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## Chapter 6

Wolfgang's face twisted into a frown.

"You don't know a thing."

"Wendell's going to need more than your armies and your legions," I said, ignoring his words. "I know the kind of men he comes from."

As the sun started to set, the sky turned a deep blue, with streaks of pink and orange adding a soft glow to the scene.

The palace and gardens were bathed in a warm, golden light, and the moat seemed to shimmer and dance in the fading light.

It was a magical moment, one that I knew I'd remember for a long time, even with the sadness that was creeping into my heart.

I'd lost so much. I couldn't lose Rory too.

Wolfgang jogged beside me, huffing as he tried to keep up.

"Slow down, witch," he growled. "What do you mean, you know Wendell?"

I sighed. "I'm not ready to talk about his ancestors. But I can tell you that he's holding the witches against their will. Most of them, at least."

Darkness fell, and the palace lights came on, casting a warm glow over the gardens.

I could hear the distant sound of music and laughter, and I knew that the Blue Moon Pack was gathering to celebrate the end of another day.

Those fleeting, thrill-seeking, silly creatures.

"Tell me what I need," Wolfgang half-panted, half-sighed. "And stop this black magic that's making you move so fast."

I turned and bared my teeth at him, suddenly excited at the idea of brewing a potion.

"The hair of a wolf cub. The petal of a black rose. Holy basil. Mugwort. And a drop of alpha blood. All brewed at midnight on the night of a full moon."

"But—" he stammered. "That's tonight!"

"Then you better hurry, pup."



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I stood in the middle of the forest, Cronnos pacing restlessly inside me.

I had no idea why I was there, or why I had been sent on this mission.

All I knew was that Eleanor, the witch who had always been a thorn in my side, needed me to find ingredients for her potion.

The hair of a wolf cub, the petal of a black rose, holy basil, and mugwort.

That's what she had asked for. It all seemed like nonsense to me, but something inside me told me that it was important.

So, I set out to find these ingredients with Cronnos protesting every step of the way.

*"Why are we doing this, Wolfgang?" he growled. "You know how much we hate Eleanor. Why are we helping her?"*

*"I don't know, Cronnos," I replied through gritted teeth. "But I have a feeling that we have to find these ingredients for her. It could be important for the pack."*

Cronnos snarled in frustration and fell silent. He knew that I was right. We had to do whatever it took to protect our pack, even if that meant working with our enemy.

I set out into the forest, my senses on high alert.

The hair of a wolf cub would be easy to find, but the petal of a black rose?

That would be a challenge. I searched for hours, my nose to the ground, and my ears pricked up, listening for any sign of the elusive flower.

Finally, I found it, hidden deep in a thicket of brambles. It was a single petal, dark as midnight, but it was enough.

Next, I had to find holy basil and mugwort.

I knew that these herbs were used in many potions, so I wasn't too worried about finding them.

But finding them quickly was another matter. The forest was vast, and I had no idea where to start looking.

As I walked, I caught the scent of holy basil on the breeze.

I followed it, my heart pounding with excitement.

This was it. I was getting closer. Finally, I saw the plant, its leaves shimmering in the moonlight. I picked a handful and continued on my way.

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But mugwort was proving to be a challenge.

I searched high and low, but I couldn't find a single sprig. I was about to give up when I heard rustling in the bushes.

Ready to defend myself, I tensed, but a small wolf cub stumbled out, its fur matted and dirty.

I approached it cautiously, my heart breaking at the sight of it.

The poor thing looked like it had been abandoned by its mother. But then, I noticed something: a few strands of fur were caught in its claws. Wolf cub hair.

I took the fur and picked the babe up. She cooed in my arms and let out a small growl before transforming back into a dirty little girl.

I frowned at her.

This was no different from what we'd been hearing about girl-wolves disappearing from our pack houses.

Human hunters were taking them to do away with our lines once and for all. I did not know how this one had escaped.

She was as pretty as the moon that night, with a head of wild black hair and a small nose. I laid a gentle kiss on her sleeping face and made my way back to the palace.

Before finding Eleanor, who'd likely be in the dungeons doing some witchcraft or the other, I sent for Kala.

She came, took one look at the babe in my arms, and squealed.

"Liliana came crying to me this morning," she exclaimed.

"She told me her baby had been taken from her cot last night when her father went to check on a nearby sound."

"Then, you may want to return this babe where she belongs." I sighed, exhausted. "What is wrong with these hunters, Kala? How can they separate children from their homes?"

Her voice trembled when she replied, "Heartless, that's what they are."

I nodded. I had more business to take care of. "I'll trust you to see that she gets home safely. D'you know where Eleanor is?"

"I saw her go toward the north end of the forest, Alpha. She seemed intent on walking in the moonlight." She's a funny one.

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I growled in frustration. The last thing I wanted to do was go back to traipsing through the forest right now. I wanted to be with Aurora.

Cronnos ached for her, and so did I. But I needed this to come to fruition too.

What if this was the key? What if it could sway the witches' collective to our side? That would be a major blow to Wendell.

I glanced down at my clothes. Sure enough, I was covered in the baby's hair. Perfect, the final ingredient was in place.

So, I gathered the ingredients and headed to the north end of Briarwick, the forest that encased our pack mansion.

As I journeyed, I couldn't shake the sensation of being watched.

The trees were dense and gnarled, casting long, ominous shadows across the forest floor.

My mother used to caution me about this place when I was a kid, saying it was home to all sorts of forbidden creatures.

But here I was, marching straight into its heart, on a mission for Eleanor.

The forest was eerily silent, and a sense of dread washed over me as I ventured deeper into it.

The trees grew closer together, their branches twisted and turned in unnatural ways.

It was like something from a nightmare.

And then, I saw her.

Eleanor stood next to a cauldron over an open fire, stirring its contents with a long, wooden spoon.

Her long, dark hair cascaded around her face, and her eyes glowed with an otherworldly light.

Her eyes were closed, and she was murmuring under her breath.

The air around her crackled with energy, and the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end.

She looked like a witch straight from a fairy tale.

I approached her slowly, not wanting to startle her. "Eleanor," I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

She turned to me, a smile spreading across her face. "Wolfgang." Her voice was sweet but deadly. "I knew you would come."

I couldn't help but feel uneasy as I watched her work.

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There was something dangerous about this woman, something that made me want to run in the opposite direction.

But I knew that I had to see this through. My pack depended on me.

Aurora depended on me.

As she stirred the potion, I looked around the clearing. The forest was alive with magic.

Fireflies danced in the air, and strange plants grew in the shadows.

I could hear the whispers of unknown creatures in the distance.

"This place is...intense," I said, my voice barely audible.

Eleanor laughed, a sound that echoed through the trees.

"Yes," she said. "This forest is full of magic. It's one of the few places left in the world where the old ways still hold sway."

I nodded, unsure of what to make of her words.

"You've brought me the ingredients," she said, gesturing to the small bundle in my hand. "Good. Now, we can get to work."

I handed her the bundle, and she added it to the cauldron, stirring it vigorously.

The mixture began to bubble and hiss, sending tendrils of steam into the air.

The scene was incredibly witchy, and I couldn't help but feel a little uneasy.

Eleanor was known for her powerful magic, and I didn't want to be on the wrong side of it.

I wondered, not for the first time, how Aurora trusted her so blatantly.

The woman looked like she could turn people into frogs at will.

As she continued to stir the cauldron, she looked up at me with a strange expression.

"You don't trust me, do you?" she asked, her voice low and dangerous.

I hesitated for a moment. "I don't trust anyone who uses magic for their own gain."

Eleanor chuckled. "Ah, but that's the beauty of it, isn't it? Magic can be used for good or for evil, depending on the intentions of the user."

I didn't know what to say to that, so I silently watched as she added more ingredients to the cauldron.



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"Last thing." She held her hand out for mine and raised her brow when I didn't offer it immediately.

"A drop of Alpha's blood, as I told you. Unless you're too squeamish to hold still under my needle." The small piece of silver glinted under the moon.

I offered her my hand, growling low as her fingers brushed mine, drawing it out until I was ready to pull away. Then, the sharp point came down, and a drop of blood welled up.

Eleanor squeezed it into the cauldron, and the bubbling contents hissed.

The forest around us seemed to come alive, and I could hear the sound of animals moving in the shadows.

Finally, she turned to me. "It's done. But be warned, Wolfgang. Magic always comes with a price."

I frowned. Was she seriously giving me an ultimatum without telling me what the fuck I could even use the potion for?

The liquid inside gleamed, red and potent.

She was waiting for me to ask her the question.

*Because she knows that means you're depending on her,* Cronnos seethed.

I swallowed my pride like a spoonful of bitter medicine.

"Pray," I finally spoke, hardly able to keep the anger from my voice. "What good is this if I don't know what I'm going to use it for?"

She laughed once more.

"You'll know everything in due time. But before that, tell me something. Why won't you leave Aurora alone?"

I smiled pleasantly at Wolfgang as he continued to process my question.

"What are you even asking me?" His voice came out like thorns. Just what I wanted.

I intended to find out how hard he loved Aurora and whether he'd go through fire for her.

Like he'd made her do. Not once or twice, but so many times.

I stood in the heart of the Briarwick Forest, my heart raced with fury and frustration.

The moon was full, and the air was thick with magic.



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I faced the alpha werewolf, who stood tall and fierce, his eyes locked on mine.

"Why won't you leave Aurora alone?" I demanded, once more, my voice echoing through the trees. "You have done nothing except throw her in the face of danger, again and again!"

Wolfgang's eyes narrowed, and he bared his teeth.

"I cannot leave her, Eleanor," he growled. "We are mates. I love her. I will never abandon her, no matter the risk."

My anger surged.

"You are risking her life!" I yelled, my hands crackling with energy. "She deserves better than someone who keeps throwing her aside when the time comes. You cannot protect her from everything!"

Wolfgang stepped forward, his own claws extended, ready to attack.

"I will protect her with everything I have. I will face any danger, any foe, to keep her safe. I will never leave her, no matter what you say."

I hurled a spell at him, and he countered it, blow for blow. We fought, my magic against his brute power clashing in a fierce dance.

I let loose a barrage of insults and curses, pushing him to the edge.

He met my fury with a steady calm, his gaze never wavering from mine.

"You're a coward, Wolfgang," I threw at him. "If you run, it means you're choosing your own skin over hers. You're no real alpha!"

Wolfgang's eyes sparked, and he growled, "I am a real alpha."

"And I'll never abandon Aurora. She's my mate, my love, my everything."

Our fight raged on, our bodies clashing with a raw intensity.

The forest trembled under the power of our magic and physical force, the air heavy with the smell of sweat and blood.

Suddenly, a voice cut through the chaos, and we both spun around to find Aurora standing there, her eyes wide with fear and confusion. "Stop it!"

"Both of you! This isn't helping anyone!"

Wolfgang and I froze, our gazes still locked in a silent battle.

Slowly, we dropped our hands, and the magic faded away.

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We stood there, panting and gasping, our bodies coiled and ready for more.

Aurora stepped forward, her eyes darting between me and Wolfgang.

"What's happening?" she asked, her voice shaking.

Wolfgang moved toward her, his eyes softening.

"Nothing to worry about, my love," he said, taking her hand. "We were just having a disagreement."

I shot him a glare, my anger still bubbling beneath the surface.

