

Letters Sent To Eternity

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 411

68 – Elara

I ordered every warrior under my command to stay close to home—no wandering off, no traveling, no unnecessary socializing. Still, I didn't want the witch responsible for this chaos to think she had scared me into hiding. So, the school remained open, and so did all the shops. I realized how foolish that was during the drive to Red Fang—how could anyone go out safely if we were supposed to stay put?

Thank the Goddess someone else was behind the wheel. The pressure behind my eyes throbbed painfully, like a storm building just beneath the surface of my skull.

“Stop the car!” Marietta's sharp command made us all jerk forward as the brakes slammed down. “Elara, we need to find her—now.” Her voice cut through the fog in my mind, but it felt like I was trapped inside a tunnel, distant and disconnected.

“What?” I mumbled, my words slurring as if I were drunk.

“Now! Elara, feel the pull—show us.” Marietta grabbed me, her hands firm but steady. Everything around me was blurry, my senses dulled. I tried to follow her instructions, but I felt nothing—no pull, no direction. Then, when I looked toward that emptiness, it worsened. She wanted me to lead her into that darkness, to the source of the disturbance. I could do that. I staggered toward the feeling, though I could barely see a few feet ahead. My wolf was silent, no reassuring presence in my mind. This was bad. I knew it was bad. Yet, my mouth remained shut, my body moving on autopilot while my mind was trapped in a haze. I couldn't even command my arms or legs.

Suddenly, a shout pierced the silence. Someone was yelling, but I couldn't see who. My vision was clouded with bursts of color, like static on a broken screen. Then, a rush of air and sound vanished in an instant, and I fell hard onto the ground. The fuzziness disappeared, replaced by sharp clarity and bright light.

“What the hell was that?” I grumbled, rubbing my sore backside.

“They were waiting for us,” Marietta explained grimly. “Someone knows you and your mate are apart—and that you'd come to him in a crisis. This was a trap to keep you separated. You're weaker apart. You need Ben.”

I pushed myself up too quickly, my stomach rebelling. I refused to vomit here, in front of these witches who were no better than my Elders, those old voices telling me I needed a man to lead my pack.

“We’re going to meet with Ben, Junior, and their top warriors because something’s happened to Junior. I’m not running to Ben because we had a spat. And if any of you think I need a man to do my job right, you can go screw yourselves.” Marietta looked ready to argue, but I raised my hand, cutting her off, and headed to the car. Since I was walking and conscious, I assumed whatever magic had attacked me was gone. I could feel Marietta and Brianna close behind, but I didn’t want to admit how weak the magic had left me. We had to check on Junior and figure out a plan—one that would shift us from defense to offense.

Sliding into the back seat of the SUV, I was annoyed when Marietta and Brianna squeezed in beside me.

Brianna placed a gentle hand on my knee. “We’re not trying to insult you, Elara…”

“Speak for yourself,” Marietta snapped. I shot her a sharp look.

“You heard me,” she said, her tone firm. “You and your ‘I’m a tough woman’ act need to stop. It’s going to get you killed. Brianna’s way of saying things is softer, but you don’t need soft right now. You need the truth. You need your mate. Don’t even think about arguing.” She jabbed a long-nailed finger at me. “I didn’t say you need a man. I said you need your mate. That could be a man or a woman—wolf, human, witch, vampire, fae—it doesn’t matter. Gender isn’t the point. What matters is the person your goddess chose to be your best. You’re stronger with your mate. To protect your pack—and help Red Fang’s young Alpha—you have to accept that. I know it’s not easy, but it’s a start.”

“Now that she’s finished scolding you,” Brianna said softly, “you need to eat. Your body isn’t used to the magic that just hit you, and you and your wolf fought it well.” She handed me a container of fruit.

I accepted it quietly. At this close range, I couldn’t avoid them, and hearing Brianna mention my wolf made me want to check on her. We still had half the drive ahead.

“Hey,” I whispered, “how are you feeling?”

“Like crap,” my wolf answered, the tone dry but honest. “But that’s expected. I just wish I could see what we’re fighting. This isn’t anything we trained for. Hell, we never even talked about this with your dad as a threat.”

“Yeah, I know,” I said. “What do you think about what Marietta said—about mates?”

“She’s the first woman who’s really gotten through to you,” my wolf chuckled softly, “like the big sister you never had, telling you straight without worrying about your feelings. Because she doesn’t care how you feel as long as you get it. She’s right. Whatever that was drained us both and made us useless. If it had been a physical attack, we’d have gotten everyone killed because we couldn’t fight. When we reach them, I need to touch Ben—physical contact will heal us faster. And we need to talk—seriously—about marking him.”

“Fine,” I sighed. It had to happen eventually. Might as well do it if it helps defend the packs.

“We’re here,” Brianna announced softly beside me.

My gaze snapped to Ben, standing close to a furious Malcom Junior.

“Maybe I should go first,” I muttered to the car. “He doesn’t look happy to see us.” I glanced at Marietta. She nodded and slid out, letting me pass. We both understood: if Malcom was angry about the spell cast on him—and didn’t know or trust that these witches weren’t the ones who did it—he might attack. I couldn’t let him hurt the only people truly trying to help us.

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 412

69 – Elara

“Hey, Junior. You seem like you’re feeling better...” I begin, but he interrupts me sharply.

“I was attacked by my own pack during a run, then locked away in my home—and trapped inside my own mind—for an entire month,” he growls, his voice thick with anger. “Feeling better isn’t even on my list of concerns. How dare you bring them here with you?”

I let out a breath, trying to keep calm. “You need to calm down, baby Alpha,” I say, letting the jab hang between us. “You’re not the only one who’s been targeted by magic. Right beside you are two coven witches—the leaders of their groups.” I nod toward Marietta and Brianna, ready to say more, but before I can, my mate steps forward from behind Malcolm, his protective presence almost tangible.

“What happened?” His voice is low but charged with concern.

There’s a wave of protective energy radiating from him, and I’m caught in a swirl of conflicting feelings—I hate it, yet I crave it all at once. No one has ever given me this kind of undivided attention before. It’s overwhelming and yet strangely comforting. I don’t even notice when he moves directly in front of me. When I finally meet those warm brown eyes, my heart softens just a bit, but I quickly straighten up, reminding myself we’re not alone. He places a gentle hand on my shoulder, and we both catch our breath. It’s not the familiar pull of the mate bond—it’s something else entirely, but it feels incredible. Suddenly, Ben stumbles, and I reach out instinctively to steady him.

“Why didn’t you tell me you were attacked?” he whispers, concern thick in his tone.

“What are you talking about?” I ask, unable to let go of him. A buzzing sensation returns to my mind, but this time, it’s light and soothing rather than painful.

My arms are suddenly wrenched away from Ben, and my wolf growls low in warning. She does not like being separated from her mate.

“The two of you can deal with your feelings later,” Malcolm snaps, his voice sharp with authority. “Right now, I want to know what the hell is going on in our packs. And I want answers—NOW!”

Turning to face him, I adopt a defensive stance, letting my wolf’s aura flare in warning. No baby Alpha is going to bark orders here. Malcolm hasn’t been in this role long, barely started training when he took over.

“Stop!” Brianna’s voice cuts through without shouting, firm and commanding. “Alpha Malcolm, don’t let anger cloud your judgment. We’re all here to work together—to protect the people we’ve been entrusted to lead and care for. Elara, what just happened with Ben?”

“I don’t know,” I admit. “He touched me, and all the pain and nausea I’d been feeling just... vanished.”

“Look at your mate,” Brianna urges, nodding toward Ben, who now looks pale and queasy.

“Did he take the pain from me?” I ask, the only explanation that makes sense. “How could that even be possible?”

“I believe Ben is siphoning your pain and injuries,” Brianna explains. “He can pull away whatever is meant to harm you.” My heart skips a beat at her words.

“Neither of us are marked,” I say slowly. “How can such a connection even exist?”

“No one knows for sure,” Brianna replies, “but I have some theories. Let’s start by comparing what your packs have in common and go from there. But stay close to your mate.”

I shake my head at the thought of touching him again if that’s what happens. If he can absorb my pain or injuries during a fight, I know without a doubt he’d do it, even if it meant risking himself. That’s the kind of man he is. But I can’t let him get hurt.

“For once, we agree about something concerning our mate,” my wolf grumbles. “But stay close. I feel better just being near him.”

“I can do that,” I answer, following the group to a clearing where someone has arranged a circle of stones for a firepit. One of the coven witches brushes her hand over a log inside the pit, and flames spring to life. I see magic performed every day, yet it never ceases to amaze me.

“I know you don’t need it, but it might make our coven members more comfortable,” Brianna says, her tone more diplomatic than Malcolm’s. “Would you mind if we cast a warding spell around the group to keep out the cold?”

Malcolm looks at me for permission. “It’s fine. They’re affected by the cold coming in, and the fire can only do so much. You can step outside whenever you want.”

“Fine,” Brianna agrees, “but I want your word you’ll remove the ward if anyone asks—no questions.”

“Agreed. And Elara is right—you’re not trapped inside. Think of it more like a large invisible tent. Our bodies are still human and feel temperature changes.”

With everyone accommodated, Malcolm leans forward, sitting stiffly by the fire, surrounded by his warriors. “Now, what the hell is going on? Why was I locked in my home for a month? Why does Elara’s touch weaken Ben? They’re mates—the opposite should be true.”

Ben and I take turns updating him on everything that’s happened in our pack since we last saw him. Marietta and Brianna fill in the gaps about magic. That part seems to frustrate Malcolm even more.

“What do you mean you don’t fully understand what this rogue witch can do? Aren’t you both elders and leaders? Don’t you have a connection to your Goddess? Ask her what the hell is going on and how to stop it! Wolves and witches are dying because of this bitch’s cause!”

“Chaos magic is exactly that—chaos,” Marietta explains. “It manifests differently in every witch who wields it. It can be a curse, a blessing, or both. We know it’s fueled by emotion, and those witches can manipulate spells cast by others without needing herbs, positions, or incantations. That’s what makes them dangerous but also invaluable in a crisis.”

“They’re a threat to everyone,” Malcolm growls. “Why not eliminate them as soon as you discover their chaotic magic?”

I’m halfway to standing up when Brianna speaks softly but firmly, “Because killing our own for being different isn’t our way.”

He wants to wipe out the unknown? What the hell is wrong with him?

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 413

Elara

“He’s scared. Fear warps people,” I muttered, flinching as if the thought had somehow escaped my mind aloud.

Ben shot back sharply, “That’s no excuse for talking about killing people!”

“He was trapped inside his own mind for a whole month,” Ben explained, his voice heavy with frustration. “I’m not defending what he did, but he was completely alone for nearly thirty days, feeling the magic pulse through him with no way to fight it. Healing from that takes time and experience.”

Marietta's eyes blazed with fury as she spat, "Chaos magic is what set you free from your prison, Ben. We've told you before—the magic itself isn't the problem; it's the person wielding it. Magic is neutral. You'd do well to remember that before you start suggesting wiping out an entire group of people." Her anger radiated like heat, and I found myself watching Brianna, waiting for her to step in if things escalated.

"That kind of thinking is dangerously close to the mindset of humans who discover our powers and decide they hate what they can't control," Marietta continued, taking a deep breath as her clenched fists relaxed at her sides. She was a remarkable speaker, and I knew I would learn a great deal just by observing her. She seemed to instinctively understand that we could sense and even feel the emotions of those around us. A skilled warrior, I'd never seen her fight, but I knew she studied her opponents carefully, preferring to win battles of the mind before any physical confrontation.

"So, what do we do?" Malcolm's voice cracked with frustration. "I'm sick of this crap! I know Elara feels the same. We're young—that's probably why we're being targeted." His pacing faltered abruptly as he turned sharply to Brianna. "Is this what happened to my dad? Was he targeted before me?"

In that moment, I saw the small boy beneath the tough exterior, and all I wanted was to pull him into a hug. But I knew he wouldn't appreciate it, so I stayed seated, my heart aching quietly.

"That's a possibility we have to consider," Brianna said solemnly. "This has been a long game for all of us, which means we have to be extra cautious about who we trust. If Eliza is behind all this, she's as chaotic as her magic. When she left us, it was because we refused to let her into the inner circle. Even we can recognize when someone is destined to abuse their power—and we try to stop it."

"She tried the same thing in my coven," Marietta added, and I sat up straighter, drawn in by their conversation. They worked so seamlessly together that I often forgot they led separate covens. In my mind, they were like mates—opposites in many ways, yet perfectly complementary, much like Ben and me.

"So, back to my original question," Malcolm said, folding his arms across his chest. I noticed how much he'd grown since I last saw him. Though still young, his body had hardened—softness replaced by a sharp jawline, defined forearms, and a broader frame. He looked every bit ready to step up and protect his pack.

"Combined border patrol," Ben declared, rising but not moving away from me. His leg brushed against my shoulder, grounding me. "We need a witch and a wolf working together. Witches can detect the magic, and wolves can protect them while they dismantle it. Is there any way to mask the Shadow Markers so Ash and Ember won't realize we're tampering with them?"

"That's difficult to say," Marietta replied thoughtfully. "Only the original caster would notice the magic snapping."

“Then I’ll leave that to you,” Ben said firmly. “Elara and I need to keep working the neutral territory between Red Fang and Black Claw. We seem to be the most affected by it, and I’m sure Junior is too, if it’s designed to keep us apart.”

I stood up, suddenly feeling awkward as they planned around me. “Will the incoming winter storm affect the magic?”

“Probably not,” Brianna answered, “but it might make finding the talismans more difficult. The pairs can protect each other—wolves with physical defenses, witches with magical ones.”

Junior’s voice cut in, “Are the markers the only focus? Or is there something else we should be watching for?”

“They need to see the cave,” I blurted out. Malcolm turned to me, curious. “They haven’t been there yet, and I want to know if that operation has moved or if it’s just been better warded. It’s been months—they’ve had time to fortify or relocate it, but I’m sure the magic left remnants either way.”

He nodded thoughtfully.

“We should also make sure whoever is paired with Junior, Elara, and me is prepared for the backlash,” Ben added. “Those markers are designed to hit us hardest.”

We spent a while hashing out logistics. All the witches traveling with us were paired with Malcolm’s wolves. Reluctantly, he had sent a few wolves and a witch to the packhouse to guard Luna Sam. They had wards of their own, and after losing his father and my parents, we couldn’t take any chances.

As we headed toward the SUV, Ben suddenly grabbed my arm. “We’re starting now.”

“Wait, what do you mean?” I asked, caught off guard.

“I didn’t stutter. We’re going now, and you’re staying with me. No more splitting up. I’m done with that—my wolf is done with it. We need to get to the bottom of this so you and I can figure out what the hell is going on.” He tugged me along, and since no one was rushing to rescue me, it seemed like he was getting his way. Assholes.

“What about staying with a witch to control the magic we find?” I suggested hesitantly.

“They’re following, but at a distance. We’re the bait now, the target. I want them to come to us, and I want this to end. Now.” With that, he ripped off his shirt and pants before shifting. His wolf took the clothes to one of my warriors, who tossed them in the back of the SUV, then looked at me expectantly.

“Ugh. Fine,” I grumbled. I’d been great at finding excuses to avoid one-on-one situations with him, but now he wasn’t leaving my side until we faced this head-on together.

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 414

71 – Ben

“Jason, can you stay close? Stick with Owen and Damon,” I instructed, my voice steady but urgent.

“What’s your plan?” he asked, eyes narrowing with concern.

“I’m not entirely sure yet. The past few days have been unbearable—worse than anything I’ve faced before. Watching Junior suffer, knowing she’s isolating herself on purpose... it’s tearing me apart. My wolf refuses to let me push her away, and I’m pretty sure hers feels the same. There has to be more to this than just her not wanting a man to take her Alpha position. But she won’t talk to me for more than five minutes at a time.” I sighed heavily, frustration gnawing at me.

“So, what? You’re thinking of locking her up until she gives in?” Jason’s tone was half teasing, half serious.

“At this point, if that’s what it takes, then yes.” I chuckled softly, trying to lighten the mood.

“There it is again!” Jason murmured inside my mind.

“What is?” I asked, glancing at him.

“That scent I was chasing when we first arrived. I caught it again just now.”

“Go back around. Take Owen and Damon with you. Maybe there’s something else there we haven’t uncovered yet. It’s been months, but if you’re still picking up that scent, it could be one of the casters setting the Shadow Markers.”

“And what about you and Elara? I don’t exactly trust either of you to stay out of trouble.”

“We’ll be fine. Just keep checking in regularly.”

I felt his presence pull away from us. He had to shift to communicate with Owen and Damon, but hopefully, they’d uncover something useful while I worked on my own problem.

“Elara, hey, slow down! We’re tracking, not running across the entire territory,” I called out, quickening my pace to catch up and move ahead of her. She seemed to be ignoring me completely.

“Elara! Stop!” I stepped in front of her abruptly, forcing her to stumble into me. My wolf purred at the contact, a thrill running through me. The tingling sensation spread across his body, making his fur stand on end. It was fleeting but intoxicating. Every time I touched her, the feeling grew stronger. I wanted this—wanted her. Now, I had to find a way to make her want me too.

“You made us the bait, Ben! I want to get as far away from everyone we’re trying to protect as possible,” she snapped, frustration clear in her voice.

“If they can’t keep up, they won’t follow. They’ll set another marker and go after easier targets.” I circled her slowly, letting my wolf nuzzle against her. At least her wolf seemed to be on the same wavelength as ours. “You have to tell me what I’ve done wrong or what I can do to help. I get the Alpha thing—I don’t want the title, and I’d never fight you for it. I don’t care what your damn Elders think. They’re just advisors. If they think their opinions matter more than yours, maybe they need replacing.”

“Let’s just keep patrolling. You want to find this witch, and I want this nightmare to end,” she said, trying to move past me.

But we stopped her again. I felt her growl inside my head, though her wolf remained silent. Then she shifted.

“Fuck off, Ben! I want to get this over with. Stop trying to distract me.”

I shifted too, stepping right into her space, fully aware of her strong, beautiful body just inches from mine. “I’m not distracting you! Avoiding this is what’s holding both of us back. Accept me or reject me—make a choice. You’re the only one standing in the way, not anyone else.” My anger simmered just beneath the surface, hot and fierce.

She closed the gap, pressing her chest against mine, fists clenched tightly at her sides. Each heavy breath caused my chest to brush against her smooth skin. My body reacted instantly—and so did hers—but I forced myself to ignore it. I wanted her. I knew she wanted me. I’d finally accepted it; now I had to hope she would too.

“I’m protecting everyone I care about. After losing two of the most important people in my life, there’s no blueprint, no instructions to follow. On top of that, we’re being attacked in ways no one understands. We’re flying blind. I don’t have the capacity to deal with this or make a decision right now.”

I took a step back, my chest tightening, struggling to breathe. Of all the things she could have said, this one hurt the most—a slap in the face. She still hadn’t decided whether to accept me or reject me. I’m sure my expression revealed everything I was feeling.

She reached out, voice soft, “Ben...”

I stepped away again, raising my hands. I couldn’t let her touch me anymore. “No. That’s all I needed to hear. For my wolf’s sake, please reject us sooner rather than later. He’s already attached, and I have a feeling the longer you wait, the worse the separation will be. It’s going to take time to heal, and like you said, we have too much going on. I’ll let Richard know—he’ll be needed as backup while I recover. Melanie will set me up outside the packhouse. I can’t be close for a while.” I turned and resumed walking along our path. My wolf was heartbroken, angry, and desperate all at once. He didn’t want to shift with her nearby—he might force a marking. He didn’t want instinct to take over if she truly didn’t want this mate bond. I understood what it did to Kennedy at first, and I wouldn’t do that to Elara.

“Ben, wait. I didn’t mean I don’t want you…” she called after me.

I kept walking, speaking over my shoulder. “Stop. No more excuses. I tried to be understanding and gave you plenty of time. I get the pressure from the idiots your dad calls friends—they made you feel inferior. Stop letting them control you. By making you question and prove yourself at every turn, they still control you, and you’re letting it happen. For his sake, I hope the next mate you get meets your standards.”

“Ben, please, wait… BEN!” she shouted desperately.

Before I could react, I saw red eyes flashing in front of me, and then I was slammed to the ground. My wolf shifted beneath the weight of the rogue, ready to fight. We had so much anger and pain bottled up inside, and now we finally had something to unleash it on.

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 415

72 – Elara

The rogue lunges at Ben, bringing him down hard, and I catch a glimpse of sharp teeth before Ben shifts and they tumble apart. I start to shift myself, ready to assist, when suddenly another wolf crashes into me with full force. This one is a pale grey, and the stench it carries is overwhelming—far worse than the usual bad breath of rogue wolves. It smells as if it’s rotting from the inside out. My wolf instincts take control; I shift fully and dig my claws into the damp earth, using it to slow our momentum. We lower our heads close to the ground, muscles coiled, prepared to spring. Thunder rumbles deep and low above us, a storm finally arriving after days of anticipation.

I can hear snarls and grunts from the wolves near me, but I force myself to stay sharp. These rogues aren’t just here to fight—they intend to kill us, to clear the way for whoever they want to install in power. We tumble and snap, claws scraping and teeth gnashing. I’ve slashed repeatedly across this female’s side, and blood flows freely, but she doesn’t seem to notice, as if the pain has no hold on her. For a moment, I hesitate. They don’t understand what’s happening to them. This possession is so complete they have lost all sense of self-preservation.

“Ben, don’t kill them,” I call through the bond, my voice urgent. “They don’t know what’s happening. They have no control.”

A grunt, a snort.

“No kidding!” Ben snaps back, breath ragged. “She’s trying to kill ME, Elara! I might… not have a choice here.”

I twist awkwardly, managing to grab the female rogue and pin her by the neck. Her legs flail wildly, scraping at the dirt as she struggles to escape. Holding her down takes every ounce of my strength and weight. She’s tearing at herself, skin and fur shredded by my wolf’s

fangs. If she keeps fighting like this, she'll kill herself. But Ben is right—I can't let her go. She won't stop attacking.

"Where are the witches who are supposed to be helping us?" I demand, frustration creeping into my voice. "Can't they break this spell they're under?"

"How the hell should I know?" Ben retorts sharply. "You've spent more time on the magic than I have. I told them to stay back—there's no way they'd survive out here without getting hurt."

The rogue beneath me bucks again, her blood slickening her fur and making her even harder to hold. She's on her back now, kicking and pushing against me with frantic desperation, only worsening the damage to her neck. Even if I could calm her, she won't make it back to the pack to heal.

"Elara!" Ben's voice cuts sharply through the bond. He senses my hesitation, my indecision. I close my eyes, breathing deeply, inhaling the foul stench of decay that clings to her. Then, with a grim resolve, I clamp down with my jaw and twist—breaking her neck, sending her spirit back to the Goddess.

I spin to see Ben, now in his human form, lying bloodied beneath the wolf that attacked him. No. I don't allow myself to think it. We shift instantly, rushing to his side, shoving the dead rogue off him. He's breathing, but barely. The blood on him is a mix of his and the enemy's—I can't tell which is which.

"I... I... What do I do? I don't know what to do!" I call out to my wolf, panic pounding in my chest. I can't lose him. No matter what, I can't lose him. The desperate need to keep him alive consumes every part of me.

"We passed a cave not far back," my wolf suggests. "We need to get him inside. I can clean his wounds there, see what we're dealing with."

"Okay," I exhale, grateful for a clear purpose. I can follow directions.

With care, I help him sit up, then drape his arm over my shoulder so he leans on me. On all fours, I shift slowly, making sure not to jostle him as we move toward the cave. His head rests just between my shoulder and neck, and I feel the gentle rise and fall of his breath through my fur. It's the only thing keeping me grounded, focused amidst the chaos.

Inside the cave, we find a sheltered nook away from the biting wind. I lower him down as gently as I can. I don't have the means to start a fire, but my wolf can tend to him—clean his wounds and share body heat until we can either move or get help.

She works slowly and carefully, licking the blood from his face and upper chest. The rest of his body looks stable, but we need to know if any vital organs have been damaged. My wolf growls softly at the bitter taste of rogue blood, as foul and decayed as their smell. When she reaches his back, she pauses—a large bite mark on his shoulder catches her attention.

“I think their bites might be venomous or carry some kind of toxin,” she murmurs, confused. “I can smell infection already. That shouldn’t be possible this soon.”

“Maybe grab some snow from outside,” I suggest. “You can use it to clean the wound and hopefully spit out the infection. We can’t help him if you get sick too.”

“I don’t know if that will be enough,” she replies. “It’s already in his bloodstream. He needs something stronger. He needs you to mark him.”

“What? No! I can’t do that to him... forceful marking? You heard him before—he wants me to reject him.”

“No! He thinks you don’t want him, just like the last girl he loved. He’s giving you an out! Now, mark him before he dies! He won’t survive past tonight if you don’t!”

She’s never yelled at me like this before, not with such desperation. I can feel the fear in her voice—the terror of losing him and his wolf. It would break her. I can’t let that happen.

“Okay... I’ll do it...” I barely get the words out before she sinks her fangs into the space where his neck meets his shoulder. He gasps sharply, and a wave of euphoria washes over me as the bond seals itself. I feel the infection begin to leave his body, his wounds starting to heal. He draws in a deep breath and exhales slowly, but his eyes remain closed.

“We’ve done all we can,” she says softly, curling up beside him. He moves his head, nestling his face into her fur. He breathes in deeply once more, and together, we drift into a fragile, hopeful sleep.

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 416

73-Ben

A sudden chill crawls across my skin, making me shiver involuntarily. The storm must have finally broken around us, leaving a sharp, cold breeze in its wake. Why does my head pound so relentlessly? I lift a hand to rub the sleep from my eyes, only to feel something soft—fur. Confused, my eyes snap open, and I inhale deeply. The familiar blend of lavender and lemon fills my nostrils, a scent that has been my sanctuary amid all this chaos for months. But why is Elara in her wolf form?

Attempting to sit up, I immediately regret the movement as pain flares sharply down my right shoulder. “What the hell happened?” I croak, my voice dry and rough.

Elara’s wolf rises to peer at me, then settles back down, fixated with steady eyes.

“Are you not going to answer me because I made us bait and it worked?” I send the thought to her mind, half-hearted sarcasm lacing my words. Her wolf tilts her head, as if weighing a response. I try again. “I don’t remember much from the fight. How did we end up here?” I

glance around, but the burning in my shoulder intensifies with movement, and I groan in frustration.

That reaction draws Elara and her wolf closer. They circle behind me, the wolf sniffing cautiously at my injured shoulder. Then, gently, her wolf licks the wound—and a jolt of electricity surges through my body. Suddenly, memories crash back like a tidal wave: the fight, the two rogue wolves, our heated argument over whether to kill them, gaining the upper hand, and then the unnatural turn of the wolf I was defending against as it sank its fangs into my shoulder. My right arm seized instantly, rendered useless by the bite.

“What was in their fangs?” I ask, staring into the green eyes that remain the only human part of Elara’s form. “What did it do to me?” Panic creeps into my voice, betraying the fear I try so hard to mask. There’s a reason she hasn’t shifted back yet. Is she afraid of me? Did something else happen? Could I be infected? I sense my wolf inside, but he’s unresponsive—weak, maybe from trying to heal me.

“Elara! What happened?!” I demand, my voice echoing in the cramped, rocky cave. I try to stand, but dizziness makes me stumble. Grasping the cave wall for support, I realize my body feels fuzzy, numb—I can’t quite tell which.

“I’m so sorry, Ben,” she says softly. “I know you didn’t want this. You said as much right before we were attacked. I didn’t know what else to do. You were dying, and no one was answering me...”

“What are you talking about?” I snap aloud, frustration bubbling up because she’s hiding something. “Will you shift? Your wolf probably needs a break if she kept us both warm all night, or day, or whatever time it is now.”

“We’ve been here about a day. The snow’s gotten worse. You need a healer—the bite was bad. But I’m not sure it’s safe to move you yet.”

“What do you mean ‘was bad’?” I press again, irritation growing. “It’ll be easier to talk if you shift.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea, not yet.”

I pace, leaning against the cave wall to steady myself, but my impatience with this vague back-and-forth is mounting. “Explain. Now. What did you mean the bite ‘was’ bad? Why won’t you shift? Those are two direct questions. I want direct answers.”

“The bite wound looks healed on the outside, but I don’t know if there’s more going on inside. You still look pale, which means your body is still fighting whatever toxin got into your bloodstream. I don’t want to shift because I’m afraid of what might happen.”

I pinch the bridge of my nose, feeling like I’m pulling teeth to get any clarity. She’s right—I feel awful. I’m in no mood for games. “Please, just tell me what you’re afraid of.” My irritation is clear; I’m still angry after our conversation before the attack, and I want to put distance between us before this magnetic pull drags me closer. Even after spending the day next to her, the urge to be near her, to touch her, is nearly overwhelming.

“My wolf tried to heal you by cleaning the wound,” she admits quietly. “It wasn’t enough. You were in so much pain and barely responding—barely breathing. I had no choice. I couldn’t let you die. Not after...”

“Elara, spit it out.” I drop my hands to my sides, drained. I slump onto the cold cave floor, rubbing my temples to ease the headache behind my eyes.

“I’m so sorry, Ben. I know you don’t want me. You want her. You’ll always love her. But to save you, I had to mark you...”

She trails off, and I freeze. Did I just hear that right? Mark me? Why would she mark me? She doesn’t want me. She never wanted a mate. She’s only tolerated me because my Alpha—and her father—made me join this pack. Slowly, I raise my head, nails scraping against my cheeks as I try to convince myself I’m not dreaming.

“Can you say that again, please?” I whisper, staring deep into her wolf’s eyes.

“I’m so sorry...”

“Not the apology. You saved my life—I’m not asking you to apologize for that. The last part. Say that again, please.” My voice barely holds steady.

“I had to mark you. I’m sorry. I know you don’t want this...”

Before her wolf can react, I move swiftly, gripping her wolf’s face in my hands. “Shift... now.” I command, infusing my Beta aura into the order so she knows this isn’t up for negotiation.

“No! Once I shift, the bond will take over and...”

“And nothing! It will take over, and I want it to. You marked me... now let me finish the bonding.”

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 417

74 – Ben

She claimed me? After all her endless back-and-forth, all her stubborn refusals about not wanting a mate, she went ahead and marked me to save my life. I’ve heard every excuse she’s ever given for rejecting the idea of a mate, all her reasons about needing to prove herself on her own terms, but I never quite grasped the full depth of it. If she was so determined to defy her elders, why didn’t she choose a mate herself? That way, she could have shown them two things: first, that they had zero control over how she led her pack, and second, how a true mate partnership works—side by side, ruling together.

Her wolf is restless, vibrating beneath her skin, desperate to shift. She knows the significance of the mate bond, but she’s been holding back, all for Elara’s sake.

Outside, the wind howls like a wild beast, relentless and unforgiving. We won't be moving anywhere for a while; I'm still too weak to travel. But this—this I can handle.

"Elara, please," I beg, voice steady but urgent. "Let me finish the bond. There's no turning back now. We have to complete it, unleash our wolves' full strength. Especially if what's out there is what we have to face." I gesture toward the cave's mouth, where the storm rages and rogue wolves lurk.

Her wolf whimpers again, clearly resisting whatever Elara is telling her. I both love and hate my mate's stubbornness. Now is the worst possible moment for her to dig in her heels.

"Those two wolves out there—they were possessed or enhanced or something," I say, running my fingers through my hair in frustration. "We have to act. What we've been doing barely keeps anyone alive. I can't hear my wolf right now, which means I can't shift—and that puts us both in grave danger. This isn't over. Please." I'm practically pleading now, drawn irresistibly toward the bond.

But she just sits there, staring blankly. And then I feel it—the final snap, my heart shattering all over again. She won't mate with me, not even to protect her pack. I must have done something unforgivable in another life, because no woman seems willing to be with me willingly.

Defeated, I let her go and move toward the cave entrance. I need to see if the storm outside is truly as fierce as it sounds. I need my wolf—and if Elara won't help me, I have to find a healer without freezing or getting attacked again. We didn't bring extra clothes since we didn't meet up with anyone. I hope our allies were far enough away to be safe but close enough to come quickly if needed. Yelling would be pointless—no one would hear us over the storm, and it would only reveal our vulnerable position to any hostile rogues still lurking.

I need my wolf to contact Jason, but that's impossible right now. So I sit at the cave's mouth, running through every option I can think of. I wish I could shift, just to feel a little more comfortable. My body heat will keep me warm for a while, but it won't last forever.

The blizzard outside is relentless. Thick snowflakes drift down slowly, almost peacefully, but the wind's roar tells a different story. I take a deep breath and focus on our surroundings, trying to piece together how long we've been trapped here. "How long have we been here?" I ask, my eyes still scanning the storm's fury. This doesn't feel natural. "Elara, how long...?"

I turn to find her in human form, curled up in the farthest corner of the cave she can get to, still within sight of the entrance. She's trembling, her body shaking with cold or fear—or maybe both. "Elara!" I move toward her so fast that all my anger melts away. I guess the partial bond has its benefits after all. She tries to press herself further into the stone wall, and I catch the faint scent of blood where her skin has been scraped.

Without hesitation, I scoop her into my arms. She protests softly but doesn't resist. Sitting down, I pull her across my lap, tucking her face beneath my chin and wrapping my arms tightly around her. I hold her in silence, feeling her body gradually calm against mine. When her breathing slows and steadies, I stroke her back gently and whisper, "You have to talk to me. This isn't just about proving something to the elders—there's more, and I need to

understand. Now you're really stuck with me, so you might as well tell me everything." I try to lighten the mood, but she remains silent for a long time.

When I think she's finally fallen asleep, I shift us so we can lie down. My legs went numb hours ago, but I didn't want to startle her. She curls closer against me, her breath warm on my chest. The heat radiating where our bodies touch sends tingles through me, and I have to remind myself to keep my arousal in check. My body is eager to complete the mate bond, but it's not time yet.

"I don't want to be a pawn in their game anymore," she whispers into my chest, and the soft brush of her lips sends goosebumps across my skin.

"What game?" I murmur into her hair, pulling her impossibly closer.

"The pass-the-Luna game," she replies, burying her head further into my chest. I'm glad she can't see my face—I know I must have gone rigid, but I'm trying to control it.

"You're going to have to explain that very slowly," I growl through clenched teeth. If I'm right, it means all our elders are doomed.

"The Luna belongs to the Alpha and the pack elders. Once she's marked, any of them can claim her. It doesn't matter if she's mated with the Alpha or not." She lets out a small sob. "I overheard some of them talking when I was younger about who would be the first to break me in..." My arms tighten around her. "Then they said it might be impossible if my father doesn't have a male heir and I become Alpha."

"Did your dad know?"

"About the communal Luna? Yes. He had to share Mom with them whenever they wanted her. Neither of them ever talked about it. I think that's why Dad pushed so hard for me to become Alpha."

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 418

75 – Ben

Every inch of me is struggling to stay calm as I sit beside her, caring for her with a quiet patience that feels more forced than natural. "So that's why you didn't wait for your mate," I murmur softly, without any hint of judgment or bitterness. I'm not upset that she isn't a virgin—after all, I didn't wait for my mate either. But hearing her explanation brings a new layer of understanding, a clarity I hadn't had before.

Her eyes lock with mine, steady and unwavering. "Yeah. It was something I could control. Having an Alpha's son or a warrior in my bed meant they wouldn't dare cross any lines." The thought alone stirs a low, protective growl deep in my chest, my wolf's instinct flaring fiercely. Slowly, she leans in closer, slipping her arms beneath mine, her fingers resting gently on my back. This is the first time since I arrived that she's touched me willingly,

outside the harsh, tense atmosphere of the training grounds. In this quiet, intimate moment, I realize I'm done fighting it. I belong to her—completely, without reservation.

"They can't have you," I say with quiet determination, my voice low but unwavering. "I'm not from your pack, and I wasn't raised to stand by while anyone lays a finger on my mate. You are mine—no one else's. If anyone even jokes about touching you, they'll be beaten within an inch of their life and then thrown into the cells to heal like a human. Your elders? They're done. They have no place in our pack, especially not in leadership, if they think they can take advantage of you or that I would tolerate that kind of disrespect." She nods against my chest, her breath warm and steady. "Now, mate, can I mark you so we can heal and get the hell out of this damn witch blizzard?"

Her head tilts up toward me, those vivid green eyes sparkling brightly, framed by the wild cascade of her fiery red hair draped across my arm. I find myself unable to focus on anything but her face. If I let my thoughts wander, I might lose control right here, right now—and she deserves so much more than that.

I stay still. She needs to tell me with words that she wants this. It will happen soon, but I'm willing to wait if she asks for it.

"I don't want to be a plaything," she whispers softly, barely audible.

"I already told you—no one will touch you. Not ever. Even if you say no now, you're still mine, and mine alone." I press a gentle kiss to her forehead, tightening my arms around her. "If you say 'yes,' I promise you, many heads will roll just for looking your way too long. And that's me trying to be nice." I feel a small smile press against my chest as her arms pull tighter around me. She's physically here with me now. All that remains is for her to say the words.

She pulls back just a little—just enough to make my wolf whimper in frustration—but then she shifts, sliding her body flush against mine. The whimper turns into a needy growl, and my body responds without hesitation. I want her so badly. I want to finish what I started months ago when all I wanted was to help her find peace in sleep.

"Ben..." she breathes out, a soft plea. I hold my breath, focusing on the shallow rhythm of my breathing. I need air. She needs to say it... now! "Mark me..."

Before she can even finish, my face is buried in the hollow of her neck. I lick her sweet skin, my fangs extending just enough to scratch the surface. If I hadn't waited so long, I might have teased her, but neither of us deserves this endless limbo. I take a deep breath, then bite. The world shatters behind my closed eyes. I can't move—locked in an embrace with her that I never want to end. Her soft pants in my ear send shivers racing down my spine. I feel like a live wire, every nerve ignited. My wolf's full awareness crashes back into my mind. I am alive—truly alive for the first time in what feels like forever. It's like waking up from a long, suffocating fog.

I thought I could be patient, wait for her on her terms, but there's no way. I want her now—right this second. I roll onto my back, straddling her luscious body across my hips, hovering just enough to leave room for my painfully hard cock. My hands grip her waist firmly, teasing

her entrance. I raise an eyebrow, silently asking if she's ready. She nods, and I line myself up, driving into her from below.

"Oh, fuck! Ben!" she screams, but I'm lost in the moment. If she says anything else coherent, I don't hear it. I keep a steady rhythm, thrusting upward. She leans over me, those gorgeous breasts pressing into my face as she holds herself up on my shoulders. "Harder, Ben, please," she begs.

I love the way she says my name, giving me instructions I barely comprehend but eagerly follow. I lift her up and slam her down harder, rubbing her clit for extra friction. Sweat beads on our skin despite the cold wind howling outside the storm. My legs burn, and I feel the first stirrings of my orgasm deep in my spine. I know she's close too, and I want us to come together, especially this first time. I've seen her release before, and it's breathtaking. I want to feel her tighten around me, drawing every last drop from me.

"You're so close. You feel so good, Elara. Such a good girl for me. Will you come for me?" I pant between thrusts, words slipping out without thought.

"Oh, yes! Right there. So... good. Yes." Then she shatters, screaming incoherent words, and I follow soon after.

The bond between us and the Black Claw pack surges stronger. Voices flood my mind, warmth washing over my body. I don't fully understand what's happening, but I can't stop. I sit up, keeping her fully sheathed on me but adjusting the angle. She continues to move, the tremors of her first orgasm still pulsing through her. I plan to make her come again and again.

Somewhere deep in the back of my mind, I know this isn't the smartest or safest place for this, but I don't care. I will have her completely before we leave this storm behind.

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Chapter 419

76 – Elara

For a brief moment, I wake up utterly disoriented. Where exactly am I? A strange, electric sensation tingles across my skin—something entirely unfamiliar. Carefully, I shift my gaze around the dim space, wary of making any abrupt moves. With everything that's happened, being cautious is crucial; you never know who might be watching from the shadows.

I glance down and realize I'm still completely naked. So, we never made it back home. We... Ben and I. Oh, damn... Ben and I. He was hurt badly, on the verge of death, and I simply couldn't allow that. I marked him—the moment everything changed. Oh, Goddess, what followed after that was overwhelming. I breathe in sharply, catching his strong scent lingering all over me. His touch still echoes on my skin—the way his fingers traced, held, and guided me. My body obeyed every command his hands gave.

He promised no one else would touch me, that no one could claim me. I suppose time will tell if that holds true. Our Elders aren't exactly villains, but they do enjoy their privileges. I know they cared for my mother when she was with them, but they treated her as if she were their possession, and my father let it happen. He allowed them to lay claim to the most precious gift the Goddess ever gave him. They shared her like a prized toy—valuable, yes, but still just a plaything.

"You know," Ben's warm, silky voice breaks through my thoughts, laced with playful humor, "I really liked hearing your thoughts when you first woke up."

I turn toward him, spotting him sitting not far away, leaning against the cave wall with a fire crackling beside him. "I didn't realize mates could hear each other's thoughts," I say, blinking in surprise. "How long have I been out?"

Ben grins, a mischievous half-smile tugging at his lips, making my heart flutter. "Turns out, I'm pretty talented at pleasuring you into a coma."

"That's not an answer," I tease, scooting closer. "And how did you even get a fire going in here?"

He pulls me gently in front of him. I hesitate only briefly—he's never given me a reason to doubt him. Being cared for without having to ask is something I'm going to have to get used to. I lean back against his warm chest, tilting my head toward one shoulder so I can still gaze up at him.

"You've been out for a while," he explains. "I'm not exactly sure how long. I'm pretty convinced this is one of those witch illusion bubbles—time here doesn't work like it does outside. What feels like hours or days to us might be seconds or minutes to the rest of the team, or the other way around. As for the fire... Alpha James insisted we learn how to protect our human side. If something happens to our wolf, it hurts, but we can survive. Our wolves, though—they need our human part to live. So we've trained on the bare essentials: finding water when there's none, knowing what foods are safe, conserving energy, building shelter, and regulating body temperature in extreme weather." He touches a leather cord around his neck. "This is a flint. Alpha James gave us all one a long time ago. I never take it off—the cord stretches to fit my wolf's thick neck."

"Who's calling me thick-necked?" A deep, rumbling growl vibrates through my mind, and I gasp. I'm not sure if it's the new voice or the surge of arousal that makes my breath hitch. Ben laughs softly, pulling me tighter into his embrace.

"Can you talk to my wolf too?" I ask eagerly, half-turning toward him. "I didn't know mates could do that!"

"I've been speaking to her, yes. She's sweet."

"Sweet? No way. She's a sarcastic little devil, but I love her," I reply with a grin.

"My mate gets the best—and worst—of me," Ben's wolf chirps in my head, or maybe it's both of our minds. I catch the satisfied look on Ben's face.

“Great. I’m so lucky to put up with the pain-in-the-ass part of you,” I tease, curling closer to him. I want to feel as much of him as possible. My thoughts are clearer now, and the tingling sensation is a welcome bonus.

“So, what’s our next move? We have to get home, but are you up for traveling? Your outside wounds look healed, but how’s the inside? And as much as I like being naked next to you, I definitely need some clothes before I freeze my tits off.” I laugh, squeezing him playfully.

“I can move whenever you’re ready. The bonding did exactly what you hoped—it’s strong. I’m hoping we can step out of this blizzard just like you, Marietta, and Branna did the first time we found a Shadow Marker. When I gathered kindling, I didn’t go far past the cave entrance—I didn’t want to get separated. I think that’s why I felt sick when you were dismantling the markers. You were on one side of the barrier, and I was on the other. Maybe it was because we hadn’t bonded yet, but I didn’t want to test that while you were resting.” He gives me a s**y look that makes my heart race. I’m pretty sure I’ll be jumping his bones again before we even leave.

I shake my head, trying to focus. “Stop looking at me like that.”

Ben raises an eyebrow, but the smile never fades. “I don’t know what you mean.”

“Come on, s**y man. Let’s go home and save our pack.” I stand and hold out my hand.

He hesitates for a moment, then exhales deeply. “Let’s go home.” He takes my hand, joining me.

As we walk toward the cave’s mouth, I feel a surge of energy and determination. Whatever this witch can throw at us, I’m ready. The snow still whips sideways, but strangely, I don’t feel the cold at all.

We step out together, hand in hand, bracing ourselves against the elements.

Then, suddenly, the storm freezes—as if someone hit a pause button on the world around us.

Continue Regular Chapter Reading Below

Letters Sent To Eternity By Hazel Rivera

Chapter 420

77 – Elara

“It’s about time. I was beginning to think I’d have to level this entire cave just to get the two of you out.”

“What the hell?” My voice barely escapes my lips, a whisper laced with confusion as I feel Ben’s presence just behind me, a steady warmth that contrasts sharply with the frigid air.

“She’s here,” Ben communicates through our mind link, his voice steady yet urgent.

“Who is she?” I ask, my heart racing as the weight of his words sinks in.

“The witch. Who else would trap us in a blizzard and then mock us like a petulant child?”

He’s right; the tone of her voice drips with childish arrogance. I had envisioned the witch as a formidable force, perhaps a woman hardened by years of bitterness and life’s harsh lessons. Instead, she sounds like a high school bully, all bravado and no real menace. This realization fills me with a strange sense of courage.

“What is it that you want exactly?” I call out, choosing to confront her directly. “I mean, it’s been quite the adventure dealing with your little minions and your magical antics, but honestly, we’ve had enough. We have better things to do.”

The wind howls around us, swirling the snow into a dizzying dance. I can feel Ben’s hand resting possessively on my hip, but I don’t have the luxury of pondering whether it’s protective or something more.

“I want what is mine, little Alpha.” The wind seems to carry her words, wrapping them around us like a chilling embrace. There’s a haunting stillness, and I can’t detect anyone else nearby, no scents or shadows lurking in the periphery.

“What do you believe I possess that belongs to you?”

“Ah, ah, ahhh. That would be too easy, and I’m quite enjoying our little game. You have plenty of help; you should have your answers soon.”

With that, the wind abruptly ceases, and the snow melts away as if it had never been there at all. We find ourselves gazing past the tree line that encircles the cave.

The woods are alive with a multitude of wolves and witches, all watching us with wide eyes, disbelief etched on their faces. But before I can take in the scene, Ben spins me around, his body effectively blocking my view.

“What are you doing? Let’s get out of here,” I insist, trying to maneuver past him, but he holds me firmly in place.

“Not until you’re covered up,” he breathes, pressing his cheek against mine, a gesture both tender and protective.

“What?” I look up at him, confusion knitting my brow. “What are you talking about? Most of these guys are my warriors. They’ve seen me shift plenty of times.” I deliberately avoid the word ‘naked’; it feels too vulnerable to voice.

“That was before you were marked as my mate,” he replies, pulling me closer as if to shield me from the world. “Just give me this, please.”

No sooner had he finished his plea than a t-shirt and a pair of shorts were thrust into my face.

"Thanks, Jason," Ben whispers, and I can't help but grumble in response.

"Anytime," Jason replies airily, his eyes scanning the forest with an intensity that makes my heart race. "What is that?!" His gaze darts around, alert and searching.

"What's what?" Ben asks, turning to me after ensuring I'm fully covered. He puts on a pair of shorts too, a silent show of respect that I can't help but appreciate.

Jason's focus draws me back in, "It's like the air after it rains, but with a spicy bite to it. I've caught a whiff of it a couple of times while on patrol, but it's faint and localized. It's as if whoever it belongs to appeared and vanished from the same spot without moving."

"I don't smell anything like that. Do either of you?" I direct my question to my wolf and Ben, curiosity piquing within me.

"No," they respond in unison. Ben turns to Jason, then back to me, shaking his head in frustration.

"What?!" I demand, feeling the tension in the air thicken.

"Just a working theory, but it's not crucial right now. We need to figure out what this crazy b*tch wants."

He scans the area for a moment, then grabs my hand and starts walking, pulling me along with him.

"Ben, I can walk on my own, you know?" I protest, annoyance bubbling under the surface.

"Until we catch this psycho witch, I want you within arm's reach," he asserts, his voice firm. "This is as much a Beta thing as it is a mate thing. She has been toying with your pack for almost a year, maybe longer. She's playing with you, but it sounds like she's ready to escalate things. And she hasn't even revealed her true intentions."

He leads us straight to Marietta and Brianna, determination etched on his face. "You left something out in your story. What does she want? What is she after? She mentioned we have resources and that answers will come soon. She has to be referring to the two of you. Why trap us in a cave, grow impatient when we don't emerge immediately, and taunt us without giving us anything we can work with?"

"Ben, it's not that simple..." Marietta begins, her voice calm but strained.

"We've gathered that much. Simple doesn't seem to exist in this witch's vocabulary. What was the point of trapping us? How long were we actually in there?"

"The more pressing question is, what transpired while you were inside?" Marietta presses, her eyes narrowing with concern. "How long do you think you were trapped?"

“Two and a half days,” I interject before Ben can argue. “But what was the actual time?”

“About forty-five minutes. What happened?” Marietta presses again, her tone urgent.

“Nothing. She didn’t do anything until we stepped out together,” I reply, a sense of unease creeping over me.

“That’s not what I mean, but I think I know. It’s just a matter of understanding how that benefits her,” Marietta says softly, brushing my hair aside to reveal Ben’s mark, still healing on my skin. The wolves surrounding us have already picked up on our combined scent.

“She wanted your bond, but why?”