength. "DIE!"

My heart faltered when I saw the shield slowly chipping from her claws, and even Devon and Diana lost their focus as fear etched on their faces. They stepped back as they felt the power of Olivia's blow.

I crouched, prepared to launch an attack as soon as the shield crumbled. But before Olivia landed her most powerful blow, Dominic had already jumped over her and grabbed her arm away from us. To my horror, his arm got infected with the disease that came from the black purple mist, and Olivia took the chance to send him flying to the other side of the hall with a kick.

Killian let out an angry snarl when her attention went back to us. He sprinted towards Olivia and shifted to his werewolf form, lunged at her with his teeth, and aimed for her neck. But Olivia saw it before he could reach her and caught him by the neck, strangling him to death.

My mind started to panic. I looked at Killian and then at Dominic. Killian was trying to escape Olivia's grip while my husband writhed in pain from the infection in his hand and arm. I didn't know who I should help first... I didn't know—

[Go to Dominic, Samantha! I can...] Killian grunted as he tried to push Olivia away from him. [I can do this!]

"Mom! He's dying!!!" Diana cried as she pointed to Dominic, and I wiped my tears with the back of my hand before I tore my eyes away from Killian, who was already struggling to breathe.

"Dominic!" I cried and was horrified to see that the poison was almost on his shoulder.

He panted, sweat beading on his forehead, and flinched away from me, scared that I might get infected too. "Don't go anywhere near me, Samantha! Just go and get the kids away from here!"

"As if I'm going to let you die in here!" I growled at him and then bit the side of my hand so hard my teeth sank into the flesh, making myself bleed.

I remembered what Brianne told me before. The tears of the Royal Blood can purify darkness. I dripped my blood on the poisoned part of my husband's arm, and it slowly healed with the help of his rapid regenerating ability.

Dominic looked at me, his eyes wide with disbelief. Then, I looked at my kids and exclaimed loudly, "Don't be afraid, Devon, Diana! You've got this! Focus and remember that feeling when we used to chase butterflies!"

I saw Diana's eyes blink, like she remembered something familiar that made her more confident and powerful. She stepped forward, pulling her brother with her as she glared at Olivia. I panicked when I saw Killian already unconscious as she wrung his neck.

"Killian! No!" I screamed in terror and quickly ran towards my friend. With my werewolf ears, I could hear his heartbeat getting slower and slower.

Until it stopped.

My eyes widened, and I was petrified in fear. No! He couldn't be dead! No!!!

Diana must have felt my grief, too. She screamed with all her might, and the light shield expanded. It exploded and threw me and Dominic, and we landed on our backs with a loud thud. Olivia was thrown violently, her body embedded deep into the stone ceiling of the hall. There were sickening cracks of bones, and blood dripped from her broken body down to the marble floor. Her twisted body made me nauseous.

"Killian!" All four of us ran to the Moonstone Alpha, and Dominic moved as he tried to revive him again.

"C'mon, Killian!" Dominic snarled as he did CPR on him. "Don't you dare die on us! Not here!"

Devon and Diana started to cry as Diana held his hand. "Uncle Killian, please open your eyes!"

We were all startled when a loud, high-pitched, manic laughter filled the place.

"You think you won!?" Olivia screamed with a crazy grin on her bleeding face. "You think you have already gotten rid of me!?"

I stood up and glared at her as I looked up at the ceiling, where she was embedded in the stone structure. I bared my teeth at her as tears poured down my face and hissed, "This is the end for you, Olivia. I will make sure of it!"

“In the tomb of the Black Forest, your mother’s—”

Before she could even finish her sentence, the color of her skin turned gray as she quickly deteriorated, her skin cracking as she started crumbling like a corroded statue that was powdered into a pile of silver ash.

The diadem fell from the ceiling, and the sound of the precious metal clanking filled the room, causing my heart to sink. I walked towards the diadem, looked at what remained of Olivia’s body, picked it up from the marbled floor, and brushed the dust away from it. I didn’t know what to feel at that moment as Dominic tried to bring Killian back to life. I was numb and in agony while my eyes focused on the precious thing.

“The Luna of the Pack with the Ocean Blue Eyes.” I read the carving inside of it that made me blink.

There was a loud gasping and coughing as Killian sat up straight; his bloodshot eyes were wide as his hands automatically touched his neck.

“Oh my goddess, I’m alive!” He smiled so wide as he looked at me and then at Dominic and the kids. “I’m alive!”

Diana was so happy that she threw herself on Killian and embraced him tightly. Dominic smiled and then patted his back gently as he stood and walked towards me. His eyes were gazing into mine as he held my hand and kissed it.

“Let’s go home...” he whispered to me and then kissed me gently on the lips.

Chapter 160
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

After we left the castle, Killian, Dominic, the twins, and I watched it disappear from the thick forest of Black. The fog started to rise from the frozen river until we couldn’t see anything but the path back to Silver

Crescent territory. I was terrified we would encounter wild beasts. The three of us were not in shape to fight anymore after what happened in the castle, but Dominic still managed to carry Killian on his shoulder as we headed home.

“ALPHA!” One of the Gamma Patrol men shouted to alert the others, and soon, as we approached the Gates, healers and soldiers swarmed us and took care of the kids, Dominic and Killian. One of the healers approached me, but I stopped her and smiled as I said politely, “I am okay. Please ensure you check the twins. And the Moonstone Alpha—he’s badly hurt. Please call Brianne and tell her that her Alpha will be in the infirmary.”

“Yes, Your Grace. The Beta is on his way here,” she said with a grave look on her face, and then was about to reach for my forehead, which was bleeding, but hesitated. Worry was etched on her face. “Are you sure, Your Grace, that you are not going to let me see that injury? It looks serious—”

“No. I will be fine,” I smiled at her again. I wanted to tell her that the wound had already healed, and it was just blood that had stained down my face, and I never wanted her to ask any more questions. “Please make sure Killian is okay. He almost died out there in the forest protecting the kids.”

She gave me one short nod and then headed straight to the infirmary. I went with the kids to make sure they were alright and no permanent injury was done to them, and thankfully, after their thorough tests and evaluations, the healers and the elders told me that Devon and Diana were perfectly fine.

I stood from my seat as soon as I saw my husband step out of the door and into the hallway. “How are you, love?” I asked Dominic as soon as he got out of the infirmary with a bandage around his broken fist. “How is Killian doing?”

“He’s fine,” he shortly answered, and then exhaled heavily as he examined the blood on my face. “Why didn’t you let them check you?” he whispered as he cupped the side of my face with his big hand. “I need to make sure you are okay, love. You fought hard, and you need to be taken care of by the healers, too.”

“I’m fine, my love.” I stepped closer to him while he leaned in, his lips nearly touching mine as he gazed down at me with such longing. I continued, “I can’t let them test my blood. You know what my blood can do. Dominic, I don’t know what they’d do to me and the kids if they found out my blood heals and repels darkness and spirits.

“I thought they tested Devon and Diana?” he asked with worry.

“They did. But they didn’t do any blood work after my request. They just did some X-rays and stuff... The twins are perfectly fine, though. You don’t have to worry.”

He kissed my forehead and then pulled me into an embrace as I pressed my cheek on his chest. He murmured, “You know I always worry about you and the kids. You are my life. I never know what to do if I ever lose any of you in that castle.”

“We survived. We are all alive, my love. Olivia is gone. Her father is gone. They can’t go after us anymore. They can’t hurt us.” A tear streaked down my face as my throat swelled, threatening to let out a sob. “We will be okay.”

“Yes, we will be okay,” he whispered and then lifted my face with his finger to kiss me lightly on the lips. When our lips parted and he stared deeply into my ocean blue eyes, he added, “I should prepare to announce to everyone that you are becoming the official Luna of this pack.”

I was surprised and stared back at him with slightly wide eyes. “I don’t think you should. It’s the last thing on my mind for now. All I want is to keep Devon and Diana safe while the issue about the gates and the walls is not fixed yet.”

Dominic’s face was sad when I told him this, but I knew he understood. All of this horror that was happening in Silver Crescent wasn’t finished yet, so there was no reason to celebrate, even if it was about me being finally crowned as his Luna. I couldn’t feel happy when his people were suffering.

“If it’s what you want, my love,” he answered as he gazed into my eyes and kissed the back of my hand. “After I fix all of this, then.”

*****

After the health examinations that the twins underwent in the infirmary, I drove them straight back home, and I was happy to see Cynthia and Madison waiting for all of us. Both of them cried in relief and happiness as soon as they saw Devon and Diana running towards them and gave each of them a tight hug.

I let the kids play first. They had already slept in the infirmary after we arrived in Silver Crescent, and the first thing I ever wanted to do was to rest my back on the couch and close my eyes as I smelled the scent of home, comfort, and peace.

“Your Grace?”

Frowning, I blinked and opened my eyes for a bit. I saw Madison looking at me with worried eyes, and I realized I had fallen asleep sitting on the couch. She asked again, gently and politely, “Are you feeling okay, Your Grace? Do you need me to prepare the bath so you can relax and clean yourself before you get more sleep?”

“No, I’m fine...” I groaned as I slowly stood from the couch; every inch of me was aching like hell. “Where are Devon and Diana?”

“They’re in the backyard,” Madison smiled as she looked outside the window, watching the kids. “I am so happy they are safe and back.”

I gave Madison a gentle smile as I patted her on the shoulder and then went to the backyard to watch the kids. Diana was busy picking the newly blossomed flowers in the garden while Devon was in a corner of the playground doing something that made me curious to look at. I walked towards him at a slow pace and saw him playing with the dirt, molding it into something that resembled the altar in the castle in the Black Forest.

My heart broke while I watched Devon working his hardest to mold it into the exact look of what they saw in that place. If only I could erase all those terrible memories they had from that place and the mine cave, I would. All those painful experiences they went through because I failed to protect them will scar my heart for eternity. I still couldn't forgive myself; that's why I couldn't get to say yes to my husband about officially announcing me as the Luna.

How could I protect the pack if I can't even protect my kids?

"Samantha."

I turned around and wiped my tears with the back of my hand and was surprised to see who was standing behind me with a sad smile on his face. "Killian!"

He spread his arms wide open for a hug, and I ran towards him and embraced him tightly. I was so happy that my tears rolled down my cheeks. "I thought you'd die!"

"Of course, that will never happen, silly," he smiled down at me. "I am tough. They can't get rid of me that easily."

I pulled away from him, half laughing, half crying. "You sacrificed yourself for the kids... I don't know how I can repay you for everything."

He reached for my face and then smiled gently, "Just be happy, Samantha. That's what I want. I want you to be happy because you deserve all the happiness in the world. I wish I could give it to you, but I'm glad you're happy with the man you love." He reached for my hand and placed something in it.

He placed a small bottle in my hand, which contained roots and an amber-colored liquid. "It contains dew from the Black Forest. I was told your mother used to—"

"Used to what?"

Both of us turned to look at the man approaching. Dominic had already changed into his clean clothes, his gaze shifting gravely from Killian to me.

I could tell Dominic still never wanted me anywhere near the Moonstone Alpha. But after Killian's sacrifice last night, he wasn't as aggressive toward him as before.

"Brianne is waiting for me at the car." Killian smiled at me and then gave a grave nod to Dominic before he left.

Dominic and I watched him as he went inside his car, with Brianne waving goodbye at me. I waved back with a smile, and then Dominic kissed my forehead as he whispered, "How are you feeling?"

"I am alright, love. Just checking on the kids when Killian went here." I whispered as I caressed the side of his face. He took my hand and kissed my palm.

The kids were thrilled to see their dad, though, and started running towards him. While watching him and the twins play in that small playground, my curiosity caught me, and I looked down at the small bottle in my hand.

It had the same logo as the prenatal diary my mom had in that wooden chest of her stuff.

Where did Killian get this thing?

Chapter 161
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"Dominic..."

I rushed to my husband's office to clarify something I had heard in the hallways of the pack manor that morning. I wasn't ready to go back to work yet, but some of the council members told me that my presence in the pack manor would boost the people's morale.

After Dominic and I had been away from the pack for several nights after the Bennetts abducted Devon and Diana, the people started to doubt if Dominic still had everything under his control. I felt that the people were still unaware of the destroyed gates, the number of deaths that occurred at the eastern gates, and the level of threat that the Silver Crescent was facing.

Once the people of Silver Crescent discovered what was really happening in their territory, there would be total chaos. And I never let these people rebel against him and tarnish my husband's reputation as an Alpha. I had to do something. I had to stop this. I had to stop Fang Trinity and Black Claw from ruining the pack that Dominic had been working so hard on.

"Samantha..." he stood from his seat with a surprised look on his face and then smiled as he failed to hide the nervousness in his eyes. "Is there a problem?"

I felt awful when I realized he was always worried whenever I rushed into his office. He became accustomed to me rushing to him during emergencies involving the kids, and it was disheartening that we had lost all sense of peace in our lives since the kids and I moved to this pack. I wanted to question my decision.

Maybe Killian and Olivia were right that we shouldn't have left the Moonstone pack. But when I see Dominic, the man in front of me, gazing at me with worry and love, all of these perturbations melt away. I chose him. I wanted him back in my life and to have the family I always dreamed of.

I would choose my husband over and over.

I closed the gap between us and kissed his lips gently. He looked at me, all puzzled, but with a smile on his face. All the nervousness etched on his face disappeared as he pulled me against him and kissed me again so deeply. Hungrily.

He sighed when I pulled away from him gently, but stayed in his arms. "What's wrong? Are the kids safe? Are they with you?"

"Yes. They are at my office with Madison and Cynthia," I said to him softly.

“Then what’s the problem?” He gently lifted my face using his thumb and index finger so that he could stare into my ocean-blue eyes. “Is there anything bothering you? Nightmares? Visions?”

“No,” I answered and hesitated for a bit, and then answered, almost stuttering, “I mean... do you really have to do this? In the middle of what is happening in the pack?”

“You mean the ceremony?” he chuckled and then gave me a soft kiss on the lips. “This is something you can’t stop, my love. Even though you say you are already and technically the Luna of my pack, the ceremony should still be held to make it official. The people should know who you are, Samantha. They should know you are my Luna and my wife.”

“I just—”

He cupped my face with his big hands; his eyes were soft as he murmured, “You deserve this, love. You fought so hard for me and the kids. You fought hard to protect Devon and Diana, and it means you also protect the future of the pack. You are not just a mother, Samantha. You are the heart of Silver Crescent.”

As I stared into my husband’s eyes, I could tell he wanted to do this so badly, so I decided not to argue about it anymore and dropped the subject.

“I’ll see you tonight.” Dominic’s face was full of pride and love as he caressed the side of my face.

*****

I found myself in front of Lena’s room.

After Dominic told me about the ceremony tonight, all I wanted was to be alone and walk mindlessly through the hall as the anxiety ate me. Dominic asked me to stay in the Alpha’s bedchamber for the preparation, but I felt the panic in me spread in my chest, and I couldn’t think of anything but going to a place and pretending it was another normal night for us.

Normal night.

I scoffed at the idea.

I pushed the heavy door and was surprised it wasn't locked. Had someone cleaned inside and forgotten to lock it when they left?

The room was clean. No dust. Everything was perfect, except for the fact that the person using it was gone. Dead. Lena will never come back. And that realization still couldn't sink into my head. Because while I stood there in the middle of her room, it felt as if she would step in at any moment and smile at me like she usually did before.

"I'm so sorry, Lena." A tear rolled down my cheek as I looked down at the floor, my chest burdened with guilt and grief that I couldn't explain. "I'm so sorry."

With my throat swelling as I sobbed, I decided to leave the room and head straight to the Alpha's bedchamber to prepare for whatever was waiting for me in the ceremony hall.

But I noticed something strange on the floor.

A loose part of it creaked under my step, and I bent down to check on it. I frowned when I saw that part of the floor was raised, as if something beneath it had pushed it up. With so much curiosity, I removed the wood and was surprised at what I saw.

A wooden box.

It had the same design as the box my mother owned, in which I found her diary.

My heart was beating fast as I took the box from under the floor and opened it. Documents. Loads of it! I wanted to check them one by one, but I didn't have enough time to read each of them. But there was a paper that

caught my attention after I saw an attached photo of it. A CCTV photo of me with all my luggage, the day I left Silver Crescent.

“The time and date when Samantha left Silver Crescent. My son, Dominic, knew she would leave, and I saw him stuff the silver wolf pendant in her luggage, telling me not to tell his wife about it. Only the Alpha’s wife can possess the pendant, a charm that protects its owner. Despite my son’s indifference to Samantha, I knew deep inside him that he still cared for her.”

My heart raced as I pulled the pendant from underneath the documents. It was the necklace I returned to Lena the day we met at the Moonstone Pack, since I left Silver Crescent. My eyes focused on the initials engraved on it, which were the initials of my mate’s name.

“Ohh, Lena,” I smiled as I carefully placed the pendant in the middle of my palm, “You kept it for me?”

I placed the box back under the secret storage, replaced the wood, and ensured it was aligned on the floor, hoping no one would notice it. I wanted to take it back with me. But this thing must be important to Lena, and I never wanted to invade any more of the business she had when she was alive.

Despite my strong curiosity to know all of it.

*****

“Your Grace!”

I turned around and was surprised to see Madison half-running towards me. I was going to Dominic’s and my room when she approached me with a worried face. Panic struck me like an arrow to the chest, and I grabbed Madison’s shoulder as I tensed.

“The kids—”

“I apologize if I scared you, Lady Samantha. The kids are safe.” She swallowed hard upon seeing the fear in my eyes. I realized how terrifying my reaction was and started to loosen my grip on her shoulders as I muttered an apology to the babysitter of my twins.

“It’s Lady Diana,” Madison said with a worried smile. “She asks for you before she sleeps.”

“Oh,” My shoulders relaxed, and I breathed as I stared at Madison’s gentle face. “Alright. I’ll go there. Just... just give me a minute.”

Madison nodded at me and then went back to the room where the twins stayed. I let out a heavy sigh and massaged the middle part of my eyes, trying to lose all the tension and fear that I felt before I faced Devon and Diana. I never wanted them to see me in that kind of state when they had slowly recovered from what happened in the Black Forest.

“Hi, Mommy,’ Diana smiled as soon as I got into their rooms. They sat on the edge of their beds, smiling excitedly at me.

“Hi, baby.” I smiled back and then kissed both of their foreheads. “It’s late. Why are you not sleeping yet?”

“Diana is scared she might get nightmares again,” Devon told me as he looked at his sister, who shot him a glare. He averted his eyes, as if he wasn’t sorry that he told me what Diana couldn’t tell me.

To my surprise, Diana’s focus went to the pendant of the necklace I got from Lena’s box, and she touched it as she said softly, “Daddy’s scent was so vivid in my dreams.”

I frowned, mystified at Diana’s riddles. “What do you mean, sweetheart?”

She just stared at me and shrugged her shoulders. “I am not sure how I can explain it to you, Mom. But we know. This necklace—I can feel a strong connection to dad when I touch it. It belongs to him, and he gave it to you to protect you, right?”

I almost gasped as I heard my daughter tell things that she shouldn't know. But Diana was special. She had a gift that no one could explain. And that gave me more reason to dedicate my life to protecting them, and finally decide on one thing.

I will go to the ceremony.

I will accept the power and the responsibility to be the Luna of this pack.

Chapter 162
[ALPHA DOMINIC's Point of View]

`I knew the night would be the night our enemies would all come to take advantage of the situation—an important ceremony that would change the lives of the citizens of Silver Crescent. The night that Samantha will be crowned as the one and true Luna of my pack.

"Are you ready for this night, Alpha?"

Liam approached me with a smile on his face. His hands were clasped behind him as he stood beside me and watched the Omegas prepare the venue for the ceremony. Everyone was busy and focused on their tasks as if doing so would make them forget the horrible threat of our enemies outside the gates.

"Yes. Have you checked the whole perimeter? Anything suspicious?"

"No. In fact, it is weird because we didn't see any Black Claws or any from the Fang Trinity tonight. It's like they retreated from where they are hiding." Liam explained as he rubbed his chin while frowning. "I have a feeling they are planning something for tonight, Dominic. So I tripled the guards and made sure there were more Gamma soldiers around the ceremony area. I won't let these bastards ruin you and Samantha's night."

I gave her a nod of approval and a slight smile. "Thank you, Liam, for keeping things on track while Samantha and I were out of the pack,

rescuing the kids. You have no idea how much help you are giving me and my wife."

"What are you talking about?" He patted me on the shoulder while we both watched the workers outside. "I am your Beta. And your best friend for decades, Dominic. I've got your back. I know if this happened to me, you would have my back, too. There is nothing for you to worry about. Just focus on Samantha and the kids. This is a very crucial time for both of them. I will handle the rest. You can trust me with this."

I gave him a pat on the shoulder and then left my office to check on everything.

As I went down the stairs to the main hall, I saw some of the elders and members of the council gathering and talking about something, and they stopped, and they all stared at me when I approached them. I knew most of them still didn't believe in Samantha's potential. But I knew my wife. I had seen what she could do. I had witnessed how important we are to her—how much she loved me and the children, that she was willing to sacrifice herself for everyone's safety.

These people didn't know. They had no idea.

And I would show them what Samantha was capable of.

"Alpha Dominic." All of them bowed their heads as soon as I reached the main hall. I expected they would complain again and argue about my choice, but they didn't. They smiled at me, which surprised me.

"We want to congratulate you and your wife on the coronation tonight." One of them spoke with a gentle voice. All the tension in me disappeared, and the shadows of my eyes lifted as soon as I realized what they meant.

"We all believe you are doing what is best for the pack," she continued. Elisa had been serving Silver Blade all her life, and seeing her finally approve of Samantha gave me a sense of relief. Yes, I am the Alpha of the Pack. I am the Law. I am the symbol and power of Silver Crescent. But

these people also worked hard for the order and prosperity of the pack. They played a big part in my decision-making.

“Thank you, Elisa.” I nodded at Elisa, took her offered hand, and shook it gently. “Samantha had proved herself so many times, and there’s no reason to delay it anymore. Silver Crescent needs her.”

She and the others nodded. “Yes. It’s time for Silver Crescent to finally have a Luna, and we all support you. No more traitors will enter this place under your rule after the Bennetts’ antics.”

For the very first time since Samantha moved into Silver Crescent, I smiled at them and gave each of them a nod, pleased that we were all on the same track now after all the doubts and fears Richard had been feeding their minds since I brought my family back.

“Now let’s go to the hall and make sure this ceremony will be successful,” I said to them as we all headed to where my wife would be crowned the one and only Luna of the Silver Crescent pack.

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I was advised to wait on the thronelike chair that they prepared for me and told me to wait for my wife as the ceremony began. I was so nervous, and it was upsetting. My palms were sweating. My feet kept on tapping, and my heart was racing. I haven’t felt this way in many years. The last time was that moment when I saw Samantha walking towards me down the aisle...

And there she was again, making my heartbeat a rapid mess.

My jaw almost dropped on the floor as she walked up the stage and showed herself in front of all the people of Silver Crescent. All the cameras were on Samantha. Her face was etched with perturbation and fear, but, Goddess, she was breathtaking! She was walking up the stairs in her long, white dress, with her long, wavy, dark hair cascading down her waist. She was wearing an embroidered dress of silver wolves and laurel, which my mother once wore when she ascended as the Luna, after she married Dad,

was modified to suit Samantha's taste, enhancing the fabric's beauty as it hugged my wife's alluring figure.

I stood from my seat, staring at my mate's face. Her ocean-blue eyes were stunning as she stared at the camera anxiously.

It was as if I had fallen in love with her again for the millionth time.

"Alpha! We have a problem!"

Liam approached me, his eyes wide with terror and his face so ghostly that my focus immediately turned to him.

"Liam, not now—"

"No, this is urgent!" He insisted, hissing between his teeth as he glared at me. "We have to take Samantha away from here!"

I frowned. "What do you mean, Liam? I thought everything was under control!"

"It is under control!" he answered, so tense that I heard his jaw click. "Until it isn't. There are packs of werewolves who want to enter the border, and there are so many of them that I worry we couldn't hold them back until the ceremony finishes! Their leader, an old man, demanded us for a passage inside the gates to see your wife!"

When he mentioned those rogues targeting my wife, that's when I started to move from my seat and follow Liam down to stop the bastards.

But we were too late.

Hundreds of them—probably almost half a thousand of those rogues—marched straight toward the stage; all were looking at Samantha. Silver Crescent citizens were so terrified they didn't dare to stop the gigantic rogues and let them walk in front of Samantha, which made my wife petrified, all confused, and scared of what was happening.

I immediately jumped in front of their leader; my glare was lethal as I bared my teeth at him. Every muscle in my body tensed and bulged, and I was already mid-shift into my werewolf form.

“You get out of my turf!” I snarled at the old guy, who was surprisingly taller than I. “Do you all want to die?! I never gave you any permission!”

He stared at me for seconds as if thinking deeply about what he would say to me, and spoke in a calm, businesslike tone. “We are here not just to support the new Luna of the Silver Crescent pack but to honor and show respect to the direct descendant of the Primordial Blood Clan.”

He knelt after he said that and bowed his head low. All his men followed him, making the crowd all baffled and realizing what kind of power Samantha was possessing.

Who she really is.

“It’s okay, my love. Let them stay.” Samantha exclaimed from the stage as she looked down on all of us. Her eyes were blazing with power that I had never seen before. And at that moment, my wolf and I agreed that we had chosen the right Luna for the pack. The Luna who would reign beside me and become one of the most powerful couples on the continent.

Liam didn’t like the idea, but I trusted my wife. I gave the old man one warning glare before I ascended the stage and sat back on my throne.

Everyone was silent during the ceremony. They all felt the power crackling in the air as the elders performed the ritual, and Samantha executed each part of it with passion and grace. I was so mesmerized by her beauty that I almost forgot the rogues were watching her too.

I stood up and took the crown from the pillow. The crown my mother used to wear.

“You are so gorgeous,” I murmured to her with hunger and longing when our eyes met. Then, carefully placed the crown on her head.

Then something strange happened that made everyone's eyes widen in disbelief.

Samantha's skin glowed like that of the moon. Then, a mark appeared on her nape, the same pattern I saw on the twins' birthmark on their backs. I was stunned at the beauty Samantha possessed as she smiled at me, and she glowed brighter.

From the crowd, we both heard someone screaming and recognized Killian's voice, his face etched with panic as he pushed through the crowd with Brianne behind him.

She cried, her face filled with terror and tears, "The tombstone in the Black Forest has moved! A-And your mother's coffin—i-it's empty!!!"

I frowned, pushing Samantha behind me protectively after I saw that dread on the witch's face. "What do you mean?!"

She was crying as she answered weakly, "When the mother was crowned and the key had turned the lock cylinder, the dead will return in the moonlight!"

It was Brianne's words before her eyes rolled up in her head and she fainted.

Chapter 163
[DIANA's Point of View]

I couldn't understand what was happening, but I knew Mom was scared.

I just wasn't sure if it was about the giant men that came marching towards the hall, but the stares of all the people at her as she stepped up the stairs.

Mommy looked like a moon shining brightly in her silver gown. I had never seen someone as beautiful as Mom. And my eyes sparkled when I saw her face on the big screen at the other side of the hall. Was the whole pack watching for her coronation? I can tell how nervous she was. I could feel it.

I could see it in my Mommy's eyes. Yet, despite all of it, she wanted to accept the role and take responsibility for the pack.

My left hand rested on my chest, near my heart, beating fast. I didn't understand why I was so anxious for my mom, but I guess it's what Mommy's feeling that I felt through the bond. It was the guilt Devon and I shared for always making Mommy and Dad worry for both of us. We got into a lot of trouble thinking we could help. But now I understand that doing what Mom and Dad said was the best thing to do rather than following my twin and my judgment on the situation.

Devon and I promised we would do better after what happened in the castle in the Black Forest.

As I watched all the rogues kneel in front of my Mom, my heart raced! What was happening? Devon looked at me nervously as well and then back at the rogues and Mom. We saw how Dad tried to control the situation, but Mom seemed confident that these people only came for her. I couldn't understand why, but there were many things that Mom and Dad didn't tell us.

"Don't be scared. I'm here." Devon whispered, his eyes narrowing sharply as he watched Dad handle the situation. "Dad knows what he's doing."

"What do these people want from Mom?" I asked him nervously, scared of another fight that might happen. "Why did Dad let them stay?"

"The ceremony is starting, Diana. Focus!" Devon scolded me, and I got so upset he wasn't answering any of my questions, so I folded my arms on my chest and pouted.

Throughout the ceremony, I felt there was something that didn't seem right. Like something in me was telling me something awful would happen. Something tragic and dangerous, and I needed to tell Mom or Dad about it. My palms kept on sweating. I felt a pounding in my head that made my vision slightly blurry. But I couldn't tell Devon about it. He wanted to watch Mom, and since the ceremony started, he didn't take his eyes away from

her. He had been excited for this moment since last night, and I didn't want to ruin it because of my stupid headache.

However, my wolf and I understood that it was not merely a simple headache; rather, it was a sign—a premonition indicating that something would occur, which I felt in my stomach.

I wanted to cry.

Devon must have felt the strangeness in me, and I felt his hand hold mine when my eyes started to become teary.

"Diana?" he asked, worry etched on his face as he glanced at me. "Did something happen? Another vision?"

"No," I pouted my lip and was about to cry, but I held back my tears. "I just don't feel good. I feel like something's going to happen."

That's when Devon started to look alarmed, and I felt awful because I never wanted to bother him with my strange feelings. "What do you mean, Diana? Are there enemies around? Do you think these rogues are plotting something about Mom and Dad?"

A sob emerged from my throat. I didn't know how I could explain it to my brother. "I don't know, Devon. I am not sure. I just feel something bad would happen!"

I looked at the stage, and Dad stood from his seat and took the crown. He approached Mom with a gentle, loving look on his face. When he placed the crown on Mom's head, my eyes widened when she shone brightly like a full moon! She was so beautiful that my tears rolled down my face.

"Diana! Look!"

I immediately turned to where my brother pointed, and our eyes both widened in horror and surprise! A shadow that had a figure of our Grandma, standing eerily behind the crowd, and was wearing the same dress as our mother, only it was black!

My heart was racing, and although I didn't understand why, my feet moved quickly as I ran to the spot where we had seen the shadow. I heard Devon behind me telling me to stop, but I couldn't! Something within me told me I had to check it for myself, and when I got there, the shadow was gone.

"Diana! What are you doing?!" Devon cried as he stopped behind me, looking so pissed. "Mom told us never to go anywhere!"

"I know, but—"

I was stopped when a lady in front of us whispered to the woman beside her. "She looked so embarrassed when she was driven away from the pack. And now look at her! Already acting like a queen!"

I was enraged at what I heard and was about to scream at the lady. But Devon stopped me and grabbed me by the arm, his face upset as he faced me. "You are not doing this, Diana! We have to go back to Dad. Now!"

He didn't give me any more chances to fight with the lady and dragged me up the stage, where we both found Dad speaking with Beta Liam. He squatted the second he saw us and smiled, asking if my brother and I were okay.

Devon looked at me sideways as if giving me a warning not to tell anything weird to Dad. He didn't like calling him Dad, though. I think he still didn't trust Dad for Mom's happiness.

But it seemed my guess was wrong.

Devon took the wolftail grass from behind his shirt. We got it as a gift for Mom on the way to the place.

"Here! You give this to Mom and don't ever make her cry again!" Devon said to Dad with a serious look on his face. His face turned red as he blushed, and then he sprinted away to pretend he wanted to discuss something with Beta Liam.

Dad looked at me, puzzled at what happened, but I just smiled at him and then shrugged.

Then I realized Mom was watching the three of us and was chuckling as Dad mouthed to her, “They are better at making you happy than me.”

Mom and I couldn’t help but laugh at Dad.

Chapter 164
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

My husband’s smile caught me off guard.

After I saw Devon shyly put the wolftail grass on my husband’s hand, threatening his Dad never to make me cry again, I felt like my heart was flooded with love for my little family. Diana smiled at me; her eyes were enthusiastic as she gave me a gentle nod, like she was congratulating me.

But then that familiar scream from the guard distracted me, and my eyes widened as I saw Killian pushing his way towards the stage. Behind him was the witch of the Moonstone pack, Brianne, who was ghostly pale as she caught my eyes with a dreaded look.

I didn’t know the rest of what she said, but I heard her talk about the tomb.

My forehead creased into a deep frown and confusion.

My mother’s tomb?!

Everyone in the crowd panicked when they saw the witch, and some screamed to drive her and Killian away. When Brianne fainted, I looked at my husband, terrified for my friend and Brianne, as Killian carried her and elbowed his way to us.

Dominic signaled and gestured for the guards to take care of the crowd and guide them out of the event hall. Some were angry, while others were confused, but they followed the Gamma wolves to safety when they said the ceremony was over.

“Killian! Brianne!” My eyes were wide as they approached us, both panting and panic-stricken. I was baffled when Brianne woke up with wide eyes and pushed away from Killian. She almost tripped, but I caught her arm to help her regain her balance.

“Lady Samantha!” She exclaimed, panting and trembling; her eyes were dark with indescribable terror, which brought the hairs on my nape to stand. “The tomb! The stone on the tomb has moved!”

I was starting to feel upset because I couldn’t understand, “What do you mean, Brianne? What’s happening?!” I lifted my eyes to Killian and waited for him to explain, but he looked away as if he couldn’t say it himself.

“What is happening here?” Dominic snarled and threw sharp glances at each of them. “Explain to us, Brianne!”

All the colors on her face drained as she looked at the Alpha of the Silver Crescent pack and then at me. She spoke softly, her lips quivering as she explained without blinking her eyes. “Your mother’s tom, Luna Samantha! When the twin keys have turned the lock cylinder, the dead would return in the moonlight!”

“She keeps on saying this the whole day,” Killian finally said as he brushed his fingers on his hair with frustration, pain etched on his face as he worried for Brianne. “I don’t understand any of it. All I know is she needed to get here to tell you about this thing.”

“She said my mother’s tomb, Dominic. I need to check what happened!” I muttered nervously at my husband as I helped Brianne stand and walked her to Killian, making sure she wouldn’t faint again.

Dominic paused for a bit as if thinking and measuring the situation before he turned to Liam and then threw orders at his Beta and Gamma Leaders behind him. Liam listened attentively to his Alpha, and his eyes reflected both eagerness and determination to complete the mission. “Send an expedition team to check on the area, Liam. I want you to lead the team and make sure to investigate the place thoroughly. I have a feeling the

Fang Trinity is behind this! They're the only organization here that can commit such atrocities."

Liam gave Dominic and all of us a nod to excuse himself and the Gamma leaders as they exited the stage.

My family was left with Killian and Brianne, and the rest of the elders and council members who performed the ceremony with me.

"Let's go back to the pack house. We have to wait for Liam to know what really happened in your mother's tomb," Dominic said to me as he caressed my face gently.

*****

"How's Brianne?"

Killiane gave me an exhausted look as I approached him and offered him a hot cup of tea. He took it and murmured a thank you, and then took a little sip.

He made a short pause as he looked down at the tea and then answered with a sad voice, "I am not sure what is happening to her, Sam. All I know is it's all connected to you. Everything that is happening also affects her. Saving you means also saving her."

I looked at him and didn't know what to say. I could tell he loved her the way his eyes turned dark when he mentioned her condition.

"Luna Samantha, the Beta is here."

Killian was the first one to rush out of my office, and I followed. When we arrived in the living area, everyone else was already there.

"Liam!"

"Luna Samantha, what Miss Brianne said is true! They moved the stone covering your mother's tomb, and the body vanished! We did everything to

find any trace that could lead us to where the culprits went. No scent. No footprints or anything that could tell us from what pack they're from."

"What f*ck—that's impossible!" Killian snarled. "Who went there? A f*cking ghost?!"

"A f*cking ghost moving a dead f*cking body. Yeah, funny, Killian." Dominic sneered at the Moonstone Alpha as he folded his arms on his chest, and then his attention went to his Beta. "I have a feeling Fang Trinity has something to do with it. Samantha and I had seen how they use dark spells to manipulate things around them. They are the only people I suspect who can do this."

"We found this instead." Liam passed me an envelope inside a Ziploc, and I opened it with trembling fingers. Everyone was looking at me, even Diana and Devon, who were standing beside Madison.

"My twin keys?" I murmured.

As I opened the envelope, Diana and Devon suddenly covered their ears. They both cried and grimaced like they were hearing something and it was hurting them. When I was about to run to them, the pain stopped. They both looked at me, looking scared as they wrapped their small arms around me.

"What happened, Diana? Devon?!"

They couldn't speak. My twins just hid their faces against me as they trembled.

I wanted to throw away that piece of paper, scared of what effect it had on my twins, but something about it was urging me to read what was inside, and so I did, like I was being possessed by something that was beyond my strength to stop.

"My dearest daughter, when you read this letter, you must have gained your wolf already. Remember when I used to hide your baby teeth, telling

you the tooth fairy would come and exchange them for a much more precious gift?"

"What the f*ck does that mean?" Killian growled, confused at what was happening. "What does a f*cking tooth fairy do with all of this?"

I paused, thinking of what my Mom's riddle was about.

And then I figured out what she meant.

"Last year," I swallowed hard as I looked at each of their faces, as I tried to explain. I knew I would sound weird, but I thought it was the only thing that my mother was telling. "When Devon's baby teeth fell off last year, they actually glowed in a metallic luster under the moonlight when I was about to throw them outside the window and then just decided to keep them like how my mother did to mine when I was little."

Killian grimaced. "You keep Devon and Diana's baby teeth like a stamp collection?"

"Shut up, Killian." Dominic gave him an annoyed glare as he walked towards me and then looked at the envelope, studying it.

He pointed at the logo at the end of the letter. I saw the dread in his eyes as he whispered. "This was an insignia of a usurper back then, before the new King sat on the throne." After seeing it, he looked at Liam as if asking his Beta if he could say something to me, as he hesitated about it.

"What is it, Dominic? Tell me." I asked him, scared and confused. "What is it that you are not telling me?"

"Tell him, Dominic," Liam said, averting his eyes from me as I looked at him. "Your wife deserves to know."

Dominic swallowed hard before he spoke, his voice conveying doubt. "The tomb where your mother's body rested was an anchor between time and space, not just to preserve her body but because my mother believes she can take your mother back to life. She holds the belief that your mother's

mission isn't done yet. She and those in that organization they were in did everything they could, believing the time would come that she would be revived again."

My eyes widened as fear crawled up my skin.

"What do you mean, Dominic?"

He looked at me as shadows darkened his hazel eyes.

"I think your mother is back from the dead, Samantha," he uttered, and my heart raced in fear.

Chapter 165
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"We have no choice but to go back to the Black Forest."

Everyone gave me a dreaded look, and Dominic didn't seem happy with my decision. He and Killian looked at me like I had just said the most ridiculous thing.

"I hope you are joking, Sam." Killian grimaced at the idea as he shook his head, his hands resting on his hips. "We barely escaped the last time we went there. And there's no way you will bring the kids there! It's f*cking dangerous! We don't know what is waiting for us there! Black Claws and Fang Trinity want the three of you dead, and they would do everything to ensure you won't be able to come back here in Silver Crescent!"

"Why do you want to go back to the Black Forest, Samantha? Do you think we can find your mother's body in there?" Liam asked as he stared at me as if he was reading whatever was on my face. As if trying to figure out what was in my head. "You know that it's dangerous to go beyond the walls. Do you know anything that can lead us to your mother's body?"

Dominic's eyes were on me the whole time as he tapped on his chin and stared at me deeply, waiting for me to say what I knew about everything

that was happening. And it scared me that I couldn't explain it without them thinking I was going insane.

"Dominic, remember that part in the Black Forest where trees or grass don't grow? The altar that is made of stone? That's where we need to go."

"What's in that place, Samantha? What are we going to go there for?" Killian asked, getting a little impatient.

"I know you feel pressured by the situation because of Brianne, Killian. But you won't go with us. It will be just me, Dominic, and the kids."

Liam and Killian's eyes widened in protest.

"No way you are going out there, endangering your life and the kids, Samantha!" Killian disagreed as he stepped forward, but Dominic blocked him from getting anywhere near me.

"You are forgetting she will be with me." Dominic snarled at Killian and then raised an eyebrow at Liam.

His Beta sighed as he scratched his forehead, "That's the thing, Dominic. I can't let you go outside the gates again. You are the Alpha of the Pack. If something happens to you—"

"If something happens to me, then you know what that means, Liam." Dominic glared at his Beta as if telling Liam what was coming. "You know the drill. Just make sure everyone here, especially my family, will be safe."

"Don't be ridiculous, Dominic—"

"I will go with Samantha." Dominic cut off Liam's next words, and Liam grimaced as he averted his eyes from his Alpha. "If Samantha wants to go to the Black Forest, that means her decision is important and she has my full support for whatever plan she has in mind. We should trust her."

"This is mad!" Killian threw his hands up to his head violently and then walked out of the room.

Even Liam seemed distressed at my plan, but he respected Dominic's decision, and his loyalty to his best friend was something I always admired about him.

"Whatever happens, you keep each other and the kids safe. I have no idea why you don't want me to send men to guard you in that place, but I know this is vital to you, and I respect that, Luna Samantha. Now that you have the power of Silver Crescent, know that my loyalty is also yours until my last breath."

Liam bowed his head at me, and Dominic seemed pleased at the gesture that his Beta was showing me. I smiled at Liam and then held both of his hands to squeeze them.

"You are an amazing friend to Dominic and me, Liam. You are not just the Beta of this pack. You are also a part of the family," I said to him softly, and I saw how his face lightened at what I said.

He looked at Dominic, and my husband gave him a slight nod as he suppressed a huge smile on his face. I saw the pride in my husband's hazel eyes when he looked at me.

Liam exhaled deeply, straightened his back, and nervously smiled, "I guess I can't do anything then but wish both of you safety, luck, and more blessings from the Moon Goddess."

"Thank you, Liam. That means a lot." Dominic stepped forward to embrace the guy who had been like a brother to him, and I embraced Liam as well, feeling grateful for his help at times when we needed him the most, especially at times when he looked after Devon and Diana while both Dominic and I were dealing with the Bennetts.

"Are you ready, then?" Dominic turned to me and slipped his hands into the pockets of his pants as he smiled.

*****

I made sure I had everything we needed before we left the Silver Crescent Manor.

Dominic shifted to his wolf form, letting me and the kids ride on his back. After I explained to Devon and Diana why we had to return to that place, they didn't hesitate to agree, knowing they would play a significant role in what we needed to accomplish. I felt awful that I had to drag Dominic and the kids to this. But it was the only way to uncover the truth and the secret my mother had kept from me since she and Dad died.

Lena made me believe that they died in a car accident. I never knew my Mom once ruled the whole continent and died protecting me and her people.

"We're close," I said to Devon and Diana, who looked as if they were having the time of their lives while riding on their Dad's back. Dominic noticed that they liked it when he ran fast, so he did. We wanted to reach the place quickly and finish what must be done.

Dominic landed safely at the place. I had already felt the heavy atmosphere of the surroundings—the darkness that lived there—before I could even set foot on the ground. I made sure Devon and Diana were always by my side when we got to the altar.

The night was freezing, and the eerie sound of the trees and the creatures of the forest made Devon and Diana tremble in fear. Dominic shifted back to his werewolf form and made sure his eyes were on us as we stood in front of the altar.

"Are those teeth?" Devon asked when I took a small ziploc from my pocket and placed it on the altar.

"Yes," I smiled at my son and patted him on the head, "It's part of what Mommy needs to do, remember?"

I could tell Devon was trying to look brave, but deep within, I could feel he was terrified while looking at the teeth. Dominic noticed it and then went to hold Diana and Devon in each of his arms.

“Mom and Dad are here,” he smiled at both of them. “Nothing will happen.”

Dominic gave me a gentle nod, telling me he got the kids, and I could start whatever I needed to do. So I took a deep breath as I put the teeth on the altar.

The stone in front of me suddenly shone bright as the moon struck it with its silver light. Dominic and the kids’ eyes widened as they all watched me.

I had no idea what I was doing, to be honest. Everything that I was doing was based on instinct. And I knew in my heart that my mother’s soul was guiding me to it.

To my surprise, Diana sang a familiar tune that made all the hairs on my nape stand. I glanced at her; my eyes were wide, bewildered at how my daughter knew that tune.

It was my mother’s lullaby to me when I was a kid, which I never sang to any of them.

I watched her sing it. She was slightly off-tune, but it was as if she was humming it through a memory that wasn’t hers. Her face was gentle and solemn as she gazed at my shocked face.

To our surprise, the rock altar in front of us moved! Dominic was quick, and he immediately pulled me to them as we saw an underground tunnel under that altar that was made from a gigantic boulder.

From deep inside was a howl of a werewolf that was so familiar I gasped and looked at my husband.

Dominic’s face darkened. He recognized the voice as well, and both of us sensed that danger was coming for all of us if we ever dared enter the underground tunnel. He put Devon and Diana down as he checked the tunnel, and I waited for his decision on whether we would go or wait for what would happen next.

Fifteen minutes had passed, and nothing had come out of the tunnel.

I started to worry, so I asked. “Dominic. What do we do? Are we going inside?”

He stood from bending on his one knee and then closed the gap between us and kissed the back of my hand to calm me down. He stared deep into my eyes with gentleness that melted my heart, and I felt time stop around us.

“That day before mother died,” he murmured as he looked down at my hand and then at my confused face. His hazel eyes looked gray under the silver light of the moon. “She told me that I should ‘protect my moon’. Now, I understand what she said. I can see all of it now. You are my moon, Samantha. The moon that brings beauty and light to my life.”

He lowered his face to kiss me, but then we were both baffled when Devon pushed him with his son’s face, wincing at him.

“You have to ask Mom before kissing!”

We were alarmed when we heard the loud rustling of from the bushes and Dominic crouched, ready to lunge to whatever was coming.

Chapter 166
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“What the—”

The tension in my body disappeared, replaced by surprise and confusion, when I recognized the tall, muscular figure stepping out of an ancient oak tree.

Dominic’s eyes widened in aggravation as he stepped before us and snarled at Killian. “What the f*ck are you doing here, Killian?! I thought it was clear that it should be only me and Samantha who are going to deal with this!”

“You don’t tell me what to do, Dominic!” Killian scowled at my husband, but when he looked at me, his expression softened; he appeared apologetic and was seeking understanding as he stood up from his crouched position and let out a heavy sigh. “I came here because Brianne told me you would need my help. I have no plan to just stand and wait in your place while all of you are facing danger. I have sensed what is inside the underground cave, and there’s no way you would go there without me.”

Killian stared at me as if I were the one who had to make all these decisions instead of my husband, which angered Dominic. I squeezed Devon and Diana against me and then glanced at my back, where the tunnel was. I knew what Killian was saying. I felt it deep inside my flesh and vibrating through my bones. The darkness that lingered in that place gave me a tightening feeling in the stomach and gave me goosebumps like little black spiders crawling on my bare skin.

“Samantha!” Killian cried as he gave Dominic a glare when my husband growled at him. “You know you need me here! You know how dangerous the thing inside that place is! I am just worried about you and the kids! Brianne is worried!”

“Are you saying I am not enough to handle this?” Dominic snarled at Killian, his eyes filled with rage as he stepped forward, threatening to push him away. “Get the f*ck out of here.”

My heart began to race in response. The wind started to blow violently, and the twins started to feel scared as they buried their faces against me. The trees shook around us, and branches creaked. A murder of crows flew from the sky; their echoing cries were like a warning that we had to hurry or it would be too late.

But too late for what?

“Just let him go with us, Dominic! We have no time!” I cried to my husband as I pressed my kids against me into a tight embrace, shielding them from the strong wind. “We have to go! Now!”

There was a faint light pulsing inside the tunnel, catching all of our attention. Dominic made an angry sound but started to walk to the mouth of the cave and then glanced at me from the corner of his eye. In a low voice, he said, “Keep yourself and the kids close to me, love. We don’t know what is waiting for us inside, so make your senses stay sharp and never run anywhere, no matter what.”

He took Diana from me, and Diana wrapped her arms around her Dad. She gave me one worried look before they disappeared from my sight after Dominic jumped down the tunnel.

“Do we have to go down there?” Devon asked in his trembling voice as he wrapped his arms around my neck as well, burying his face on my shoulder. “I’m scared!”

“We won’t let anything bad happen to you,” I whispered to my son and gave Killian a short nod as I watched him jump down as well.

“Here we go now, Devon. Close your eyes, son.”

I took in a deep breath, filling my lungs with air as we lunged deep into the tunnel. My stomach flattened in terror as I realized how high its mouth was from the ground, and that’s when my mind started to panic. I braced myself as I tightened my arms around my son. Where’s Dominic? Was he safe with Diana? I couldn’t reach him through our mate bond, and my son and I were plummeting down so fast I didn’t have enough time to scream.

The next thing I knew was the violent impact on my feet, and a few seconds later, Devon and I were already underwater.

Seeing my son’s shocked face, I instinctively kicked hard to reach the surface.

“Dominic!” I screamed as soon as I got out of the water with Devon in my arms. My whole body was trembling as the water trickled down my face and my soaked clothes. “Dominic!”

“Samantha!” from behind me, Dominic approached with Diana in his arms; both of them were wet as well. My husband embraced the three of us tightly and kissed me and the twins with fear and relief on his face.

“We’re okay,” I murmured to him, tears rolling down my face. “We’re all okay, my love.”

“Okay,” he cleared his throat and then blinked something fast from his eyes as he stared at me and then at the kids. “Let’s get this done. Let’s do what we need to do and then get out of this place!”

Something in my heart melted when I saw that raw emotion on my husband’s face the moment he saw me and Devon. I had never seen such fear in his eyes before. I had never witnessed Dominic run to me as if losing me was his greatest fear of all.

Killian’s voice rang in our ears.

“RUN!”

Dominic and I didn’t know what he was screaming about until we both saw a gigantic smoke, perhaps a shadow that soared from the midst of the lake like a kraken.

My body froze in fear, and it was Dominic who gave me Diana and then ran straight to the shadow together with Killian.

“Dominic, no!”

“Keep the kids safe, Samantha!” he screamed back. His eyes were sharp, and he was in his full Alpha mode when he crouched in front of the shadow. “We will do our best to stop this thing! Go and do what you need to do, Samantha! We will hold this back as long as we can!”

Killian and Dominic shifted to their werewolf form. Black and silver were like the balance this world needed. I pulled my children towards me, making sure they were safe as I looked around, my heart racing and my head pulsing. Where was that light? Where did it go!? I breathed hard, trying to

fill my lungs with air. We were trembling. Freezing, My whole body was aching and I didn't know what I should do next!

"Mom! What's happening?!"

The ground shook until dust started to fall from the ceiling of the cave. In my panic, I stood up, carrying Diana and Devon on both of my hips, and then ran away from the lake where my husband and Killian were trying to drive away the monster that wanted to attack me and the twins. To my horror, when I glanced back to check on them, one of the pointed tentacles of the beast moved so fast that Dominic didn't have the time to avoid it.

It pierced my husband's shoulder and hung him up in mid-air.

"DOMINIC, NO!!!"

All the anger in me swirled in my chest like a storm as I put Diana and Devon down, telling them to never run away anywhere. I lunged to save my husband and shifted to my wolf form, aiming for the tentacle that stabbed Dominic's shoulder.

The beast had seen my plan and grabbed me by one of its tentacles and hurled me against the wall of the cave. Killian jumped behind me, so I collided against him instead.

He had saved me from shattered ribs, but Killian broke his hips and couldn't get up after we both fell on the hard ground.

[Killian!]

[Go! Help Dominic! I'll be fine!] he yelled at me.

The adrenaline in me gave me so much focus that my eyes went to my husband, grinding my teeth in anger. I got up to my feet and ran straight to him again, and this time, I was able to avoid the beast's tentacle and sever the leg that pierced Dominic.

[The kids—] Dominic grunted as he fell after trying to get up from the ground. Crimson blood gushed out of his wound as he stood, trying to regain his balance. [You can't leave them, Samantha.]

I turned my head and searched for my kids and found them sitting and hiding in a hollow part of the walls of the cave; both were trembling with terror. I glanced at Dominic, panting on the ground, and Killian, unable to stand due to fractured bones from the impact. I didn't know what to do! Who to save first! My eyes were wide as I watched the beast stand to its full height, its head almost touching the ceiling of the vast cave. Its crimson eyes were glaring at me, ready to send its sharp tentacles to shred me to pieces.

Could it be the end of us all?

I swallowed hard as I stood and glared back at the monster.

No. I won't let that thing hurt my family...

Chapter 167
[SAMANTHA'S Point of View]

[Samantha! There's no way you'll survive that thing! Run with the kids!]

[And what? Let you and Killian die in here?!] I snarled at my husband as I saw him grimace in pain. The wound was slowly healing, but the bleeding hadn't stopped yet. Despite the injury, Dominic stood on his feet beside me and glared at the beast before us. His eyes were crimson, and he bared his razor-sharp teeth. He licked the wound on his shoulder as the skin slowly healed until it was nothing but an ugly scar.

[Go, Samantha...] he snarled softly, refusing to look at me. He squared his shoulder as he crouched again, ready to fight back, but I could tell that wound, despite being healed from the outside, must still be excruciating and still fresh from the inside.

I glanced at Devon and Diana. They were still curled in that hollow space on the cave wall, embracing each other. I caught Diana's eyes and saw her terrified of the monster before us.

The beast roared to its full height, and I saw Killian jump at it and claw one of its eyes. It caught Killian and threw him to the other side of the cave.

[KILLIAN!]

"Uncle Killian!" Devon screamed in tears as he stayed by his sister's side; his body was trembling just as his sister's was. "Mom! What are we gonna do?!"

I never wanted to leave Dominic, but I had no choice. When the beast attacked us, Dominic stopped its tentacle and caught it between his teeth as he helped me get a chance to go to the kids. I ran straight to the kids, but then my eyes widened when a tentacle grabbed me by my torso and lifted me violently off the ground. My body tilted to a sickening position when it threw me violently to the ground, knocking the air out of my ruptured lungs.

[Samantha!!!]

My vision blacked out, and I couldn't see for seconds. I saw light, and then everything was blurry. I gasped. Blood was choking me as it splattered out of my mouth, but I managed to move and lift my head to check on Diana and Devon to see if they were alright. Every inch of me ached, and I had a feeling my ribs punctured my lungs. I coughed blood once more and crawled towards my kids.

Tears rolled down my face when I looked back and saw Dominic fighting the beast with rage. I saw pain and wrath on his face as he tore away its tentacles one by one. I could tell he was screaming, yet I couldn't hear him. My ears were ringing so badly that it made me wince.

Killian attacked the beast, too. Both Alphas were filled with fury as they slashed the beast into ribbons. I crawled to my crying twins. My body started to heal second by second as I clawed my way to them, but the pain

was so excruciating that my vision blurred, and I slowly fainted. It was as if my lungs were being stabbed by hundreds of swords.

“Mom!”

“Mom, don’t die, please!”

“MOM!!!”

It was as if I were under the water. I barely heard their voices, but I knew it was Devon and Diana. It was freezing. I couldn’t feel my skin anymore. But I forced myself to lift my hands to reach out for them. To hold them.

They are my strength.

I felt two small hands pulling me out of that dark water that was slowly drowning me into oblivion. I gasped violently; fresh blood gushed out of my throat, and I could finally breathe. I looked up to see Devon and Diana pulling me toward them, their faces wet with tears but their eyes shining with courage as they gripped my hand and pulled me again.

“Now, Diana! Pull!” Devon snarled; his little face was beading with sweat, mixing with his tears. “Pull!”

Diana was wailing as she pulled with all her strength. Their bravery brought something warm in me, making my healing process a lot faster than a normal werewolf. My skin and eyes glowed golden, and just minutes later, all my injuries disappeared, while the new strength I discovered made me feel completely renewed.

Dominic was already covered with black ichor, the same as Killian. The beast was stronger than we all thought, and despite the two Alphas inflicting damage to it, its tentacles only regrew.

It was hopeless. There was no way we could beat the monster. It only grew stronger the more it got damaged by Dominic and Killian. As the sole guardian of this place, its design seemed to withstand such injuries.

“Mom, are you okay?” Devon asked, trembling. His hands were around Diana as he looked up at me. “How are we going to get out of this place?”

[There should be another way...] I murmured to myself as despair started to feel like strong hands grasping me around the throat, and my eyes widened at what I saw.

It was the pulsing light! The light that I saw before we dove right into the cave. I grabbed Devon and Diana’s hands and then turned sharply at Dominic and Killian, who were still in a rage of killing the unkillable monster.

[Dominic! Killian!] I screamed at them as I started running while carrying the kids on both sides. [You follow the pulsing light! Come on!]

As I got closer to the faint light, that was when I noticed the ancient murals painted on the walls of the cave. I thought they were molds at first. But as my werewolf eyesight adjusted to the cave’s deep darkness, I discovered the patterns, and they began to glow as we passed by them. I glanced back and saw my husband and Killian running behind me, the monster slithering after them at incredible speed. We needed to escape the cave immediately, or else we would all die without a trace.

The two Alphas were arguing about something, exchanging angry snarls at each other, but I couldn’t hear them through the clamor. A snarl ripped in my throat as I made myself focus more on the kids. They clung to me, their arms around my neck, their legs on my hips, their faces buried in me. I wish I could tell them that everything will be alright. But I wasn’t sure anymore. I wasn’t sure what would happen. Of where this pulsing light would lead us. My instinct was telling me that I had to follow it. My wolf urged me to trust my instincts, which was my only hope to save us.

But then my eyes widened in terror when, at the end of the cave, there was nothing but a thick wall.

A dead end...

“Mommy!” Diana cried as the beast was getting near. Killian and Dominic stopped in front of us and faced the beast as they cursed under their breath.

My heart felt as if it shrank and sank to my stomach, and I watched the monster stand in its full height again, its eyes glaring down at my family.

We’re f*cked. We were so f*cked...

[Step back, Samantha. Never leave the kids!] Dominic snarled as he looked back at us, his eyes glinting with despair and fear for me and the children. [We will lure the monster. And whatever happens, you and the kids run! You all get away from here!]

[You say it as if it’s simple to leave you here!] I snarled back at my husband, and Diana started to sob. [We will all find a way out!]

Killian looked at me and then at Dominic, and he tilted his head as he shook it with a grin on his face. [I guess we are all gonna die here then.]

[Shut up. Killian!] Dominic and I barked at the Moonstone Alpha.

The giant Kraken roared again, and the whole cave quaked. I was so terrified that I stepped back, and underneath my foot, something clicked.

Killian and Dominic heard it, and both of them glanced at me.

A moment later, I felt as if my soul had detached itself from my body. The next thing I saw was that we were all falling into a dark pit until my back hit smooth concrete. All of us screamed as we all spiraled down—I held Devon and Diana tight against me, making sure we wouldn’t get separated.

[Dominic!] I screamed at the top of my lungs, and he immediately grabbed us to him and went underneath us as we landed on a solid, flat stone surface. I heard my husband’s body thud violently against it, and then a loud groan as his limbs dropped and spread to his sides.

“Are you okay, Dad?” Diana asked as she looked at her Daddy’s face with worry.

[Yes, honey.] Dominic answered through mindlink, and Diana embraced him tightly.

[What the f*ck is this place?]

I blinked and looked around as I heard what Killian said. When I saw him, he was already standing on all fours and looking around the place.

I got what he meant.

It was a chamber full of strange weapons, armor, treasures, and ancient books. I gasped as I saw the glinting diamonds, emeralds, and other precious stones all over the place, as well as all the gold that was mounded and scattered on the floor.

“Is this what that beast has been protecting? All these treasures?” Devon spoke softly, his eyes widening at the exquisite treasures displayed in front of us.

[Children, don’t touch anything!] I warned them as soon as they started walking around with curiosity and looked closely at the armory.

“Oops!”

My heart started to race when I saw Diana take the old book displayed on top of a marble stand in the middle of the chamber. Her eyes widened in fear when the floor started to quake again, and the linings on the floor started to glow so bright that they blinded all of us.

It was too late for me to grab my twins.

Chapter 168
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

When I opened my eyes, we were all in a different place.

It felt as if a powerful force had transported us to a new location that resembled the chamber we had been in before, but this one contained no treasures. There was only an empty space, with faint light flickering from the other end of it.

No, it wasn't a chamber anymore but more like a tunnel.

[Now, where are we?] Killian asked as he grunted and held his head, shaking it. [What the f*ck is happening here!?]

[Shut your mouth, Killian. Not in front of the kids.] Dominic snapped at him as he glared at the Moonstone Alpha and then studied the whole place with his werewolf eyes. [I think the light transported us somewhere that is far from the Silver Crescent territory. If it's the same as the cave Samantha and I walked into before, then it must have brought us into a different dimension...]

[Different what?!] Killian's eyes deepened into a furrow. Looking so confused and exhausted.

[A dimension between time and space.] I explained to him, trying to make sense of all of this to my friend. It's a place where time just freezes. Like an eternal loop with no beginning and no end, everything here is all stuck into the stillness of time.]

[First, an underground cave with a Kraken in it. Then a chamber of treasures! Now, a dimension where time doesn't exist?! What the f*ck is happening, Samantha? What is this we are all dealing with?!] Killian blurted in panic, finally losing it. His voice echoed from every corner of the cave.

[We are not really sure...] I said in a soft voice as I focused my eyes on the faint light at the other end of the tunnel. [What I know is this is all beyond our understanding, Killian. Something that my mother and Lena know. Something that put them in huge trouble and led them to live a life full of darkness and secrets. We are here to unravel it all and make this right.]

[And to save the kids and Samantha from those bastards.] Dominic snarled, his jaw clenched as the side of his face twitched in silent anger. [We will end all of this now!]

[Look who's snarling at me about cussing,] Killian sneered as he looked at my husband through the corner of his eyes.

[No time for your bickering!] I snapped at the two and then sighed as I made sure Devon and Diana were comfortable beside me. [We have to know what's in there. We can't stay here and wait until bad happens again.]

Killian cleared his throat and mumbled something, which I unfortunately heard well. [Everywhere we go, everyone wants us dead.]

I shot him a warning look, and he just averted his eyes and then cracked the bones in his neck and stretched his arms and legs as he said again in his cheerful voice, "So where are we going next? Who are we going to kill this time?"

I only rolled my eyes at him as I shook my head. I didn't know the reason why Killian went with us here. He told us it was about Brianna—that she was connected to what was happening to me, and without solving all of this, her life would be in danger as well. That dedication he was showing to save her made me happy for Killian. He finally had a reason to fight once again.

My husband looked at me as if he felt what I felt. He understood that Killian was desperate to save Brianne, just like how he was desperate to keep me and his children alive, and that anger in his face softened, the tension on his shoulders slowly relaxing.

When I looked back at the faint light, I noticed it was gradually getting a little bit brighter, and I was suddenly alarmed at what it really was. Dominic and Killian saw it too and were about to step in front of us, but I stopped them with a glance. Devon and Diana clung to me tightly.

"Mom, please don't go there. I can sense something dangerous in that place," Diana whispered to me in her trembling voice.

[Samantha! You don't know what's in there!] Killian shouted at me, his rough voice echoed once again, putting more tension in the dark atmosphere in the whole place. I was breathing hard. Fast. My heart was frantic as we got close. I squinted. At first, I thought the figures were shadows dancing on the walls created by that faint light, like a small flame flickering from the soft wind. But this light wasn't from a flame or something. It was an orb of light at the end of the tunnel. What was at the other end of this wide channel? What's waiting for all of us in there!?

[Samantha, No!]

My eyes widened as soon as I realized what those shadows were.

I was too shocked to move. Those vile creatures moved faster than lightning, and only Killian and Dominic had the chance to shield me and the children from them. My body responded to the danger and shielded Devon and Diana with my body, too, regretting that I let the curiosity in me win when we didn't have any idea of this place.

[I'm so sorry,] I kept on whispering to Diana and Devon over and over as I held both of them tight, snarls and roars filling the whole place, and the sickening sound of breaking bones and tearing flesh made the kids tremble in horror.

[Everything will be okay,] I whispered to them again. [Daddy and Mommy, and Uncle Killian will make sure you are both safe. I am so sorry. We shouldn't have brought you here.] Tears rolled down my face, and Diana reached for them to wipe them off my face.

"Don't cry, Mom. Devon and I are here to help. We said we will help." Diana sobbed as she dried my tears. "We won't let you and Dad leave us again while both of you fight. We will help. We want to help, Mom!"

[Okay,] I breathed deeply, filling my lungs with air, trying to keep myself together as I pulled them behind me, making sure they were safe from the fight that was happening between the two Alphas and the dark forces that looked more like werewolves—only that they had the same features as the

beasts we saw in the cave where Dominic and I were trapped inside while looking for that object that Brianna wanted me to find and yet still failed to find because of all the chaos that happened between us and the Bennets.

They were as strong as a Beta and fast, so it was a bad idea for just Dominic and Killian to fight ten or twelve of them like we did in that cave. I glanced back at Devon and Diana, thinking of the way to hide them from the enemy's sight, and then I saw a wide column just a few steps away, hoping it was enough to cover them from the dark werewolves.

[Stay here.] I whispered to Devon and Diana. Mommy doesn't want to leave both of you, but I need to help Dad and Killian. Remain hidden here and hide your presence just like how you did when you tried to sneak out of Liam's house. Do it, and you will be safe while we deal with those beasts. Understand?]

Devon and Diana nodded their heads, making me let out a sigh of relief as I looked back at Dominic and Killian, who were starting to struggle to have control over the situation. Eight beasts were trying to take my husband down while four were trying to tear Killian into pieces with their long, razor-sharp claws.

The adrenaline in my system pumped up when I saw two of the dark werewolves lunge at my husband, pinning him down to the ground. One almost reached his neck with its teeth if he wasn't quick enough to avoid it.

[Go away from my husband!]

My roar shook the tunnel, and all the dark werewolves stopped as they felt that powerful presence I gave off to distract them. Killian and Dominic took advantage of that chance and started tearing, biting, and clawing them one by one as I joined them, killing two of the dark werewolves with my teeth. That bitter taste of their black ichor made me almost gag and vomit as I spat them out of my mouth.

[I hate doing that.] I complained as I helped my husband get to our kids.

[Yeah, you should get used to this, I guess? I have a feeling it won't be just them who want all of us dead in here.] Killian replied, his face showing clear disgust at the ichor in his mouth, like I did, as we all gathered back to Devon and Diana.

But then strange things happened.

As we stepped over the dead bodies, all three of us started to notice that they were melting into a thick, thick liquid until they evaporated into thin air. We were all so confused that we froze for a few seconds before returning to the twins.

[I am starting to go crazy in this place.] Killian murmured in horror as he looked at me and then at Dominic. [Have you seen how they melt like butter in front of us!?]

[It's this place.] I said to Killian as I stared at that black spot where the dead body used to lie before it disappeared. [I think their bodies had existed for so many centuries already that when they died, they just melted and turned into nothing.]

[We have to get out of here fast.] Dominic murmured as he led me gently to the kids. [We shouldn't wait for these people to trap us in here.]

Chapter 169
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

[What do you think is on the other side of the tunnel?]

[I am not sure, Killian.] I answered the Moonstone Alpha as we headed to it. [But what I know is that there is something important behind that door. Whatever it is, it might be the key to the questions about my mom and this organization that wants all of us dead.]

The children were with their dad as they walked on each side of him, clutching his fine, silver fur. Diana still looked scared and anxious as she felt her father's fur on the side of her flushed cheek for comfort. Devon walked with his back straight, his face painted with patience and courage.

His small steps were so light that I barely heard them clacking on the floor, unlike his sister's. Devon was definitely a hunter—a born leader and warrior that Silver Crescent needs one day.

[Is it not clear yet about what Brianne told you, why they wanted you dead?] Killian answered; his voice was soft enough for me to just hear through the mindlink, careful for the children not to hear. [You all are the key and direct descendants of the royal blood; your dad was the son of the former King. Your mother was a Royalty—an Alpha-Luna that once ruled these lands. That enormous power is the reason why they all want you dead. You are a threat to them, Samantha. A huge threat to them.]

Killian was right. It was the main reason why all of this happened. But then I frowned and glanced at him through the corner of my eyes; my voice was sharp but soft, not wanting Diana and Devon to hear that kind of conversation as well. [But what does Brianne mean about my mother's corpse? Do you think she's come back from the dead like everyone thinks? It sounds ridiculous and scary, but what if she did? What if she really came from the dead, Killian? What do these people need from my mom? Why did they disturb her from her grave?]

The Moonstone Alpha cleared his throat as he decided to focus his eyes on his way, avoiding my stare. [Even I freaked out when Brianne said that. She woke up and then screamed about it like a nightmare she had and it scared the sh*t out of me. She said it over and over as she embraced herself while rocking herself back and forth... I didn't know what to do, so I bought her in Silver Crescent, forgetting that it was your coronation night. Then, when I saw you glow on that stage, everything suddenly made sense to me.]

I blinked. I really didn't know exactly what to say to Killian. But then I had to say something. Anything that will assure him that everything will be alright, even though I wasn't sure if we could all find the answers to all these mysterious things that were happening between me, my family, and Silver Crescent.

{We'll find whatever is behind that door, Killian. We will know what mom's involvement is in this. If Fang Trinity and Black Claws are the ones who

stole my mom from her grave. I am scared of what answers we will find there, but we can't stay like this anymore. We have to end this and bring peace to our people and the whole pack.]

Killian nodded gently, tugging the corner of his mouth for a side grin. [Yeah. I can't wait to end all of this and go home.]

I smiled back at him and then let out a heavy sigh. I glanced at my husband, who was leading the children behind us, and we locked eyes in mutual understanding that he was ready for whatever would happen once we opened the door behind that flickering, faint light.

[So this is it?] Dominic commented when we stopped in front of a totem pole.

On top of it was the head of the wolf, raised as if howling at the sky. Above its mouth was an orb of light, that beacon that brought us to this place and was pulsing like a heartbeat, giving each of us a strange warmth that we never expected. I studied the door behind it—a thick metal hatch that seemed too heavy to open even for Killian and Dominic's combined strength.

"How are we going to open that thing?" Devon asked in curiosity, realizing the problem in front of us again. "There should be a key or something."

Dominic and I looked at each other as we both thought about how we were able to get inside. Killian, on the other hand, must have given up thinking about anything and just started smiling and playing with Diana as they sang a kindergarten song she always loved.

I was still thankful he could divert the children's minds from the problem, and so Dominic and I stood side by side while he rubbed his chin and stared at the heavy metallic door.

[What are we going to do with this?] Dominic growled after he tried to open the latch with his own strength. As we expected, he failed. His brows deepened into a furrow, furious that we couldn't do anything about it.

[It should be connected with me and the twins.] I whispered, a little exasperated at the thought that it was going to be another puzzle that we needed to solve. [It should be...]

I looked around the door, trying to figure out the patterns embedded in it. The pattern was identical to the birthmarks of the twins. That insignia of the royal family, the wolf with golden eyes—all of it rang a bell in my head as my heart raced, examining it.

Your blood is the key.

My eyes widened as I remembered what Brianne told me. I swallowed the lump in my throat hard, trying to calm my frantic heart.

[I have to bleed to open these gates.] I murmured under my breath.

Killian and Dominic looked at me, frowning.

[What the hell are you talking about? What do you mean, bleed?]

I shot Killian one deadly look as I hated to explain more about it, but now I had to. [It's Brianne. She told me my blood and the kids' blood are the key. I am just not sure if it will work here, though. I just need to try.]

[You need ours too, Mom?] Diana bravely stepped towards me, volunteering to do what I explained to them. [Devon and I want to help. We are not scared.]

My tears stung my eyes as I bent down to Diana and Devon and held both of their shoulders gently. I gently stroked my daughter's hair as I smiled at her. [No. This is Mommy's duty. I will take care of it, sweetheart. You are not going to sacrifice for this again.]

Devon touched the side of my face and stared me in the eyes, trying to give me more courage. "You can do it, Mom. Diana and I are here to help you if you need it."

I stepped closer to the door, bared my teeth to expose my fangs, and then stabbed my paws with them. Blood trickled down from it as I painted the wall in front of me with crimson.

Then, to our surprise, the floor shook and the thick metal door started to tremble until the blood illuminated a bright gold that spread in a line, making the patterns more vivid.

A loud creak, and then it opened.

Diana and Devon immediately clung to their Dad's side as we all ran inside, worried that the door might close again if we didn't hurry. My wound slowly healed after I licked it, and then everything was pitch black when the heavy door shut tight behind us.

Then, light exploded inside the chamber from the light orbs that surrounded it. In front of us was an ancient library containing history, magic, and books about mysterious magics that existed in the region surrounding Moonstone and Silver Crescent and other packs around them. My instinct was not to waste any more time and flip on some of them, hoping we could find more information about my mother or the packs and organizations that wanted us all dead, and hoping we could get some answer that we needed regarding the prophecy about the double key lock cylinder that my mother mentioned in her library.

Killian found some pairs of clothes we could use so we could transform back to our human form, and then I started flipping through the books that tell about keys or locks or prophecy.

"How are we going to get out of this place then?" Killian asked as he touched the metal gate and examined the patterns on it. "Hurting yourself, Samantha, every time we open some random, sh*tty doors is not a good idea."

"Yeah, but we have no choice," I answered him as I browsed the books and hoped I could find anything that was useful here after all the struggles we went through just to get to this place. "There should be something in here that will give us answers!" I blurted, starting to feel frustrated.

I looked around and then I saw Diana standing in front of a book and staring at it. It had a golden cover with red markings on it, and I immediately jumped to get it from the shelf, hoping it was what I was looking for.

And I was right!

“I found it!” I almost screamed in excitement, and Dominic immediately ran to my side to look. Both of our eyes widened at the first page containing a paragraph:

“The fate of the two is intertwined with chaos that will fall upon the land of the Silvers.”

My husband and I looked at each other because we knew what it meant.

“A war is coming.” Dominic murmured to me with his eyes widened in terror.

Chapter 170
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

“What do you mean war is coming?” Killian asked as he walked towards us, looked at the book, and then at me and Dominic. “War is already here, Samantha! The Fang Trinity, the Black Claws—what is so surprising about it?”

“It says a huge chaos is coming to the Silvers where the two keys are born. It means Silver Crescent will face more catastrophes than it already does. Black days are coming, and darkness will swallow it whole, and the rest will turn into ashes. Nothing will remain. There won’t even be any skulls or bones left on the ground. There won’t even be a single blade of grass. Everything will be covered with dessert. Only it was ashes of the dead instead of sand.”

“What the f*ck does that even mean?!” Killian commented, his eyes wide with terror as he stepped back from us, picturing all the horrors that the script said. “It sounds like a sh*tty apocalyptic thing!”

“We can’t let that happen,” Dominic murmured as he bit his lower lip hard, his eyes staring at the ground as he succumbed to his thoughts, thinking about what the script meant. “We can’t let whatever or whoever wants to annihilate the pack that my ancestors worked so hard to protect. We need to know how we can stop them. There should be a way.”

“How are they going to do that, though?” Killian asked, still horrified at the thought, as he covered the lower half of his face with his hand while his eyes were wide with dread. “How could they erase a powerful pack like that into ashes? Are they possessing weapons that they would use against us?”

“They could. But we are not sure what is waiting for us.” Dominic answered and then let out a heavy sigh, massaging the space between his tightly closed eyes. I could tell he was starting to feel a headache from what we found out in the prophecy.

When Dominic lifted his eyes, I noticed how his brows deepened, and then he stared at the walls near a light orb.

“What is it, love?” I asked him, feeling worried after noticing that his jaw was clenched and the tension had returned to the muscles in his shoulders. “What are you seeing?”

Even Killian must have noticed it too after his eyes went sharp and his hands curled into tight fists. His knuckles were white, ready to attack.

I looked at the spot they were glaring at, and then I saw it.

At first, it looked like shadows dancing in the light, like the shadows that turned into dark werewolves that attacked us outside the door. Adrenaline started to kick in as we all waited for the shadows to form into dark werewolves, and that’s when we, the three of us, would strike. To our bafflement, they didn’t! Instead, they formed symbols that, at first, confused us all. Dominic stayed closer to me with Devon and Diana on each of his

sides, glaring at the dancing shadows in front of us. I looked down on the corner of my eyes and saw Killian flexing his fingers, ready to shift any moment and jump at the enemies.

But then Killian's body relaxed as he saw what the shadows were doing.

At first, his reaction to it made me frown, but then I understood. When I looked back at the walls where the shadows were, all the blood in my face drained, and my stomach tightened.

The shadows transformed into a figure so familiar to me that the hairs on my nape stood up in fear. I was sure she was that figure on the wall. I couldn't remember most of her facial features if I didn't see her picture in her diary with Lena. But I was one hundred percent sure it was my Mom who the shadow was showing...the shape of her face, the width of her shoulders, the posture...

"Samantha—"

Tears rolled down my face. I didn't know what to feel. Why did the shadow show me my mother? Was my Mom looking for me? Was she in danger? I couldn't understand because she was dead! She was supposed to be dead?! I was so confused about what was happening. I didn't know what to think anymore!

"Samantha, no! Don't let these things get into your head! They are trying to test you! They believe you have information about your mom, and they are attempting to manipulate your emotions to influence your thoughts." Killian snarled at me. "Don't let them get into your head, Samantha!"

How? How could I resist this when I heard my mother's soft voice calling my name in agony?!

It was as if the shadows—my Mom was reaching for me. She was singing in my ears, and everything just faded into nothing. Just me and my Mom. Her eyes stared at me with love and tenderness that I hadn't experienced in my whole life...

“Samantha, it’s just an illusion!”

Killian said many other words, but I couldn’t comprehend any of them anymore. When Mother lifted her hand to reach mine, my hand automatically lifted to touch hers too. But I felt pressure on both sides of my body, and when I looked down, it was two children embracing my thighs and crying.

My wolf sounded so distant in my head, but the two children...

No, they are not just random children.

They are my kids!

The rage in my eyes went back as I remembered the real reason why we were here. “There’s no way my Mom is alive! She is dead! Don’t f*cking use her to get into my head, you bastards!”

My skin glowed with a starlit gold hue, and the shadows began to melt away and vanish, similar to what happened with the dark werewolves we fought outside the massive door. I felt Diana and Devon’s tight embrace against mine as they buried their faces in me, my two saviors who saved me from the illusions that almost broke my heart and soul.

“Please, Mom, stay with us! Don’t go with the shadow! We don’t want you to go!”

As I drove the shadow away with a snarl, something unexpected happened that caused the ground to shake! The shadow’s figure distorted into something that made all the hairs on my neck stand. It turned into a snake, a werewolf, the symbol of the Fang trinity, and then the crown. It was so fast that I barely understood what it meant, but I saw how Killian attentively memorized everything while Dominic’s focus was on Devon and Diana, who were still clinging beside me.

My instinct told me to grab the book, and I tucked it on my side, making sure I wouldn’t lose it.

“We have to go! The ceiling is going to fall any minute!” my husband yelled amid the raging tremor as he grabbed Devon and Diana from me, carrying them both in each of his arms. “Come on, Samantha! We need to go!”

I blinked twice, hoping to catch a glimpse of the shadow, but it had vanished entirely. No trace of it anymore. The next thing I felt was my husband’s hands on my wrists, urgent yet gentle as he pulled me and half-dragged me desperately towards the heavy metallic doors of the chamber.

“How the hell are we able to get out of here?!” Killian screamed as he tried to push it open, but it didn’t budge despite putting all his strength into it.

“The way we got in!” I glared at the door as I bit the side of my palm until it bled. Devon’s eyes widened in horror when he saw me tear the flesh from my hand and then splatter the crimson blood on the door.

Just the same as when we entered the place, it illuminated and trembled until it started to open slowly. My heart was racing so fast in my chest as all of us watched it open and saw half of the hallway had already collapsed, and if we didn’t move fast, we would be trapped here forever.

“GO!” Dominic screamed at the top of his lungs, and all of us started to sprint to the other side of the hallways as swiftly as we could.

“Samantha! Look out!”

Another strong earthquake struck the ground, and the rumbling sound became increasingly nightmarish in my ears. I looked up and saw the vast part of the ceiling falling down on me, and I froze. It was too late for me to move or jump away from it.

“NOOO!!!”

I closed my eyes and ducked. I waited for the pain. I expected the solid object to crush me into a pulp, yet it didn’t happen. My eyes widened with both terror and bafflement when I looked up and saw my husband lifting the debris with both of his hands, all the muscles on his upper body flexed, his

skin glistened with sweat as he did his best to get rid of it and tossed it to the side behind me.

“Dominic!” I panicked when I saw him fall on his one knee as he breathed fast. I looked for the children and they were already on the other side of the hall with Killian. The three of them were waiting with their eyes darkened with fear and worry.

“Let’s go,” he murmured with a slight smile at me and kissed my forehead. When he pushed away gently from me, I saw the blood dripping from his head.

“You’re hurt!” I blurted with my eyes on the verge of tears, feeling so worried for my husband.

“It’s nothing,” he whispered to me as he stared into my eyes with love that made my stubborn heart melt. “Your safety is the most important thing to me, my love.”

Struggling, I bit my lower lip and helped him get up. Dominic was twice as heavy as I was, but I did my best to help him walk out of the hallway where Killian and the kids were waiting. I glanced at my husband, feeling a twinge of guilt for questioning his love for me.

I knew that all the negative feelings I had for him didn’t make sense, especially after everything he did to prove how much he wanted me and the kids to stay in his life. But could I blame myself for still not trusting him after all the hurt and trauma he caused me before?

I was so confused with my feelings that I decided not to entertain them yet.

The safety of the kids should come first.

Chapter 171
[Samantha’s Point of View]

“You can do it. We’re almost there...”

I barely breathed as I helped my husband go to the other side of the hallway. I saw the tension on my twins and Killian's faces as they all watched me and Dominic walk side by side, his arms on my shoulder as I did my best to drag him as fast as I could as the debris started falling behind us, sealing the place with rubble and boulders, burying the ancient library into nothing.

"You can do it, Mom! Dad!" Diana blurted as tears rolled down her face, "Please!"

"C'mon!" Devon joined his sister as his eyes glistened from the faint light coming from the orbs floating on the walls. "Faster!"

"It's okay, we will be okay," I murmured to my husband as I smiled at him in the middle of chaos. His eyes glinted, and his lips curved into a soft smile while he looked at our twins. His blood still trickled down his chin as we both reached the end of that collapsing hallway.

"We're going to die," I said, a little sarcastic as I laughed, terrified and nervous after a huge boulder fell just a few feet behind me.

"If I die, then I'll die happy," he answered back as he laughed with me and glanced a little at me, and then focused his eyes in front of us again. "But don't worry, my love. I will make sure you survive for the kids."

"As if I will let you die here," I growled at him, my eyes sharpening as I made my pace faster, forcing him to drag himself to keep up with me.

The rumbling sound became louder and louder.

"I don't think we can make it!" My voice and lips started to quiver when I saw the ceiling above us cracked. I thought my heart went to my throat as I looked up and watched them rattling against each other, threatening to fall on our heads any minute.

"GET DOWN!"

I was in total panic when Dominic pushed me to the floor and shielded his body when the ceiling started to collapse and fell on us. I thought I heard him scream in pain, followed by grunts. I could barely breathe; my heart was like thunder in my chest. I caught my breath and slowly opened my eyes to see Dominic on top of me, shielding me from a large section of the ceiling that had fallen onto his back. To my horror, he vomited blood, and it spattered on my chest, making me gasp and start to hyperventilate in hysteria.

“Dominic!” I gasped as I looked down at the fresh blood on my chest. Blood was still trickling from his chin and coming from his head, and I realized those were new wounds he got after he saved me from the collapsed ceiling.

“Shhh... It’s all right. You’re alright,” he said in his assuring tone, thinking I was badly hurt and trying to calm me down. “I will keep you safe, Samantha. Even if it costs me my life.”

Tears rolled down the side of my face as I looked at those gentle hazel eyes looking down at me. His face was just inches from me as his blood continued trickling from his head. I swallowed hard when my throat started to feel swollen. I never wanted to cry in front of Dominic. Not like this. We won’t die like this. I wouldn’t let it happen.

“It’s okay, my love,” he kept on murmuring as he grunted, trying to hide the excruciating pain from me, even though he knew it was useless because we were connected with the mate bond.

“You’ll lose a lot of blood, Dominic.” A sob slipped from my throat as I tried to calm myself down and stared into his eyes. “Why are you doing this?”

“What do you mean, why am I doing this?” He asked, his brows deepening into a furrow as the corner of his lips tugged into a smirk. “Of course, because I love you, silly.”

That’s when I lost it.

Tears started to stream down my face as my shoulders shook. Worry flashed in my husband's eyes as he watched me cry.

"Are you hurt?" he asked in his rough, husky voice as he checked on my face and shoulders. "Are you hurt, Samantha? Please tell me!"

I shook my head gently as I sobbed, covering my eyes with my forearm, too embarrassed for him to see me crying like a helpless child. It's been a very long time since I showed Dominic my soft and helpless side, and I was so not used to it.

"I will not let anything happen to you..." He whispered again as he smiled at me despite the excruciating pain he was feeling.

"And I won't let you die either!" I snarled as I sniffed and tried to push down my throat the sobs that were threatening to emerge again. With clenched teeth, I tore the hem of my shirt and crumpled it in my hand. Dominic winced when I pressed it against the wound on his head, but chuckled, trying to distract me again from the fear that was looming in my head.

"I guess we are not going to let each other go, then," he smirked as he gazed down at my eyes and down my slightly parted lips. "We will be stuck with each other forever."

There was another rumbling from the debris above Dominic, and the smirk on his face disappeared and was replaced with pain that flashed on his face. His strength was slowly depleting, and the rubble and debris behind his back were pressing him down until his face was just an inch from mine.

Please, Moon Goddess, we need help...

[Dominic! Samantha!]

Our eyes widened with hope when we heard Killian's voice through the mind link. Little by little, the weight behind my husband's back got lessened. The sound of rocks rolling down the ground was heard, and then light entered when, finally, Killian lifted that massive boulder behind my husband's bruised and injured back.

“F*ck! Are you both still alive in there!?” Killian yelled, terrified at what had happened. “Goddess, please speak if you both are still breathing!”

“We’re fine!” Dominic yelled back; his voice was weak as he grunted in pain. He was about to get up, but his elbows and knees betrayed him as he collapsed on top of me unconsciously.

“Dominic? Dominic!” I tried to wake him up, panic spread all over my face, and I never cared that he was twice my weight as he pinned me to the ground. Killian moved fast and pulled Dominic from on top of me, checking if my husband was still breathing.

“He’s alive alright,” Killian assured me as he checked on Dominic’s pulse. Devon and Diana immediately ran towards us and were crying after they saw their Dad not responding to them.

“What happened?” I wiped my tears with the back of my hand as I checked on Dominic, my hands on each side of his face as I tried to wake my husband up. “He’s just talking a minute ago.”

“He must have saved all his strength and made sure those boulders won’t crush both of you into a pulp,” Killain explained as he looked at me and then at Dominic’s pale face. “His wounds need Moonthorn grass. It looks like it’s not going to heal because of this place. We need to find it in the Black Forest as soon as we get out of this sh*thole.”

Killian picked Dominic up and carried my husband on his shoulder. He was struggling, but he looked at me and nodded as if silently telling me he got this. He won’t let anything bad happen to my mate, and I was so grateful that my eyes were teary.

“Let’s go.”

I grabbed Devon and Diana’s hands as we all searched for our way out of the cave. To our surprise, it didn’t take us long to reach the exit and Killian, who was almost breathless, carefully put Dominic down on the grass and rested for a bit.

Devon, who was a little distant from his Dad, approached Dominic immediately and examined his father's face with worry and then looked at me, his eyes glistening with tears. "Can't you heal him, Mom? Do you think your blood can heal him too?!"

I was startled by Devon's fear for his dad's life. Despite all of that, our little boy still loved his Dad, which made me happy, even though Devon was suspicious of Dominic and hated him for all the pain his Dad caused me. I kissed the top of Devon's head and reached out for my little Diana, who started crying again as she realized how dire the situation was after seeing her brother.

"Yeah, why don't you try? It worked on me. It will definitely work on your mate, Samantha!" Killian said as he scratched his chin and then stared at me. "I guess that will work faster than the Moonthorn grass. That herb is rare in this part of the forest. It might take us until tomorrow to find it."

After Killian's suggestion, I looked down at my unconscious husband and saw that he was in agony. A sob threatened to escape my throat again as I thought of all the injuries he willingly received just to keep me alive. I stared at his bruised ribs. His broken left shoulder blade. The concussion on his head and those raw wounds on his back after sharp edges of stones cut and pierced them.

I drew in a sharp breath when I dug my nails deep into my palm and dripped it on Dominic's wounds. My blood glowed gold, and as soon as it seeped into my husband's skin, his injuries immediately healed. His bruises turned lighter, like they were never there. His broken bones were fixed and his skin regenerated faster than an Alpha could heal.

Killian's jaw dropped at what he witnessed.

My eyes widened when Dominic bolted away. He was so fast I didn't have time to flinch away when he grabbed my neck and pulled me close to his face. His teeth bared, his snarls ripped in his throat with pure anger.

His voice was both clear and hoarse as he growled at me, saying, “Stop looking at me like that, woman. I never believed the evidence!”

Chapter 172
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

Killian was about to punch Dominic in the face to let me go, but I felt his grip loosen and stopped the Moonstone Alpha by raising my hand to him. I panicked when his eyes rolled back to his head, and my husband fell on the cold, grassy ground, unconscious and sweating so badly.

My eyes widened as I gripped my neck where his hands had been, and I breathed quickly, trying to calm myself down in front of the kids. Even Devon and Diana were so shocked they couldn’t immediately process what happened.

“What the f*ck—”

I shot Killian a deadly glare for swearing, reminding him that the kids were with us.

He cleared his throat and straightened his back as he corrected his words, “I mean, what the heck had just happened?!”

“Body reflex? I am not really sure,” I said, caressing the burning feeling around my neck as I cleared my throat and then went to Devon and Diana to hug them. They were so baffled that they just stared at their dad and didn’t speak or react at all.

“Hey, hey, it’s okay. Dad is just going through something. It’s not him. Something must have happened to him, okay?” I caressed Diana’s hair and tucked it behind her ear while I patted Devon on his shoulder and then pinched his cheek gently. “He will be okay; we will find out what happened to Dad. He never intended to hurt Mommy, so don’t get upset. Something happened.”

Killian seemed unconvinced by what I said, but he folded his chest and then smiled at the two children reassuringly. “Yeah, your Mom must be

right. Maybe that cave did something to your dad. We will find a way to fix this, kids. So nothing to worry about, okay?”

Diana nodded, but Devon looked down and away from me and Killian, his eyes furrowed in concern. I knew it was difficult for him when he saw Dominic grab my neck and try to kill me. He always looked for a reason to accept him as his father, but after what he saw, I was scared he must have completely lost hope of forgiving Dominic.

And I didn’t know what to do about it.

Seeing the helplessness in my face, Killian went to Devon and tousled my son’s dark, unruly hair. “Don’t take things too seriously, kid. I am sure your dad never wanted to hurt your mom. Like what we told you, he must be under some influence of whatever that was in the cave. Once he wakes up, we will find out what happened," he said as he bent down to look at Devon’s face and smiled. “So stop fretting, okay? Everything will be okay. Just have faith that it’s not something that will put your dad’s life in danger. He is the Alpha of the Silver Crescent pack, and you will inherit his title and become the next Alpha of your generation. You need him to teach you everything he knows about your turf.”

Devon’s face flushed at the thought, and he pouted his lips as he mumbled, “I don’t care about any titles, though.”

Amused, Killian stood and then smirked as he tousled Devon’s hair again, “Sure you don’t, kid.”

Seeing Devon smile after Killian calmed him down brought relief and lightened that load in my chest a little. But then I looked down at my husband, and all the worries flooded my head again, wondering what happened to him and what he meant about the evidence that he didn’t believe.

Could it be about the evidence regarding Mother Luna’s death?

Could it be possible that he thinks I killed his mother despite all the evidence that pointed to Randalf as the one who killed Lena that night?

That thought brought a wave of pain in my heart, a kind that felt like cold knives stabbing me in the chest over and over.

I frowned and chose not to entertain the fear and doubt that emerged in my chest. I never wanted to believe Dominic still blamed me for what happened. But after what he did and said, I didn't know anymore. I was confused. And hurt.

"Let's go," I said in a grave tone, as my eyes darkened due to the negative thoughts and feelings that loomed in my head and chest. "We have to find our way back to Silver Crescent."

I looked around, sucking in a deep breath through my teeth with my fists on my hips. This place wasn't the same Black Forest we were in before we got into the underground cave. The trees were different, and I couldn't smell the lake that should be around here, which was also near the borders of Silver Crescent. The exit led us to a completely unfamiliar location, and I became concerned that we had strayed too far from my husband's territory.

"I think we're lost," I exhaled in exasperation, rubbing my forehead, and then examining the trees again around us. "There are no growing pine trees around Silver Crescent. We are in a different place."

"Yeah, that's what I thought, too." Killian looked around at his surroundings and then gazed up at the cloudless sky, where the full moon was at its peak. "I just hope this cave didn't bring us straight to the territories of our enemies. We have to be careful."

"Mom, look!"

Diana pointed her little finger somewhere, and when I looked at it, my eyes widened, and I couldn't believe what I saw.

"I swear there is no house there when I looked around," I murmured, mostly to myself, as I squinted my eyes and walked closer, wanting to make sure it was a house and not some enemy's base camp.

“Let’s check the place. We need shelter while your husband is still unconscious, Sam. We can’t stay in an open area like this. It’s too dangerous.” Killian suggested, grunting as he carried Dominic on his shoulder. “We need to keep the children safe.”

“Yeah,” I nodded and then reached for Devon and Diana’s hands as I led all of them towards the old house in the middle of the pine woods.

*****

It was an old cabin that had looked abandoned for many years. The floor that was made of wood creaked from Killian and Dominic’s weight as he stepped in, studying the place with extra caution while securing my husband on his shoulder.

But what caught more of my attention was the family insignia of Dominic’s Clan embroidered artistically on a banner that hung in the middle of the wall just above the small fireplace. I walked towards the fine fabric and felt it between my fingers as I stared at the symbol and then frowned.

How come this house belonged to Dominic’s clan when it was standing outside their territory?

“Mom, is that grandma?”

I turned around to see the picture frame Devon was staring at. The picture frame was hanging on the wall alongside several others. The place was dark, but with our werewolf eyes, we were able to see everything clearly, like night vision.

And that’s when I recognized who the people in the picture were.

I snatched the picture frame from the wall and looked at it closely with my heart beating wildly in my chest. It was Lena, and she looked so much younger in these old photos. She was handing a swaddled baby to a man wearing a silver wolf mask, and I couldn’t tell who it was until I saw that tattoo on his neck...

I felt nauseated when I realized that the person in the photo with her was Randalf Bennet. He was taking the child from Lena's arms with a serious look on his face. It didn't feel right because I knew I was that baby in the picture. Cold sweat started to bead on my forehead until I felt Killiam behind me. He looked down at the photo in silent surprise.

"Is that—

"There's no way that's Richard Bennett, and we are not sure that the baby was mine," I said in denial as I shoved the picture in Killian's hands for him to look at it. "No. That's not me."

"Yeah," he answered, a little confused, but the look on his face made me think he really believed it was me and Richard Bennett in the photo. "Yeah, maybe it's just some random kid."

Both Killian and I knew it was Lena, me, and Richard, and he was considerate enough not to make me upset with what I saw. Why was Richard there?!

Dizzy, I looked away, massaged my temples with both hands, and shook my head slightly, feeling confused about what I had just seen. What did it mean? Why was Richard taking me from Lena?

Was that the reason why Richard stared at me when Lena welcomed me into the Silver Crescent pack after she lied to me that my parents both died in an accident?!

"I heard Lena and your mom are comrades in arms," Killian said softly to me while he stared at the photo. "But why is Lena handing you over to Richard when they branded him as a huge traitor? Do you think there was something more about this that we don't know about what really happened?"

Lifting my face at Killian, I wasn't sure what to say or how to react to this. It was all in contrast to what I read in my mom's diary, and I was starting to doubt if everything she wrote in her diary was real.

“Maybe there is another reason for the usurpation of the throne—”

Killian didn’t finish his sentence after we all heard that eerie sound of chains somewhere in the cabin. Devon and Diana immediately ran towards us in a hurry, and I grabbed them against me, making sure they were safe.

“That sound came from underneath us!” Killian hissed softly as his eyes sharpened. All of us were ducking in full alert.

And as the sound of the chains underneath us continued, a scent so familiar caught my nose. I frowned. It couldn’t be.

Chapter 173
[DEVON’s Point of View]

After all the terrible things my twin sister and I had witnessed after we entered that underground cave, I didn’t know what kind of monster we were going to face again.

After battling an unkillable giant squid, Mom, Dominic, and Uncle Killian barely escaped death. Then the shadow werewolves. I was horrified when the entire tunnel ceiling collapsed on Mom and Dominic, thinking they were already dead. I was ready to scream in grief and pain if it weren’t for the bond that connects me and my twin sister to our parents. This feeling made me believe that they were still alive under the gigantic debris and rubble, so I told Uncle Killian that he had to get them out before it was too late.

Yes, I was upset with my Dad. How could I not? He hurt Mom. He wasn’t there with me and my twin sister as we grew up! And I got more terrified for us after I saw him wring my mother’s neck. I was so shocked, I thought I was just imagining it at first. But it was real. It was as if he wasn’t the guy that Diana and I adored so much before...

“Devon! Diana! Stay with me!” Mom hissed as she glanced back, worried about Dominic, who was still lying unconscious on the floor. A part of me wished we could just leave him there. But then, no matter how much I hated him, I could never change the fact that he was still my father. And

that Diana and Mom still loved him, no matter how many times he let them down.

I couldn't do anything but curl my hands into fists and promise myself that I would protect Diana and Mom no matter what. I will never let him hurt Mom again. No. Never on my watch!

As I ran to Mom, I saw Uncle Killian looking at me gravely, as if trying to read what I was thinking after glaring at Dominic on the floor. I didn't know if I could even open up to him—if I could tell him how I hated my Dad. But what else should they expect me to feel after everything I saw?!

Averting my eyes from Uncle Killian, I took my sister's hand as we walked behind Mom, who was making sure that my twin sister and I were safe from whatever was moving underneath the wooden floor of that strange old house.

Mom's face was pale. She had seen or thought something dreadful while we crouched towards the hatch on the floor, just like the one we had in the house we were staying in. I had a feeling something disastrous would happen. I could sense it through my twin sister. I sensed it through our strong sibling bond. She was feeling something—seeing something that any of us would never see or feel. Diana was special. She always was.

I held Diana's hand tightly. I wanted to make sure she was alright. I wanted her to know that no matter what, Mom and I were there to keep her safe. I knew I wasn't an Alpha yet, and as strong as Uncle Killian and my father. But Mom said I was special. She told me I could do things that no ordinary werewolf could do. And that was enough for me to prove that I could fight too.

I would fight and make sure we get out of this spooky place.

"It's okay, Diana. Nothing bad will happen to you," I whispered to her as I saw how the blood ran down her face. I felt her hand turn strangely warm, like she was having a fever. I knew this. This had happened before when she experienced a vision of a strange, giant black wolf biting the moon.

Diana was having another episode of visions again, and I started worrying about her.

Diana looked at me with fear in her eyes as she pressed herself against Mom's side. I knew she believed me, but I still couldn't protect her from whatever horror she was feeling and seeing in her head, and that made me helpless and useless. I wish I could do something. But only Diana could deal with it. Only her.

That's how strong my twin sister is.

All of us ducked when we thought something would come to us after hearing the eerie clicking sound coming from everywhere inside the house. Mom stayed on full alert while Uncle Killian was standing straight, his eyes moving as if figuring out where that sound came from. I kept my focus on Diana as her hands turned warmer and warmer as the clicking sound turned louder and louder in our ears.

"Where's that sound coming from?" Mom hissed as she looked around—on the floor, on the walls, and the ceiling. The sound was surrounding us. It was everywhere in the house, and I started to feel scared of what kind of monster we were dealing with. Uncle Killian didn't leave Dad and stayed standing near him on the floor, still making sure that our father would be safe if ever something or someone attacked us all.

"What is happening, Mom?" I asked, my eyes were still on Diana, who was hugging Mom's thigh, and then I lifted my terrified face to look at Mom's. She couldn't look back at me, as if taking her eyes off the walls meant death, and I understood her fear.

"I am not sure, sweetheart," she tried her best to make her voice calm as she rested her hand on Diana's head. "I am sure it's just nothing. Just don't leave Mommy's side."

My twin and I definitely knew it wasn't just nothing.

Then that creepy sound of clicking was joined by the sound of the dragging chains from downstairs that made Diana gasp loudly. Mother held us

against her, tight as she and Uncle Killian stood back to back, watching anything that would appear in front of us.

“Watch out for the kids, Sam. Don’t leave your sight on them,” Uncle Killian snarled under his breath, and that’s when I felt my stomach tighten. It was coming. Whatever monster was hiding underneath the hatch and the ones that were behind those walls, they were coming for me and my sister!

“You don’t have to tell me what I need to do,” Mom snapped at him as she looked down at Dad, who was still unconscious on the floor.

Diana leaned closer to me, her mouth on my ear as she whispered, “Devon, I can hear the voices crying in the wall.”

Did she mean ‘inside’ the walls?!

“What do you mean inside the walls, Diana?” Mom was the first to ask after she heard her. “What do you see?”

Diana couldn’t say a word. She was too terrified to speak. I tried to squeeze her hand to let her know nothing was going to happen to her, but it didn’t help. It must be something that Diana couldn’t explain. Something that was too complicated for her to describe.

Mom understood the pain on Diana’s face and so she looked at me, trying to think I knew something about it. It was embarrassing that I had no idea what was going on in my twin sister’s mind. Her vision was something that our sibling bond couldn’t share. It was as if the vision was only for her to carry. To suffer. And it was a burden I wished I could share with my sister. Perhaps the Moon Goddess had other plans for Diana. Perhaps she needed my sister as a medium so she could send us the signs of the disaster that was coming to Silver Crescent and its people.

I shrugged my shoulder to my Mom and then lowered my eyes.

But then something happened to me. Something like a warmth spread all over my chest and I looked at my sister, who was already staring at me as if she knew what was happening to me. She gave me a short nod and a

slight smile. She was trying to transfer me her vision through our enclosed hands. In an instant, I began to hear eerie cries of torment and grief, as if we were inside a funeral. The cries on the wall were like rituals or prayers that kept chanting around us—like someone died. It was so powerful that I felt as if my head was going to split into two. I had to snatch my hand back from Diana and Mom and fell on both my knees as tears rolled down my face.

“Make it stop!”

Mom and Uncle Killian looked at me; both were dreadened at the terror displayed on my face. Mom grabbed me by the shoulders and stared at me in the face, not knowing how she could calm me. The voices that echoed all over us turned louder and louder.

How could Diana endure all of this!?

My hands pulled my hair, hoping it could ease the pain somehow and then I closed my eyes tightly as I started to rock myself back and forth, humming that lullaby Mom always sang to us every night when we slept.

“The Silver moon will rise to brighten the clear northern sky...”

And that’s when the walls of the house began to ripple—rippling in waves as if they were magical barriers concealing something inside. Cold sweat covered my face when I saw the skeletons piled into walls wearing silver wolf bracelets on their wrists and I couldn’t recall the first time I saw it.

I knew I saw it before but where!?

Chapter 174
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

Something was happening to my kids, and I didn’t know how to help. I didn’t know how to save them from the horrible things these supernatural beings did in their heads. We had to get out of this horrible place before anything got worse for my twins!

“Killian! The doors!”

But as the second, I yelled at the Moonstone Alpha to secure the exit; the door slammed closed on its own, almost making Devon and Diana jump in dread surprise. Killian cursed under his breath as he turned to the windows, but all of them closed tight, trapping us all inside that ancient cabin in the middle of nowhere.

“What’s happening?” I hissed. I breathed quickly; my heart was pounding so loudly in my ears. My mind was divided between my twins, that clicking, eerie sound coming from the walls, and that clanking sound of the dragging chains in the basement underneath us.

“Just keep the children close to you, Samantha!” Killian blurted as he raised his hand protectively to us while his wary eyes were looking around the cabin, figuring out where the next threat would come from. Something was off about Killian. My gut told me something was wrong with him, but I couldn’t tell what. Must be that calm look on his face? But I knew Killian as a composed person at dangerous times like this. Yet, my stomach tightened when he looked back at me and then raised both his brows at me as if he wasn’t too bothered about all the weird things that were happening inside the cabin.

Has Brianne told him everything about it already? Could it be possible that they could still communicate through their bond over a distance like this?

I got more horrified when Devon suddenly knelt on the floor, screaming with both his hands on his head like he was in deep pain. My eyes widened in panic as I grabbed him by the shoulders and looked into his eyes to see what was happening. His face was drenched with tears, his eyes were wide with terror, and his skin was hot like he was having a fever. The first thing I did was look at Diana to understand what was happening to her twin brother, but she was just crying and burying her small face against my arm.

“Devon, Devon, look at me,” I whispered to my son desperately as I saw how his face turned blank after that scream. “It’s Mommy. Tell me what’s happening. Tell me what’s going on!”

“Mom, it’s the walls!” Diana cried and then pointed at the walls of the cabin.

At first, I thought I was just imagining it.

The walls rippled like water. Like a mirage of images that moved and slowly dissolved into thin air, revealing the skeletons that piled as the wall of the cabin, wearing the bracelets that I once saw somewhere, on someone...

Killian knocked the side table, and it made a thud on the floor as it fell sideways. Yellow envelopes burst out of the small drawer, drawing my attention away from the terrifying bones on display before us. I frowned when I recognized the penmanship on one of the letters. There was no way I would be mistaken! It was Lena’s handwriting!

“What are those doing here?!” I snarled as I glared at the letters with wide eyes. Killian snatched one of them and handed it to me with a pale face. His dark and grave eyes looked at me as if he also couldn’t believe what was happening. The skeletons in front of us started to rattle in front of us—the jaws of the skulls moved as if they were all laughing at us. The clanking of chains underneath the floor turned louder and louder, as if someone below was whipping it against something, and my body tensed, wondering what kind of monster was hiding underneath the hatch.

And we couldn’t get out. I glanced at my unconscious husband, worried for our lives.

We managed to escape the beasts and traps in the underground cave.

But here, I was scared we wouldn’t make it all out alive...

“When you see this cabin, this letter, it means I failed,” I murmured as I read the letter with a trembling hand and raspy breath. “The Wolf Tomb in the black forest is not the end but the beginning...”

“Another f*cking riddle!” Killian blurted in anger.

I was about to drop the letter, but then I noticed the gold stamp with a broken Moon Wolf Seal on it. I couldn’t remember the last time I had seen

that same stamp, and if I am not mistaken, it was the same Seal that I had seen when I dreamed of my twins before I gave birth to them. I wasn't sure what those stood for and what pack they came from. Lena had so many connections that I wasn't sure where these things came from anymore.

"The keys..."

Diana immediately ran towards her Dad and cried, checking if he was alright. Devon stayed baffled at my side, though, and froze as we watched his father mutter something under his breath, still unconscious but talking in his coma.

"Dad! Dad, wake up, please!" Diana cried, terrified at what was happening. It was only Dominic who could calm her every time she was having a terrifying episode. "Please, you have to wake up!"

"Diana!" I grabbed her and she wrapped her arms around my neck, crying for her Dad. "Dad will be okay; something just happened, but he will be okay."

Dominic kept on repeating the words—key and crown. I wasn't sure what he meant about it. Something must have happened to him, causing him to mutter the words. I knew my husband was fighting whatever it was. I knew he would come back to us! I couldn't help but feel shattered as I saw how the beads of sweat formed on his forehead; his skin was pale and cold to the touch. Like he was slipping away...

"This is a trap," I said to Killian as I looked at him with glaring eyes, my teeth clenching as I carried Diana in my arms and Devon still clinging to my side. "Our enemies must have known we are here! The scent—Olivia's scent—cannot possibly belong to her! She's already dead!"

"Then how are we going to get out of this place!?" Devon yelled to hear his little voice above the noise inside. "We can't go! There are no doors or windows, and a wall of bones surrounds us!"

“Who do you think did this?” Killian asked, as he also thought of a way we could get out of this place, which was once a cabin but is now a cage made of human and werewolf bones.

“Only the Fang Trinity can do this kind of trick!” I snarled as I pressed Diana and Devon closer to me. The mirage of illusion was finally taken down, revealing the cage we were in as the skeletons formed into spiky prison bars. “They know we were in the underground cave and prepared this thing for us, knowing the first thing we will find is shelter after what happened in the ancient library.”

“Is that mean we’re f*cked?” Killian asked me, not caring anymore if Diana and Deovn could hear him swearing. We were in a dire situation. In a cage where enemies could kill us like easy prey.

“Yeah,” I answered, biting my lower lip hard, my eyes were stinging from tears as I looked down at Devon and then at my husband, who was still unconscious on the floor, whispering about the key and the ground. “We’re all f*cked.” I answered in my darkest tone, my heart hammering in my chest as I embraced my twins.

Chapter 175
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

Everything was blurry.

It felt like I was caught in the middle of a storm while standing on the shore of a wide beach. The sand was gray, and the entire scene was chaotic. The rain felt like whiplash on my bare skin as I looked around, looking for my wife and my twins. I kept on screaming their names, running desperately, hoping to see them safe and alive, but they were nowhere. My heart was pumping hard and violently in my chest as the mixture of the rain and my tears stung my eyes. My hair splattered on my face, and I was completely drenched, but I kept going. I kept on running on the endless shore, looking for them.

“SAMANTHA!!!” I screamed loudly, terrified for my family’s safety and perplexed as to how I had ended up here. “SAMANTHA, WHERE ARE YOU!?”

The last time I remembered, I was saving her after the ceiling of the Ancient Library fell on us. Did I die? Did I fail to protect my family again? Why did the Moon Goddess bring me to this place? What is this!?

Every inch of me ached. My head was spinning as I looked left and right for them. I ran and ran. Nothing. I was alone. The storm was so strong that the wind knocked me over, and my throat swelled as despair spread from my chest. I couldn’t be stuck here. I couldn’t just die in a place like this! Samantha and the kids need me! I had to get out of the hell I was in.

“This is just in my head! This is all just in my head!”

I closed my eyes tightly, thinking that it was all just an illusion—a nightmare that the creatures in the Ancient Library had created in my head. When I opened my eyes, I was in a different place again. I was so dizzy I lost my balance. To my surprise, Liam was by my side, his face unsmiling as he caught me by the arm to regain my balance.

“Are you alright, Alpha?”

Baffled by what was happening, I still managed to nod at him slightly. A mellow music started to play and then I realized I was in front of the Pack Manor, in front of so many well-known business tycoon all over the region, the Alphas of allied packs and my—

My mother.

Sharp breath slipped in between my parted lips. All the blood on my face drained as if I were seeing a ghost in front of me. Mom was smiling at me so sweetly. That’s when I realized where I was. When I turned my head, everyone’s attention turned to the most stunning woman I had ever seen in my entire life...

My beautiful Samantha, walking down the aisle in that wedding dress under the bright moonlight.

I was on my wedding day.

My hand curled into a fist as I watched Samantha's sad eyes while she marched down the aisle. I could remember that day, how much I despised her for bringing me into this situation. I never wanted to marry her. We were young. I felt a great deal of embarrassment at being forced to wed a girl who appeared out of nowhere. Mom welcomed her into the pack without telling me where she came from. She just told me that she studied abroad, and her parents died in an accident, and Mom was the only person who could be her guardian.

Samantha—a weak, wolfless orphan. My young, prideful mind couldn't accept her before. I couldn't accept that a strong Alpha like me would have to marry a random girl like her. All my attention was on Olivia before. I thought she was perfect for me, as she was being admired by so many Alphas our age. I was dumb. Samantha and I had a special connection. I felt it. So many times, whenever she was around, it scared me from falling for someone, thinking she would never fit the position of a Luna for the Silver Crescent pack. I let my pride overrule my other emotions for her and destroyed myself in the process.

Her dark hair cascaded down her back, hiding that bloodstain on her neck. It was as if my heart was being stabbed by a million knives as I remembered how I had hurt her before the wedding. That bloodstain, I did it. We had a little argument before the ceremony, scaring her into backing out—to run away and never show her face. But she did despite the bite I gave her neck. She even hid it with her hair, trying to cover the horrible thing I did. I was evil. And that felt like a hard punch in the gut as our eyes locked with each other.

She gave me a small smile. Yet, in her eyes, she was weeping inside.

My eyes caught something past her shoulder, and I saw Olivia flirtatiously smiling at me with those evil eyes. I remembered it as well. How I smiled back, and Samantha thought it was me who smiled at her, and she smiled

back at me. Then my eyes went to her with a cold stare in response, and I saw how she looked so shattered until she stood beside me in front of the altar.

She endured so much. Because that's how much she loved me. And I never even realized how lucky I was to have her. I was blinded by power. I was so driven by greed to be the most powerful Alpha in the entire continent. My moron heart thought that Samantha would only taint our name by being an incompetent Luna who couldn't even shift to her wolf.

I used to hate my mother for her decision and always demanded an explanation from her: why, of all the women in Silver Crescent, did it have to be Samantha? She never gave me a clear reason. Mom was always a puzzle to me. She never told me the reason for everything. She just expected me to do what she wanted, and my rebellious heart never liked it.

But now I understand. I understand that what she always wanted for me was the best thing. She saw something in Samantha that I failed to see before just because I let my blind judgment get the best of me. I was completely convinced that Olivia was the perfect match for me. I was a fool to believe in such a thing.

Samantha turned to look at me with her solemn ocean-blue eyes, and as I was about to gently touch her face and whisper an apology, the scene began to fade like colors diluted in water.

"Her blood has healing power, son. But don't let Samantha bleed on you."

I blinked twice when the scene changed with my Mom standing in front of me, straightening my jacket. Yeah, she had told me this before, but I ignored it because it didn't make any sense to me. Now I understood what she meant. If only she had explained everything to me, maybe this feeling I had for Samantha would never have confused me so much before. I never liked the uncertainty. The doubt. I always relied on the data. My instinct. My feelings for Samantha before were like a glitch in my head. Something I couldn't trust because I wasn't sure how it would end. If she would become my salvation or the downfall of the Silver Crescent.

And despite all the terrible things that were happening to my pack, I never thought I would still choose her a million times over my people—over any wealth and power.

Then the scene faded once again. There, in front of me, was my wife, standing in front of me, still in her wedding dress. Face streaming with tears. Her eyes were pleading. My heart shattered once again, wanting to hold her in my arms but I couldn't. It was as if I was being chained in one place and couldn't move. I looked at her with desperate, teary eyes, but all she did was stare down at the floor, sobbing. I screamed at her, apologizing for hurting her and for letting her leave without going after her, but I couldn't make any sound.

No voice was coming out of my throat.

Now I understood the pain I caused her. I understood the horrible things I did.

And now I am the one dying slowly inside.

The jasmine scent filled my nose, and when I looked back at my wife, I saw that she was already staring at me before turning her back and walking away. My whole body trembled in grief as I watched her step away from me and not even give a single glance. The pain, the fear in me, gave me enough strength to destroy the invisible chain that was holding me back and ran to my wife.

I embraced her tight. Held her in my arms and never wanted to let go.

"I'm so sorry for everything I did, Samantha. For all the pain I caused you. I know I was a monster before. I treated you terribly, and I know I couldn't erase everything I did. But I swear to I love you with all my heart and life, and you can trust me with everything. You can trust me and never feel scared for your heart to get hurt again. Because I love you! I love you and I realize how much I want to be part of your and the twins' life!"

I frowned when I felt her skin go cold, but I thought it was just the place, so I held her closer to me to warm her up. "Believe me, this time."

Confused that she didn't say a word, I turned her around and was terrified to see her bloody face and glasslike eyes staring blankly at me.

Chapter 176
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"The key... the crown... believe me..."

I couldn't take my eyes away from Dominic, who was still unconscious on the floor, his head shaking gently as he murmured the words in repeat. I wanted to check on him, to feel his sweaty face with my hand but Devon and Diana were around me, wrapping their arms around me as they trembled in fear.

"How are we going to get out of here, Mom? What happened? Where's the cabin?" Devon asked as soon as he recovered from what happened to him. I pulled his face closer to mine to check on him more thoroughly, and I noticed that he was still pale with slightly purplish lips, which made my heart sink into my stomach.

"We'll look for a way how to get out of this cage, sweetheart. I just need you to stay with your twin, and both of you, watch over your Dad, okay? I'll go help your uncle Killian."

Diana held me tight as she buried her face on my thigh. "No, Mom. PLease just stay here with us. I am scared!"

Devon looked at his twin sister and then at me with worry. He knew I needed to help Killian figure out how we could break free from this place. So he took Diana's hands from me and then embraced her while smiling at his sister, saying, "It's okay, Diana. I am here beside you. Mom just needs to do something so we can finally go home."

A soft smile escaped from my lips as Devon gave me a short, serious look on his face, telling me he got his sister. I couldn't believe how quickly he matured after moving here to Silver Crescent. At the same time, it made

me feel so guilty and sad because they shouldn't be experiencing things like this.

But then they are werewolves. They came from a powerful bloodline and from a strong Clan of Alphas that had been ruling this part of the continent. They were destined for bigger things and this will shape them into powerful leaders one day.

If it was the Moon Goddess' will, then I will do my very best to protect them with my life.

I mouthed to my son, "Thank you," and then walked towards Killian, who was studying the bones in front of him, looking for that part where he could easily destroy it without burning himself. We noticed that the bones weren't just ordinary bones but were also coated with silver, a cage that made sure no werewolf would ever get out from it.

"This is harder than I think it is," Killian said softly, not wanting the kids to hear the despair in his voice.

"We have to get out before the enemies find out we are trapped here," I said to him, almost hissing. My eyes were sharp as I tried to touch the bone with a finger, and I perplexedly moved away from it after it sizzled my skin, immediately burning it.

"Damn it!" I snarled as I checked the burn, shaking my hand to ease the pain.

Killian smirked and then looked up at the sky, sighing deeply. But then he frowned and closed his eyes as he massaged the back of his neck. A growl escaped from his throat. I found his behavior was too strange, so I asked him anxiously, "Are you okay, Killian? You have been acting weird since we got into this place. Is something wrong?"

"No," he grunted, but kept on massaging his nape. "I just feel a little weird since we got out of the Ancient library—like I've been so restless and anxious lately."

“All of us are anxious,” I tried to calm my mind, knowing what he’s feeling was normal. “As long as we are here, it’s normal to feel scared and restless.”

Killian stared at me for a minute. I raised a brow and eyed him as I blurted, “Focus!”

He shook his head as he laughed softly and then whispered as the smile on his face disappeared, “I want to tell you something, Sam. But I worry you’ll think differently of me if I tell you this.”

“Stop it, Killian. You risked your life for all of us. If you weren’t here, Dominic and I would have already died and gotten buried under those boulders.”

He cleared his throat. “It’s not about you or Dominic, you know. It’s for Brianne.”

“I know.” I smiled at him. I know Killian was just trying to look as if he didn’t care about any of us, but I knew he still cared about me and the kids, as a friend. Of course. “But I am still grateful,” I added.

“You’re welcome,” he smiled, and yet the worry still lined his face. “What if I am not the person you think I am, Sam? What if—”

All of us ducked when we heard a rustling sound coming from the forest that surrounds us. I quickly ran towards my kids and wrapped my arms around them. Diana ran away from me, thought, and wrapped her little arms around her father’s head instead as if protecting him from what’s coming.

“F*ck it!” Killian growled as he flexed all the muscles on his upper body, shifting halfway into his werewolf form.

My eyes widened, realizing what he was going to do, and I couldn’t stop myself from yelling at him, wanting him to know it wasn’t a good idea at all.

“Don’t you dare do it, Killian! You’ll kill yourself!” I snarled at him as I kneeled beside my husband while protectively embracing the kids. “Stop it!”

“I don’t care anymore about what will happen to me, Sam! I need you and the kids to be safe away from here! When I say you run, RUN! I will take care of Dominic!”

“There is no f*cking way I would let you kill yourself over this! We’re in a cage! It means they all want us alive, Killian! You don’t have to do this!”

Killian turned his back on me and started crushing the bones in front of him with his bare hands.

Devon and Diana’s eyes widened in terror as we all witnessed how Killian’s hands sizzled and burned so badly that we smelled the flesh roasting against the poisonous silver on his hand.

Killian roared in pain, but he held onto that bone with all his strength until it crumbled in his hands and destroyed it, making a gap just enough for a person to get out of the cage. When he released the bone, I noticed that both of his hands appeared severely burned because of the poison.

“Killian—”

“Don’t mind me!” He snarled sharply in pain, barely glancing at me as he held both of his burning hands in the cold air, trying to ease the pain from the cold breeze. “Just go, Samantha! Take Devon and Diana away from here, quick!”

I was panicking as I saw how serious his injuries were, but Killian was right. There’s no time for me to shut down in that kind of moment, so I immediately scooped Diana away from Dominic and into my arms as Devon ran straight past Killian and out of the cage, not wanting me to worry about him and so that I could focus more on his sister.

“GO!”

Glancing back at my husband, I went outside the cage with Diana in my arms and waited for Killian as he threw Dominic on his shoulder. He grimaced when he had to hold Dominic with his burned hands and made sure my husband wouldn't slip down and that they could safely get out of that deadly, poisonous cage.

"D*mnit, Dominic! I swear to the Moon Goddess, you have to pay me handsomely for saving your life multiple times!" Killian was infuriated as he dropped Dominic on the ground in front of me and Diana without a care. Diana gave Killian a vexed look, though, making the Moonstone Alpha apologize to her.

"Mom, what was that?"

Devon looked around. His werewolf instinct picked up something that was roaming around the area like predators watching their prey. Killian immediately noticed it too and then looked around, keeping us behind him protectively.

A freezing, violent wind blew. The clouds were swept from the sky, revealing the bright moon.

From the trees of the Black Forest, we all saw the creatures—the werewolves with purple eyes glaring at me and the children. Devon glared back, baring his razor-sharp teeth despite the fear in his ocean-blue eyes.

Dark energy reeked throughout the place.

Diana tugged the hem of my shirt as she looked at me with big, curious eyes. "Look, Mom. Uncle Killian's eyes look so much the same as the eyes of the enemies behind the trees!"

At first, I thought Diana was just throwing a tantrum and wanted to make fun of Killian. But when Killian glanced at us, I saw in the corner of his eyes that Diana was telling the truth! That his eyes indeed had the same glowing purplish color as the dark werewolves that surrounded us. I froze, unable to believe what I saw. I was so horrified that my mind went blank for a minute.

Killian turned around to look at us and even Diana and Devon were so shocked in fear.

“Killian! What is this?!” I asked him, betrayal and fear crawling up to my neck, making me almost choke as a lump formed in it. “What happened to you?”

As soon as that look in his eyes was revealed, the burns that he got from the bones with silver coating started to heal so fast that his skin was looking brand-new again in just a few seconds. Like the burn didn’t happen. I flinched, not knowing what to think.

I saw the sadness in Killian’s eyes as he saw the terror in mine.

Chapter 177
[ALPHA KILLIAN’s Point of View]

I tried. I tried my very best.

All in my head, I need to protect Samantha. Keep her and the kids alive. I wasn’t doing this for her because I still had feelings for her. Indeed, my feelings for this woman might not fade away in a few months or a year. But the Moon Goddess had a different plan for me, and that’s when I met Brianne.

My reason for coming to this place with them was genuine. It was true when I told Sam that I only came here for my mate. But it is also true that I still cared for her and worried for their safety. I knew something would happen. I knew deep within me that they would need my help eventually. And I was right. I sensed that Sam and Dominic had something between them that I couldn’t explain. Doubts? Hesitations? Something was holding them back from each other. Whatever it was, it made them look weak in the eyes of their enemies, and they weren’t even aware of it.

I expected a lot more from the Alpha of the Silver Crescent Pack. I knew Dominic as a powerful, cautious man. Many in this region, including several large organizations, feared him. Yet, after what he did to Sam, so many things changed. He turned weak. He became uncertain of the things he

had been doing. That arrogant, unmerciful Alpha everyone knew turned soft. And that led to the downfall of Silver Crescent.

This made me feel bad for Sam. Dominic's confusion about his feelings for Samantha caused his mate a great deal of heartache and chaos. And I admired that despite it, Samantha remained by his side, which I thought was probably about the children, but still, it would take a lot of patience and love to choose someone like Dominic.

To be honest, I felt a significant blow to my ego when she left the Moonstone pack, especially since she was aware that her life was much better there. I guess I just wasn't the right guy for her. She was destined for him. And that was something I couldn't break just to have her back. The mate bond is like an invisible chain that connects two souls into one. It was something that no one could destroy; even the most powerful witch in history couldn't do it.

I knew this time would come. The time when I wouldn't be able to hide it from Samantha anymore. At first, I thought no one would be suspicious about my newfound strength after Sam healed me with her blood. But it wasn't just an ordinary healing that her blood did to me. It did something sinister to me. Something that I never thought I would ever experience. It evolved something in me. Transformed me into a more powerful Alpha, possessing three times the strength that an Alpha should possess.

This wasn't normal, and I knew Samantha had done something to me. The nightmares, the evil thoughts that kept whispering in me. The way I sense evil and dark vibrations around me, faster than any werewolf could. As if these things were calling me. Luring me to them like they were now part of me, and I was part of them as well. It was maddening because I never wanted any of it. That pushing these feelings and thoughts away felt like a massive torture to me, making me almost want to give up. But Brianne reminded me I couldn't let these evil thoughts win against me. So I had to do it. I had to endure all of it and make sure Samantha and the twins could survive.

If something happened to me, everything would be up to Dominic. And I couldn't even trust this bastard if he could really protect Sam and the twins.

Hearing Diana after these dark feelings slipped into me and seeing how my eyes glowed faint purple under the darkness felt like a thousand knives stabbing me in the chest. And that terrified look on Samantha's face was more unbearable than I thought it would be. I never wanted them to fear me. But how are they going to trust me now that they know I wasn't the man they knew I was?

That I was now one of the monsters they were so afraid of?

"What is this, Killian? What happened to you?!" Samantha's eyes were full of dread as she looked at me while carrying Diana in her arms, pressing her daughter against her as she trembled. "What happened! What are you!?"

"Something happened, but it is no time to explain—"

"TELL ME, D*MNIT!"

I turned away from her, not able to look her in the eyes. How could I tell her it happened after she healed me with her blood? That her blood do this to me? I knew Samantha. It would f*cking break her, and she would blame herself for everything. No way I would let that happen, though. She never deserved it. It wasn't as if she wanted this to happen to me.

"We have no time, Samantha! I have to lure these enemies away and find a safe place where you, Dominic, and the children can hide! It's not safe here anymore!"

"NO!" She put Diana down carefully as she bared her teeth at me, her eyes were sharp and deadly. "Tell me how you became like this, Killian!" Her eyes were red with tears as she tried to suppress herself from crying. "Who did this to you!?"

F*ck. I have to go away from here.

I couldn't think of any response, though, so I just smirked as evily as I could and then turned around so Samantha could see me directly in the eyes.

“Are you that scared that I, too, will become a monster?” I said in a hoarse voice as I glared at her. “I had already become one when you left the Moonstone Pack, Samantha.”

I saw how all the colors on her face drained, and how Diana and Devon’s faces looked horrified as they stared at me with both grief and fear. Like I was already dead in their eyes.

It honestly felt like a punch in the gut.

“Bring them all to safety!” I snarled at her and then shifted into my werewolf form and ran, luring all the beasts and shadow werewolves in my direction.

Chapter 178
[ALPHA DOMINIC’s Point of View]

Warmth.

It was the first thing I felt.

I was spiraling into somewhere warm. I saw a light from above me, but it was too bright, slightly blinding me with it. I had to squint my eyes, but the warmth reminded me of home—of Samantha and the twins—and so I forced them open, wanting so badly to come back and have them in my arms again.

My eyes fluttered as my blurry vision turned gradually clearer, and I grunted from so much pain that I collapsed to the hard ground I was lying on after my failed attempt to get up.

“Dominic—”

I froze when I heard her voice. That voice I had been longing to hear since I started having those nightmares that brought me back to my most awful memories—the memories that revealed the kind of monster I had been to Samantha. Deep in my heart, I swear I regretted everything I did and tried my best to be someone worthy of my mated she-wolf. But I couldn’t hide

the fact that I, too, felt scared of my feelings for her. This uncertainty. This pain. The uncomfortable and aggravating feeling when she gets out of control—this was all new to me as well. I was so used to always having a plan. Calculating things and seeing the outcome. But with Samantha, it was as if I were steering a boat in the middle of a raging storm without a compass. Without a map. It was alarming and daunting, yet I craved it. I craved her. She was like the danger that I had been avoiding, but my feet kept on following her to the edge of the precipice.

“Dominic, it’s me.” Her voice was so soft as she helped me sit up. Her face was etched with worry as she cupped the side of my face. “How are you feeling?”

My brows automatically deepened into a frown as soon as I felt that sharp stabbing pain that felt like my brain was going to split in two. I answered hoarsely, “What happened?”

The first thing that my eyes did was look for the twins. There, across the bonfire, were Diana and Devon peacefully sleeping on top of the leaves that Samantha must have gathered for them as a bed. I winced, hating that I had been unconscious the whole time and didn’t know or couldn’t even remember the rest of what happened after I saved my wife from the rubble that collapsed from the ceiling of the ancient library.

Samantha leaned her exhausted back on the hard wall of the small cave we were hiding in. She was filled with bruises and small cuts on her arms.

Only wounds from silver weapons stop the werewolf’s ability to heal. “Where did you get those wounds? Did someone attack you while I was out?”

She gave me a faint smile. Her eyes were worn out, and it was obvious that she had been through a lot already. God, I hated myself for not even being able to help them. Samantha let out a deep sigh before she answered. “Not really. But we saw an old cabin that had been transformed into a cage. A trap prepared for us by the enemies in case we escaped the ruins. The thing has spikes coated with silver; hence, these wounds you are seeing now.”

“I’m so sorry; I wasn’t able to help,” I said, feeling ashamed of myself. “How long had I been out?”

She shrugged her shoulders, her face looking cold. “I am not sure. Probably five? Six hours?”

I couldn’t blame her if she felt disappointed in me. I was disappointed with myself, too.

“Killian? Where is he?”

As I mentioned his name, Samantha’s face turned into sudden worry and then rage. I couldn’t understand the complex emotion that suddenly appeared on her face, but I realized that something terrible had happened. “Where is he? Did something happen while—”

“Let’s not just talk, Dominic. My head aches so badly, and I need to sleep. I have no idea where we are or what part of the Black Forest this place is. I just know that we’re all in danger. We can’t stay here for too long.”

She was right. Samantha appeared exhausted as she attempted to sleep, leaning her back against the chilly stone wall. I wanted to go to her and embrace her tightly, wanting her to know how much I was so glad to be back with them. But that look on her face held me back. It wasn’t the right time for it. She needed rest, and I gave her the space she needed.

I bit my lower lip hard, and my hands tightened into fists as I watched my wife. How could I make it up to her? How could I make her believe that all I ever wanted was her in my life?

Could it be too late? Could I still have her back?

Could I take away all of these doubts and fears looming in her heart?

With a grunt, I stood up from my seat and then looked around the cave to assess our surroundings. The fire from the bonfire drove away the harsh cold from the breeze entering the cave. We were on the high ground, well

hidden by the tall old trees of the forest. Even Samantha, making the bonfire, was not worrying at all because the smoke went under the cave somewhere and not outside.

When I looked back, Samantha had already fallen asleep. All the tension in my body gradually released while I watched her breathe softly, her lips partly opened, and her head slightly tilted to her side. When was the last time I watched my wife like this? I never thought watching my wife sleep was the most peaceful thing to do; I didn't notice I was standing in the same spot for over half an hour and only moved when I heard my little girl mumble in her sleep.

I immediately went to Diana to check on her and saw a silver wolf pendant in her hand, just like the one I gave Samantha before. I was so surprised to see one, thinking she must have thrown it somewhere after leaving Silver Crescent.

"My little girl," I smiled and was about to touch Diana's face when Devon suddenly woke up and glared at me.

"Don't touch her." his tone was sharp and threatening.

I didn't expect that kind of behavior from him, but I understood that Devon wasn't happy about what was going on with us. I wish I could apologize to him, but my pride just wouldn't let me. So instead, I looked him coldly in the eyes and then moved away from Diana, just as he wanted.

However, my instinct as a father filled me with massive guilt, prompting me to turn around and look at Devon with an apologetic look, hoping he could finally accept me as his father.

My mouth opened to tell Devon that I never wanted any harm to him or his mother, but then I was interrupted by Samantha as she stood; her eyes were wary and grave when she looked at both me and Devon, not liking the tension between the both of us.

She looked outside the cave and at Diana, who was still asleep, and said, "We have to focus on how to get out." Her face softened a bit as her eyes

lingered on our daughter, and then, as she sighed, that fierceness in her tone came back. “The spirits in the Black Forest strengthen during full moon nights. We must go and find the location of the Wolf Tomb before dawn or we will be forever trapped in this place!”

Devon dropped his glare at me though but he didn’t leave his sister’s side. What did I do that made him so scared and angry with me? I looked at my wife and she averted her eyes from me as well. Something happened. Something they weren’t comfortable telling me.

And I needed to know!

Chapter 179
[SAMANTHA’s Point of View]

I didn’t know how to feel after seeing my husband wake up from his coma.

There was something different in his eyes. The way he looked at me—that softness, the ache, the guilt that was etched on his face. I wondered if there was something that happened to him while he was unconscious. Did something hit him on the head? It made me worried.

From the corner of my eyes, I saw how Dominic stole short glances at me. And when I caught him, he would smile sweetly with those strange emotions swimming in his soft, hazel eyes. I wanted to ask. I wanted to know if he saw anything in his coma that could help end this. But if something did, I knew Dominic would tell me.

Killian suddenly vanished, drawing the enemies away as we fled that part of the woods. We needed to look for him so we could all go home alive. Something happened to my friend, but deep within me, I believe he wasn’t among those evil beasts. He was still Killian. The Alpha of the Moonstone pack. My friend. The only friend I had who helped me when I was at my lowest. I needed to find him and take him back to Brianne.

“Where is Uncle Killian, Mom? Why did he leave us?” Diana asked while being piggybacked by her dad. “Is he one of them?”

“No, sweetheart,” I immediately answered, not wanting the kids to think that Killian was a bad guy after everything he did to save us all. “Uncle Killian is not one of them. He just drove the enemies away from us. He won’t do anything to harm us all.”

Dominic’s brow deepened, curious about what his daughter said. “What do you mean, he’s one of them?” he asked his daughter and then he looked at me with that grave look on his face, demanding answers from me. “Please tell me what happened, Samantha. Why does Diana think Killian is one of those men who wants us all dead?”

I bit my lip hard and then looked around. I wasn’t sure if I would tell him, but Dominic deserved to know so he knows what to do if anything unexpected happens. “You remember those purple eyes the Fang Trinity had whenever they let the darkness possess them?”

Dominic’s eyes widened as he realized what I meant. I averted my eyes from him and focused on the trail we were taking. It was so difficult to walk around the forest with thick fog around us. The night was getting colder and the path we were taking became rocky and steep and I had to carry Devon too after seeing that he was having a hard time keeping up with me and his father.

“I can do it, Mom! Put me down!” he grumbled, feeling embarrassed after I carried him on my back. “I am too old for this now.”

“You are not too old for anything when it comes to Mommy,” I said to him, smiling. It was difficult to breathe as the air went thin, but we couldn’t stop and wait for the sun to come up. We had to be there before dawn, and we couldn’t let the enemies find us, especially since Dominic and I were still recovering after we got the injuries from the Ancient Library that collapsed.

“I am too big to be carried, Mom,” Devon grumbled again, pushing away from me so he could go down, and when I had no choice but to let go of him, he looked me in the eyes with those angry, ocean-blue eyes. My eyes.

“Fine. As long as you can keep up,” I pretended I was annoyed and Devon just grinned, making my eyes roll. Dominic grinned when he saw me, and then I realized that he and Devon shared the same traits. Same stubbornness. Same pride. The same sense of dominance in everything. My heart started to swell as I looked at Devon and then at my husband, dreaming of the family I always wanted to have. If I trust Dominic again with my whole heart, if I throw away and forget all the bad things I experienced with him, could we have the happy ending I always wished for? Could he always choose me and love me with all his heart without any hesitations?

[What is it that worries your mind, love? I can feel it.] Dominic’s voice rang in my head through our bond link. [Tell me, so I know.]

[I am worried about Killian. We have to find him before anything bad happens to him.] I whispered to him, trying to even my breath as the air started to burn in my lungs fast. [And we have to find where that Wolf Tomb is. Based on what I read in the books I took from the Ancient Library, this should be just around here somewhere.]

There was a pause as he succumbed to his thoughts, and then he finally answered. [Do you want to look for him first before we search for the Tomb?]

It was my turn to fall into silence as we continued to walk. Diana had already fallen asleep behind her father’s back while Devon did his best to keep up with me and his Dad. My son occasionally looks at Dominic through the corner of his eye as if checking on his sister and looking to see if Dominic would do something again. I couldn’t tell my husband that he grabbed me by my neck in that prison cell made of bones. I was sure it would break him once he found out he tried to kill me in his sleep.

Devon was wary of his father, and I couldn’t blame him for the way he felt towards Dominic.

“Mom, look!”

My son’s shout snapped me out of my thoughts, and I looked at the spot where he was pointing. Even Diana had woken up from how excited

Devon's voice was. She looked over her father's shoulder and her eyes widened.

As the four of us followed the butterflies, the kind that I saw when Dominic followed me into a cave, the tiny creatures brought us to an old dry well.

"Devon, no—"

But Devon rushed towards it without a pause. My heart raced, terrified at the carelessness he showed as he went to look down the dry well. I watched how his eyes widened and his lips pulled into a wide smile as he looked at me and then at Dominic. "Look, Mom! I found something!"

"Don't you ever do that again!" I scolded him, my chest heaving as fear flashed in my eyes the moment I got to the well and pulled him to me. I pushed him gently away from me with my hands grabbing both of his shoulders, my face angry, and my eyes teary. "Don't you just run anywhere, Devon! It's dangerous to go around here! You know that!"

"I'm so sorry, Mom, but look! I found something!"

My son was right. There was something strange at the bottom of the well, and even Dominic was so petrified when he saw what it was. The crystal coffin was so familiar that it brought a weird feeling in my stomach, hoping that my eyes were only deceiving me—that it was something that wasn't true, and that there was something in this forest that was tricking me and my husband.

"That can't be your mom's coffin, Dominic. That's impossible!"

He looked down, his jaw stiffened, and I saw him swallow hard. "I don't want to believe what my eyes are seeing as well... but I believe it is your Mom's coffin, Samantha."

"That's crazy! Your Mom's buried in Silver Crescent—"

"Grandma is there!"

“That’s impossible!” I gasped softly; my eyes were gazing at the coffin at the bottom of the dry well. Then I noticed there were symbols engraved on the bricked walls of the cave, the same symbols I saw in my mother’s diary.

“Dominic, what are you—”

It was too late for me to stop him. My husband jumped down the well and checked the thing himself. My heart raced when he placed his hand on the crystal coffin and carefully pushed the heavy lid, only to find it was empty.

“There’s something inside!” Diana yelled to her dad as she pointed at something and my eyes caught that something glittered when the light struck it.

“It’s a necklace!” Dominic said. His voice was as shocked as I was when he lifted it for us to see. “It’s my mother’s necklace...”

“We want to go down, Mom. I want to see it!” Diana said it to me with urgency in her voice.

“No, we’re not—”

But I gasped sharply when Diana jumped and Dominic panicked as he caught his daughter with both hands. I was so angry at what Diana did but got angrier when Devon jumped too, embarrassed that his Dad had to catch him and immediately stepped away from Dominic.

“So nobody is listening to me now!” I snarled at the three of them and Dominic just grinned, together with Diana.

All of them were at the bottom of the well now so I had no choice but to jump and join them. I squinted my eyes at Devon and Diana, who gave me puppy eyes and then frowned at my husband, warning him never to tolerate their behavior like that again.

“Let me see it...”

When I took the necklace from Dominic's hand, the ground suddenly shook, and a familiar voice echoed inside the well, ringing painfully in my ears. "Hoping to find the truth here?!" Olivia laughed manically, making Diana tremble in fear. "Don't think I will make it easy for both of you, Samantha and Dominic!"Black fog appeared inside the well, putting Dominic on full alert as he grabbed Diana and Devon close to him. A figure of a woman emerged from the black fog and I crouched, ready to lunge at it.

But the phantom figure went somewhere in the cave and triggered something that made the floor of the dry well tremble, threatening to bury us alive along with the crystal coffin.

"Save the kids!" I screamed at Dominic in the middle of chaos as the bricks around us started to crack and create fissures. "Now, Dominic!"

"I won't leave you here!" He screamed at me. "Take my hand now, Samantha!"

I wanted to go to Dominic but Olivia's phantom shadow stepped between us—its crimson eyes glared at me. Its hollow mouth grinned, taunting me to my death.

Chapter 180
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"Dominic!"

"No! We are going out of here together!"

"We don't have enough time for this!" I snarled at him, frustrated that he was being so stubborn again. "You have to get the kids out before this well caves in on us all!"

Dominic's face darkened as he approached me with both of his arms, carrying Devon and Diana on each of his sides. His eyes went crimson, and his jaw tightened as he glared at me, using his Alpha command tone

with his nerves appearing on the side of his forehead. “You get on my back, Samantha!”

My eyes widened a bit as I felt that pressure on my shoulders, the power of the Alpha’s words that demanded I obey him. Never, not even once, did Dominic do it to me, and it intimidated me a bit as I silently stepped behind him, wrapping my arms around his shoulder.

“Good girl,” he purred under his breath, and Devon and Diana looked at me, Diana having a wide grin on her face and Devon making an irritated sound with his eyes rolling.

Diana’s teasing grin made my face hot and flushed, and I had to suppress myself not to smack Dominic’s head in front of the children as I felt his shoulder shake as if he were stopping himself from laughing.

How dare he laugh at times like this?!

When we all looked up, we found out that we were already surrounded by the shadow werewolves, waiting for us to emerge outside the well. All were glaring at us with their glowing purple eyes, fangs bared, drooling to kill us with their teeth and razor-sharp claws.

“Are we going to die here?” Devon trembled as he buried his face on his father’s shoulder, his hand holding Diana’s hand.

“No one is going to die here, son.” Dominic snarled as he bared his teeth back to the enemies waiting for us at the entrance of the well. “I won’t let them hurt any of you.”

The tone of Dominic’s voice made my heart flutter. Yes. Something indeed changed in him. Something that made the bond stronger than it ever was. I felt the assurance in his voice as I felt the muscles in his back tighten, his knees bending into a crouch, ready to lunge us all up out of the collapsing well.

“Do you think you can get out of here—”

Before Olivia's phantom shadow reached me, almost grabbing me by the hair, Dominic had already jumped skyward, lifting all of us thirty feet above the dry well. I looked down and all the shadow werewolves glared, waiting for us to land with their claws ready to shred us into ribbons.

[How many?] Dominic asked me through our bond while we were in midair.

[Thirty—No. Forty. There are forty of them down there.] I answered, my eyes swiftly counting and calculating how we were going to fight all of them while making sure the children were safe and unharmed.

[You want to stay with the kids or you want to have some fun too?] I felt Dominic's grin in my head, and I couldn't help but smile as well. We had fought these werewolves before. We knew their strengths and weaknesses. We could beat them, especially with my newly awakened strength.

[You can leave some for me.] I answered my husband, smirking as we started going down, and my husband decided to land in the middle of the shadow werewolves, ready to shift into his wolf form. I, on the other hand, pulled Diana and Devon from him, making sure the three of us would safely land underneath my husband's giant silver wolf form.

"Mom!!!" Devon grabbed me by the neck. I grabbed Diana by my side as Dominic let go of us. I saw how beautifully he shifted to his wolf form, and even Devon, who hated his dad, couldn't hide the astonishment on his little face. I saw how his eyes lit up, admiring that gigantic silver wolf above us, scaring the shadow werewolves that surrounded the spot where we landed. I could tell how Devon wanted to be like his father even without him telling me.

[Get them all!]

It was Dominic's cue to attack. He raked the ones who were in front of us with his teeth. I, on the other hand, shifted into my wolf form, causing all those who stepped towards me to hesitate when they saw the reddish hue on my fur, which was strong proof that I indeed came from the line of the Primordial Bloodline. Dominic looked back at us, checking for me and the kids, and when I gave him a short nod, telling him that I could handle it, it

brought back his confidence that he could finish all the enemies around us without anything or anyone holding him back.

[Devon, Diana, stay close to me!]

My twins did as I told them. Devon was very protective of his twin sister while I drove away or killed anyone who tried to jump towards me and the kids. My mouth and the fur on my chest were soaked with bitter, disgusting ichor from the beasts. I glanced for my husband, checking if he could handle that number of hordes around him, and I saw how he jumped from one shadow werewolf to another, tearing limbs, biting off heads, or cutting their throats open.

Diana covered her face with her hands, but Devon watched. He observed his father as Dominic fought the enemies, killed them with a single slash of his claws, and tore them apart with his razor-sharp teeth. Shadow wolves got alarmed when their numbers started to dwindle and so the rest of them started running towards my mate, attacking to stop him instead. Devon looked at his father with worry, and that's when I went to my husband to help him finish off what was left of them.

Then I noticed some familiar marks on the chests of the shadow wolves that surrounded my husband. These wolves were bigger and stronger than the ones that had no marks on them, which made me curious after seeing that anxious look on my husband's face.

[What's the matter?] I asked him as I saw how he hesitated to attack any of them. Did he know these wolves? I looked at them, and I saw the crests of Dominic's clan on them. But that would be so impossible!!! This group of soldiers died and was annihilated after fighting in a war a long time ago. I saw their pictures once in the library of Silver Crescent when I was a soldier in training, and the librarian told me that they were Dominic's father's Elite group of soldiers who were assigned to guard Dominic's family.

[Dominic, they are dead! They are not the same people you knew!] I yelled at my husband through our matebond.

I couldn't read what was in Dominic's head. That's the disadvantage when you have an Alpha as a mate. Alphas can shut their minds from the others, even from their Lunas, and that's the most annoying thing I hate about Dominic. Shutting me off from his head.

But I was surprised when he answered me in a calm manner. [I know, love. I just hate the fact that they use them against me, thinking it will hurt me.] he snarled softly while glaring at the five giant wolves that surrounded us. [It makes me angry that they can't even give these poor men the peace they deserve after dying while doing their duty for my family.]

Even after Dominic told me that he wasn't worried about being hurt after seeing these wolves, I could tell that he was just trying to hide the pain and not wanting to give Olivia the pleasure of seeing him broken in front of these old guards. Diana and Devon remained close beside me and their dad, studying the situation. Both of them were warily staring at Olivia's phantom standing behind the giant werewolves.

"This is just the beginning, fools!"

Olivia's phantom shadow raised her hands, and that's when another pack of forty shadow werewolves emerged from the shadows everywhere. They started walking towards us, surrounding us again with lethal glares.

My heart and mind started to panic. [How are we going to fight all of these werewolves, Dominic, if Olivia can summon them from the shadows around us! This is impossible!]

Dominic didn't answer. A snarl ripped from Dominic's throat as he glared at the old guards who began to approach my husband, poised to attack at any moment. Dominic crouched into his fighting stance, making sure I and the children were safe behind him. We were cornered! It was a trap from the very start!

[We have to go, Dominic! We can't fight all of them! Olivia will only summon them again from the shadows! It will be an endless fight! We can't risk staying here! The kids' lives will be in danger!] I said in panic to my husband, and he looked at me and understood that we needed to get

away; we couldn't use all our energy and strength to fight them and let these shadow monsters overwhelm us in the end.

"Do you think I will let all of you get away from here, Samantha? Dominic!? You will all die in here!" Olivia's demonic voice echoed in my head as she raised her hands again and another pack of forty shadow werewolves emerged. "I won't let you get out of Black Forest alive!"

But suddenly, a golden light emerged, dispelling the thick fog and causing Olivia's phantom shadow to scream in agony. To our surprise, we all saw Killian holding a thing that glowed so brightly I had to squint just to see him and what he was holding. It repelled the demon shadows, destroying them as the light spread in the area.

A pendant. Could it be—

"Uncle Killian!!!" Devon and Diana screamed with joy after seeing him, which made Dominic a little annoyed and wary after seeing those purple eyes Killian had. He stepped up and hid the kids behind him, not trusting Killian even after the Moonstone Alpha saved us.

[Whose side are you on?!] Dominic snarled at Killian with a cold look of distrust in his face.

[I am not here for you, don't worry,] Killian raised an eyebrow at Dominic. He looked at me and then the kids with a smile but then winced. That's when I noticed he was hurt. Purple-black blood—an ichor—oozed from his arm and trickled down his fingers.

[We shouldn't waste any more time now,] Killian grunted after repelling all the shadow werewolves with the light. [I found the tomb and you have to follow me to it!]

Chapter 181
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"How did you find it?"

I couldn't resist glancing at Killian, squinting my eyes slightly with suspicion. Now that Killian had revealed that he wasn't the man we all knew anymore, even Dominic and Devon became wary of him. Something happened to him. And it seemed he didn't have any plan to tell us anything about it.

[What is happening, Killian!? Explain to me everything!] Dominic glared at Killian, still not letting his guard down. Killian drove the shadow werewolves away. But it was clear, based on what we were seeing, that he was already one of them. Devon looked at me with worry and hurt, confused about what was happening, and it hurt me too that I didn't know how to explain it to them. Was Killian now one of them? Was he already an enemy? What happened to him? Could it be too late to get him back to normal?

"Mom!"

I clenched my teeth and didn't let my eyes stray from Killian. There was something wrong with him. That's what my wolf instinct was telling me. Until his smile disappeared, his green eyes grew cold as he glared at me and my husband through his nose—A kind of look I never thought I would see on him as he turned around with darkened eyes.

[Samantha—]

[I know,] I said to my husband, my heart shattering into millions of pieces as my tears started to sting the corner of my eyes. [I know.] My voice quivered as I tried my hardest not to break down in front of my kids and husband.

My best friend...

"What's the matter, Sam? Why are you looking so terrified and sad?" The corner of Killian's mouth pulled into a smirk as he closed his hand into a fist, putting off the light that repelled the shadows, and shoving the necklace into the pocket of his jeans. "Are you scared of me?"

I bit my lower lip as they started to quiver. I wanted to take my eyes away from Killian, but I knew the second I did it, it would be just a matter of a split

second, and he could tear my head off my shoulders. I couldn't risk it. When Dominic didn't lower his guard, I knew he immediately sensed something on Killian. At first, I believed Killian had it under control after he saved us all from the shadow beasts after we got out of the cage made of silver-coated bones. But I was wrong. Very wrong to think that Killian was still the same man who cared for me when no one did. He wasn't the best friend I knew. The darkness had already corrupted his mind, and he was here to lure us to our death and not to the salvation we were seeking.

As the light from that necklace turned off, all the shadows that disappeared emerged back, together with the giant guards and Olivia's phantom shadow. I saw how Olivia's phantom shadow's eyes squinted as she grinned at me evilly; her hands were raised at her hips level, ready to summon more shadow werewolves.

[Why are you doing this, Killian? What happened to you?! Tell me!] I yelled at him with pain, I failed to hide in my voice. [What did they do to you!?]

"It doesn't matter what happened, Sam," Killian answered, stepping forward to me. A growl erupted from Dominic's throat as he stepped in front of me, hiding me behind him. His eyes were lethal toward the Moonstone Alpha, ready to attack if Killian ever made a wrong move.

Killian stopped pacing forward, but his eyes were glaring back at my husband. "Ohh, you are finally awake, Dominic. I thought you couldn't go back after Olivia's nightmares while you were in a coma."

[So it's all planned along?] Dominic hissed, baring his teeth at Killian. [How dare you do this, Killian!? Samantha trusted you with all her heart!]

"It's not my fault that all of you are so naive!" Killian hissed scornfully as he tilted his head to the side, giving Dominic a cold, arrogant look. "Look at you, Dominic. You are not the same Alpha that this region was scared of. You lost your teeth! The savagery that made you famous in all the territories here. Now I will question you. What happened to you, Alpha of the Silver Crescent pack?"

Angry snarls erupted from my husband's throat as he suppressed his desire to shred Killion into ribbons, knowing that I wouldn't allow him to kill the Moonstone Alpha. He stayed crouched in front of me, waiting for Killian to make the first move to attack.

[He's trying to get into your head, Dominic. It's not Killian. It must be the dark fog that is controlling his mind!] I yelled to my husband, hoping to stop them from killing each other.

[He is not the guy you know, Samantha. He's completely possessed by something, and if we won't fight back, he will kill us all one by one!]

Killian made an evil grin as if he could read the hesitation on my face. I met his gaze, and I saw a flash of emotion there, and then his face went cold and blank again.

[He's still there. I believe he's still there!]

Dominic's mind suddenly went to complete silence, a sign that he cut me off from his thoughts. My eyes widened at what he did, and after he shoved me away from his head, his deadly glare and his desire to kill Killian were still there.

[Stay with the kids!]

[Dominic, no!]

With a speed that was too impossible for me to follow, Dominic lunged straight at Killian, opening his mouth to reveal those razor-sharp teeth, ready to sever Killian's body in half while the Moonstone Alpha was still in his human form. But Killian was just as fast, for he sprang to his feet backwards and shifted to his wolf just in time before Dominic reached him. He avoided the teeth of the Silver Crescent Alpha but not the claws. Dominic's claws slashed Killian's chest, and even though they were shallow enough not to reach the heart, Killian bled awfully, making Diana gasp in horror.

[Don’t you dare mock me, Killian. And don’t you dare hurt any of my family, or I will shred you into ribbons!] Dominic snarled, his breath was ragged, and his nostrils were flaring as he filled his lungs with air, ready to strike again. [I won’t let you do this to Samantha!]

[Funny that those words came from you.] Killian scornfully laughed at Dominic, making my husband more agitated.

Their rally of attacks and defense lasted for thirty minutes. I was there, watching with horrified eyes as I saw how they exchanged deadly wounds, healed and then tried to kill each other over and over again. Devon watched as well without blinking his eyes. His mouth was partly opened, as if trying to anticipate who had the most advantage to win between his father and Killian.

There was worry on his small face. And I knew he was dead worried about his father despite his hatred towards Dominic.

Devon was rooting for his dad. If something happened to Dominic, the twins would be devastated.

I was about to head forward and help my husband but then I saw Olivia’s phantom shadow move, as if she was just waiting for the chance for me to leave the twins. My heart raced as I looked down at Devon and Diana and they looked back at me with the same terror in their eyes. No. I couldn’t leave them. Olivia was looking for a chance to strike at us while Killian was making Dominic busy and because of the power I owned, Olivia won’t risk attacking me unless she wants to be completely obliterated from the face of the earth.

She knew how to play this game well. She was really careful.

[Samantha!!!]

I was baffled when my husband screamed my name and the next thing I saw was that small thing flying in midair. From the corner of my eyes, I saw Olivia advanced towards us, her face tilted upwards to look at the object that Dominic threw in our direction, and then I realized what it was.

It was the pendant that Killian used to drive all those shadow werewolves away.

“Mom!!!”

Devon screamed at me, and then I knew what he meant after seeing Olivia lunge for it.

My eyes sharpened as adrenaline pumped into my veins like gasoline burned and everything in my body turned mechanical, acting on its own based on my wolf instinct. Before Olivia had reached it with the tip of her fingers, I had already kicked her in her gut and sent her flying on the other side of the collapsed well.

[DEVON!!!]

Devon knew what to do. The second I landed on the ground, he had already caught the necklace and extended his hand up in the air, turning that mysterious light on and sending the shadow werewolves screaming in pain as they all disappeared like thin smoke in the air.

However, Killian wasn’t affected by it, but he knew that if he tried to attack Dominic again without Olivia and her backup, Dominic would not hesitate to kill him right there and then.

[Killian, go back!]

[No, Samantha! It would be too dangerous to go after him! Let him go!]

Dominic stopped me from going after Killian, while Devon and Diana ran towards me and their father, crying loudly from the horror and heartbreak they had just witnessed. Tears rolled down my face as I watched where Killian had vanished.

Five hours after that incident we found out that the necklace that my husband took from Killian was also a holographic map of the Black Forest, pointing us exactly to where we were and what path we should take back to

Silver Crescent territory. It was as if Killian had the intention to give us this so we could find our way back home.

Or maybe it was just a coincidence. I wasn't sure.

How could we return home without him? What should I tell Brianne when we arrive at the pack manor?

I was so confused and scared of what would happen next, and the first thing I did was to hold my husband's hand, hoping he could feel the fear in me.

But then he didn't even give me a single glimpse and just stared ahead with a cold expression on his face.

Chapter 182
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

When we arrived at the gates of the Silver Crescent territory, Dominic made sure the healers and the Omega servants of the Pack Manor took care of me and the children first.

As much as I wanted to talk to him and know what was in his head and why he just suddenly shut himself off from me, I couldn't because he went straight to his office and went to look for Liam.

I wanted to feel angry. I wanted to confront him about what's going on with him and why he suddenly went cold to me after everything that happened in the Black Forest. I wanted to know if I did wrong or if I did something that he didn't like. But then my fears held me back. What if he came back to the old him—the cruel, heartless guy that made me suffer for so many years? What if he changed his mind again and doesn't want to be with me anymore after so many problems I bought in his pack?

Should I stay? Or should I run away again?

After the healers made sure I was in my best condition and made sure the Alpha's bedroom was clean and comfortable for me to have my rest, they

all made their leave so I could sleep peacefully. Only it was hard for me to sleep as my anxiety slowly tortured me. I pulled myself up from the bed and walked towards the window, glad that we were home but worried about what was wrong again with my husband.

I couldn't go and face Brianne. I heard her voice outside my room while the healers were busy checking on my injuries, asking the guards if she could see me. I felt bad that I felt relieved the guards didn't let her in. I had no courage to face her yet and tell everything that happened to her mate.

I looked outside the window and then looked up at the perfect full moon in the clear, starry sky. How could I explain to her all the terrible things I saw after Killian revealed to me that he wasn't really there to help us find the tomb but to lure us to be killed by the enemies?

However, a part of me remained unconvinced that Killian was entirely aligned with the enemies. He could have killed us all there in the cave—helped the giant beast in that underground lake to annihilate us all there. Or when the ancient library collapsed and Dominic and I were buried underneath all that rubble and debris. Or after Dominic fell into a coma while I and the kids were there in the bone cage coated with silver poison.

There was something strange happening and I couldn't understand why Killian had to do this. What was his reason? Did Brianne know anything about this? Did he mention to her that something was changing in him? That something was pushing him or convinced him to join the Fang Trinity?

Embracing myself, I decided I needed to get out of the room and do something. I couldn't stay in bed when all these thoughts haunted me. I needed to go somewhere. I needed an answer to all these questions in my head. I couldn't stay like this and let these thoughts torture me while being scared that my husband would go back to being the way he was before. We all went through hell together, but I wouldn't let these things destroy what Dominic and I had. Devon and Diana will be devastated.

I am the Luna of the Silver Crescent pack. I needed to find a way to fix these.

After changing into decent clothes, I left the Alpha's bedroom and headed straight to the library. I wasn't sure what I should look for there. My mind was like a huge mess, and I couldn't figure out how to organize things in my head. Dominic's coldness toward me distracted my mind from the important things I needed to do. I wanted to storm into his office so badly and ask him why. But I knew the action would only make things complicated between us. Maybe he's pissed that I had been worrying about Killian? Angry that the Moonstone Alpha was still out there, posing a huge threat to all of us, and because of me, he couldn't deal with this problem?

What did he want me to do then, though? Just let him kill Killian? What about Brianne? What about the Moonstone Pack? He knew once he ended Killian, it would be a war between Moonstone and Silver Crescent. Was he willing to risk that?

I didn't know what to think anymore. I didn't know how Dominic's mind works...

My hand curled into fists as I embraced the jacket against me, wondering what to do as I stared at the stacks of old books on their shelves. Of course, there was no librarian inside anymore since it was already in the middle of the night and was supposed to be closed. Good thing I had spare keys and access to all the facilities here in the Pack Manor.

Desperate to do something and make my mind busy with anything else, I went to the archives and looked for the personnel files of the guards that Dominic fought while we were in the Black Forest. Olivia must have known these men well enough to dig them up from the grave, trap their souls, and use them against Dominic. Were these men close to my husband? I wasn't sure what kind of relationship Dominic had with them, but I remembered his face while he faced them in the fight. He was grieving. He was in pain seeing them in that state, and that's when I knew they were a huge part of him and molded him into the Alpha he was.

There were six of them. There were six Elite guards belonging to the Silver Crescent's Alpha Clan. In that war, four Elite guards died in their fifties, and two would have been Dominic's age if they had lived.

Those two. They were so young when they died...

Maybe that's why Dominic was so angry after seeing those six men that Olivia revived from the dead. Those six men had already found peace after fighting for the Silver Pack and had died with glory. And Olivia took that all away from them. Now I understood what my husband felt.

As I dug into more files, wanting to know more about these men, something fell on my head that baffled me and almost made me yell in surprise.

"What the hell—"

When I looked down, it was an old parchment that was as big as a tabloid or ledger. I became curious about the parchment after noticing the strange lines in the corner. Then I blinked. Did they just glow a purple light?! I blinked again and then shook my head, hoping I was just seeing things.

"Goddess, we spent so much time in the Black Forest that everything I see is now glowing purple." I laughed nervously as I picked the thing from the floor.

But I was dazzled by the purple light when I opened the parchment and it revealed a complex magical circle, almost making me blind from it. The first response my body did was to throw away the paper but I couldn't. It was as if my hands were stuck to it and I couldn't let go!

Before I knew it, images started to flash in my eyes. A place. In the middle of a foggy forest with wisteria trees around it. A small cave that had a stone covering it. All the plants fifteen feet around that cave were dead. Wilted. Like they were poisoned by something. Then, the full moon appeared, casting elongated shadows from the trees; sets of glowing purple eyes took shape from the shadows, all glaring at me.

I was so terrified that I flinched away and finally let go of the paper. I knocked down a box behind me and fell, creating a loud thud on the floor and winced as the pain spread on my hips.

"What the hell are you doing in the middle of the night?"

My eyes widened as I heard that familiar voice and saw the surprised look on my husband's face. I stared at him for seconds as I panicked and searched for anything to say and then smiled awkwardly, "Oh, uhh... I can't sleep so I am looking for something to read."

From the corner of my eyes, I looked down at the parchment that rolled down the floor and then back at my husband, who was squinting at me suspiciously.

He frowned, but he offered his hand to help me get up. I was about to take it but then remembered he had been moody since after we fought in the Black Forest. He sighed when I stood on my own and brushed away the dust that stuck to my pants.

"How about you? What are you doing here?" I asked him with a serious look. Should I tell him about the parchment? I looked down at the thing on the floor and then pretended I was looking for something and then picked it up.

Dominic looked at the paper in my hand but then decided not to question it, which was a huge relief because how would I be able to explain everything I saw?! We just got back to Silver Crescent!

"I've been looking for answers about where those purple-eyed shadow werewolves came from," he answered, his voice still exhausted as he brushed his dark hair with his fingers and then sat at the old books stacked behind him. The floor creaked from his weight. "I feel like there is a connection between them and my father. I am uncertain about how much Olivia knows about this. She manipulated all of them like they were all an extension of her power—of herself. Like they were her minion.

"Richard Bennette must have taught his daughter everything. Unfortunately, it all backfired on her, turning her into something monstrous." I spoke to my husband softly, unable to meet his intense hazel eyes. "She's no longer a werewolf; instead, she has become a servant to something more powerful than herself."

“Do you think someone powerful is behind this?” Dominic asked me and I felt that tension between us growing as his voice turned hoarse. Gentle.

“Yes. And Olivia and her father were just pawns to make the things happen according to what that powerful being is planning.”

I finally had the courage to look back at him, but my heart sank when Dominic decided to stand up and leave.

“Don’t stay here too late.” He said in his cold voice when he glanced back and stepped out of the door, leaving me alone in the library.

Chapter 183
[SAMANTHA’S Point of View]

I didn’t sleep a wink.

That morning, all I did was stare outside the window and watch the kids play in the backyard. Madison and Cynthia were thrilled that the kids and I were back. The house was clean, and Madison prepared a delicious meal for us after she heard the news that we’re heading back home from the Pack Manor.

Diana embraced both of them after she jumped out of the car. Devon followed, but he was more casual with the two, and that’s when I knew that my son had grown a lot after all the horrible things we went through in the Black Forest.

He was growing like his father...

A part of me was worried about that realization. Despite having my ocean-blue eyes, Devon bore a striking resemblance to his father. The way he observed things silently, the way he slipped his hands in his pockets while having deep thoughts—all of this, I remember Dominic in him.

I wanted Devon and Diana to have an amazing and safe childhood. But it was as if fate was testing me. My family. Dominic. I haven’t seen my husband since we saw each other in the library. I expected he would sleep

in the same room as me last night, but he didn't. Could it be that he was avoiding me? Was he hiding something? I wonder what happened and why he suddenly changed after we got back to Silver Crescent. It was as if everything he said to me while we were in the cave was just a dream. As if all of it didn't really happen.

Sighing, I rested my head on the backrest of the sofa and stared at the ceiling. I started to feel anxious about what to do next. Liam informed me that the Black Claws and the Fang Trinity had ceased their attacks on the eastern gates after we vanished into the forest, but when we returned at night, they were once again waiting at the edge of the border as if waiting for me or Dominic to go to the Black Forest—like they were expecting us to go back there.

They knew we would go back.

At the open door of my room, I tilted my head to peek at the spot where I had placed the parchment I had seen in the library. I still had no idea what to do with the parchment, but I was sure there was a reason it appeared to me while I was in the library.

"Mom!"

I was baffled when I heard Devon's voice screaming for me. I jumped off the couch and went straight to the backyard, my heart fluttering with both panic and worry, wondering what had happened.

"Yes, are you hurt?! What happened?"

Madison and Cynthia were also there, watching the kids. They both looked troubled but were still smiling, trying not to notice the panic etched on my face, thinking that I still hadn't recovered yet from the horrors I had seen in the Black Forest.

My shoulders tensed when I noticed Diana and Devon gazing at the bushes near the wall gates in the backyard. The bushes moved, creating rustling sounds that drained the blood from my face. My first instinct was to grab them and take them back into the house. But Devon would know if it

was something dangerous. I trusted my son's instinct after all his experience in the Black Forest.

"Mom, look..."

Diana's soft voice calmed me somehow, but my mind was still on full alert for whatever was hiding behind the bushes. A sound like a dog whimpering was heard, and seconds after, a small wolf cub stepped out of the bushes, wounded and trembling with fear.

"Oh, you poor little thing." Diana immediately took the cub in her arms.

"Diana, it could be—"

She smiled as she pulled the cub to her chest, "Relax, Mom. This poor baby looks hurt and hungry. Can we take it inside? Please?"

Madison and Cynthia looked at me, seemingly expecting that I would agree to help the poor baby cub. Devon waited for me to answer, too, looking so concerned at the baby animal in my daughter's arms.

"Fine. But be careful not to be bitten, okay? I told the kids, "We still don't know where it came from," after sensing it was harmless. I knew it was funny and ridiculous to think, but I had seen so many strange and mind-bending things in the Black Forest that any unexpected things like this would make me paranoid and would be sent by the enemies to hurt the kids.

Although we were already inside the borders of my husband's turf, I still couldn't lower my guard and pretend everything would be alright. While Olivia, the Fang Trinity, and the Black Claws were out there, waiting for the chance to kill us all, my mind would never be at peace.

Devon and Diana were thrilled that they could at least take care of the cub. They ran inside and asked Madison and Cynthia if they could help them treat the wound and feed the baby wolf. I smiled at the four of them, glad my kids were growing up kind and innocent despite the dangers they faced in the Ancient Library's underground caves in the Black Forest.

If only I could take all those bad memories away from them...

“Oh, you are so cute!” Diana smiled as she tried to kiss the cub on the wolf, but hesitated after I warned her not to, for it might need a vaccine first. She pouted at me, though, but smiled again and then giggled as the cub started to become more energetic and playful.

“Can we keep it, Mom?!” Devon asked, giving me puppy eyes as he stared at me, hoping that I would consider their desire to keep the poor baby wolf. “We want to take care of it, at least until it can take care of itself.”

“Fine. You can keep it. But we have to send it to the animal doctor first to know what the cub really needs.” I smiled at my son, and Diana’s eyes glowed with happiness as she embraced their new pet. “We need to make sure the cub is healthy and is safe to play around you.”

Devon and Diana ran towards me and embraced me tightly, feeling so excited that they finally had a pet and a new playmate. “Thank you, Mom! We will take good care of it!”

“Good. I expect you to be good to the baby.” I smiled and then kissed their cheeks and pulled them to me for a tight embrace.

Chapter 184
[SAMANTHA’S Point of View]

I let the kids get busy taking care of the pup. Maybe they needed it. They needed a distraction from the issue that I and their father should be handling without involving them. That idea was like a sledgehammer on my chest. I wish we hadn’t brought Diana and Devon into that underground cave.

I wish we didn’t go there. Because for what!? We failed to find the Wolf Tomb. We failed to locate the dead body of my mother. Or if she was dead indeed. I wasn’t sure anymore of what was happening. Yet, I couldn’t deny the fact that we learned a lot from that little dangerous adventure. We learned that Olivia still existed, and she still posed a huge threat to us and

the whole Silver Crescent pack. I just wasn't sure if my husband told his Beta about what happened to Olivia, and if the council would even believe everything we saw.

And Killian. The MoonStone Alpha. I had no idea how I would be able to look Brianne in the eyes and tell her that her mate was as good as dead after what I witnessed. He wasn't the same anymore. The darkness of the Black Forest had completely devoured him, making him into a totally different werewolf. And I wasn't sure if we could still bring him back to his old self, to the same man who was always there for me when I needed him.

The living room was filled with Devon's and Diana's laughter as Madison and Cynthia helped them feed the new member of the family. I stared at the cub, and I was surprised that it stared back at me as well with its light blue eyes. I wasn't sure, but there was something about the animal. Like I had seen it before and it knew me, yet I couldn't remember where I'd seen it or if I really had seen it somewhere else.

Or maybe I was this one ball of paranoia again.

I decided I needed to check on Dominic to know the progress of his investigation and research about his father's involvement in the purple eyes shadow werewolves, and how Olivia knew about them. I thought it was only Lena who was hiding secrets among the people of Silver Crescent, but apparently, it ran through Dominic's family, having their own dark and personal agendas.

Happy that the kids were enjoying their new pet, I went straight to my room to get my phone. I remember the last time I used it, I put it on the bedside table—

"Hello, Sam."

My eyes widened as I recognized that voice. All the hairs on my nape stand, creating goosebumps on my skin as his spine-chilling voice reverberates in my ears as if it came from the depths of the ground.

Terrified and wary, I turned around sharply, hoping I was wrong. But I wasn't. He was here, discreet and cautious as he gently pushed the door closed. All of a sudden, the whole room was filled with this dark aura, like a small dome that trapped me inside with him.

"Killian!" I thought all the strength in me slowly depleted as I saw him standing in front of me. His face was dark. His eyes glowed purple, and the channels of veins all around his body glowed in the same way his eyes did. He was wearing a clean, white shirt that was too tight for him; it accentuated how bulging his muscles were.

"What are you doing here, Killian!" I hissed at him while he stared at my pale, terrified face. "How did you get here without being detected?! Without me noticing your presence!? How did you do that?!"

"What do you mean, Sam?" he smirked as he stepped forward but stopped when I flinched from him. The smirk on his face disappeared as he watched me crouch, ready to fight if he ever did something that would force me to retaliate. His eyes darkened as he glared at me. "Don't do that. You look like a cornered little cat."

The fact that Killian managed to enter Silver Crescent undetected was quite unsettling. If he did it so easily, it also meant that Olivia could do it as well! I had to tell Dominic so he would know that our enemies could go in and out of his turf using their dark powers! I had to warn my husband!

I snatched my phone from the bedside table and dialed Dominic's number. But before it could ring, Killian had already grabbed my wrist and taken the phone away from me. I watched in fear as he stomped on it, crushing it with the sole of his boot.

"What do you think you're doing, Sam?" Killian pulled me towards him, his face an inch from mine as he glared and hissed at me. His eyes were swirling clouds of purple as I gazed at them. My eyes were dilated with horror while I was petrified of him.

"Let me go, Killian! You can't kill me here. My children still need me!" My lips quivered as I tried to push him away with all my strength, but he was

still stronger than me, and I was helpless. “Please, I am the only one who can protect them from Olivia!”

“Who says I am going to kill you?” he whispered as his eyes went from my eyes to my lips, which confused me. He had a mate. Why was he acting as if he was going to kiss me?!

“W-What do you mean—”

“I am here to tell you that I have been investigating Richard Bennette’s theories about the origin of the dark power in the Black Forest. And I need you to listen to me because this is important and we don’t have much time!”

I frowned, confused about what Killian was trying to say, but it seemed it was about Olivia and her dark forces that he wanted to tell me. “Why are you doing this? I thought... I thought you were one of them?”

He gave me an annoyed look and scowled as he dragged his fingers through his dark, unruly hair. “I know you would think of that. But believe what you want to believe, Sam. I just want to tell you this. I want you and the kids to survive this. I am not letting the three of you die.”

“You know I don’t trust you, Killian,” I said straight to his face as I glared at him. You brought us to Olivia. We almost died there!”

“Only you didn’t.” He let out a deep sigh as he stepped away from me; his hands were both on the level of his head in surrender, as if telling me he didn’t have the intention to hurt me. “I can’t do that to you, and you know that.”

I scoffed at him, furious that he thought I was that easy to manipulate. “Stop playing around, Killian. You can’t make me believe you again!”

His face turned serious as he stared straight into my eyes with full sincerity. “I am here to help.”

I swallowed a lump in my throat, confused if I should trust my instinct to believe Killian or scream at the top of my lungs and tell him to leave.

Chapter 185
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"I'm sorry, Sam, but I have to do this—"

It was too late for me to realize what he was saying.

He grabbed me by my shoulder and stared at me with dark eyes. "Remember. Don't tell anyone I came here to tell you everything I said. Once Olivia finds out that I had gone to see you and told you about the source of her dark power, she will kill Brianne and leave Moonstone in ashes, Sam. I trust you. Maybe I am not the same friend you used to know. But you know deep within you that I still care. I still care about you and the twins."

Tears started to well in my eyes. I saw the sincerity in Killian's words as he spoke them to me. "Then why are you doing this? Why don't you tell me what happened and why you became one of them, Killian? Why did you lie to us and bring us to Olivia? Why are you doing this?"

There was pain in his eyes as he dragged his hand down his face and let out a breath of exasperation. No. More like a sigh of disappointment. Of himself? Of me? I wasn't sure. Actually, I didn't care anymore. He kept on saying he cared for me and the kids. Yet he brought us straight to the mouth of danger. No. I couldn't trust every word he said. Not again.

"This is not just about you, Sam. This is also for Brianne and the MoonStone Pack," he hissed at me, looking very impatient after he saw in my eyes that I still couldn't trust him. "I risked everything to warn you. I did my best to keep you all alive. So I hope you understand the only request I am asking from you."

"I can't promise you anything, Killian. After what happened, I am not sure I can trust you anymore," I hissed back at him; my eyes were sharp like knives as I glared back at him. "We are talking about my children's safety, you know?" I won't gamble their life after you deceived us all! I know your

concern is for Brianne and your pack, and I understand your fears. But what about my fears, Killian? What about my family?"

He paused, blinked twice, and then retreated. His face appeared sad as he contemplated how everything had changed. Even my faith in him as a friend was shaken. It hurt so much! I felt that pain in him because I was disappointed with myself as well—that I couldn't believe in him anymore. I never wanted to get to this point where we were both back to being strangers after all the years that we were together for each other.

But this was about my kids.

And I couldn't negotiate their safety for something like this.

"I understand..." he finally murmured as he grinned at me, shaking his head gently, and that worried me, scared that he would come to his crazy self again. "It's a mistake I went here."

I watched how his face turned cold as he looked at me again. "Just forget I came here, Sam. But I am telling you. This sh*t will become more dangerous, so keep your eyes on the kids."

"I don't care what you and Olivia are planning against—"

My snarl was cut short when I felt this sharp, surprising pain on the back of my neck, which immediately turned everything back without a single warning.

*****

"Sam? Samantha..."

"Mom?"

"Mom, wake up!"

I frowned. Grimaced. As I tried to get up from the couch, the pain in my neck felt like it was killing me. Wait—what happened? I looked up, and my

eyes were still blurry and unsteady, but I knew it was my husband. Behind him were Devon and Diana, who were looking at me over their father's shoulders; both were worried sick while they tried their hardest not to cry in front of me.

"W-What happened?" I murmured as I put my hand on the back of my neck, pressing it to ease the pain.

"You tell me what happened." Dominic's eyes darkened as his brows deepened into a frown. "Madison was hysterical when she called in the office, telling my secretary that you were found unconscious in our room. What happened? Did someone attack you?" he asked in his grave tone as he eyed something on my neck, which I knew was a big bruise.

Madison handed Dominic an ice pack, and he carefully placed it on my neck. I jolted from the sharp, cold sensation of it, but Dominic's grave expression softened as worry sparked in his hazel eyes. "Does it hurt? Who did this to you, love?"

I couldn't tell him who did this to me. I didn't even know why Killian had to do it, though. That prick! He could have killed me!

Dominic stared at me, trying to read what was in my mind, but I didn't let him. If he could keep me away from his head, then why couldn't I?!

My husband's eyes narrowed as he found out what I did, and I just turned my eyes away from him, not wanting to make any more arguments. After how coldly he treated me while we travelled back to Silver Crescent, there was nothing for me to explain to him.

I knew he was worried. But while he was being an *sshole to me, I wouldn't say a word to him. I promised Killian. And no matter how much I loved Dominic, that promise also applied to him.

When he noticed that he wouldn't get any answer from me, he stood and walked away. However, Diana and Devon attacked me with kisses on the cheeks and tight embraces. They were scared something bad had happened to me.

From the corner of my eye, I looked at my husband and saw that he was staring back. I wondered what was in his mind while he glowered at me like I was the most vile creature he had ever met.

*****

I had to do something. I had to figure this all out!

While I made sure the kids were safe and sleeping soundly, I packed the things I needed and hooked my bag over my shoulder. After studying the whole Black Forest with the use of the necklace, which was also a holographic map from Killian, I was sure I could make it to the place where I needed to go and get back home before dawn.

I slipped the necklace inside the pocket of my pants and checked all the items that were in my bag. I made sure I had the parchment I saw in the library. I strongly believed that it was the key I needed to enter the Wolf Tomb, and if I was mistaken, at least I had tried. All I wanted was for all of this to be over. I needed to find my mother's body and make sure Olivia didn't do any weird things to her.

Like bringing her back from the dead.

That thought brought a sickening feeling in my stomach. I made sure all the security cameras and the alarm in the house were working before I left. I hadn't gone far into the forest yet when I felt that familiar presence following me, and my shoulders drooped and my eyes rolled when I turned around and saw my mate walking silently behind me.

As I expected, there was this sharp glare in my husband's eyes as he slipped his hands into the pockets of his jeans. "I knew you were up to something."

"You shouldn't go with me—"

"We have to do it faster if you want to be at home before the dawn breaks."

My eyes widened in disbelief as I watched Dominic walk past me, ignoring the annoyed look on my face. He turned around, frowned slightly, and asked, "Are you coming or what?"

Deep inside, I was growling in anger, but I decided not to waste another second and let him lead the way. It seemed he had been spying on me because he knew exactly the way to where we were heading.

As I had anticipated, the Wolf Tomb was located not too far from the collapsed well where Olivia had appeared and nearly killed us all. Dominic first checked the perimeter, ensured the area was safe, and confirmed that no shadow werewolves could reveal our presence as we both approached the Tomb.

At first, I was skeptical of how easily we got into that massive mausoleum. But with how strong Dominic's werewolf senses were, I was sure the place was carelessly unguarded.

"What are you doing?!" I hissed at my husband, eyeing him when I saw him walking straight to the basement after we found a hatch just in front of the sarcophagus.

"We can't waste any more seconds, love. We have to explore the place while the enemies are not aware we are here."

I followed him, furious, because it was supposed to be just me dealing with all of this. However, I realized that Dominic was right. I needed him. There was no time to argue anymore when we had to go back home fast. We couldn't leave the kids for a long time.

The whole basement was another old library, not as old as the ancient one we saw in the underground cave, but it was filled with the same books of enchantment and spells we saw in that place. Dominic started to check the things inside. Weapons, armory, books, parchment—

"Look at this!" Dominic called for me, and I immediately approached him, curious about what he had found out. "This has the same symbol as the

sarcophagus upstairs. Do you think they have a connection to opening those massive tombs?"

I stared at my husband's eyes.

This could be the answer to all the questions we had.

Chapter 186
[SAMANTHA's Point of View]

"So you are saying this can be the key to whatever is inside that sarcophagus?" I asked Dominic, wondering. If this was what Olivia had wanted so badly, then how come they hadn't found what was inside this mausoleum? Could it be that there was something that was stopping her or not letting her get inside this place? Could the Wolf Tomb have a protection spell that wards off darklings attempting to raid and take whatever is inside the sarcophagus?

Could it be that my mother's remains were inside that tomb?

Dominic gave me an uncertain look in his eyes, but he stood straight and then rolled his shoulders as he let out a heavy sigh. "We are not sure what they are really up to, love. But I hope the situation is not some kind of a trap again. If they couldn't get inside, I have a terrible feeling that Olivia and her minions are just letting us in to get whatever that thing is in the tomb for them. We have to be careful."

My husband was right. There could be a possibility that Olivia and the shadow werewolves were waiting for us outside to get whatever was inside the tomb. And if I was right, Killian could be waiting with them too! How would I be able to fight back if it meant I had to kill my friend?

Dominic stared at me as if he looked like he didn't have to access my thoughts through the bondlink to read whatever I was thinking. He knew I was still worried about Killian. Perhaps this is the reason he has been so angry with me since we left the Black Forest. Was he thinking that I still had feelings for the MoonStone Alpha?!

“Hey,”

He raised both of his brows, acknowledging that he heard me but wasn’t able to look me in the eyes this time. He kept on looking at the old books and rotting parchments, pretending that he was studying them.

I sighed deeply as I approached him, trying to be patient with all of his strange moods. “Hey, please. Look at me.”

I had to hold his face to make sure he wouldn’t look away again. This time, I wouldn’t allow him to bottle up his feelings again and then ignore me as if I were just air in front of him. “Tell me what’s wrong. Tell me why you are being an *sshole to me again since we got back to Silver Crescent.”

His hazel eyes glinted from the dim light of the room, which came from the little orbs that were flying around the area. “I don’t know what you are talking about, Samantha—”

“Stop lying to me!” I snarled at him; my eyes were fierce and deadly as I glared at him. I had had enough of this! “Something is wrong, and you need to tell me right here, right now!”

There was hesitation on his face as he breathed sharply between his teeth and then stepped away, leaving me confused. Pain was etched all over my red face.

Dominic shook his head as he rested his hands on his hips, paused for a minute as if thinking whether he would tell me or perhaps was choosing the right words he wanted to say. “I don’t know, Samantha. You tell me what is happening. Since we left Silver Crescent and went to find that underground cave, all that has come out of your mouth is Killian’s name!”

I was right.

My brows furrowed as I stood in front of him, grasping his arm to force him to look at me. “You know that is not true! And you know why I am worried about him. He is my friend Dominic—”

He scoffed and then laughed like I just told him the baddest joke. “Yeah. Right. Friend.”

That reaction he gave was the last straw. I shook my head as I tried my hardest for my tears not to fall from my eyes, and then scowled at him. “He was there when I needed him the most, Dominic. He was the only friend I had when I had nothing! He literally took me out of the rain like a lost, wet kitten on the street when I had nowhere else to go!”

“Then why did you choose to go back to me if you are still thinking about him, Samantha!” he snarled, his face red with rage. His eyes were swimming with jealousy. “Why do you have to make me feel like I am useless! That I am nothing but the monster who made your life a living hell? Why do you have to always remind me of that?!”

I was shocked at what he said and couldn’t believe I heard those words coming from his mouth. What was he saying?! How could he say such things to me!? “I thought we were over this, Dominic. I told you I had forgiven you already! I thought we already moved on from this!”

“Did you?” he growled as he leaned in, his face so close to mine that our lips were nearly touching. “Have you really moved on from it?”

Have I?

It was I who flinched and looked away from him this time. I didn’t know what to answer. Have I moved on from everything that happened? Am I healed from all that pain? Could I trust him truly and wholly after all the terrible things I endured after I ran away from him?

I loved Dominic. There was no question about my feelings for him. But for how much could the damage from the past pull us apart? I tried my hardest to push it all away. To tried to heal because all I wanted was for us to have a whole, happy family. But how? How could I do that when every time I looked at Dominic, there was still doubt in my heart?

Like, anytime he could become that monster again?

“I am not that man anymore, Samantha...”

That softness in Dominic’s voice felt as if my heart was breaking into pieces. I lifted my face to look up into his eyes, and all I saw there was pleading—like he was so desperate for something, which I couldn’t understand.

Or maybe I did understand but just wasn’t ready to let go of these awful feelings yet...

Because if I did, what if he came back to the old him? What would happen to me?

Dominic and I crouched as we heard a strange sound upstairs—like someone had entered the premises. But who would go inside a mausoleum in the middle of the night if they weren’t someone who also knew about the secrets hiding inside the Wolf Tomb?!

Putting his finger on his lips, telling me not to make any kind of noise, Dominic tiptoed his way up the stairs to check who went inside the gates of the mausoleum. He peeked as he slightly lifted the hatch, hoping it wasn’t one of Olivia’s minions.

My brows lifted, feeling so tense as I waited for my husband to tell me who it was.

Baffled, my husband stepped back from the hatch when someone opened it. He froze at what he saw, which made me scared.

“The f*ck are you doing here!?”

Killian! It was Killian snarling at Dominic!

“Killian—”

Killian went downstairs; his eyes were wide with rage as our eyes met. If Dominic's theory was right, how could he get inside the mausoleum? Could it be because he wasn't fully converted as a shadow werewolf yet?!

"What the f*ck are you two doing here?! Do you realize how dangerous it is here!?" Killian snarled at us both with his eyes slightly glowing purple. "This is not the place you should have gone into, Samantha! You and Dominic have to go!"

Dominic frowned. "What? So you can get whatever is inside that sarcophagus?! Do you think I will let you, Killian?! You already deceived us once!"

"I am telling you this." Killian's eyes were crazy. His shoulders were tense as he lifted his hands to let us know he didn't have any intention to harm us. "You have to go, Samantha. You shouldn't be here. Any moment now, Olivia will be here, and you won't get out of this place alive!"

"I don't believe you." Dominic hissed. "If what you say is true, then Olivia won't leave this place knowing that there is something important hiding here. Do you think we will allow that to happen?!"

Killian and Dominic looked as if they were about to kill each other again, so I stepped between them and gave them both a sharp, warning look. "We are not doing this here now!"

"I told you, Samantha! What you are doing is dangerous! You promise me you are not putting yourself and the children in danger like this again! I put so much effort into giving you that necklace so you can go back to Silver Crescent!"

"The f*ck are you talking about?! You almost killed me just to get it from you, *sshole!" Dominic's teeth ground as he snarled at Killian. "Stop pretending you care for them, Killian! Stop making Samantha believe that you still side with us! Stop messing around and admit that you are already one of them!"

Killian's face darkened as he glared at me. "She will kill Brianne, Samantha."

What was I supposed to do, then? "What do you want us to do?! Should we just go away, let Olivia win, and destroy everything? My voice trembled as tears began to well up in the corners of my eyes. "This is something I can't do, and you know that, Killian! I have to protect my family! I have to protect my pack!"

"But what about my mate!? What about my pack!?" Killian sounded betrayed as his nostrils flared. Pain was etched on his face, which was full of despair. "You promised me, Samantha!"

I felt as if my chest was being torn into pieces.

What should I do?