

Chapter 81 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I sat at the big, dining table across which was a variety of food and delicious dishes. Everyone squeezed around, passing plates and murmuring words beneath their lips. Most of all, they were all smiling and happy.

I can't remember the last time we had a feast here or even if we'd ever had a feast. It was all too fitting after everything we'd all been through, that my reign began with a dinner of celebration.

All the inconspicuous whispers and chattering swept through my ears as I looked around the table. The room was cozy, lit up with soft lights which hung from the ceiling. The sound of laughter and stories mixed together.

Kids screaming in excitement, darting through relatives for food, their faces aglow with innocence and joy, making the air feel even warmer and happier. A smile brushed along my lips as Elijah scurried back and forth where I sat.

"Are you sure you don't want anything?" Denver's voice suddenly echoed from above and I tilted my head to face him. "Nothing, thank you" I had some cake earlier and I was already full. Besides I didn't come here for the food, but rather to deliver my first speech as Alpha of the Pack.

As ordered by my father of course.

So both impromptu and hurriedly, I had tried to put my words together at the dying minute. Now, I was just waiting for the moment to face the Pack.

Even the clinking cutleries and the strains of undiluted laughter, my eyes met my Dad's at that moment and I could tell that it was time. A soft chill went up my spine as I cleared my throat.

At that moment, my Dad arose at the apex of the dinner table with a wine glass in his hands and a fork which he beat against to gather the attention of the whole Pack. Most of us were in this very large room but for the rest that spewed in the parlor, I was certain they could still hear.

"Can I have the attention of everyone please?" My Dad asked and it took a moment for the whispers to completely die down, the children to finally stay still. "I know I'm no longer your Alpha but please, just give me a moment" He joked and a few of us chorused a chuckle.

“Now I don’t really have a lot to say” He looked around the room with beaming eyes. “I’ll leave most of the talking part to my daughter herself, our Alpha. I’m only here to do the honors and introduce her” He added.

A wave of nervousness swept through my body but I felt Denver’s hands slowly slip into mine and he held my fingers tightly, in a reassuring manner. When I looked at him, I sucked in a deep breath through my lips.

“You’ve got this” He mouthed inaudibly just as my Dad muttered. “It is with both extreme pride and humility that I present to you, your deserving Alpha, Eliana Jacobs” His deep voice was met with a searing applause and even more yelling and I prompted myself to stand.

The echoes of the applause left me with a surreal feeling as I clutched my chest, darting an eye to as many members of the Pack as I could. Denver stood up too but only to assist me fully out of the wheelchair.

It was his idea. I knew even if I told him I could stand for a few minutes without falling, he wouldn’t listen to me. But I didn’t put up a fight because deep down, I wanted him there.

I wanted him standing right beside me for my first address to the Pack. He was just as much a part of his journey as I was. I wouldn’t even be standing here without him. So I could endure him holding my hands.

“You can come up here” My Dad stepped out of his seat, at the apex of the large table—usually the Alpha’s seat. But I looked at him and shook my head. “I’m fine here” Maybe not today. Maybe baby steps.

He was still very much alive so there was no need to completely replace him. At that moment, the applause died down and I hefted in my hands the piece of paper on which I wrote everything I wanted to say.

“Hope I got it all” I muttered to myself with a soft chuckle. And looking around once again, I could hardly believe this was my reality. I batted my lashes, tears stinging at the back of my eyes.

“If anyone would have told me when I was six years old that I would go ahead and grow to become the Alpha of this Pack—my Pack, I wouldn’t even have just called them a liar. I don’t,” I paused, sniffing my nose.

“I don’t know what I would’ve said”

“Because at that point in my life, I was nothing but a slave. And I was looked down upon and maltreated by every one of you here. And you’re probably wondering why I would even bring that up. Well, it’s my story.”

“It’s the story of how sad and tragic my life started and it’s one only I can tell. But I won’t dwell on the past, not because I’ve completely moved on from it, although some days I’d like to think so. The other days, I desperately wish so but then again, a lot of things have changed”

“Since the last time I was here, standing in this very room, a lot of things have changed. I feel like a different person, a stronger person, a hopeful person. You don’t know how long it took for me to be able to look in the mirror and not see the most hated slave” I turned to Denver.

“It took one person to see me differently. One person to love me, for me to finally love myself. And he’s standing right beside me today” I pushed a hard lump down my throat before continuing. “He wouldn’t even have been here if it wasn’t for such a thing called a second chance.”

“I was never one to believe in second chances until my life became one.”

“So I’m going to tell you a few things about it. We all deserve second chances, I’m here today because of mine and I can give this speech and you can listen because of a second chance. You know my father had no idea what I was even going to do for my first speech as Alpha.” I said.

“All he just said was to talk about all the things I’m going to do as Alpha which I’m still going to get to but then he mentioned something about the things I’m most passionate about. And I didn’t even know what I was going to say until a few hours earlier,”

“I was scribbling with my pen when it hit me. How I wouldn’t even have been here without Blake” There were gasps in the room, light whispers but they died down when I continued.

“What are you doing?” Denver whispered because even he didn’t have an idea I was going to talk about his brother.

“Now, you all may know him as a murderer and a monster but what you don’t know is that he saved my life. I was in a battle once with someone who was much more stronger and powerful than I was and Blake was there. That day, he put aside everything that day to save me.” I said.

“We all have made terrible, horrible mistakes and most of the time, it’s due to so much unresolved trauma and hurt. I would know that, you all would know that because you did exactly the same thing to me all those years and I forgive you. Of course I forgive you.”

“Now, all I ask is that you forgive Blake too. Because like I said, we all deserve second chances. Whoever pure should be the first to strike a stone” I pressed my lips together and there was an abrupt silence.

Followed by a few nods. One from my Dad too.

A hard lump slipped down my throat. “Which is why for the first thing I do as Alpha, I’m choosing to start it on a clean slate. A fresh start which is something I’ve always clamored for since I can remember.”

“Now, I’ve had the opportunity to meet Adam and I can assure you that he’s doing okay. That he’s in a much better place and he’s happy. He’s met someone too” I let the tears drop from my eyes. “And I see no use in still punishing someone who is clearly apologetic. So, I stand before, asking each and every one of you to give Blake a second chance.”

“That’s the first thing I’m doing as your Alpha” I met my Dad’s eyes at that moment and he smiled at me. Just then, an Elder arose. “We can consider it, your Alpha” He took a bow and I breathed a sigh of relief.

“See,” I turned to Denver. “Blake would be so happy” He pressed his forehead against mine. “How could I love you even more?” Denver asked.

“You can’t.” I replied.

“That’s where you get it wrong” He muttered and I looked back to the Pack, still squeezing that paper in my hands. “Well I’m not done” I added.

“You see what I’m going to do next as your Alpha is adding women to the supreme council of Elders for the very first time too” I said and there was an applause mostly headed by the women.

Though there were a few looks by the already reinstated Elders of my father’s regime, I didn’t care. Like I said, clean slate. Fresh starts, and most importantly, new beginnings.

“And for my first woman counsel, I would like to appoint my best friend, an able wolf herself, Thelma Parker.” I looked to Thelma who wore a face of shock right next to Cory and she screamed. I chuckled softly.

“You may not know Thelma now but I’m certain that when you do, you will love her as much as I do” Our eyes met and we smiled at each other.

“I’m not saying that there’s a merger happening between the two packs, at least not for any time soon but moving forward, the Blood Hounds and the Black Mountain Pack would be something I’d call happy neighbors” I beamed a smile at Denver.

“They’re welcome here at any time, just like we’re welcome there at any time and besides, their Alpha is someone you’ll be seeing often around here” I felt Denver’s arm around me and I loosened up a bit. All their eyes remained fixated on me and I was glad most of them were happy.

I could tell by their eyes that I was at least doing something right.

“Both Packs should be able to dine together, party together, mourn together, celebrate together for we are one and I see no use in fighting against each other. And speaking of fighting,” I paused.

“I think it’s time to put an end to the battle of Alpha thingy after me. For the longest time, I’ve felt it was pretty stupid to have a fight determine who should rule a Pack because it’s far more than that” I said.

“One could still challenge for Alpha but in the end, the real leader is going to be chosen by you and for you, the Pack” I continued. “And lastly, a new law has just been set in place, already signed by my father and the counsel and it ensures even though I’m the first woman that’s an Alpha, I won’t be the last” I said before pressing my lips together.

I folded the paper in my hands with a proud smile across my lips. I’ve always been a firm believer in equality and change. And there was nothing more I wanted for this Pack.

“That’s a start, don’t you think?”

And the people arose, yelling and screaming and clapping their hands. My heart swelled in my chest as Denver helped me into the chair. “Did I do good?” I asked him.

“They’re all clapping for you. Of course you did great” He whispered, intertwining his hands into mine and Denver’s smile caused his eyes to disappear. “God, I can’t wait to marry you.” He said. My heart melted.

“I could do it right now.” At that moment, my eyes widened and my lips parted to say the most shocking thing. “Then what are we waiting for?” I whispered. Denver was just as shocked as I was as he chuckled softly.

“Then let’s do it” He muttered.

“Let’s do it tomorrow. I won’t waste another second with you after everything that has happened. All I want is to finally call you mine” I gasped softly when he reached for my face and color escaped my cheeks when our eyes locked into each other.

“I’m already yours, Denver” I said softly. “I was never not yours” And his hands caressed my cheeks with a smile. “So tomorrow?” He asked. My heart lumped in the back of my throat as I echoed.

“Tomorrow.”

Chapter 82: Wedding Bells.

Chapter 82 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I opened my eyes to the soft sunlight filtering through my sheer curtains which cast a warm glow on my room. As soon as I sat up, a smile curled softly upon my lips.

The air was filled with a gentle breeze, crisp with the fragrance of blooming flowers and carrying the promise of a perfect day. I heaved out a sigh as soon as my eyes fell on the flowers that scented so nicely.

They were upon my bed stand. A chuckle escaped my lips as I reached towards it. Attached below the white tulips was a note.

“I can’t wait to marry you today” I read off the piece of paper, biting down into my fingertips as my smile grew wider. I knew exactly who he was even before he walked into the room.

“Hey” His voice was deep and comforting. I looked up into his green eyes. “Hey” I whispered. “How are you feeling, Alpha?” He asked and I rolled my eyes to the back of my head.

“For the hundredth time, I’m okay Denver” I replied. “Now go! Isn’t it bad luck for the groom to see the bride before she walks down the aisle?” I groaned at him, bringing my feet to the ground.

“No?” He arched his brows. “I’m pretty sure that’s seeing the bride in her wedding dress?” He added. “Not you arguing with the bride!” I scoffed, standing up to wedge him against the door and I stepped closer until he was back outside. “I’m not taking any risks” I muttered.

“Today has to be perfect.”

“Like I didn’t see you the morning of the last time we did this...” Denver said and I gasped softly. “And look how the last marriage ended” I teased. Only a soft chuckle escaped his lips while I held back my laughter.

“Well, the second time’s the charm” Denver inched closer, grasping around my waist and pulling me into him. “Denver, I mean it” I groaned but he didn’t let me go until he stole a kiss. Leaving me to just eye him.

“I’ll go now. Besides I need to check on Blake and everything. You just get ready,” He stepped backward with his hands in the air and I blushed coyly. “It’s third...” I called out to him. “Third time’s the charm.”

“Well then I’m counting the mating ceremony” He shrugged his shoulders, however, before he left, I called his name. “Denver?” He threw one look back at me. “And thank you for the flowers” I whispered.

“They’re beautiful.”

“Beautiful flowers for a beautiful bride” He echoed, halfway across the corridor before walking out. A wave of emotions filled me at that moment as I looked out of the windows, the soft winds coursed through my hair.

At that moment, the reality dawned on me.

I couldn't believe I was getting married to Denver that day, again. Maybe he was right, maybe the third time was the charm. Because undeniably, I had a good feeling about this time.

There was a knock on my door which immediately drew me out of thoughts. I clung to the handle, pulling it apart. "I just told you—" However, my words were cut short when my eyes fell on my Nana and Thelma, instead of Denver. And I pushed a hard lump down my throat.

"We came to help you get ready" They smiled so much that their eyes disappeared and just like that, they sauntered into the room, raising the blinds and opening the curtains. Thelma herself, came with her whole bag of makeup while my mother brought the dress.

"Is this it?" I asked, my fingertips gracing the timeless ends of the white flowing gown and my Grandmother nodded once our eyes met. "It is," She said softly and I couldn't help the tears that filled my eyes.

"It's the exact same dress your Mother wore on her special day" She added. My heart melted at that moment. I had already been in an expensive white dress once so this was what I wanted. To get married in a piece that was so close to my heart, that meant so much to me.

To be, even if it was a second longer, closer to her.

I took the dress, squeezing it softly in my hands and I buried my face in it. Her scent was undeniable in it. "And I fixed up some parts of it so it would fit better" Nana added and I looked up at her.

"Thank you" I whispered. "Thank you so much." Thelma, on the other hand sat on the bed impatiently. "You guys can get all mushy later, we need to get to the other part!" She squeaked and I threw a look at her with a chuckle. "Makeup?" I echoed and she groaned.

"No dummy. Getting you ready. The wedding is in a few hours" She said and my eyes fell on the clock. I put the dress down, sauntering closer to Thelma. While I sat in front of her, she stuck her fingers into my hair.

"Let's get this all fixed" She muttered, meeting my eyes through the mirror. "And you better cry now all you want before I apply your makeup" She teased and I ended up bursting into a chuckle. She too.

I sat in the chair, gazing at my own reflection in the mirror and still, I couldn't believe I was doing this. Notwithstanding, it was still the happiest I'd been in a really long time. And it was something that was so rare but for the first time, the future seemed certain and clear, and vivid.

Like every little thing, every decision, every moment had led up to this moment.

After about two hours of back-and-forth dressing and contouring and a little crying amidst everything, we were finally done. And I was standing in front of the mirror once again, gazing down at my beautiful white dress.

“There” Thelma helped me with my last zip and she stepped backward to take it all in. “How do I look?” My hands tugged loosely at the bottom of the veil just as I darted my eyes at her. She arched her brows.

“Something is missing” Thelma muttered and unconsciously, I checked to see that I was wearing my necklace, I was. “I think that’s it” I turned to her but she shook her head, grabbing the white flowers from my bedside.

“Now, there!” She handed it over to me with her lips curled in a proud, loving smile. “It’s perfect now” My hands clenched the tulips as I heaved in a deep breath. “You?” I darted my eyes at my Grandma and she let out a soft light scoff that was just tears in disguise.

“You look perfect, Eliana” She muttered.

At that moment, Thelma excused herself from the room. “I should go get dressed too” She muttered. “I’ll meet you both downstairs” She walked out of the room and for a moment, there was quiet. I walked to the edge of my bed, taking a sit right next to my Nana.

She didn’t even try to hold back the tears that fell from her eyes. She cupped her chin, folding her hands until I reached for them and a hard lump went down my throat.

“I told you” I whispered. She turned to me.

“I told you you’ll get to walk me down the aisle” My whisper jerked even more tears from her eyes as she looked up at me. “I wish she could see you right now. I wish she was here” Grandma said and my eyes stung with tears I had to hold back. I squeezed her hands.

“I wish she was here” I said, looking down at my Mother’s dress. “In the physical but every other way, I feel her” I muttered. “I feel her in everything I do, every way I turn. She is here” I said to my Grandma.

She nodded at that moment.

“You, Eliana...” She paused. “You look beautiful” And those were words that meant a lot coming from her. “A beautiful bride, a beautiful beautiful mother and an even more beautiful Alpha.” She whispered. A tear made it out of my eyes.

“Don’t ever for one second think less about yourself” She said. I nodded.

And then, there was a knock on the door again. This time, as I stood up, my eyes met Ivan in a glistening black suit. He’d halted for a moment as his eyes scanned down my dress, and then an exhale fled his lips.

“God, Eliana!” He exclaimed. I sniffled through my nose, wiping my eyes.

Ivan inched closer to take my hands in his. “Denver is such a lucky man” He muttered beneath his breath. “Are you ready? Cos he is.”

“Everyone is waiting downstairs already” Ivan continued and this time, it was me who heaved a sigh. The time was so fast and it was here. Closing my eyes, I clenched the tulips in my hands and a confident whisper slid out my lips.

“I am.” I opened my eyes. “I’m ready.” I’d been ready for so long now.

Chapter 83: Always And Forever.

Chapter 83 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

The soft piano music waltzed through my ears as I crept closer to the door. I gathered the hems of my flowing white dress, a sigh escaping my lips which only grazed against my veil. And chill went up my spine the moment the cold air hit my face.

Thelma, on my right hand, held around me a little tighter and when I looked at her, my face turned crimson. “I can’t believe I’m finally doing this” I whispered. Only for my Nana, on my left hand to respond to me.

“You’ve got this, Eliana” Her voice was as delicate as it was comforting and I nodded. “Remember how much you’ve wanted this. Well here it is, here is your happily ever after behind that door” She added, restoring the color into my cheeks and my eyes stung with a few tears.

Happy tears.

At that moment, the door drew open to the adorned Pack halls, as soon as I took my first step in, everyone’s eyes turned to me and there was a chorus of a few gasps. However, the only eyes that I met were his.

Denver was standing at a distance from me, at the altar. His hands in front of his stormy grey suit and a smile which crept onto his lips. Slowly, I walked towards him with the music playing in the background.

My feet grazed against the flowers scattered on the ground and from the corner of my eyes was a banner, ‘Alpha Eliana Weds Alpha Denver’. I scoffed lightly. He really put all this together in a day.

I smiled at him and he did the same. I loved it when he smiled, without trying to hold back his emotions which was what an Alpha usually did. But at that moment, it was clear Denver wasn't holding anything back. It was as if for the first time, his guards and walls were completely down and he was standing there, bare to these feelings, vulnerable but still powerful.

His eyes shimmered with tears as I walked towards him and he clenched down into his teeth. He rocked his shoulders back and forth and I caught Blake's hands smother along his back for a second, for comfort. I loved that he had his brother at his side on this special day.

And I had my best friend and Grandmother. Although Thelma stopped halfway, she wanted Nana to walk me the remaining distance to the altar where my Father stood as well. And Elijah and every single person that mattered. They were around that day.

Finally, I reached the front of him and I came to a halt. The most important person that day—my husband. As soon as he stepped forward and his fingers tugged loosely at the bottom of my veil, a wave of nostalgia hit me like a storm because this wasn't the first time he did this. This wasn't the first time we were here.

But I looked into his glassy eyes, knowing enough to believe that it was different now. That it could be, it could be my happily ever after. My Nana subtly left my hands, slowly backing away behind me. And that moment, all eyes were just on me, including Denver's.

He pulled the veil back, slipping it behind my ears and a hard lump went down his throat the moment a tear dropped from his eyes.

"Hey" There was a crack in my voice as I fought to hold back my tears too. The first thing Denver said was, "You're perfect, Eliana" He pressed his lips together and I felt goosebumps across my skin.

"I'm the luckiest man to be here a second time" He muttered and I let my gaze linger. It felt like a full circle moment just then.

"Second time's the charm?" I shrugged and a scuffle escaped his lips. He nodded. "Second time's the charm" His hands slipped into mine, holding it in a soft grip as both our eyes met my Father. It was an honor to have him officiate the wedding. That moment, I caught Denver throwing a look back at his brother who nodded.

"We've gathered here today finally to witness the true, relentless and powerful union of these two beautiful souls" My Father announced and a smile crawled to my lips as I faced Denver again. He still held my hands firmly, without the intention to ever let go.

And I stared into his eyes, I couldn't help but feel like the luckiest woman. Denver smiled too, as if he'd won the whole world. For the next few minutes, as we looked into each other's eyes, everything else drowned out. It just felt like we were in our world.

"Now," My Father muttered.

“It’s my honor to present your very own ring bearer as you go ahead to exchange your vows” He continued and Elijah was already a few steps away from the altar. When I looked back to find me, I gasped and I just couldn’t hold the tears back anymore. They just fell like a river as I stretched my hands to my son.

Dressed in a little grey suit like his father, he inched closer to hand me the diamond ring and of course I didn’t let him leave without a lasting hug. It meant the whole world that he was a part of my special day.

It was his special day too because for the longest time, this was what he wanted.

“Thank you, Mommy” He whispered into my ears, holding around my white dress but I sharply pulled away to look into his eyes. “No, Elijah. Thank you my son” I nodded with tears in my eyes as he walked back to meet Nana. Now, for the moment we’d all been waiting for.

I smothered the sides of my dress as I straightened my back. My eyes rested back on Denver. He held his own ring in his hands and without wasting a second, his lips parted.

“I remember the day you left like it was yesterday. I remember it every second of every day. It’s like a curse, something I have to carry with me forever because that day, I made the greatest mistake of my life” Denver took my hands in his.

“When you left, Eliana, my whole world collapsed to the ground. I couldn’t believe it and the mere thought of never seeing you again, the mere possibility broke me even more. I found myself looking for you in everyone that I met” His voice went low but still deep.

I only just locked my eyes into his as Denver carried on with his vows.

“And never do I want to feel that way again. I never want to wake up in the morning to not find you there. I never want to live a single moment without you there. I can’t do this without you, Eliana. I can’t live without you. How can I?” He scoffed.

“How can I when I love you like breathing?”

“Like life itself, because that’s what you gave me. You gave me life because even though I was walking the earth far longer than I met you, it wasn’t until then that my life had a purpose. I was just a hollow void. You gave me hope, Eliana. You gave me my humanity and made me never want to be that man again. Ever again” He squeezed my hands.

“And that’s my vow to you, to never return to the way I was before. To never be the man that dares to let you go. Life could through us anything, life has thrown us everything but no one leaves. No one ever turns their back on the other. I would stick beside you for the rest of my life and love you until my dying breath, Eliana.”

“I’m standing here and I’m not sure about anything but you in this moment. I promise to spend each day, making up for the hurt and heartbreak that I’ve caused you in the past. And I vow to

you to never be the man that breaks you again. I vow to protect you,” He threw a look behind him.

“And our son, all our children” He looked back at me and tears brimmed at the surface of my eyes. He wiped them, those same hands went through my hair and he muttered with a broken voice.

“You’re so beautiful and strong and perfect and I’m so overwhelmingly in love with you, Eliana. Words can’t even describe it” I nodded, holding firm to his face and wiping his tears too.

“I know” I whispered.

“Words may not be able to describe it but I know. I feel it” My heart swelled in my chest and I had never felt more connected to Denver than I did at that moment. “I feel it,”

“And I love you too, Denver. I love you more. I’ve always loved you.”

“It was never another person, not even for a second. It’s been you and it will always be you. “I could vow a million things to you today but you already know how I feel so here’s just one thing, one thing I want more than anything in the whole world” I parted my lips.

“Forever, Sweetheart.” I echoed the exact words that he said to me and Denver nodded. “Forever”

“Always and Forever.” He said.

“I love you so much, Denver. And you have saved me, in more ways than you even know. I’m the happiest to call you mine” He shook his head vigorously. “Never say that, Eliana. You have no idea.”

He slipped the ring onto my finger and I did the same. There was a roaring applause that somehow reminded us that there were still people watching us. I batted my lashes, turning around with a scuffle and a smile that ravaged my lips.

“You may kiss each other now!” Thelma yelled from the congregation and Denver didn’t waste a second in drawing my chin to him. He whisked me by surprise, crashing his lips into mine and it was like the first time all over again. Fireworks burst in my chest as the soft music serenaded us.

I could never be tired of Denver’s kiss. It was the perfect blend of soft and passionate. And that moment was really perfect. His hands held around my face and for a second, I felt my feet leave the ground. Today was everything I’d pictured it as and more.

Finally, our lips broke apart, even though our bodies still clung to each other. All for Elijah to run into us and he climbed into Father’s arms. Thelma screamed, running to me as well and she grinned.

“Welcome to the Club!” She cheered. One by one, our whole family closed in on us. The Blood Hounds were here and so was the Black Mountain Pack—his Pack. It was only a day before they finally left. But I didn’t care about the future or the past at that moment.

I just wanted to stay here, right in the present. With every single one of my loved ones around me. Now, we were inches away from each other but our eyes still met. My lips curled into a soft smile and Denver’s too.

“I love you.” He mouthed. I nodded back at him. My heart was beaming with joy and life was full of a million possibilities. Now, it didn’t matter what life threw at us or whatever battle was coming next, all that mattered was that we had each other.

And we could get through anything, together.

I remembered the last time I was standing here in a white dress, a tortured broken slave who had nothing but everything had changed now.

I met Denver and he changed everything, the rest is history.

“I love you” I finally replied him and I really wished this was the end. It was the perfect way to. But alas, it was not. But very, very soon.

Chapter 84: A Normal Life.

Chapter 84 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

Denver and I had just got married.

We were on our way up the stairs when he suddenly whisked me in his hands. I felt my feet hover away from the ground as he lifted me in the air. A soft chuckle escaped my lips amidst a yell for help. But his hands were firmly attached to my waist.

He kicked his feet forward, carrying me in his arms as we made our way from the hall and up to our bedroom. We'd made it through the whole day unbelievably and only just somehow managed to escape everyone now. After a ceremony that seemed to last forever, we finally retired to my room—the Alpha Chambers.

Denver kicked the door open and my arms wrapped around his neck. He placed me to the ground alongside my flowing white dress and we were both breathing heavily from the distance we'd run.

He closed the door behind him and now that we were alone, his hunger was crystal clear in his eyes. Denver's hands pricked the button of his suit jacket before he pulled it off. It fell to the ground with a thud. He went for his shirt next, taking it off as well.

All this time, with a gaze that never left me. I took a step out of my silver stilettos, gathering the ends of my gown in my hands. Denver, now shirtless made his way around me. He pressed against my back, holding down the zip of my gown.

"Let me help with that" His heated breaths trailed the ends of my skin and I could feel the hairs across arise by his touch. Denver's lips grazed against my ears as he unzipped my dress and a throaty groan escaped his throat. I closed my eyes—he knew exactly what he was doing.

And he knew it was working.

I turned around to face him and his hands swept through my hair now. I was able to get out of my wedding dress. Now, I was only standing there in my lingerie which from the looks of it, he wanted nothing more than to take it off me. He crept closer and I parted my eyes open.

"You look so beautiful, Eliana" Denver would say a hundred more times and he would mean it each time. "I would never get tired of telling you" Just as if he'd read my mind, he whispered those words next.

"Hmm You're okay yourself" I muttered sarcastically back at him, shrugging my shoulders and his chest exploded with a chuckle as he once again carried me in his arms, this time throwing me to the bed so effortlessly like I was as weightless as a feather.

My hair danced across my face and I blew it off, he was already inches away from me. He climbed onto the bed, leaning into me and without wasting a second, Denver crashed his lips into mine.

"You liar liar" He whispered barely audibly and I blushed vigorously. When I opened my eyes, he just stared down at me. "I love you, Eliana" That was one more thing he could never get tired of telling me. And without a doubt, I knew exactly what my next words were going to be.

His hands slipped into my lingerie and slowly pulled them off, first my brassiere and then my white panties. I was laying bare and naked to his desire-filled eyes and there wasn't any other moment when I felt safer.

His hands traced the edges of my skin, and then his lips, starting from my inner thighs and onto my belly, slowly and intensely, he kissed all the way to my lips. Slipping out of his pants, I could already feel him, far before he even thrust into me.

Denver slipped his hands softly into mine and he made sure he was looking directly into my eyes.

"Don't worry," He smirked. "I'll be gentle" His cock pushed into my pussy and a faint moan escaped my lips. I jerked backward, holding onto him regardless and when our eyes met again, I nodded.

Denver kept to his word, he was slow and gentle but still intense enough to be the best sex I'd ever had yet. And after all was said and done, he fell right next to me, hands still in mine as I rested my head upon his bare chest.

We were both staring at the ceiling and even though I could hardly tell what was going through his mind, what was going through mine was the reality of the entire day.

I could hardly believe we'd just gotten married. That after everything, we found our way back to each other and we were in this moment, "Eliana," Together. I looked up at him.

"What?"

"What are you thinking about?" He chuckled. "I saw it through your eyes that your mind already went somewhere" Denver added and I scoffed lightly from my lips. "What were you thinking about?" I threw the question back at him.

"You?" Without any hesitation, he replied. "Us?"

"I was thinking about us, and the exact question that struck my mind was, 'What next?'" Denver shrugged his shoulders. "Like what now?" Once he asked that question, I realized I didn't have the answer myself.

Grudgingly, a sigh escaped my lips as I held tighter around him.

"Can we just stay here for a little longer?" I whispered, cuddling into him. "Without worrying for once about what comes next..." As those words escaped my lips, I realized just how much I needed to take my own advice. Like I wasn't already spiraling, waiting for the next shoe to drop.

Because it always did.

There was always something, and being a Werewolf, now both an Alpha and a Witch, we were never safe. I understand from the moment that crown grazed against my head, the responsibility as well as the power but still the fear. The anxiety of what does come next.

And whether or not you're prepared for it.

Was it thought of the Witches who I feared were always a second away from attacking again since we killed Elyndra but the curse was still there...the curse was still yet to be broken.

How long until another Witch surfaces, desiring my blood? Or even worse, the only other hybrid, my son's. The fear was always there which was why even when I got a second, one second of the

possibility of a normal life, I would gladly take the delusion and choose to rather just stay in Denver's arms where I felt the safest.

Ignoring my problems didn't guarantee they never came. Because they would. They did. But only just for today, tonight, I didn't want to be an Alpha, or a Werewolf or the Hybrid. I just wanted to be a bride.

But right now, after a long day, I just wanted to fall asleep in his arms. Surely, that wasn't too much to ask for. Alas, it was.

The sound of sudden movements slowly jeered me out of sleep. I wasn't sure how long my eyes had been closed but when I opened them, it was to Denver wearing his shirt and about to leave the room as quietly as he could. I sat up, rubbing my eyes.

"Where are you going?" There was a crack in my voice which brought him to an immediate halt. He turned back to me. "I'm so sorry I woke you and I'm even more sorry that I have to leave, Eliana" He whispered.

Though my eyes and head were a blur, I tried my best to make out his words. "You're leaving?" I echoed. "Now...tonight?"

"It's..." He pushed a hard lump down his throat. "Cory just called. He thinks we're under attack" At his words, my eyes widened. "Attack?!" There it was, the shoe.

"Relax, Eliana. It's only my Pack. I can find my way back tonight and try to put things back in order and I promise you I'll be here in the morning before you even wake up. Okay?" His hands reached for my face and my lips curled into a frown.

"I...I don't understand."

"Don't worry, I have it under control" He insisted. "Surely, I can do something. You can have one of my army troupes" I persisted but Denver broke away with a reassuring gaze. "It's okay. I promise I'll be back soon" He wanted to leave but I squeezed his hands.

"I just wish you never had to leave, tonight of all nights" I looked back to the empty bed and Denver crept closer. "I wouldn't if it wasn't so important. Sadly, we're both still Alphas of two different Packs. You understand why I have to go...right?" He asked and I cowered my head.

Never had I wanted the merger to happen so fast until that moment but these were two big Packs we were talking about and it was going to be a lot of processes and jurisdictions. It wasn't going to be easy. So until then, I guess the reality was, we were two Alphas of two different Packs.

"I understand" I replied with a whisper. And I did, this was only one tiny bump in the road for us and there was nothing we couldn't overcome. I let go of his hands finally and Denver pulled away with a pout, not before he kissed my forehead.

"I love you." He whispered.

"Be back in the morning, before I wake up!" I exclaimed, folding my arms and he clung to the door. "You didn't say it back" Denver mouthed. I scoffed angrily. This was the night of our wedding, of course I was angry.

All I did was roll my eyes to the back of my head and a chuckle escaped his lips before he finally left. Once the doors closed behind him, I cupped my chin with a sad expression across my face.

Pulling the covers over my body, I guess I had the whole bed to myself for my wedding night. I went to sleep with a furrow between my brows, the only thing worth looking forward to was seeing Denver in the morning.

But little did I know.

Little did I know what was to come.

The birds chirping for the first time I heard as I opened my eyes the next morning. The bright sun poured in through my windows as I sat up. My hands unconsciously fell beside me on an empty bed.

And my heart dropped at that moment. My eyes darted to the clock. It was 9 AM, the day after my wedding. Denver said he would be back before I even opened my eyes but he was nowhere to be found. Just as I picked up my phone to call him, the door opened.

And to my surprise, it was— "Ivan!" I called out his name.

He stood still by the door as I sat up. Once my eyes met him, there was just something troubling about his aura. It was a way I had never seen Ivan before in my entire life.

"What happened, Ivan?" I brought my feet to the ground and a hard lump slipped down his throat. His lips parted.

"There's something you should know, Alpha Eliana..."

Chapter 85: Big News.

Chapter 85 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I slipped in my shorts before putting on my t-shirt. For a second, I halted in front of the mirror, running my hands through my messy hair. Once I was certain I was at least presentable, I walked back to the door, opening it for Ivan to come back in.

Now, his eyes met mine with a harrowing look. I looked down at the papers in his hands. I could just tell something was wrong even though I couldn't quite put a finger on it. But he was different.

He was restive.

"Ivan," I had to call his name again. What was so difficult that he couldn't say? That he was so disoriented and disturbed. Was it me? Was it Denver who still wasn't here by the way after promising to make it back by morning? I looked everywhere but he hadn't come.

"What is it, Ivan?" I asked him one last time with my patience running thin and only then did a hard lump slip down his throat. "There's something that you should know, Alpha Eliana" The tone of his voice made my heart sink in my chest.

"What happened?" I questioned. He then hefted up the paper in his hands, stretching it towards me. My eyes blanked at what seemed to be my test results. The thing was Ivan had stopped by the night before my wedding to draw some of my blood to ensure my body was still stable.

My organs were intact after my literal resurrection. But I wasn't supposed to get back the results until a week went by. This was only two days later and the reason an arch came between my brows.

"What is this?" I darted a look back and forth, swinging the paper in my hands. "I thought this wasn't due until a week's time" I muttered. He pressed his lips together. "Is there something wrong with me Ivan? Did you find anything? Am I..." I paused with a heavy breath.

"Am I dying?" Perhaps it was a stretch but there was still that other shoe I was waiting to drop. Ivan locked his glassy eyes into mine and I just allowed my shoulders to fall back.

"Eliana," He called. "You're..." His words got caught in the back of his throat. "You're pregnant, Eliana" Finally, he broke the news which hit me like a storm at that moment. My stomach dropped and goosebumps ravaged the surface of my skin.

"What?" My lips parted open to a whisper.

And Ivan nodded his head. "The blood test results show that you're five weeks pregnant, Eliana" He added and a sigh escaped my lips. My hands clutched my chest. "Oh!" I exclaimed, a smile creeping to my lips once the shock had washed off and I was suddenly feeling everything at once.

I was happy and confused and mad, that Denver wasn't here to hear the news with me. I was overwhelmed and my heart was heavy. My eyes were filled with tears and my throat, dry and sour.

I pulled back to fall into the bed. And that moment, my eyes fell to the results in my quivering hands. I didn't even know what I was looking at but all that kept echoing in my ears were Ivan's words.

"I'm pregnant?" I whispered. The nostalgia hit me from seven years ago when I first found out I was pregnant with Elijah. And now, the thought alone of giving him a big brother or perhaps a sister this time, it warmed my heart and lit my lips.

I pulled out my phone to dial Denver again.

"I have to tell him" I stuttered, trying my best to keep it together and hold the phone in my trembling hands. I was just, I was just overwhelmed and there was no emotion that I wasn't feeling at that moment.

But however, when I lifted my gaze back up to Ivan, I noticed how awfully silent he was throughout the last few seconds. There was a glint in his eyes, ridden with a secret that he held back.

Now, the smile vanished from my lips once our eyes met. His were so grim and dark. "What is it, Ivan?" I asked him. "You just told me that I'm pregnant and you're not even pretending to be happy?" I asked him. He inched closer and with each step he took forward, my stomach twisted tighter. I placed the phone down with a furrow between my eyes.

"Or is something wrong with the baby?" I asked. And at that moment, it hit me. Five weeks... That was far long before I literally died and Denver and him tried to resuscitate me. Only when I woke up did they tell me my heart had stopped and my lungs weren't even functioning.

I was actually dead for those few minutes, and surely that could harm the baby if it was long enough. I stood up from the bed and Ivan stared as if he was trying to read my thoughts.

"Something is wrong, isn't it?" I asked him, unsure about whether or not I even wanted to hear a response. My eyes suddenly stung with tears as I parted my lips again. "When I died," My voice was barely audible.

"Something happened."

"No" Ivan reached for my hands. "No, it's not that" He muttered and I was careful enough to not let out a sigh of relief too early. "Then what is it?" The suspense was torturous. "Spare me, Ivan. Please" There was a crack in my voice.

"Please just tell me."

“The baby is fine, Eliana. Although we’d need to still run a few scans to be certain for sure but the likelihood of resuscitation harming the baby is quite low, besides you weren’t gone for that long, so I’m confident the baby will be fine. But...” He paused.

A tear dropped from his eyes. His hand was still upon my shoulders.

“I found out something which I think you should know” Ivan whispered. “And it’s not,” He pushed a hard lump down his throat. My brows curled with wry. “It’s not good, Eliana. It’s not good at all.”

“And it’s about you, not the baby” He finally said. At that moment, I straightened my back to look fully into his eyes. Ivan drew me back to the bed for me to sit which I reluctantly did, without knowing what he was about to say would change the course of my life forever.

And when he had told me, shattered wasn’t even the word. Immensely broken and devastated, nothing could describe the hurt that filled my heart as I broke down in tears once Ivan left the room.

Nothing could have prepared me for that. It was worse than a death sentence. It was...

All I wanted to do at that moment was call Denver, which I did. But his phone rang and rang and rang, but he didn’t pick up. He didn’t pick up his call.

Leaving me hanging by the edge of my bed, with the phone to my lips.

“Denver,” I decided to leave a voicemail.

“Denver, it’s Eliana” My voice was so shaken up that I thought he wouldn’t even recognize it. “Where are you? Please come home” I cried.

“I need you, Denver.”

“Please, come home. Please” I left the message, closing my eyes to the river of tears that fell from them. And with the heaviest heart, Ivan’s words kept echoing back to me.

Knowing I had to make the most difficult choice wasn’t the hardest part, it was living with that choice. And the brutal reality that I may never get to have another child besides Elijah and it was all because of the one thing that was supposed to be my greatest gift but was now my worst nightmare—and that was being a Hybrid.

I stared one last time at the paper in my hands. This was it.

This was the shoe I’d been waiting to drop and it was the worst thing.

Chapter 86: The Medicine 1.

Chapter 86 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

IVAN.

TWO DAYS EARLIER.

I walked up the stairs, gliding through all the people going in and out of the Alpha Chambers. Eliana wasn't just finally moving in but tomorrow was her wedding ceremony which was why it was no surprise when I pushed the door open to see her trying on a long white dress.

Her eyes darted from the mirror, throwing a look over her shoulders at me. "Oh thank God. Ivan" She heaved, holding tight the front in her hands. "How does this look?" She was breathless.

Partially because of all the stress but I could see a glimpse of the anxiety in her eyes as well.

"It's my mother's dress. She's wore it to walk down the aisle and I don't know, I just want it to be special too. I want to carry a piece of her on my special day. It would be my something borrowed" She chuckled back at her Grandmother and my eyes fell to navigate the dress

"It's beautiful" I said flatly. It really was.

The only thing was I wasn't here to talk about her wedding dress. I was here for her checkup which Eliana had somehow managed to postpone until the very dying minute—the night before her wedding. I was working a late shift at the Pack clinic, being one of their trained doctors.

It was how I was assigned to Nana Abigail in the first place. Throughout my time as a doctor, I also led the team that looked after the Alpha himself, Gerald. And that also meant Eliana's care was in my hands.

And I couldn't have emphasized the need for her to get her body checked out since the incident anymore. She gazed into my eyes, finally zipping up her dress with an exhale.

"Phew!" She exclaimed. "I think I may have put some weight." Looking back into her mirror, she added. "I could always help with the adjustments" Her Grandmother suggested.

"Do you think it'll fit better tighter?" "Ivan" It wasn't until she called my name that I realized she was speaking to me and my hands clasped my face, pinching the bridge of my nose.

"Alpha Eliana, with all due respect, you know why I'm here" I muttered to her, holding out the little plastic bottle I was meant to draw her blood into alongside a sterilized syringe. Her shoulders fell.

“You’re no fun, Ivan. Has anyone told you that?” She humphed, finding the chair. She only pulled down her left sleeve before hanging her arm over. “I’ll tell you whether it fits or not after I draw your blood” I said.

“I don’t even see the need for this anymore, I mean I’m fine. I’m okay, I can walk better now. No dizziness or tiredness—“

“She’s been asleep since the party ended” Her Nana chirped in and I looked back and forth at the two of them. “It’s nothing. Don’t mind her! I’m okay. I feel okay” Eliana could say a million times in her most convincing tone but I remained a science guy which meant I was a facts guy.

“Well, how about we let the test results prove that” I replied, soothing her wrist with the cotton wool and before she even knew it, the needle was in and out. She briefly closed her eyes, jerking forward.

“There!” I exclaimed, sealing up the bottle. She opened her eyes and I stood beside her. “You’ll get the results in a week” With one hand on the door, I threw one last look at her.

“Hey, Ivan!” She yelled. I arched my brows. “What now?”

“You haven’t answered my question” Her hands smothered the sides of her flowing white dress and I heaved out a sigh. “Is it better fitted or like this?” Eliana smiled. Now, it was me who rolled my eyes.

“I prefer it this way.” I scoffed lightly before she looked at her Nana.

“Then we’ll leave it like this” She said before turning her face to me and she winked her eyes. A half-smile crawled to my lips as I walked out of her room. I paced along the corridors of the Pack hallway, straight to the Pack clinic. It was about 10 PM so I was lucky to even find a single light on. Eliana herself had dismissed everyone from their duties so they would be able to prepare for the wedding tomorrow.

I walked into the clinic and it was empty. Everyone had left, except one person as usual. I sauntered in, taking off my lab coat to hang it. I also placed her blood on the table and it was then I heard his voice from behind.

“What are you doing here?” I turned back to face Nathaniel and I heaved a sigh. “I could ask you the same question” I whispered. He inched closer, hands buried in the pockets of his coat. I looked around and Nathaniel was busy as usual, up to whatever he was doing or solving now.

I may have been a doctor but no one loved medicine more than Nathaniel.

He was so passionate about his works and I guess that was one of the very many things I loved about him. He came to a halt, barely inches away from my face and his hands slipped into mine. Within a second, he leaned forward to crash his lips into mine.

And I chuckled softly.

“What was that for?” I asked when he pulled away and he just shrugged his shoulders loosely. “I thought I won’t see you till tomorrow” Nathaniel replied and I hummed. “I was getting bored around here.”

“That’s because everyone has left but you. What are you even doing here anyway? Eliana already permitted us to take the night off” I said to him before his hands hefted a document.

“Research” He pursed his lips. “That’s what I’m doing.”

“It’s what you’re always doing, Nate. Don’t you think you deserve some rest too?” I asked him softly and it was from a place of concern.

The thing was when you loved your work like Nathaniel did, you could very easily get consumed in it and I knew that because I learned the hard way. Now, I try my best to not get so serious all the time and to find joy in other things besides the medicine.

Like in the person standing right in front of me.

We’d only been seeing each other for a few weeks, fine, maybe months. But what started out as casual nightly hookups had so suddenly become a full-fledged relationship and it was my first. Nathaniel’s too.

I’m not saying we were as madly in love as Eliana was with Denver or if we’d ever become like that but Nathaniel, he was pretty fun. Besides all his seriousness, he was funny and caring and very loving. And the bonus was we liked the same things, and worked in the same place which was the clinic so we were usually around each other so much.

No wonder we fell so fast.

“Ivan” He called and I heaved a deep sigh. “I’m sorry” I whispered. “I should’ve asked what you were up to instead” I reiterated and he laughed subtly. “But after you tell me, we are definitely leaving and going upstairs” I tugged the collar of his shirt.

“Ouu, for what?” He bit into his lips seductively and I shrugged my shoulders. “You know I’m a sucker for the element of surprise” I replied.

“But something tells me, you are not” I pulled away to sit in the chair right opposite him. “So tell me, what is the great Nathaniel Daniels up to this time?” I asked, folding my arms across my chest with intrigue.

“Fine” He cleared his throat.

“So, ever since I found out our very Alpha was a Witch-Werewolf Hybrid, I guess it piqued my interest. Unlike no one else who seems to be talking about it, there’s me who has like a gazillion

questions” Nathaniel pulled out a board as he explained and his eyes grew so wide that I was able to see his pupils dilate from all the science dopamine.

You could see how much of a nerd he was, which was cute, sometimes.

“Like this is something we’ve never seen before in anyone. There are just so many things that have been going through my mind, so many things I desire an answer to. So I started reading all these books that explore the creation of Hybrids itself and bitch was just a myth before now.”

“Finally, I decided to launch a study—“

“A study?” I echoed. “Hear me out, Ivan” His hand struck my shoulder as Nathaniel fixed his gaze into my eyes. “Think of what it could do, think of all the million things we don’t know about hybrids and how much this could help Alpha Eliana herself when we do, and her...”

“Her child, Ivan” Nathaniel added and I just ran my hands through my hair with a sigh. “So this research,” I paused. “It could finally answer all my questions—“ “Well has it?” I asked him.

“It’s barely been a week but my findings have revealed a spectrum of outcomes. Ivan. From the seamless integration to readiness against unforeseen challenges. I mean these hybrids possess enhanced abilities but surely there must be a limitation, a biological conflict because they were never meant to exist in the first place” Nathaniel replied.

At that moment, I stood up.

“I think it’s dangerous, Nathaniel. I’m going to be sincere this once, Eliana isn’t a test subject, she’s our Alpha. I think you should just give it up” I muttered. He pulled his arms back, his lips parted.

“I—“ He stuttered and his eyes dwindled. I swallowed a hard lump down my throat, suddenly feeling terrible but it was the truth I said. And this was exactly what I was talking about—when you get so consumed in the medicine that you don’t even know when you start to thread these lines of ethics.

“I just thought you of all people would understand” Nathaniel whispered and there was a crack in his voice. “I don’t want to do this, Nate. I don’t want to fight with you.” I said.

“I was only telling you of the good we could finally do rather than just sitting here. Don’t you ever think of becoming something more than this? Of leaving this place behind? Don’t you ever want more, Ivan?”

“Because I do.”

“I’m more than just a Werewolf, at least I want to be” He muttered. I turned around the door but still stopped in my tracks. “If you’re talking about the human world, I assure you it’s better to stay away. It’s better you stay here. Here is good. Here is safe” I said to him.

“No,” He paused. “Here is limiting. And I guess that’s what makes us different, isn’t it?” He asked and I turned to look into his eyes. Nathaniel immediately looked away and another lump slipped down my throat.

“I guess so” I muttered, finally walking out of the door and closing it behind me. ‘What just happened?’ Was a question that plagued my mind.

This felt like our very first real fight since we’d been together and it was over something we both loved. Although one, so much more than the other. The realization hit me like a storm at that moment.

That Nathaniel would never pick me over the medicine. So what exactly were we doing..., At that moment, I pushed through the door after a few minutes in the corridor, only to find the lab empty and Nathaniel gone. I came to a halt, my eyes falling to the table too.

Only to realize that one more thing was gone—Eliana’s blood which I had just dropped there. I pinched the bridge of my nose with a deep exhale. He had taken it.

“Shit.” I cursed.

Chapter 87: The Medicine 2.

Chapter 87 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

IVAN.

I pulled out my phone to press it against my ear. As I paced up and down the stable, heavy impatient breaths escaped my lips. Nathaniel’s line was ringing but for the past two days, I’d heard nothing from him.

“Please, Nathaniel” I sent him my umpteenth voicemail, gritting my words through my teeth. “It’s been two days, call me back when you get this. I’m starting to get worried” I added. Given how we last left things, of course I was worried. I already hated fights.

But to end on such note with someone you cared about, it was horrifying.

“And please, return the sample of Eliana’s blood. I promise you I’m not mad. In fact I understand how much this research means to you. So if you just come home, I promise to help” I ended the message, clutching my phone in my hands.

I stood out in the cold stable, breezing heavily out of my lips with my hands in my pocket. It was nearly winter and the snow wasn't holding back this season. I kicked my feet forward and turned around. Walking back in, I took off my coat to hang it on the hanger.

But there was an empty space where Denver usually hung his. Although, I didn't give it that much of a thought, putting two and two together, I realized he hadn't spent the night here.

Which was quite odd because it was his wedding night.

It was whilst my mind roamed freely with these thoughts that I suddenly heard a knock on the door. I threw my head over my shoulders because it didn't take me a second to scent Nathaniel from beneath the door. My wolf senses tingled but most of all, I heaved out a breath of relief.

I sauntered towards the door and pulling it open, my eyes fell on him.

For a brief moment, there was silence between us before Nathaniel brushed past my shoulders. "Where the hell have you been?" I asked him, closing the door. "You said you weren't mad" He replied with a calm tone and a scuffle made its way out of my lips.

"So you were listening to all the voicemails I sent?" I stared back at him with disbelief and he only made my blood boil even more. "Without calling back? Not even a text, Nate?" I gritted through my teeth, lowering my voice once I realized it was still the early hours of the morning.

Because of the party till late last night, so many members of the Pack were still asleep, leaving the corridors and sidewalks majorly empty. Like, this one now, it was just Nathaniel and I standing there but his voice still lowered in secrecy.

His eyes were wide with intrigue as he squeezed a paper out of his hands.

Before Nathaniel even said anything, he whisked me by my arm, pulling me into a tight, secluded closet. An arch came between my eyes as I looked at him. "You know you haven't answered any of my questions" I continued. "Where the hell have you even been? You missed the wedding and don't tell me it's—"

"Research?" He pouted his lips. "Well, yes Ivan. Yes, I was doing my study and you will thank me later" He hefted up the paper in his hands and from a distance, I could recognize a blood test result.

"You already tested the sample?!" I exclaimed furiously. "You know there's a code against—" "Ivan!" He screamed my name. "Can we just move past what happened even if it's for a second? Yes, I tested the sample but it was because I wanted some DNA for my study but I found out something else, Ivan" Nathaniel's voice deteriorated into a whisper.

My eyes scanned the paper and only then did I let out a gasp of realization.

“No,” I said softly, lifting my gaze to him and Nathaniel nodded. “Yes,” He argued. “Alpha Eliana...she’s five weeks pregnant. So the result said” He added and so suddenly, my lips curled in a smile.

“No!” I widened my eyes with disbelief. “That’s...she would be so, I don’t even know what to say now Nathaniel. Eliana would be so happy” I blurted out with excitement but at that moment, Nathaniel folded his arms. When our eyes met, there was just something burdened in his.

“I mean I’m so happy too” I said. “Why aren’t you?”

“Well you won’t be for much longer after I tell you what I want to say” He replied and a furrow carved into my forehead. “What is it?” I asked with a vanishing smile. “It’s not good, Ivan. And I just want to warn you”

“What is it, Nate?” My patience was running thin especially as I caught the suspense in the eyes. “Is this something about the research?” I asked. And he leaned forward to pick up his bag. He ravaged in the space behind only to pull out a really big book.

A brown hardcover book with about a thousand pages that seemed to have been dated at least centuries back. I inched closer as Nathaniel flicked through the pages. Half of this wasn’t even written in English or in a common language at least. It was like a secret foreign code.

“You know I told you I started reading on hybrids, text, articles, books, you name it. I was still trying to pick up a few things when I came across something that I assure you none of us knows about, not even Alpha Eliana” Nathaniel lifted his eyes and they met mine for a chilly second.

“You mean the besides the fact that she’s pregnant?” I questioned. “Actually, this is connected especially to the fact that she’s pregnant” He replied with a finger coming to a halt between the pages. He then turned it around to me. I batted my lashes.

“What exactly am I looking at?” I asked him.

“You’re looking at the only original documentation of the first study of Hybrids, by hybrids themselves. Two of them, hundreds of years ago. They made this book—“

“Thought you said Eliana was the first of her kind?” I recalled, slightly intrigued by all of this and a hard lump slipped down Nathaniel’s throat.

“Well, I was wrong.” He replied.

“And how did you even get this?” I looked at the front of the book, half the title was faded but there was something written on it. My finger struck across the surface of the letters—гібрид.

“Book of the Hybrids” Nathaniel seethed through his teeth. “That’s the name and how I got it is the least important thing right now” He dropped the weighty book into my hands. “You

remember when I said something about hybrids possessing enhanced strength but still, limitations.”

“You mentioned biological conflicts, yes” I replied him and Nathaniel nodded with widened eyes. “You were listening!” He exclaimed. “Of course” I muttered. “But what does that have to do with Eliana though?”

“The thing is it’s not just her but it will affect her as much as it will affect any hybrid, as long as your blood is mixed with an entirely different species” Nathaniel said and the first thing that came to my mind was the curse that could only be broken by Eliana’s blood.

So I knew the importance of even a drop of it, I was aware of how powerful a Hybrid’s blood was.

“Turns out it doesn’t just give you the option of immortality but having mixed blood comes with dire consequences and even more devastating risks” Nathaniel opened the book again and stopped on the exact same page. “I was reading yesterday when I found this—” He pointed at the page, his finger striking a few words.

Гібрыды не могуць нарадзіцца двойчы.

“What is it?” I looked up at Nathaniel who forced yet another hard lump

down his throat. “What that roughly translates to, is that a Hybrid cannot give birth twice.” Nathaniel muttered and just as much confusion as there was a shock hit me in that moment. I felt my heart stomp.

“What?” There was a crack in my voice. He nodded.

“I mean I’ve heard tales and stories but then you don’t really know how much of it is true—“ “So you’re just going to believe everything that’s in this book?” I asked him. “This book you’re talking about existed way before any of us. It is the blueprint, the prophecy of not just our species but every supernatural to ever roam the earth.”

“If you don’t believe in it, you may as well not believe in the Moon Goddess” Nathaniel argued. “But it doesn’t make sense...what does that even mean? That a hybrid can’t give birth twice?” I quizzed.

“It explains everything in the book, Ivan” He collected it from my hands.

“Hybrids are born from the intricate fusion of diverse genetic materials, and often face an enigmatic challenge during subsequent pregnancies. That means, after the first successful pregnancy which Eliana has already gone through with Elijah, it’s nearly impossible that her body would be able to survive a second full term” Nathaniel explained.

“Her body?” I let out a chuckle.

“Have you met Eliana? She’s the one who fought the Queen of Witches, her body literally died and came back to life” I argued with him. “I call bullshit” I muttered. “Have you ever considered the fact that the reason her mother’s silver arrow didn’t kill her that day was because she isn’t a full Werewolf?” Nathaniel asked.

And I’d already backed away when he brought me to a halt.

“That’s because there aren’t many things that can actually kill a Hybrid, and it’s pretty ironic that one thing that sure can is their own body. That’s why I needed her DNA, that’s why I originally stole the blood sample because I wanted to run some more tests,”

“You see, those genetic factors that I was talking about, they contribute to the fragile harmony of the Hybrids which is a system like nothing we’ve ever seen before. These factors, they couple together to create a delicate symphony that with each successive pregnancy, becomes more and more disrupted, leading to inconsistencies in gene expression,” Nate paused for a moment.

“Organ development” He added.

“And overall physiological stability. This disruption ultimately results in the failure of hybrids to survive beyond their initial creation.” He continued and though it was a hard pill to swallow, I understood every word he said.

Except for one thing—

“Why?” I asked him. “Why is their body what kills them?” I knew if there was one person who had the answers, it was Nathaniel. “Is it like a curse or something, placed on them?” I questioned.

“That, I’m not certain of and even if there is an answer, perhaps I’m yet to reach there in the book. But what I do know, Ivan, is that Hybrids aren’t even meant to exist in the first place. There was a time in the world when being a Hybrid was taboo. When they believed they were toxins and dark forces from other World and they were not just hated,”

“They were struck and some of them burned to death.” Nathaniel said.

“Now, we have a Hybrid Alpha, but still not that many things have changed. Their bodies aren’t built like ours, like anyone’s. And their DNA since the beginning of time has already been compromised” He added.

“I don’t...” My words got stuck in the back of my throat.

“I don’t understand so now that Eliana is pregnant, does that mean she won’t survive it if she has the baby?” I asked Nathaniel and he pressed his lips together. The answer was obvious in his eyes even though he couldn’t bring himself to say it.

“Oh my God!” I exclaimed, clamping my mouth with my quivering hand.

“I was just going to tell her she was pregnant” There was a crack in my voice. “Now I have to also tell her that having the baby could kill her” My

eyes stung with tears yet to fall. “It’s better she knows her options.”

“I know it’s hard, Ivan. Trust me I’ve already come to terms with that.”

“And there’s just nothing you can do? Nothing in the book that procures a solution to this death sentence?” I asked. He shook his head. “The study I’m running has only come up with one solution and that is to terminate the baby if you want to save the Alpha’s life” My heart broke.

“No” I shook my head. There were tears in my eyes.

I looked away and Nathaniel ended up holding my hands firmly. “I’m afraid you must tell her because it’s the only way, Ivan. At the end of the day” I lifted my eyes to him as he parted his lips to say those awful words.

“Alpha Eliana must decide who she’s willing to save.” Nathaniel continued.

“Her life, or the child’s?”

Chapter 88: The Hardest Decision.

Chapter 88 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"What?"

My lips parted with a soft whisper and tears welled up in my eyes as I looked back into Ivan's eyes. He sat on the bed, reaching for my hands and I just took a moment to stare in disbelief—to fully grasp everything he'd just told me all at once.

"I—" I stuttered, words stuck in my throat.

"I don't understand" I whispered. Just then, there was a knock on the door and Nathaniel walked in, head cowered low but the book firm in his hands. "This is him?" I looked at Ivan and then at the door.

He nodded his head.

"He's the one that found out the technicalities of being a Hybrid" Ivan muttered and I pushed a hard lump down my throat. "And he's a doctor?" I asked. "Here?" It struck me how I'd never seen his face before. Nathaniel sauntered in and when he was closer to the bed, he took a bow.

"Alpha Eliana" He said, out of respect but I couldn't care less about that at that moment. "Yes, he is" It was Ivan who replied me and when I looked at him, color had drained out of his face. He glanced back at Nathaniel and there was something so intricate about the gaze they shared.

"I know him" Ivan said. "He's my..."

"Friend." Nathaniel interrupted, clearing his throat. "We're colleagues" He added albeit immediately and I caught the wrinkle between Ivan's eyes just before he nodded his head. "Yeah I guess. We're colleagues" He said.

"And that's the book?" I pointed to the frail, washed cover of the really big book in his hands. "Yes" Nathaniel pursed his lips. "And what does it say exactly?" I asked him. He flipped through the papers and handed it over to me. It was heavy laden in my hands and so were his words through my ears.

"It basically talks about what it entails to be a hybrid and even as a supernatural, it details our strengths just as much as our weaknesses. Every one of us has something that could kill us, silver and wolfsbane for Werewolves, and the Aetherbane arrow for Witches. We have the wooden stake for Vampires..."

"So for Hybrids, it's a second pregnancy?" I questioned, a hysterical laugh escaping my lips. "It's not essentially what kills you, it's your genetic makeup that prevents a second conception. Your body isn't built to go through that again. And you know it's almost been different for us than for the humans." He explained.

"Werewolf Pregnancy is never easy, I'm sure you've heard about omegas dying from it because they're too weak, their bodies aren't quite as strong and it's the same for Hybrids" Nathaniel said.

"So I could be the strongest in a room and be able to defeat a powerful Witch but at the end of the day, I'm still no different from an Omega?" I asked him. Nathaniel pressed his lips together.

"I don't know the laws, nature does" He replied softly.

"Or your ridiculous book does" I closed it in my hands, handing it over to him and I stood up from the bed. Ivan let go of my hands which I ran through my hair and I breathed out an exhale.

"So what?" I scoffed. "We're just meant to believe a hundred-year-old book which isn't even in English. For all we know, those words could've been lost in translation. They could literally mean anything else, Ivan!" I turned to him. "I'm making sense, aren't I?"

"Alpha Eliana, I'm afraid the study proves it too. And not just mine but several oth—" "Enough!" I snapped back at Nathaniel, my hands clutched my temples. "Just enough! Enough from you and the book and just stop hovering. Please" There was a crack in my voice as I yelled.

And as the tears streamed down my face, I sat back at the edge of the bed. My hands stroked my chin as I looked in the distance.

"It's okay, Nathaniel. You can go now" Ivan stood up, excusing him towards the door. "I'll take it from here" He whispered and only when the doors closed to both Ivan and I did the tears freely flow from my eyes. I looked up at him.

"It's ridiculous, right?" I barely could even speak.

"It doesn't make any sense" My heart was heavy with the hurt. Because as much as I wanted to tell myself that this was all false, there was a part of me that feared it could be true too and that part was overwhelming and haunting at that moment.

"Eliana" Ivan softly called my name, taking a seat right next to me. I covered my head. "I should call Denver" I shook my head. "I'm so sorry, Eliana. I really am" Ivan muttered and I scoffed lightly.

"I really wish it could've been more different than this" He said.

"Well," I heaved. "But somehow here we are, you just told me the one thing my heart has wanted for the longest time, you just told me that I'm pregnant and not even seconds later, you're saying that that pregnancy could very much kill me if I went ahead to have the baby."

"Don't you see it, Ivan?" I asked him.

"Don't you see how fucked up that is?" At that moment, I wasn't just mad at him. It was harder to not be mad at him. I was furious, I was raging at everything all at once. I pulled my hands away from his grasp.

"So now, what do I do?" I blinked my eyes.

"If it even is true, am I just supposed to get rid of the baby? Is that the only solution or does your supernatural book suddenly blank out on the pages of solutions to its own problems?" I arose from the bed, looking down at him. "Does it, Ivan?" I raised my voice.

Tears stung the back of my eyes and my throat was sore.

I clutched the phone in my hands. "Now, I want to call Denver and I want to tell him. I wanted to tell him the news, I wanted to scream at the top of my voice that we were going to have another child. I had it on my lips and I knew exactly what I wanted to say but what do I even tell him now?" My voice broke.

"That we can't have the baby because I'm a goddamn fucking Hybrid?"

"Something that has always been disguised as a gift, 'You're Special', my Nana always told me. 'You're chosen', everyone said but they had no idea. No fucking clue how hard it is because if it isn't a gnarly evil witch after your blood for sacrifice, it's the fact that one normal thing that I ought to have as a woman, it's also being taken away from me."

"Being a Hybrid has taken everything away from me. It has taken from me far more than it's given and I'm just tired" My back hit the wall as I dropped to my knees. "I'm fucking tired, Ivan" I cried.

"And some days, I'm not sure I want to do this anymore. I'm not sure I can carry on. I just want to be normal because if this is special, I don't want it" I looked up into his eyes, the only person that I could actually be vulnerable in front of. The only person I could say these words to.

"I don't want it, Ivan" I shook my head. And at that moment, he inched towards the floor, sitting right next to me. I looked at him while he took my hands. "Why does it always have to be me?" I asked him.

"What do I even tell Elijah when he asks for a little brother now? And he's been asking a lot more often these days. Denver says he's bored out of his head but I just think it's something he deserves. He deserves a true family with not just his parents together but siblings. Maybe two or three like the times when I envisioned my future in my head."

"But now that's never going to happen, isn't it?" I whispered. "It's like the more I try my best to stop him from growing exactly how I did, the more his reality is just dawning. Because he's a Hybrid too, Ivan."

"I somehow gave him this curse and no matter how much I try not to think about it or to pretend even for a second that we're normal, it does not still change the fact that he's a Hybrid and one day, he's going to grow up and these things will affect him too and I won't be able to stop it. Hell I'm not even sure I would be there. And no one should have to go through this, most especially not him."

"He shouldn't have to run as much as I did. He shouldn't have to be faced with the most difficult decisions like these. I want him to be different. I want to give him a better life but I don't think I can, Ivan"

"It's going to be okay" At that moment, all he did was grasp me in for a lasting hug and his hands smothered along my back. I cried upon his shoulders. "I don't think I can, Ivan" I whispered.

"It's going to be okay."

"You don't know that" I replied. And hope was more far-fetched than the sun at that moment. "None of us does because each time I think it's finally over. Each time that I'm deluded into thinking that finally, this is my happily ever after, something else happens. Something that

sweeps the carpet from below my feet and crumbles my world to the ground and once again, piece by piece I'm left to slowly arrange it all back together."

I pulled away from him, my eyes glistening with tears.

"And I'm just tired, Ivan. I really am" I whispered. And my hands fell to my stomach. Not that I felt a kick but I did feel something. And a scuffle escaped my lips. "I'm not giving up this baby, Ivan" I said to him.

"I just can't bring myself to do that."

"But Eliana," He called. I shook my head. "For now, we're not even a hundred percent certain that it really could kill me. Are we?" I asked him and his lips fell wide open. "Are we?" I awaited his response but just like I thought, he didn't say anything.

"I thought so too" I muttered. "Now, even if this is all a thing then we're going to find a solution. You lead a whole team of doctors who were able to create the serum that saved my father and I'm a half-witch, birthed from the daughter of a full-bloodline Witch who is very much still alive. We're going to figure something out" I wiped my tears.

And it took a whole lot to hold back the rest of them and pull myself together off the ground. Ivan stood too. I cleared my throat.

"Because we have to."

"But the one thing I'm not doing is giving up this baby" I said, plain and simple. "But what if—" I halted his tongue with my hands in his face and I nodded. "Even if it's the one thing that does kill me, then I'm willing to take that risk but I'm not doing it, Ivan. I can't do it" I said to him.

He fixed his gaze into my eyes, reading the words right off my lips and I meant every single thing.

"You should get to work now" I dismissed him and a hard lump slipped down his throat. He thought I was crazy, I could see it in his eyes but he couldn't understand. I'm not sure anyone could. But he nodded before walking out of the room and once the breeze of solitude hit me, I sucked in a deep breath through my lips.

I pulled out my phone again, looking across the screen.

There was still no message from Denver. Just my one million voicemails he hasn't responded to. My heart stomped with horror at that moment.

"Where the fuck is Denver?"

Chapter 89: An Accident.

Chapter 89 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

“Hi Cory”

My lips curled with a whisper as I leaned my back against the wall. “Have you...uhm have you heard from Denver?” I asked the one person who would know where Denver was. Regrettably, I wished I'd done this sooner.

And luckily, he picked up. So that would mean he and the Pack were safe. The most of them left for Tombsdale right after the wedding.

“Actually,” Cory heaved. “I just spoke with him. He was here not so long ago but he already left” His words forced a breath of relief out of my lips. “Oh my God” I ran my hands through my hair.

“What is it? Any problem?” Cory asked. My saliva moistened my dry throat as I muttered. “I'd been calling him all morning and left even a hundred voicemails but he hasn't replied any. I was just beginning to worry” Beginning...I had no idea how worried I already was.

“Oh well, yes” Cory paused. “He hasn't really been with his phone.”

“Typical Denver” I scoffed beneath my breath, taking a seat by the edge of my bed. “One might think he would change after getting a wife” I said and Cory muffled a laughter. “Please give us a break” He scoffed back at me. I breathed out deeply from my lips.

“I was worried again because he mentioned something about the Pack being under attack?” There was a questioning tone to my voice. “Ah well” Cory subtly explained. “It was all just a minor misunderstanding between two members of the Pack but he got it under control before he left” A smirk curled at the corner of my lips.

“Yeah, he said he'd do just that” I replied Cory.

“He should be on his way by now. He'd be with you in no time, you know Denver can only spend so long away from his precious” Cory teased and my heart sank in my chest. To think he would come back home and I would have to tell him about the baby and everything.

I didn't want to keep it a secret, I didn't have to. No more of that, we'd already promised each other but it was just a lot harder having to look him in the eyes and say those words ‘I'm pregnant' and then not be happy about it. It was all just a complicated fusion of all these emotions.

“Right” I muttered, a lump slipping down my throat. I clenched the phone in my right hand. “Thank you, Cory. You’ve been of so much help” I said before hanging up the call. Color drained out of my face as I tossed the phone to the bed and I stood to face my reflection in the mirror.

I tilted my head, examining my body for so long—my body which I was convinced hated me. My hands subtly fell to my stomach and there was that sensation again. It wasn’t like a kick, it was just like a presence. A knowing that something was in there.

That I was carrying a child, a mother’s greatest gift. And I smiled, already feeling connected to the baby in my womb so much that letting him go wasn’t an option. I had already told Ivan, I just couldn’t.

I’d rather spend the rest of the term finding a cure or some solution. But to give him up, or her. I just couldn’t.

I didn’t realize how drawn into my thoughts I was until my phone buzzed on the bed again. And I pulled away, my hands reaching for it. The moment I grasped it, a wave of relief washed over me.

“Denver!” I picked it up. It was him, finally.

“Eliana, I’m so sorry. I’m really sorry I wasn’t with my phone” He immediately said and my heart just calmed off its worries. “Oh God Denver” I pinched the bridge of my nose. “Where have you been?”

“As soon as I got to the Pack, I just absolutely forgot it in the car. The only thing on my mind was to go in and out as quickly as possible so I would be right there when you wake up like I promised...” He paused and I heaved out a deep breath, my eyes falling to the bed.

“Well,” I replied.

“I’m so sorry for that too, for one misunderstanding to another. Who knew it would take so long for everyone to settle in but now, they are. And I’m on my way. I’m in the car along the Hadder Express and I’ll be with you in no time” His voice was deep and assuring.

I closed my eyelids for a moment.

“Eliana?” He called my name again. “Are you okay?” Of course he could see right through me, even over a goddamn phone. Perhaps it was from

the way I breathed or my hesitation but of course he could tell.

“Denver” Tears suddenly welled in my eyes and there was a crack in my voice. “I don’t know, Denver” I muttered. “Hey, hey” He chanted and I could hear the noises of the car wheels and honking in the background.

“What is the matter?” Concern was brazen in his voice. I should just wait for him to get back. I should tell him face to face because these are things you can’t talk about on the phone. Right?

But then, the longer I have to carry the burden of the thoughts and what-ifs in my mind. I sat there, shoulders flat. I was just a mess, all morning. And I was alone. I felt alone.

“Eliana, I promise you. I’m on my way. Whatever it is, I’m sure we’ll figure it out” I clamped over my mouth with my hands as I sobbed deeply. The tears were a river flowing from my eyes. “Okay,” I whispered.

“Okay, I’ll be waiting for you.”

And little did I know the tragedy that was seconds away from happening.

“I promise, Eli—“

“Shit” Denver suddenly cursed, over the phone and there was an echo of his swerving tyres. “Oh my God!” He yelled and in a split second, he was thrown into a sudden cacophony of chaos that echoed through the phone.

The sound of tires screeching and metal twisting rang through my ears and a deafening crash pierced through the line.

“Denver!” I exclaimed, arising from the bed with my grip on the phone tightening. My heart pounded in my chest.

“Denver, what’s going on? What happened?” An arch came between my brows, panic clawing at my chest each second that I couldn’t hear him. But I could hear the aftermath of the chaos the car crash presented. That was what it sounded like—like he’d rammed his car into something.

“Denver” My voice trembled beneath the echoes of shattering glasses and tears filled my eyes. The connection began to cackle before I heard his voice, strained and distant.

“Eli...Eliana” He forced my name through his lips amidst hard and labored breaths. “Denver! Tell me you’re okay, Denver!” I muttered. “I didn’t see her soon enough. She was...she was right there” He said frailly and I just batted my lashes. “Who?” I questioned.

“Who was right there?!”

“Who?!” The line abruptly cut off, leaving a static linger and my heart hanging in the balance. “Who, Denver?” I cried in the unsettling silence.

Panic gripped me as I desperately tried to redial his number but each unanswered ring heightened my anxiety even more. But this time, it didn’t take me so long to call Cory. I grabbed my keys, ready to leave at exactly that moment. Denver was hurt and I knew where he was.

“Hey, Eliana” Cory picked up the call and my voice was strained and restive. “It’s Denver.” I blurted out. “I think he’s been in an accident” I said. “What?!” Cory questioned in disbelief and I stormed out of my door.

“Where is he now? How do you even know?”

“We were on a call one second and he was saying he was on his way and then the next, I just heard a loud noise like screeching tires, glass fucking breaking. I heard everything and it didn’t sound good, Cory” I fought back the tears in my eyes as I scrambled down the stairs.

“And he said something like she was in the way, he didn’t see her. I don’t understand but I don’t think he’s okay, Cory. I don’t think—“ “Do you have any idea where he is right now? Where the crash happened?” Cory asked and it hit me.

“He said he was on the Hadder Express, that’s not so far from here” I replied. “Okay, Eliana. I’ll meet you there as soon as I can. Just please, stay safe.” He hung up and as I made my way downstairs, I met Ivan again.

This time, when he looked back at me, an arch came between his brows.

“Where are you going?”

“Yeah?” My Nana’s voice was frail from behind too and I looked at the both of them, tears at the surface of my eyes. “It’s Denver” There was a crack in my voice too. Nana was taken aback. The tears streamed down my cheeks as my heart leapt into the back of my throat.

Those words were the hardest to say but I did.

“He’s been in an accident” I pressed my lips together. “And I don’t think he’s okay.” I muttered and Ivan and my Nana reached for both my hands.

“Let’s go.” They quietly chorused before we sauntered out of the house in search of my husband. And as if things weren’t already as bad enough as they were, it was all about to get even worse.

Chapter 90: The Hybrid Curse.

Chapter 90 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

Ivan's hands gripped the steering wheel as he zoomed across the highway. The car was awfully quiet and every second that passed drew slower and slower while my heart pounded louder and louder in my chest.

I gazed out of the windows, in search of anything other than this deafening silence because it forced me to confront the million things that were racing through my mind. I didn't want that. Not now.

Now, all I wanted to do was find Denver and know that he was safe.

I wanted nothing more at that moment. The car jerked forward, turning into the junction that brought us closer to the Hadder Highway but it was still like half an hour away. A hard lump slipped down my throat.

I couldn't survive the quiet for that long. So I turned to my right, and there was my Grandma who had persistently argued her way into following us. Throughout the ride, I noticed her hands never left mine.

They clamped over my fingers with a steady grip and each time I looked at her, she had that comforting gaze in her eyes, as if everything was going to be truly okay. Now, she'd said that for the one-millionth time that night but however, but I wasn't sure I believed any longer.

My heart was aching so much that I couldn't even dare to hope. And though she could see the tears in my eyes, she had no idea of the burden that sprung them forth.

"Eliana," She called, squeezing my hands. I cupped my chin and a tear dropped between my thighs. Nana drew closer with her hands around my

shoulder and slowly, I lifted my eyes to her.

"What is the matter?" She asked. "This isn't about Denver, is it?" Her voice was soft yet confident, enough to bring to the surface of my eyes even more tears and at that moment, I just blurted out.

"I'm pregnant" Most of my voice got stuck in the back of my throat and the shock was evident in my Nana's eyes. "Eliana, what?!" She softly exclaimed. Her eyes shimmered a bit. 'Don't get too excited' I almost told her. Because I, myself couldn't be.

"That's what I wanted to tell Denver" I muttered. "When I called him, that's what I wanted to say and it was good news. It should've been good news" I whispered. "I...I don't understand, Eliana" Nana replied.

"Haven't you heard about the Hybrid Curse?" I asked her. She was bewildered. "The Hybrid Curse?" She echoed. I bit down on my teeth.

“Apparently my body is strong enough to win an Alpha battle but I can’t have a second successful pregnancy. Elijah was my first, and having another child could be dangerous—“

“Dangerous?” Nana whispered. “How so?”

“It could kill me if I choose to have this baby” I replied her. “That’s the Hybrid Curse, taking away what is supposed to be a blessing. Because I’m pregnant and I should be happy. It should be the best news but it’s not. It’s not, Grandma and I hate feeling this way too.”

“And then I wanted to tell Denver, that’s all I wanted to do. What are the odds that he would get into an accident the same day after our wedding? Now, I don’t just have to worry about losing my baby, I have to worry about losing Denver too” I cried into my hands.

“Denver is going to be okay, Eliana” Nana whispered but I shook my head. “You don’t know that. You don’t know anything. Hell, I don’t know anything too and that’s the most fucked up thing about all of this.”

“You’re happy one moment, walking down the aisle to the man of your dreams about to exchange vows that would bind you for the rest of your life. Your future is beaming on the horizon, so it seems. Endless possibilities but then you have no idea that your whole world would come crumbling down the next day. No warning, no signs.” I said to her.

“Morning.” My voice cracked.

At that moment, my eyes met with Ivan’s through the rearview mirror. He was driving as fast as he could but somehow, it wasn’t fast enough.

“Can we get there any quicker, please?” I asked him and he dropped his gaze to the clock. “We’re almost there, Eliana” Ivan replied. I had to pretend like my Nana wasn’t staring into my soul from the corner of my eyes. And slowly, I felt her hands reach forward to my stomach.

I leaned backward, allowing her to touch. When I looked at her, there was a smile across her face and ironically, tears in her eyes.

“I feel her” My Grandmother whispered and a hard lump slipped down my throat. “Her?” I echoed. She nodded. My heart leapt into my throat. “It’s a girl?” And it melted at that moment. “It’s a girl?”

“It’s a girl, Eliana” She replied me. I shook my head, breaking down into more tears and she brought me closer in her hands. “Is there even such a thing as the Curse?” I whispered. “Why does it have to be me?”

“I have no idea, Eliana. What I do know is that being a supernatural, as much as it comes with the strengths, it also comes with weaknesses too”

“That was exactly the same thing he said” I replied her. “Who?” Her hands subtly combed through my hair. I held around her. “Nathaniel. He’s the one who read it in this really big, old book.”

“The Supernatural Book?” Nana knew of it. Of course she did.

“You know it?” I looked up at her and she nodded. “I know of it. But never have I seen it. Written by the first Hybrids from whom the entire supernatural bloodline came from” She whispered. “So, it’s true then?” I asked her. “All of it...it’s true?”

“If it’s said in the book, then the likelihood of it being true is a lot, Eliana” At that moment, I didn’t even know what to think. I just stared at her blankly. “But it doesn’t mean that we won’t figure it out, Eliana” She muttered her words, nodding.

“Even if it comes down to one decision, we’ll figure it out. Maybe not now, maybe not in the future but—“ “I don’t understand” I looked at her. “Are you saying that I should give the baby up too?” I asked her.

“Just throw in the towel? Without a fight?” I stared in disbelief at the woman in front of me. I couldn’t believe my Grandmother could ever say that. Not her. “I’m saying that you need to be okay, Eliana”

“And I would,”

“But the Curse?” She whispered. A scuffle escaped my lips. “A curse you didn’t even know about until now. That I didn’t know about until today. Why should it change so many things? Why must I always be the one to give, to make all these decisions?” My voice broke.

“You’re an Alpha now, Eliana”

“Your decision is not only yours but for the rest of the Pack. And you shouldn’t have to endanger yourself” At that moment, the car came to a halt and all I wanted to do was come out of it. I pushed the door open and once I alighted, the winds grazed through my hair.

“I can’t believe you would tell me this!” I yelled. Nana came out too and she faced me. “I know you’re thinking about keeping the baby, even if it means you giving up your life. You would rather do that than give it hers and I cannot blame you. A mother shouldn’t have to grieve her unborn child but look at it, Eliana. You have the child but then you’re not around to raise her. You’re not around to see her grow and to—“

“I would take that any time, Nans.”

“But I can’t. I can’t let her go” I shook my head, some of this rooted in my own childhood trauma. “Eliana,” My Nana called. “We’ll fix it. We’ll fix me” I looked her dead in the eyes before turning to Ivan.

“Right?” I called onto him but he was already trailing down the steep hills. I turned to my Nana again and she was already inches away from my

face. “Eliana, Vampires can’t reproduce for a reason. It’s in the book too. These things are never easy to fix, it’s genetics. It’s in your blood, Eliana. You powerful, powerful blood.”

She grasped my hands tightly as she gritted through her teeth.

“You can’t sacrifice your life for a child you’re never going to see. What happens when she has to live with that guilt when she finds out how was she born? What happens when the burden becomes unbearable and she blames herself? You, Eliana. You should know that”

“I...” Tears filled my eyes and I parted my lips, although the words didn’t fall out. “I already lost your Mother and I’m not going to lose you in the same way. The whole Pack can’t lose you, Eliana. You’re our only hope”

“But I have to save her. I have to try.”

“Save yourself, Eliana. Save us” She whispered. I shook my head, pulling away slowly from her hands. “Susannah may have died but look how I turned out. I turned out strong and pretty fine. And she could too. She may feel the guilt and the burden but she’ll rise above it.”

“Just like I did.”

“There’s nothing you can tell me, Nans. I’m willing to risk it. Because the reason I’m here is because someone once did” I said. And my Nana was taken aback. So was I, at that moment because a dawning realization hit me like a storm. “My Mother...she risked it,” I stuttered.

“The Hybrid Curse” I looked into Nana’s eyes. “My Mom, she was a Hybrid too. Right?” Nana shook her head. “No” She whispered but I felt the surge inside of my chest. The gut feeling every time I knew I was right and it was there, at that moment, it was there.

“You said it yourself, she was fine up until that morning that she gave birth to me, ma. What if she never knew? Or what if she did?” I asked and my Nana swallowed a hard lump down her throat. I fixed my eyes into hers and could tell almost instantly that she knew something.

“Am I right?” I asked her.

“Am I my mother’s second child?”

“Am I the Curse that killed her?” My heart dropped and my stomach tied into a knot but before she could even say anything, Ivan’s voice called out from behind. “He’s right here! I’ve found him!”

“I found Denver!” Immediately, I threw my head over my shoulders, gazing down at the bottom of the hills where the debris of his crashed car laid. And it was scattered and dented into pieces, so much that my jaw dropped at the sight of it.

“Oh my God” My Grandmother exclaimed. “Is that his car?” That barely even looked like a car anymore. The wreckage was a death sentence. And I could swear my heart skipped a beat at that moment.

I used my hands to clutch my chest and could only say his name through my sore throat.

“Denver.”