

My Hockey Alpha #Chapter 101 Tortured Love - Read My Hockey Alpha Chapter 101 Tortured Love

Chapter 101 Tortured Love

Nina

While I slept, I had a strange dream.

I dreamed that I was walking through the forest just outside of campus. I recognized where I was, and I knew the path well as I walked. Up ahead, I could make out the clearing where I had last kissed Justin on the night that I discovered that he was a rogue.

It was nighttime, and the moon was full. The air was perfectly still and warm.

As I stepped into the clearing, however, I knew that I wasn't alone. Across the clearing, moving in unison with me, was a large wolf with red fur and a cream-colored streak across its face.

I stopped in the middle of the clearing. The wolf stopped in front of me. I reached out to touch it...

But then, I woke up.

I wasn't in the forest; I was back in my room. When I tried to move, I realized that the restraints were around my wrists and ankles again.

"Good morning," a familiar voice said from beside me. I looked over to see Edward sitting on his stool next to me with a smile on his face. "Which Nina am I talking to today?"

"Good Nina," I replied, remembering what had happened earlier in the closet. Evil Nina had taken over for a bit, but Edward saved me, and now I was in control again.

Edward's smile widened. "That's good to hear." He paused, reaching over to the table next to him and picking up a cup. "I'm going to start giving you some new medicine," he said. "It'll taste a little funny, but it'll help make sure that Evil Nina doesn't come back again. We wouldn't want that to happen, would we?"

I shook my head. Edward, still smiling from ear to ear, leaned forward. He lifted my head with one hand, then held the cup to my lips with the other. I drank. It did taste funny — a little bitter — but I drank all of it, because I didn't want to lose control to Evil Nina again. I wanted to get better so that I could go home to my family, just like Justin.

“There,” Edward said, setting the cup down. Next, he unbuckled the restraints around my wrists and ankles, and helped me sit up. “I’m not going to keep you restrained now that you’ve taken your medicine. But you have to promise to take your medicine every time I give it to you, otherwise I will have to restrain you again. Okay?”

I nodded.

“Good. Now, I’m going to take care of the bad man who came to steal you away. You might hear some scary noises, but I promise that they’re just the sounds of him resisting his treatment, just like you did at first.” He patted me on the head like a dog, then headed toward the door. “I’ll be back later to give you more medicine,” he said, then disappeared through the door.

Not long after Edward left, the medicine must have begun to kick in, because I started to feel a tingling in my body. I stood up and crossed over to the desk in the corner to draw, but realized then that Edward had taken away my drawing supplies.

“Hm,” I said out loud to myself. “I guess I’m not allowed to draw anymore.”

“He’s a liar.”

I jumped, whirling around to search for the source of the disembodied female voice that echoed in my head — but there was no one there. I shook my head and walked over to the other side of the room.

“Edward is not your savior. He’s brainwashing you. He’s using hypnotic abilities to make you his minion.”

“That’s not true,” I replied without thinking. “Edward is really nice, and when I’m better, I’ll get to go home.”

“Nina, if none of your experiences over the past four years are real and Enzo never existed, then why did Enzo come to save you?”

I frowned, then clapped my hands over my ears and began to repeat my mantra under my breath. This voice was clearly just another one of my hallucinations... If I just repeated my mantra enough, I could make it go away.

“My name is Nina Harper...”

“Your name is Nina Harper, and you are a student at Mountainview University.”

I clamped my hands down harder on my ears and scrunched my eyes shut. “...I am a patient at Mountainview Psychiatric Facility.”

“You are not sick, and Edward will not fix you.”

I shook my head and began to pace. “No,” I said. “You’re not real. Get out of my head.”

“I am real, Nina,” the voice replied. “I’m your wolf, and my name is Cora. Werewolves are real; Edward has been lying to you.”

Still shaking my head vigorously, I laid down on my bed in a fetal position and began to rock back and forth.

“My name is Nina Harper... I’m a student... No! I’m a patient at Mountainview Psychiatric Facility... I’m sick...”

“Nina, please listen to me.”

“Shut up!” I shouted. I sat up and pounded my fists against the side of my head, as if doing so would knock the voice out of me and make it go away. “You’re not real! Stop talking to me!”

Just then, my thoughts were broken by the sound of pained grunts coming from next door. It sounded as though someone was being beaten. With each sound of something hitting flesh, I would hear another strained grunt. They only got louder with each repetition.

“See?” I said out loud, standing and walking slowly toward the wall. “Edward is fixing the bad man who tried to steal me away. He’s protecting me.”

The voice didn’t respond.

“Edward is protecting me...” As I slowly walked closer, repeating those words quietly to myself, I began to realize that my voice was quivering. I stopped in front of the wall and slowly held my shaking hands out, pressing my palms against the concrete, and then leaned forward until my ear was pressed up against the wall.

There were muffled voices on the other side. I couldn’t make out exactly what they were saying, but I recognized Edward’s voice, and...

Enzo’s voice.

There was another sound of something hitting flesh, followed by another pained grunt, this time far louder than all of the rest. I flinched and jumped back, my eyes wide.

It wasn’t until I felt something wet on my face and lifted my fingers to touch my cheek, pulling them away and looking at them curiously, that I realized I was crying.

A sob escaped my throat. I ran back to my bed and covered my ears again, this time covering them against the sound of Edward beating Enzo and not from the sound of the strange voice in my head. I

wasn't sure how long I was there, but eventually, I must have fallen asleep because I was awoken sometime later by the feeling of someone shaking my shoulder.

When I opened my eyes, I looked up to see Edward standing over me. I scrambled backwards on the bed, but he was too quick; he grabbed me by the neck and held a cup up to my lips.

"Open your mouth," he said. When I didn't do it immediately, he rolled his eyes and forced my mouth open with his hand before pouring the bitter-tasting drink down my throat. I sputtered and choked on it, coughing up some of it onto the front of my hospital gown, but the majority of it made its way down my throat.

"I'm only doing this to protect you," he said, tossing the cup aside and pushing me down on the bed. I squirmed, confused, as he buckled the restraints again. Then, he left me alone once more.

"Wait! I'll be good!" I called after him, but he didn't listen. I watched, struggling against the leather straps as he punched a number into the keypad on my door, then disappeared through it. Another sob caught in my throat.

An indistinguishable amount of time passed. The straps were tight around my wrists, burning my skin if I moved too much. The medicine made me drift in and out of consciousness, but each time it did, I felt myself slipping back into that strange dream of the wolf in the forest...

And each time I woke, I smelled something tantalizingly sweet drawing me toward the room next door

Chapter 102 The Sister

Enzo

I should've known that Lisa couldn't be trusted. I thought for sure that I had her on my side thanks to my own abilities, but as it turned out, whatever training Edward had given her made her completely invulnerable to me — and, in turn, her own hypnotic words lulled me into a false sense of security.

She led me through the woods behind the cabins, taking me on a winding path that eventually led to a small hatch in the ground. She opened the hatch and climbed down a ladder, and I stupidly followed.

"What is this place?" I asked as we entered a narrow tunnel at the bottom of the ladder.

"It's Edward's secret hideout, if you will," she said. "Do you know that the school actually used to be a sanatorium back in the day? Well, this was where they used to transport the dead bodies."

It was now that I started to realize that following Lisa could end in disaster, but what else was I supposed to do? There was no other possible way to find Nina, and as Lisa led me through the maze of tunnels, I knew that I could easily get lost in here if I tried to find my way on my own.

Eventually, the tunnel widened. We passed by rows of solid metal doors, each with an illuminated keypad on them. The bright fluorescent lights gave the place an almost scientific feel, but the sound of dripping water was a constant reminder that we were actually in a glorified sewer.

Finally, Lisa stopped in front of a door. She turned to shoot me a grin, then knocked on the door.

“She’s in there,” Fio said inside of me. “I can sense her. And... there’s another presence inside of her. Her wolf may emerge soon.”

I didn’t have a chance to ask about Nina’s wolf; I was too focused on getting her out of here. As I heard a bit of a commotion inside the room, I took a few steps back to get out of sight of the door and began to borrow some of Fio’s power so that I could quickly shift and even kill Lisa and Edward if I had to.

What happened next happened so quickly.

The door slid open with a mechanical whirring sound. Lisa stepped inside and the door shut again. I heard a few words exchanged before the door slid open once more, and I made my move. I quickly stepped in through the doorway and began to shift.

“Let Nina go before I kill you,” I said.

But then, I felt a needle in my arm. I looked down to see Lisa pushing the needle in with a grin on her face.

“What the—”

I tried to shift, but I couldn’t. I lurched away from Lisa and toward Edward, who stepped out of the way with an absurdly casual demeanor. I fell face forward as my limbs became too heavy to move, my ears filling with the sound of Nina’s muffled screaming. As I fell, my head faced a closet on the far wall. Its doors rattled as Nina pounded on them.

“Nina...” I whispered. I had to get to her. I tried to push myself up, but I quickly fell back down as Lisa and Edward only laughed at me. My body quickly became nothing but dead weight as I tried to drag myself across the floor. Fio’s presence turned into a whisper, then he was gone altogether.

And then...

Darkness.

...

I woke up in a blindingly bright cell to the feeling of something hitting me on the side of the head. As my eyes squinted against the bright lights, I felt someone grab my hair and yank my head back.

Edward's face came into view.

"You know, you really should learn to mind your own business, Enzo," he said, dropping my head with a thud against what felt like a cold metal post. I tried to move, but quickly realized that I was on my knees and was chained to that very post.

"Where is she?" I croaked.

Edward chuckled. "She's right next door, where she'll be able to hear your torture. But don't worry — she thinks that you're just the Big Bad Wolf."

"That's not true."

"Oh, but it is," Edward replied. "She's such a simple girl. Just a few days of treatment was all it took to make her think that I'm her knight in shining armor. And soon, once I'm certain that she's nothing but a shell of a person, she'll be shipped off to The Sister for her execution. Public, of course."

I groaned and struggled against the chains, but it was no use. "You'll get caught," I said. "People will be looking for both of us. My father will find you and he won't hesitate to kill you."

Edward laughed again. "No one will be looking for you, because I'll wipe your memory and set you free. As for Nina, as far as anyone else knows, she took off with her new boyfriend. We've already got all sorts of 'evidence' in the works to help our case."

"So why am I here, then?" I asked. "Why not just wipe my memory now and be done with it?"

"Because," Edward said, crossing over to a table on the other side of the room and rifling around for a moment before returning with a large leather whip in his hand, "there's still a shadow of the old Nina in there, and I need to kill it off. And, as for you, well... You piss me off."

Suddenly, I heard the whip crack behind me, followed by searing pain flashing across my back. Edward whipped me again and again. I couldn't move, I couldn't shift, I couldn't fight back — I could only endure it.

I wasn't sure how long it went on for. Eventually, my pained grunts stopped, and my vision began to fade, and that was when Edward decided that he was done... for the moment. I watched in agony as he casually walked over to the table, whistling to himself as he wiped the splattered blood off of his hands. He then retrieved another syringe and, still whistling, returned to me.

"This will keep you from healing," he said, grabbing my arm and pushing the needle in. "I won't kill you yet, though. We've got a bit of work ahead of us before she's entirely broken."

I couldn't respond. My throat felt as if it was closed up from the pain, and Edward was nothing but a dark blob moving across the room. I heard the door slide open, then shut, and I was alone again.

I had no way of knowing how much time passed. I repeatedly slipped in and out of consciousness from the blood loss, but each time I came to, the lights were just as blindingly bright as ever. All I knew was that it was hours at the very least; I imagined that Edward was probably sitting in his office on campus right now, pretending like he didn't have students locked up in a dungeon below.

My wounds weren't healing, just as Edward said. If I didn't get help soon, I would surely die down here. All that was keeping me going at this point was the thought of saving Nina and getting her out of here.

Eventually, I heard the sound of bare footsteps approaching in the hallway. I braced myself for the door to open and for Edward to return for another beating... but he didn't. The footsteps stopped outside my doorway, and suddenly, a sweet smell permeated through the door.

Fio, who had been too weak all this time, seemed to twitch at the sweet smell.

But then, I heard other footsteps — definitely Edward's this time. I heard the sound of the footsteps outside my door retreat once more along with the smell.

A few moments later, the door slid open and in came Edward

Chapter 103 Echoes of the Wolf

Nina

Edward left and didn't come back for a long time. I laid on the bed, trapped there in my restraints as I waited for him to come back.

Eventually, the medicine stopped making me fade in and out of consciousness so much. I knew that that meant that Edward would return soon to give me more, and I craved it; I knew that the more I took his medicine, the closer I was to getting better.

At some point, I fell asleep from pure exhaustion and boredom rather than from the medicine. I slipped back into the dream with the wolf. It was almost as if she was waiting for me.

“Are you ready to wake up?” she asked.

“I just fell asleep.”

“Not like that,” she replied, her dark eyes fixed on me as her voice echoed all around me. “I mean, are you ready to wake up to your true nature? I can give you a little bit of my power, and you can get free. I can only give you a tiny bit, though; I’m still weak.”

I frowned and shook my head. “No,” I said. “I know you’re not real. I need to get better so I can go home, and if I keep talking to you, then I won’t get better.”

“Fine, then,” the wolf replied. “I’ll wait.”

I watched as she lowered herself down onto her belly and laid her head on her paws. She closed her eyes and fell asleep.

I paced around for a while, unsure of what to do. I didn’t want to wake up from this oddly realistic dream because it only meant that I would be laying in the bed again, unable to move from the leather straps

around my wrists and ankles, but at the same time I couldn’t leave this clearing — and all the while, the wolf slept.

Finally, I grew bored. I sat down in the grass across from the wolf and stared at her.

“What was your name again?” I asked.

She opened one eye. “Cora,” she said, then closed it again.

“And you say you’re my wolf?”

“Yes.”

“So, if you’re my wolf, why can’t I shift when I’m awake?”

“Edward is giving you medicine that’s making me weak,” she said. “I was just about to emerge, and he realized that. So he started giving you that medicine to keep me away.”

“Why would he want to do that?” I asked.

Cora lifted her head finally to look at me. "I'm not sure exactly, but I think that it's because you're special in some way," she replied. "If I emerge before he can accomplish whatever it is that he's trying to accomplish, it'll be a lot harder for him."

I frowned, thinking, and flopped backwards onto the grass to look up at the sky with my arms outstretched beside me.

"So... Let's just pretend that this is all real," I said.

"It is real," Cora interrupted.

"Let's pretend," I continued, "and say that I do accept that you're my wolf, and I wake up. What then?"

Cora was silent for a moment before speaking again. "I can give you just enough power to break the restraints. I won't be able to help you much more than that, but I know that you're smart. You can find a way out. You can get Enzo out, too."

Now, it was I who was silent. I racked my brain to remember the things that Luke and Enzo had told me before about werewolves, and the longer I did, the more I realized that Edward had lied to me by telling me that none of it was real. My memories became clearer, more palpable.

"Are you doing that?" I asked, lifting my head to look at Cora.

She shook her head. "No. The medicine only works for so long, so your memories are becoming more clear to you. But that won't be the case for long. Just a few more doses, and he'll have you fully convinced that your entire life has been a fantasy that you made up in your own head."

I sat up then. "How much longer until he comes back?"

"Not long," Cora replied. "He's going to beat Enzo again and again until it breaks you, unless you do something about it."

Suddenly, I felt tears begin to well up in my eyes. If I thought hard enough, I could remember the way that Enzo's arms felt around me. I could remember the way that he smelled. He really had come for me, just like I knew he would, but now I needed to save him.

I stood, nodding as the tears streamed down my cheeks. "Okay," I said. "I'm ready."

Cora stood as well. She couldn't smile, being a wolf, but I knew that she was happy. "Touch me," she said, lowering her head. "I'll give you a little power."

I reached out and touched the cream-colored streak on her face.

Then, I woke up... and I knew what I needed to do.

I tensed all of the muscles in my arms and legs, feeling the little spike of power surge through me. I strained against them, scrunching my eyes shut, and let out a gasp as I felt the leather snap beneath the force.

I sat up then, glancing around, before climbing off of my bed and running over to the door. But the keypad... I didn't know the code.

"Think," Cora's voice echoed in my mind. "You saw him punch it in before."

I nodded and shut my eyes, thinking back to the last time I saw him do it. I could picture him punching the numbers in.

One... Seven... Eight...

Two.

The door slid open.

I stifled a squeal of delight and poked my head out, looking both ways down the narrow hallway. Edward was nowhere to be found, and nor was anyone else. But I could smell Enzo... That sweet, tantalizing smell.

I quickly darted toward his room, the sound of my bare feet slapping on the tile floor echoing through the hallway. The smell was so strong now it was almost dizzying. Was this what it was like to have a werewolf's sense of smell?

A grin spread across my face as I stopped in front of his door, but that grin quickly faded as I realized that I couldn't get in without a code. I bit my lip, thinking, but before I could come up with anything, I heard the sound of a distant door slam, followed by the sound of footsteps pounding toward me.

I quickly ran back to my room, my heart racing. One... Seven... Eight... Two. I punched the code into the keypad and slipped into my room, running over to my bed and placing my hands and feet back where they were before in the hopes of Edward not noticing that the straps were broken, then I closed my eyes and pretended to sleep.

The door slid open. I heard Edward's footsteps approaching. He muttered something to himself, then shook my shoulder. "Medicine," he said, lifting my head.

I pretended to wake up groggily, my mind racing as he lifted the cup to my mouth. I wanted to spit the drink out. I wanted to find some way to avoid drinking it, but I didn't have the time, and he poured it down my throat, watching and waiting for me to swallow.

I had no choice but to drink it... But at least I was free from the restraints.

Once he was satisfied, he dropped my head back down and retreated from the room. I waited several moments until I was certain that he was gone before I sat up and immediately shoved my fingers down my throat, making myself vomit onto the floor.

Then, I heard the sounds of Enzo being beaten mercilessly next door.

Chapter 104 The Sacrifice of Love

Nina

For hours after I threw up my medicine, all I could hear were the sounds of Edward beating Enzo in the room next door. I wished that I could just go in there and stop him, but I knew it would be a futile effort; I had to be smart about this if I really was going to get Enzo and I out of this place.

While Edward was next door, I planned out my escape. I had noticed him once, when I first came here, put a slip of paper in his pocket after using the keypad on my door. I had forgotten about it because of the medicine, but I could see it clearly in my mind now that I was sober again. Edward must have changed the codes on the doors whenever he brought in a new “patient”, so he kept the codes in his pocket in case he forgot. If I could get the codes out of his pocket, I could sneak out again when he was gone and get into Enzo’s room.

First, I cleaned up the vomit with a pillowcase and shoved it under my bed. Next, I would lay down on the bed when I heard him coming, and I would pretend to be tied up again. When he tried to pour the medicine down my throat, I would distract him by spitting it out into his face; it might result in a beating, but I could grab the codes out of his pocket before he noticed.

Eventually, I heard the beatings stop. I quickly ran and got into place on the bed, taking extra care to place my hands and feet in such a way that he couldn’t tell that the restraints were broken.

“Good morning, Nina,” Edward said as he entered. I pretended to be groggy and lifted my head to look at him. “Are you ready for some more medicine?”

I nodded.

Edward smiled and approached me with the cup of medicine in his hands. He still had a bit of blood splattered on his shirt from torturing Enzo. It made me sick; I wished I could just attack him right now, but I couldn’t feel Cora’s presence, so I had no strength to borrow from her.

Edward held the cup to my lips. I took all of the medicine in my mouth, then...

I spit it out, directly onto his face and his shirt.

“God dammit, Nina!” Edward shouted, stumbling backwards. “What the fuck is wrong with you!”

He turned his back to wipe the medicine off of his face, and while his back was turned, I reached out toward his pocket... But he turned around just as I did so. His eyes widened as he realized that I was free from my restraints, and he grabbed me around the wrist. His grip was so tight that I was certain he would break my wrist as he dragged me off the bed and began beating me.

My vision became clouded by the barrage of punches being thrown at my head. I took the beatings, feeling as though my skull was about to explode, as I continued to reach for his pocket with my free hand.

Through the sound of the punches and the curses that flew out of Edward’s mouth, I heard something else: the sound of Enzo’s screams coming from next door.

“Don’t touch her!” he yelled. “Get the fuck away from her, you bastard! Beat me instead, coward!”

Edward’s fist stopped midair just as he was about to hit me again. I cracked my eyes open to see a bit of spit dripping out of his mouth, his teeth bared and his face red with fury while Enzo continued to scream for mercy next door.

Then, he dropped me to the floor. He threw one last kick at my ribs, causing me to yelp in pain.

“You’re lucky she wants you alive,” he snarled, before turning on his heel and storming out of my room.

I think I slipped into unconsciousness at some point — I couldn’t quite tell, through all of the blood and the agony.

All I knew for sure was one thing: when I uncurled my fist, my fingers aching from gripping together so tightly during my beating, I had what I wanted.

The codes.

I heard Edward beating Enzo again next door. The sound of Enzo’s cries of pain were more brutal than ever before, but there was nothing I could do; I had to wait until he was gone. Edward wouldn’t kill Enzo, I was sure of it. He would face too much wrath from Enzo’s father, the leader of the Fullmoons. He was doing this to break me.

Eventually, after what felt like hours, the cries of pain stopped. I unplugged my ears, halting my sobs, as I lay curled up on the floor and listened for Edward’s footsteps. But

he never returned to my room. I heard the door open to Enzo's room, followed by a string of curse words escaping Edward's lips and then the sound of his footsteps receding.

He was gone.

Slowly and agonizingly, I pushed myself up to a seated position and let out a weak cry of pain as I came to the harsh realization that at least one of my ribs was certainly broken. There was an aching pain in my head, and one of my eyes was swollen shut. When I lifted my shaking hand to touch my jaw, I could feel that it was hard and tender beneath my touch. I winced, but persevered and pushed myself up onto my knees, then grabbed the edge of my bed and pulled myself to my feet.

"One... Seven... Eight... Two," I whispered to myself as I slowly shuffled toward the door, feeling agony in each step. "My name is Nina Harper. I'm a student at Mountainview University. Edward is a liar, and werewolves are real. Enzo is a good man, and he came to save me."

With each agonizing step, I repeated this mantra to myself over and over again. Hearing it gave me strength. "One... Seven... Eight... Two. One... Seven... Eight... Two."

I finally reached the door after what felt like an eternity. "One... Seven... Eight... Two."

I punched the numbers into the keypad, and the door slid open. I stuck my head out into the hall, looking left and right and ignoring the searing pain in my neck as I turned my head. Then, I began the grueling journey to Enzo's door.

As I slowly made my way toward Enzo's door, all I could think about was him. I didn't feel the pain from my beating, or the foggy in my head from the poison that still lingered in my system. Over and over again, I only repeated the mantra with each step, using it as a crutch to propel myself one foot forward at a time.

"My name is Nina Harper. I'm a student at Mountainview University. Edward is a liar, and werewolves are real. Enzo is a good man, and he came to save me... My name is Nina Harper. I'm a student at Mountainview University. Edward is a liar, and werewolves are real. Enzo is a good man, and he came to save me... My name is Nina Harper. I'm a student at Mountainview University. Edward is a liar, and werewolves are real. Enzo is a good man, and he came to save me."

Chapter 105 Healing Touch

Nina

"My name is Nina Harper. I'm a student at Mountainview University. Edward is a liar, and werewolves are real. Enzo is a good man, and he came to save me..."

As I whispered this mantra to myself, I finally, slowly but surely, made my way to Enzo's door. I pulled the paper out of my hand and uncrumpled it, straining my blurry eyes to read the numbers.

On the paper, there was a list of four different numbers.

"Seven... Three... Nine... Zero."

I punched the first number into the door and bit my lip, watching with bated breath and letting out a disappointed sigh when the light blinked red on the keypad. I glanced both ways over my shoulder again, groaning quietly as searing pain overtook my injured neck, before I tried the next number.

"Eight... One... Two... Five."

I waited again. The keypad blinked red again.

It had to be one of these numbers, right?

"Five... Four.... Six... Nine."

As the light on the keypad blinked red at me for the third time, it almost felt as though it was mocking me this time, as if to say that I was a blundering idiot for thinking that Edward actually had the real codes to our prison cells written on a scrap of paper in his pocket. Surely Edward was too smart to do something as simple as that.

Still, there was one more code on the paper. I took a deep breath, glancing over my shoulders again with the fear of seeing Edward sprinting down the hallway to tackle me constantly looking in my mind, before I punched in the last code.

"Eight... Nine... Zero... Two."

It felt like I waited for an eternity. My breath was caught in my throat, my fingers crossed in the hopes that maybe, just maybe, the final code was the correct code.

Once again, the light on the keypad blinked red.

"Fuck!"

Momentarily, I forgot my pain as I threw the paper to the ground and pounded my fist against the concrete wall, ignoring the searing sensation in my fists as the concrete scraped up my knuckles. These codes were the only hope I had to get Enzo and I out of here, and none of them worked. There was no doubt in my mind that Edward was watching all of this on a hidden camera, laughing to himself as he watched my futile struggle to escape. Surely, any minute now, he would return and drag me back to my

cell, where he would force the final dose of medicine down my throat and then promptly beat Enzo to death in front of me, forcing me to watch.

I felt a sob catch in my throat. I backed up against the wall and slid down to the floor, pulling my knees up to my chest. As the tears started to flow, I could feel their salty sting on my swollen eye, but I didn't care. Surely, the pain I felt now would be nothing compared to the pain I would feel when Edward returned — and it would especially be nothing compared to the pain that poor Enzo would feel because of my actions. I knew that Edward wouldn't make Enzo's death quick; he would make it as painful and slow as possible, because he was a sick man who loved watching the light leave other people's eyes.

I leaned my head back and hit it against the wall lightly, sobbing quietly to myself as I cursed myself for ever coming to this school to begin with. Maybe, if I hadn't come here, none of this would have ever

happened. Enzo could be safe right now if it wasn't for me. Maybe his father was right; maybe I was just a burden.

Suddenly, I jumped as I heard Cora's voice echo in my head faintly. She sounded weak and far away, but she was there.

"Check again..."

"What?" I said out loud. "What do you mean? None of the codes work."

She didn't answer.

Sighing, I reached out and grabbed the crumpled paper off of the floor. I held it up close to my one good eye and squinted as I studied it closely.

"None of these work..." I whispered once more. Another tear rolled down my cheek. I went to toss the paper back down, when something suddenly caught my eye.

It was faint, but I could see that some of the numbers were written in a slightly different colored pen. Were my eyes deceiving me? I gripped the paper tightly, my brow furrowed, as I pushed myself back up to my feet and reached for the keypad, punching in the numbers that were written in a different color.

"Seven... Two... Four... Nine."

There was a painfully long pause. I bit my lip, a lump forming in my throat. No, I thought to myself. That can't be right.

But it was.

The light on the keypad didn't blink red this time; instead, it flashed a bright, beautiful green. I clapped a hand over my mouth, suppressing a scream of delight as a smile stretched across my face. The door slid open with a mechanical whirring sound that felt like music to my ears.

My smile faded, however, when I saw the scene before me.

The feeling of happiness inside of me quickly turned to horror as I stepped into the room. The door slid shut behind me, locking me in with him.

In the center of the room, there was a large metal post drilled into the ground. The once-pristine white floor around it was stained with blood. Blood was even splattered on the walls, as though someone had run around with a paintbrush and a bucket of red paint.

There were chains coming out of the pole — four, to be exact, with massive metal links. And attached to the ends of those chains... was Enzo.

He wasn't conscious. He was slumped over at the post, his head leaning against it. The chains had his arms wrapped around the post, and he was on his knees. As I approached, I could see his chest moving weakly, and could hear the sound of strained breaths escaping his lips. He was alive, just barely, but the way that the enormous gashes on his back were gushing blood indicated that he wouldn't be alive for much longer.

"E-Enzo?" I said.

He didn't respond. I knew, as I approached, that he was dying. I had heard about the sound coming from his chest in anatomy classes before: the death rattle, it was called. His chest was making a weak, bubbling sound with each breath as fluid slowly built up inside of his lungs.

I ran over to him, dropping to my knees, and cupped his face in my hands. "Enzo," I said, gently patting his cheeks to wake him up, "you have to wake up. Please."

His head felt like a bowling ball in my hands. I could just barely see his eyelids flutter, so I knew he was still in there, but I didn't know how much longer I would have. Edward must have given him something to keep him from healing — was it the same medicine he gave me?

I knew that I possessed healing abilities once. I didn't know if they were still there after all of the medicine Edward gave me, but I had to try.

Taking a deep breath, I shakily reached out and touched his back, wincing as I heard the squelching beneath my fingers. I closed my eyes and focused my energy on him... But nothing happened.

Or so I thought.

The rattle in his chest stopped. I felt him move beneath my fingers, followed by a weak whisper escaping his lips.

“N-Nina...”

Chapter 106 Final Fight

Nina

“N-Nina...”

The sound of Enzo’s voice, in that moment, was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard.

“I’m here, Enzo,” I whispered, keeping my hands on his torn up back as I continued to focus all of my energy on healing him. “I’m here.”

“Nina... Stop...”

I opened my eyes and looked over at Enzo with my brow furrowed. Why would he want me to stop healing him? “I know it hurts,” I said reassuringly, “but I promise I’m almost done.”

Suddenly, I realized why Enzo wanted me to stop as I heard the door slide open. I gasped, looking up to see Edward standing in the doorway.

“What the hell is going on here?” he barked, grabbing a large metal, rod-like instrument off of the table by the door. “Trying to escape, are we?”

I froze, my hands still pressed into Enzo’s back as I tried to focus myself on continuing to heal him as much as I could. Within a moment, however, Edward flew across the room at me. He raised the metal rod over his head and brought it down, hard, on my hands. I yelped and scrambled away, clutching my throbbing hands against my chest.

Edward raised the metal rod over his head again and stormed after me.

“To think that I’ve been so nice as to keep you alive all this time,” he snarled, “only for you to somehow escape and try to rescue him?”

He brought the rod down again. Somehow, I managed to roll out of the way. I heard Enzo’s chains rattling behind me, but before I could look, I felt Edward swiftly kick me on the ribs again, sending me sliding across the floor.

I yelped, then suddenly vomited, from the pain. All I could do was curl up in a fetal position, sobbing, as Edward stormed toward me again. He reached for my hair and grabbed a fistful of it, lifting me from the floor as I tried to pry his hands away.

Suddenly, I heard the sound of the chains again; I heard the sound of the chains breaking.

Something heavy and metallic whipped toward Edward, hitting him hard across the back. He cried out and cursed, dropping me, before his eyes began to glow a bright shade of red. He whipped around to face Enzo, who now stood behind him, his hands curled up into fists at his sides. His back was no longer bleeding, and there was a fury in his eyes that I had never seen before.

“You’re a fucking monster,” Enzo growled, advancing on Edward.

Edward only chuckled. He dodged as Enzo tried to whip him with the chains again, then stooped down and picked me up, holding me in front of himself as I squirmed to get free. His hand was clamped firmly around my neck, restricting my breathing while my feet barely touched the floor.

“Go on,” Edward said. “Try to hit me again. You’ll only kill her.”

Enzo’s eyes flickered down to me. Behind the fury, behind the hatred, there was also a deep pain mixed with a profound sense of love.

“Don’t listen to him,” I choked out, clutching Edward’s hands as I tried to pry his thick fingers away from my neck. “H-He won’t...”

Edward’s grip only tightened around my throat. “I will, though. And it’ll be your fault, Enzo. You hear me? When I take her dead body to The Sister, you’ll be in handcuffs beside the coffin. And the funny thing is this: you two lovebirds won’t even be buried together. Isn’t that sad?”

Enzo breathed heavily and bared his teeth, exposing sharp, elongated canines.

“You can’t shift,” Edward said with a dark chuckle. “I made sure of that when I injected you with my special concoction. For all I know, you might not ever shift again... Assuming you make it out of here alive.”

I tried to choke out a response. I wanted to tell Enzo that Edward was a liar, but I couldn’t. His grip on my throat was too strong, and I could feel my face going purple and my vision beginning to fade.

Edward, noticing this, dropped me. I fell to the ground in a gasping heap, clawing at my throbbing neck as the feeling of something being clamped around it continued. From my position on the floor, through my spotty vision, I could see another flash of chains,

followed by the sound of a loud, ear-piercing growl that was so deep it made my chest vibrate.

Then, I saw a flash of dark fur. Large paws, bigger than my head, whirled past my face. I saw Enzo being thrown to the ground, pinned beneath those paws.

“Enzo!” I cried, my voice hoarse, my throat burning. I tried to push myself up, but my arms were weak and shook beneath me, finally giving way and sending me back to the floor. I sobbed, reaching for Enzo with a shaking hand as I saw him grapple with the massive wolf, holding back its snapping jaws with his hands as they slowly inched closer and closer to his throat. I imagined those jaws closing around his throat and biting down. I imagined those long, sharp canine teeth sinking into Enzo’s flesh and tearing out his throat.

As I screamed for him, Enzo’s eyes slid over to me for a split second, although it felt like an eternity as our eyes locked. I sobbed, reaching for him as Edward’s jaws snapped at him...

Suddenly, as though my gaze gave him strength, Enzo gritted his teeth and jerked his arm, whipping the chains up and around Edward’s neck. He grabbed the end of the chain and pulled as hard as he could, causing Edward to yelp in pain and scramble away. Enzo still wasn’t strong enough to hold on, but it was enough to make Edward recoil.

I took my chance, mustering what little strength I had, to scramble to my feet. Everything moved in slow motion as I ran toward Edward, picking up the metal rod that he had just used to beat me, and jabbed the end of it as hard as I could into his ribs.

Edward recoiled again with another ear-piercing cry of pain. He leaped away, shaking the rod loose from his ribs as a spray of blood splattered on the ground. He then turned on his heel and ran toward me, leaping over me. His front paws collided with me, sending me to the ground, but he wasn’t intending on killing me — he was running.

I fell to the ground, watching as Edward burst through the door, his wolf form knocking the door clean out of the wall. There was the sound of scrambling claws on the tile floor, and then silence as he made his escape.

“Nina!” I heard Enzo’s voice echo in my ears over the sound of my own heartbeat.

He ran over to me and rolled me onto my back, his face wrought with worry as he looked down at me.

“We did it,” I whispered, a smile spreading across my face.

But Enzo wasn’t smiling. “Hold on,” he said, scooping me up off the floor with his eyes wide as he looked down at my stomach. “We’ve gotta get you to Tiffany.”

“Tiffany...?” I replied, but before Enzo could answer, everything went dark

Chapter 107 The Good Doctor

Enzo

I thought we were finally free at first when I watched Edward run away with his tail between his legs, but as I looked over at Nina and saw the puddle of blood growing around her, I knew that the real fight had only just begun.

She appeared to be in shock. When I picked her up, cursing under my breath for what Edward had done to her, she looked momentarily confused before she promptly lost consciousness from the blood loss.

“Shit,” I whispered as I held her in my arms. I closed my eyes and tried to teleport, but I couldn’t. Whatever poison Edward had given me must have stunted all of my abilities, just like he said it would. If it weren’t for Nina healing me earlier, I would’ve been dead by now from blood loss.

I had to get Nina out on foot. Lisa had mentioned before that these tunnels were underneath the school, where they used to transport the bodies back when the school was supposedly a sanatorium. There had to be an entrance in the school, then. I was certain that Edward had been using it to get in and out of his office without being detected.

The sliding metal door, which now lay on the ground in a crumpled heap, sparkled slightly as I carefully stepped over it from the electronics inside the keypad being smashed. The large chains, which were still hooked around my wrists, felt heavier than lead as I walked, but I couldn’t let them stop me and I didn’t have the time right now to figure out how to get them off. If I didn’t hurry, Nina would bleed out.

I made my way through the tunnels, periodically looking down at Nina’s helpless body in my arms to check if she was still breathing, until the tunnel eventually widened and began to angle upwards.

Lisa wasn’t lying, I thought to myself as I walked, picking up my pace. This must have been where they wheeled the bodies down.

I passed a large room that appeared to be a morgue. All of the mortuary cabinets were open, so it was empty — but I couldn’t help but wonder if Edward would have stuffed my body in there if he had gotten his way and killed me.

Eventually, the tunnel came to an end, and I was met with two double doors. I pushed on one, shifting Nina’s weight into one arm, and it opened with ease. As I did so, I heard her groan slightly, which was a good sign. At least she wasn’t dying just yet.

The doors led me into a dark room that looked almost like a storage room, and suddenly, as I heard the bubbly female voice on the other side of the door, I knew exactly where I was: Tiffany's office.

"Tiffany!" I shouted, bursting in through the doors and causing her to screech. She leaped off of her stool, dropping her phone, and clamped her hand over her mouth as she saw me and Nina.

Quickly, she picked up the phone. "I'll call you back," she said, gesturing for me to lay Nina down on one of the beds. "Sick student." She hung up, then ran over to me. Her eyes landed first on Nina, taking in her bloodied and bruised appearance, then slid over to me, taking in my equally bruised and bloody appearance as well as the chains on my wrists.

"Don't ask," I said, crouching to cup Nina's face in my hands. "Just fucking help her."

Tiffany nodded and ran to grab a cart of medical supplies. She wheeled it over, then I helped her to cut through Nina's shirt with a pair of scissors and move the fabric aside.

Nina's stomach made a squelching sound. It was even worse than I thought; Edward had dug his claws into her stomach when he barged past her, leaving her with two enormous gashes right on her stomach.

"Holy shit," Tiffany said under her breath. I watched, horrified and clutching Nina's tiny hand like my life depended on it, as Tiffany cleaned the blood away around the wound. She then disinfected the wound,

which made me grateful that Nina was knocked out, and began to stitch it up.

When she was finished, she ran over to the sink and sanitized her hands. "Get that IV cart from over there," she said, pointing with a bloody finger at a tall metal rack with wheels. I jumped up and grabbed it, wheeling it over, then watched as she dried her hands and came over. She placed a plastic bag of fluids on the rack and connected a long tube to it, then inserted the IV needle into Nina's arm.

As she did that, Nina's eyes suddenly shot open, wide and frenzied. She began to thrash, screaming something about not wanting to take her medicine. I ran over and grabbed her by the shoulders, pushing her down into the bed and bringing my face closer to hers so she could see me.

"Nina!" I shouted. "It's okay! It's me!"

Recognition flashed across her face — then, suddenly, her eyes rolled back and her eyelids closed once more. I looked up to see Tiffany infusing something into the IV.

“Morphine,” she said, her hands shaking as she pulled them away from the bag. “She needs to heal. Thrashing around won’t make that happen any faster.”

I nodded, releasing my grip on Nina’s shoulders, and stepped away. Now, Tiffany came over to me and began to inspect me. “I’m fine,” I said, pulling away as she went to touch the wounds on my back, which had closed up into scars thanks to Nina’s healing. “I just wanna get these chains off.”

Without a word, Tiffany nodded and retrieved a few bobby pins from her hair. Together, we worked at the locks on the cuffs around my wrists for at least an hour, occasionally taking breaks to check on Nina, until one finally clicked open, then the other. The chains fell to the floor with a crash. I rubbed my sore wrists as I stared down at them.

Tiffany disappeared for a few moments into the very same storage room that I emerged through and returned with a shirt, a bag of crackers, and an electrolyte drink. Once I had the shirt on, I devoured the

crackers and chugged the drink, although I could’ve eaten a lot more after being locked in that dungeon for who knows how long.

“Now,” Tiffany said, sitting across from where Nina lay. “Do you wanna tell me what happened?”

I hesitated, wondering if I should even tell her anything because doing so would reveal the existence of werewolves, but at this point, I figured I could trust her... So I explained everything.

When I was finished, Tiffany merely nodded. She didn’t seem fazed in the slightest.

“...You knew, didn’t you?” I asked.

“Well, I knew about werewolves,” she said. “I didn’t know what Edward was up to down there. He said it was just research, so I stopped questioning him when he kept coming out of the tunnels, although I started to notice that some of my supplies were going missing, and I was planning on asking him about that. He’s always been a bit of an odd guy; I never thought he would do anything nefarious. And it’s creepy as hell down there, so I never went to investigate it myself. Now... I wish I had.”

I shook my head. “No. It’s good that you stayed up here. I don’t know what he would’ve done with you if you’d found it. And I’m glad that you were here when Nina needed you.”

There was a long pause. Nina moved a bit in her sleep, which was a comfort.

“Tiffany?” I asked.

“Hm?”

“So, if you knew about werewolves... Did you know I was one all along?”

Tiffany nodded as a bit of a smile spread across her lips. “Of course I knew! Those PT results are way too good. Besides, I... I knew your father.”

My eyes widened, but before I could ask anything else, Nina moved again and groaned.

“She’s waking up,” Tiffany said, standing. “Let’s make sure she doesn’t freak out again. I think she needs to see you to stay calm, so stay by her side.”

I nodded and crouched down beside Nina, taking her hand in mine and pressing it to my lips as I looked on with concern. If she was going to wake up, I wanted to be here for her

Chapter 108 Dreaming in Red

Nina

After Enzo picked me up off the floor, I felt my vision begin to flicker before everything went black.

I opened my eyes a few moments later to find myself back in the forest clearing. Cora was no longer sitting across from me, but as I dug my fingers into the blanket of soft red fur surrounding me, I realized now that she was laying underneath me. I sat up, looking around. My body felt light and nimble, and I could see out of both eyes now. All of the pain that had overtaken me before from Edward’s beatings was gone. My stomach, which had just been full of searing pain from Edward’s claws digging into me just moments earlier, was now fully healed without so much as a scar.

“Am I dead?” I asked as I looked around.

Cora lifted her head and shook it back and forth. “No. You’ll be fine. You’re just here for now until they fix you up.”

“Who’s ‘they’?”

“Enzo, and that other woman,” Cora replied. “The nurse.”

“Tiffany?”

“Mhm. She’s patching you up as we speak.”

I smiled, imagining that Tiffany was deftly fixing up my wounds. If I was going to trust anyone to take care of my injuries, it would be her. I was glad that they didn’t take me to a hospital, where the doctors would have only made my trauma worse by locking me up

in another room with fluorescent lights. I stood, then, and started to walk around the forest clearing.

“Do you live here all of the time?” I asked.

Once again, Cora shook her big red head back and forth. “This isn’t real. I just live inside your head, and it seems like you’ve subconsciously taken a liking to this particular place.”

I thought back to the night that I found Justin in the forest clearing — the night that I discovered that he had been turned into a rogue — but this clearing didn’t look anything like that. It took several moments of racking my brain as I tried to remember where I had seen this place before to finally discover where I was.

“Oh!” I finally said out loud. “It’s the clearing that we all went camping in.”

Even though that was the very place where K had tried to drag me through the portal, I supposed that I did make some happy memories with my friends in this very spot. As I remembered my time here, the tents that we slept in slowly popped up around me like a pop-up book, followed by the campfire. It quickly turned from a scene of a bright and sunny day to a cool and quiet night, with only the fire to illuminate the camp. With the firelight flickering, Cora’s fur looked almost like it blended in with the flames as she laid beside it.

I thought even harder then, remembering the time I spent with my friends here. Just like the tents, they, too, popped up around me like a pop-up book. There was Lori and Jessica, and Matt and James, and... Enzo. They were all sitting around the fire, frozen in time like a picture. The only spot that was empty was mine, so I sat there and shut my eyes, remembering how we had played spin the bottle.

“Hey!” Jessica said, coming to life and jumping up. She picked up an empty beer bottle and shook its contents out, then held it up for everyone to see. “Who wants to play Spin the Bottle?”

Everyone was silent for a moment.

“C’mon, guys!” she said. “It’s just a game.”

“I’m down,” Matt chimed in. Lori shrugged, while James and Enzo stayed silent.

“James?” Jessica said, shaking the bottle gently. “What do you say?”

“Oh, alright,” James said, throwing his hands up in surrender. “I guess it could be fun.”

“Well, looks like we have a majority vote here,” Jessica said, setting the bottle down in the middle of the circle, right next to the fire pit. “Sorry, Nina and Enzo. You guys don’t have to play if you don’t want to.”

“I’ll play.”

Enzo’s voice was firm and sure, just like it always was. When I looked over at him, he was staring right at me from across the fire pit. My heart started racing, even though this was a memory — I had already lived it.

“Yay!” Jessica said, clapping her hands. “Nina, you’re playing, right?”

“Sure,” I said quietly, my eyes still locked on Enzo.

Jessica grinned. “I’ll go first.” She spun the bottle.

The bottle spun around several times, then finally landed on Matt, who looked devilishly pleased as Jessica leaned over to him and gave him a peck on the lips.

“Lori, you go next,” Jessica said.

Lori sighed and spun the bottle. It spun for several long moments; she had spun it hard and fast, and it went around quite a few times before finally landing on Jessica.

“Oooh!” Matt said, grinning.

“I- Uh- I didn’t- You don’t have to, Jessica,” Lori said nervously. Her face was a bright shade of red.

Jessica smiled as she absentmindedly twirled a strand of blonde hair around her finger. “I don’t mind.”

I watched as Jessica and Lori kissed for the first time, a smile spreading across my lips to see them finally realizing their feelings for each other. I wondered if they were worried about me right now, though, and my smile faded.

Now, everyone looked at me expectantly; I reached out and spun the bottle, but I knew it would land on Enzo. When it did, my friends bantered once again.

“Ooh, you could cut the tension with a knife, it’s so thick.”

“Shut up!” Smack.

Enzo stood and walked around the fire, stopping in front of me. I looked up at him, my heart racing a mile a minute, but this time, I was more excited for the feeling of his lips

than I was afraid of it. He crouched in front of me and placed his hand under my chin. His glowing red eyes were locked on me, unwavering, loyal.

He kissed me, swift and hard, and his lips lingered on mine for several long moments before we slowly pulled away.

Without another word, Enzo stood and walked back to his spot on the other side of the fire.

The scene paused again, and everyone became frozen in time. I felt Cora sidle up to me, and as I closed my eyes, tasting Enzo's kiss on my lips, I knew that she was saying goodbye. I was waking up, now. I reached out and tangled my fingers in her fur, letting out a deep sigh.

"It's probably gonna hurt a lot when I wake up, huh?" I asked, my eyes still closed.

"Probably. It's okay, though."

"When will I see you again?"

Cora didn't answer. I opened my eyes to see her one last time, but when I opened them, I was no longer sitting by the campfire. I was laying in the dark infirmary. It was quiet — was I alone? It must have been nighttime.

I slowly turned my head, feeling that the pain that was there before was still there, but it wasn't so bad now. My eye was less swollen, so I could see better than before, and the pounding headache was gone entirely. The only real pain was the one in my abdomen, where Edward had cut me with his claws.

I realized then that I wasn't alone. There was a warmth in my hand, and the sound of soft breathing next to me. I looked up and smiled to see Enzo sitting beside me with the same unwavering, loyal look in his glowing red eyes as he did on the night that we played Spin the Bottle

My Hockey Alpha Chapter 108

Dreaming in Red

Nina

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in his glowing red eyes as he did on the night that we played Spin the Bottle

Chapter 109 The Peacekeepers

Nina

The infirmary was dimly lit and quiet when I woke up. It took a few long moments for my eyes to adjust before I finally realized where I was and what had happened. My mind felt foggy, although not nearly as foggy as it did when Edward gave me my medicine.

"Nina," Enzo said softly, squeezing my hand. I looked up at him, a smile twitching at my lips, but as I opened my mouth to speak I quickly realized that my voice was too hoarse to get a word out.

"It's okay," he said. "You don't have to talk. Tiffany is here and she'll take care of you."

I nodded weakly before looking up to see Tiffany approaching from behind Enzo. Her eyebrows were knit together with worry.

"Hey there," she said softly. "I'm sorry this happened to you. I promise we'll find Edward and bring him to justice... Enzo was just filling me in on everything."

I looked over at Enzo once more, my own brows knit together now as I wondered if he had told her about werewolves. Realizing this, Enzo nodded. "Tiffany knows about werewolves. She has all along, apparently."

"I'll tell you all about it when you're feeling a bit better. For now, just get some rest, okay? Your body is healing at an accelerated rate, so you'll be right as rain in no time."

I wasn't sure exactly what Tiffany meant; I knew I had a wolf now, but she still hadn't emerged completely, and I wasn't sure if she ever would after all of the poison Edward gave me. But Tiffany was right — now was not the time for questions. I had to rest.

...

Later, as the sun began to come up, I eventually felt strong enough to sit up. Tiffany gave me a t-shirt and sweatpants to wear, then checked my wounds, relieved to see that even the gashes in my stomach were making a rapid recovery. Soon I was able to stand and walk around in brief spurts with Tiffany and Enzo's help.

Finally, once I was able to talk, Tiffany told me the story of how she knew about werewolves.

“When I was your age, in college, we had a hockey club here,” she said, holding my elbow as the three of us slowly walked back and forth across the empty infirmary. “The club consisted of myself, as well as several others. Those others were your mother, Nina, and Enzo’s father. Edward, as well as Ronan’s father, were also part of the club, as well as our current dean — Cynthia — and James’ mother.”

I was a bit taken aback to hear that almost all of our parents were part of this hockey club, but I chose not to ask about it just yet so that Tiffany could keep telling the story.

“Except... The club wasn’t really a hockey club. It started out as one, but eventually developed into something else when there was an outbreak of ‘rabies’ on campus.”

“It wasn’t rabies, was it?” I asked, remembering that Tiffany had mentioned this before when she showed me the picture of the club.

Tiffany shook her head. “No. There were a few werewolves — sent by the leaders of the Crescent faction — who were going around campus and turning people into rogues. The dean at the time covered it up by claiming it was a rabies outbreak, but we knew better — because we already knew about werewolves, since several of our club members were werewolves themselves.”

“Who were the werewolves that the Crescents sent to turn people?” Enzo chimed in. “And why?”

“I don’t know who they were.” Tiffany paused as we turned around at the end of the room and began making our way back toward the other side. By now, I was already feeling well enough to walk on my

own, and was able to let go of their arms — but I still chose to hold Enzo’s arm as we walked, just because I needed to feel his warmth. “The Crescents wanted to take over Mountainview,” she continued. “You see, at the time, the Crescents and the Fullmoons were currently warring over which faction should control the town. Since it’s located right on the border of the werewolf realm...”

“...It’s the perfect place for control over both the werewolves and the humans,” Enzo interrupted.

Tiffany nodded. “So, while the Crescents and the Fullmoons were fighting and killing each other, the seven of us got to know each other as we bonded over our love for hockey. Some of us began to realize that the war was pointless, and so the hockey club eventually turned into a safe haven for young Crescents and Fullmoons who didn’t want to fight. We began to secretly refer to ourselves as the Peacekeepers, and would take every chance we had to bring more people into our club.”

“Humans, too?” I asked.

“Mhm. Cynthia, James’ mother, and I weren’t the only humans — well, Cynthia is a hybrid, but she has no wolf or abilities. There were plenty more who wanted to advocate for werewolves, who believed that werewolves weren’t monsters.”

There was a long pause. Eventually, we stopped pacing and sat down at the large table at the back of the room. Tiffany sighed, passing her hand over her tired face, and took a gulp of her coffee before she continued.

“It was great — for a while. We would hold regular meetings, have friendly hockey competitions between the two factions, and eventually began to plan out various protests against the older Crescents and Fullmoons to try to convince them to stop their fighting and live in harmony. But then... Everything changed. The Crescent chief and the Fullmoon chief at the time both died suddenly during the same battle, leaving Ronan’s father and Enzo’s father as the sole heirs to the factions. We tried to stop them, but the power quickly got to their heads. They were too young and full of fire to have so much power, and the fighting only got worse. Eventually, the hockey club began to split up as the members of each faction felt loyalty toward the two boys who were not only their leaders, but their old friends. Soon, the only ones left were myself, Nina’s mother, Edward, the dean, and James’ mother. James’ mother quickly began to fear the werewolves now that we were low in numbers, so she ran away.”

“So there were only four of you left after that,” I said.

Once again, Tiffany nodded solemnly. “Soon after that, however, Nina’s mother was discovered to be having a love affair with none other than Ronan’s father. But the thing is, Enzo’s father was in love with her, and had been for years. I still don’t know exactly what happened, but Nina — your mother left suddenly. None of us ever heard from her again. I was especially devastated, because your mother and I were always close. When I heard that you were in the candidate pool to be my intern, I immediately picked you.”

I stared at Tiffany with wide eyes. “Why didn’t you tell me sooner?” I asked.

She looked down at her hands and shook her head. “I don’t know. I was afraid, I guess. I didn’t know how much your mother had told you about her past, and I didn’t want to scare you away.”

Enzo, who had been silent all this time, finally spoke up. “What about Edward?” he asked. “What role did he play in all of this?”

Tiffany shrugged. “He stayed with Cynthia and I. All these years, he led us to believe that he was still a Peacekeeper. Cynthia became the new dean, vowing to make the

campus a neutral zone. I became the school doctor, so that I could always be here if there was another war. So I could protect the students. And Edward..."

"He was supposed to keep the humans from discovering too much," Enzo said. "To protect them."

"Yes." Tiffany looked up then, and I saw that her eyes were full of tears. "Edward was always a little distant, aloof. But... I loved him. I never stopped loving him. I guess I let that cloud my judgment."

"It's okay," I whispered. I reached across the table and squeezed Tiffany's hand. She squeezed back.

After another silence, Tiffany wiped a tear away from her cheek with the back of her hand and stood. "Come on," she said. "Let's take another look at your wounds. I'll bet they're almost healed by now."

Chapter 110 Some Scars Never Heal

Nina

Just as Tiffany suspected, my wounds were indeed almost fully healed.

"You'll likely have some scars on your belly from those gashes," she said as she carefully removed the stitches from the already healed flesh, "but other than that... I think you're okay."

I nodded, feeling both grateful for Tiffany's help and awed by my new healing abilities, but as I looked over at Enzo, I couldn't help but wonder if he would ever heal like this again. The relieved expression on his face had turned to one of deep sadness, which came as no surprise after everything that had happened.

By this point, the campus was starting to wake up once more, and I was certain that my friends were starting to get worried about me. Tiffany had informed me that I was missing for only three days, although it felt like years — but I still knew that Jessica and Lori would be concerned, so I decided to go home.

Enzo walked me home. He was quiet during the walk, but stayed by my side. His presence deflected any strange looks I received, considering the fact that the last time I had been seen, I was vomiting in a campus trash can after supposedly sleeping with Ronan — although I was now certain that it really was all a lie to get me away from Enzo so that Edward could take me away to whoever this 'Sister' person was.

When we arrived back at the dorm, Lori and Jessica were shocked to see us walk in; so much so, in fact, that Jessica dropped her spatula as she was making pancakes and

ran over to me, pulling me into a tight hug, while Lori practically vaulted over the couch to do the same.

“Where have you been?” Jessica asked. “We were really worried about you.”

I felt tears begin to well up in my eyes. Those tears began to flow, and soon I was bawling to my friends on the couch. I knew, then, that I would have to finally tell them. There was no other way to explain any of this to them without giving them the entire picture, and all of the sneaking around had gone on for long enough. I needed the support of my friends, especially because Edward was still out there somewhere.

So, I explained everything.

...

When I was finished, Lori stared back at me in abject shock, while Jessica only nodded thoughtfully. Meanwhile, Enzo had been quiet the entire time, leaning on the kitchen counter behind me.

“Well?” I asked. “Do you think I’m crazy?”

“I mean, sort of—” Lori began, but Jessica stopped her.

“I know you’re not crazy, because I know that werewolves are real.”

Lori, Enzo and I all looked at Jessica in shock. “How?” I asked.

She shrugged, inspecting her nails as she spoke. “My great-grandma was a hybrid. I think she was, like, a quarter werewolf or something. So I don’t have any real werewolf DNA left in me, really, but it’s no secret to my family.”

“So you knew all along, and you didn’t tell me?” Lori asked, her eyes wide.

Jessica merely shrugged again. “I dunno. I had a feeling that something fishy was going on, but I figured that Nina would tell us in her own time.”

While Jessica and Lori began to bicker over whether Jessica should’ve told her these things sooner, I looked up to see Enzo sitting on the kitchen stool now. He was staring out the window with a stony expression on his face and unblinking eyes; I could tell that he was still reliving the experience in his mind, as was I. I stood and walked over to him, squeezing his hand.

“You’re tired.”

He nodded. I knew that he hadn’t slept all night. “I should probably go home and get some sleep,” he said, standing.

I stopped him just as he started to make his way toward the door. “No,” I said, my voice quivering. He looked down at me, puzzled, as I shook my head vigorously. “Please stay. Just until tomorrow.”

Enzo paused, his brown eyes searching my face, before he finally nodded silently. I realized now that I was gripping his hand tightly as though my life depended on it, like letting him go would cause him to vanish from existence.

And so, while Jessica and Lori continued to bicker, I led him to my room.

Once we were inside with the door shut tightly behind us, it felt eerily quiet and foreign. I realized that I had almost forgotten how my room looked; Edward’s hypnotism had worked so well on me that it had become a distant blob in my memory, nothing more than a vague daydream.

“You kept this?” Enzo asked, walking over to my desk and picking up the wolf plushie that he had won for me at the Halloween fair.

I nodded, a smile tugging at my mouth as I remembered that night. I wished, now, that I had gone with him to the fair — not with Ronan.

He held the wolf in his hands for a few moments, studying it, before he set it back down. “Is it alright if I shower?”

“Sure,” I said. “There should be a clean towel on the rack.”

I watched as Enzo made his way over to the bathroom. He turned on the shower, then began to lift his shirt over his head, but as he did, I could see him wince. He seemed to struggle, as though he had lost mobility in his arms.

“Here,” I said, running over to him and grabbing the hem of his shirt. “I’ll help you.”

He hesitated for a moment before shaking his head and taking a step back, looking ashamed. “No. I don’t want you to see me like... Like this.”

I frowned. “Let me help you.”

Enzo stared back at me reluctantly before finally relenting and letting me lift the shirt over his head. The bathroom began to fill with steam, and once I had gotten his shirt off, I took a few steps back and quickly turned on my heel to give him his privacy. Before I could leave, however, I felt a firm hand on my shoulder and turned around to see him looking at me with that same unwavering, wide-eyed expression.

“Shower with me,” he said.

I felt my face get hot and my heart quicken its pace. “Are you sure?”

He only nodded, then stepped toward me and lifted my shirt off over my head in the same way that I had done for him. His hands lingered on my bare waist for a moment before he unbuttoned his jeans and slipped them off. I pulled off my sweatpants, and for what felt like an eternity, we stood in front of each other, our faces red, as we looked at each other's bodies.

"After you." He opened the shower door. I stepped in, realizing now that I hadn't had a shower in three days. I winced briefly as the hot water washed over the wounds that still remained on my skin. Enzo stepped in after me.

We were silent as we held each other beneath the hot water. There was nothing we could say — no words could heal the pain we felt from our shared experience. Eventually, as though it was only natural for us to do so, we took turns washing each other. The soap didn't wash away the scars, but the ritual of it helped, at least a little.

Enzo wouldn't let me at first, but when I finally convinced him to let me wash his back, he hesitantly turned around — and for the first time, I saw the scars that lined his back.

I cried, although he didn't see it. These scars would never heal, and they had been caused because he cared about me