

## Chapter 91 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

My eyes glimmered beneath the glow of the moonlight and I clutched my chest. I felt my heart skip a beat the moment I saw Denver's car.

His Benz was unrecognizable, dented, wrecked and destroyed. From the looks of it, he seemed to have swerved off the highway, only to come tumbling down the hills with as much speed as he was running.

And he'd rammed himself between the ground and the trees.

Ivan was several feet below, already scavenging through the messy debris but I just needed a moment to get myself together. A hard, painful lump slipped down my throat at the sight of the wreckage.

"Oh my God" Nana was just as shocked. The both of us weighing the chances of his survival. A million thoughts raced through my head at that moment and there was a sudden surge that coursed through my veins.

"Denver," His name escaped my lips. I jerked myself back from the state of shock and now, all I wanted to do was get down there. So, I kicked my feet forward, jumping down the hill without a care in the world. I crashed to my knees and Ivan yelled out at me.

"Careful, Eliana!" He gritted. At that moment, my eyes and my mind were a blur and I was thinking straight. Anxiety had gripped my heart and the air was thick with fear. I could feel my heart throb in the back of my throat with each step I took towards the car.

My feet began to crunch all the broken glasses that must have spilled from his windshield and I wasn't even near the car yet. I pulled myself together, sprinting down the steep hills and I kept yelling out his name.

"Denver!"

"Denver!" Please, Please, my heart yearned. Please be okay. Please.

"Please be alive" I muttered beneath my breath, inching closer to the violent impact and the moment my hand grazed the car, a heavy breath left my lips. There was a hollow hole through

the dented roof. My heart at this point was pounding intensely against its sternum that I feared it could stop at any time now.

My feet swarm through the fuel-drenched grasses on the ground as I made my way to the driver's seat. I pulled the door, now hanging off its hinges and it fell apart with barely that much impact. I hovered over the chair, the interior of the car, a haunting tableau.

Glass was shattered all over that if I wasn't careful, I would leave this place with cuts and wounds on my hands and legs. I pushed myself further through the door but still, there were no signs of Denver. "Have you checked in here?" I lifted my eyes to Ivan.

"He's not here" He replied. "I've checked everywhere" He muttered. "He's not in the car" At that moment, I had no idea whether to feel even more dreadful or relieved. "He wasn't here?" I whispered.

Ivan shook his head.

"That could be a good thing" I pondered. "That would mean he was alive, that could mean he had enough strength to get up and leave. Right?" I held onto that glimmer of hope that beamed in my chest but something told me Ivan was thinking otherwise.

He hefted the torchlight in his hands and he pointed it through to the back. "Eliana," He called. I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. "You might want to see this" He added. I made my way around to his side, looking back and forth.

"What is it?" Before finally, my eyes fell in the direction of his pointed torch and my breath caught the moment I noticed the dark stains of his car's upholstery, a stark contrast to the pale moonlight.

"Is that..." My hands clamped over my quivering lips. "Is that blood?" It was everywhere, everywhere in the car and even leaving a crimson trail in the grasses. "He may have left, Eliana. But it didn't mean he wasn't severely injured" Ivan said and I heaved a deep breath, one far from relief and edging towards the dread that twisted my stomach.

And I felt that strange sensation, right beneath. And it wasn't good. It didn't feel good. The chilling realization hit me like a crashing wave, and grief and disbelief etched themselves across my face but at that moment, I still shook my head.

"He left the car. He got up and he walked out. That means he's still somewhere out there" I muttered. "And we're going to find him" I faced Ivan. "Before it's too late, we're going to find my Denver." I let the courage break into my veins, or perhaps it was even a more dangerous denial. But I decided to hold onto that glimmer of hope in my heart.

No matter how faint it was.

Because that is exactly what he would've wanted me to do. I let my eyes fall again to his blood-stained chairs and a chill up my spine. He got out, he made it out—Denver was a fighter. And I was too.

I stamped my feet into the ground.

“Order an army, call it an emergency. Let everyone look everywhere.” I directed Ivan. “Cory is still on his way and he’s coming with people too.”

“We’re not going to give up.” I gritted through my teeth.

“Not I’m certain Denver is okay. And alive.” As the fierce words left my lips, I lifted my gaze to the silver moon, unbeknown to what laid ahead of us and nothing, absolutely nothing could have prepared me for it.

Chapter 92: The Search For Denver.

## Chapter 92 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

Till the earliest hours of the morning, we were still out there, ravaging through the depths and corners of the forest that was bound between both Tombsdale and Oakland.

A score of Blood Hound guards led the search and on the other side, Beta Cory and his men took charge. For the past few hours, we'd been at it but unfortunately still, there was no trace of Denver yet.

I'd tried everything including a locator spell and our mate bond but nothing worked.

However, as I wavered through the wild trees with my hands, I refused to give up hope. As long as we hadn't found his body, I was confident he was still out there. No one knew Denver more than me, which is why I refrained everyone else from losing hope.

He was a fighter. Escaping that ghastly accident was proof enough of that. Now, I assumed the next thing he sought was help. Which meant he wasn't far after all. That glimmer of hope was what propelled me, through the first hour, the second, the third.

And now, the fourth.

My phone rang in my pocket and I picked it up. My eyes fell to Cory's name and I slid across the screen. "Anything yet?" My eyes grew wide but that was only a thought too fast. A deep breath from his end drew me out of my delusion.

"It's a dead end here, Alpha Eliana" Cory added. "We've searched through to the end of the Highway and all the land beneath. Both Human and Wolf have trailed the edges of the forest but there are no signs of him" Cory's dwindled voice confirmed my greatest fear—

—that he was losing hope too. Or perhaps, he was just tired.

I came to a halt, and teamed up with my Nana, she stopped in her tracks too. I pressed my lips together, unsure of what to say.

"I'm not sure he's out here, Alpha Eliana"

"Then where else could he be?" I almost snapped. "I'm not saying he's dead. I'm just saying there are no signs of him here. Perhaps, someone already took him" Cory suggested but I shook my head. There was a lingering gut feeling in the depth of my stomach.

"No," I shook my head. "Denver is out there and we must keep looking until we find him" I ordered before hanging up the call. I slipped my phone back into my pocket and as I stood there, I heaved a deep sigh.

The breeze rushed into my pale face and I had no idea how much I was faking to be strong for everyone else. I swallowed a hard lump down my throat as I leaned against a tree.

"Ah!" I softly exclaimed, bringing my arms to wedge my entire body up. I was experiencing severe muscle cramps from all the walking. I had barely stopped to rest throughout the last few hours and this was my body's reminder. "We can take a break here, Eliana" My Nana helped me to the ground and as I sat down, my hands soothed over my knees.

I blew out painful breaths from my lips, trying to stabilize my breathing.

"Here," She sat down right in front of me. "Let me help me" And slowly, she massaged my legs. It was excruciating at first but over the next few seconds, the sharp stinging pain deteriorated.

"Are you feeling better?" My Grandma asked and I lifted my eyes to her.

There was a strange aura between the two of us and I would lie if I said I had no idea why. Both our eyes met as she paused. It was only because I withdrew slightly from her hands.

"You haven't answered my question" I recalled. "All night, you've been avoiding it" I pressed my lips together and a scuffle escaped my Mama's lips. "What question?" She asked innocently.

"Don't do that" I pulled away, staggering to stand on my feet. "Don't do that, Nans. Because I've figured it out, just like I figured out how you were a Witch and you kept it from me. I know

my Mom was a Hybrid too, just like me and the book...that goddamn book would make a lot of sense, wouldn't it? If I was the second child" I stuttered.

"I mean it's the second child that kills the mother, isn't it? Maybe she knew, maybe my Mother knew but regardless of everything, she still decided to have me or maybe she didn't. Maybe there weren't enough studies or no one knew about the book but I'm the second child, aren't I?" There was a crack in my voice as I turned back to face her.

"Answer me!" I yelled but my Grandmother stood up.

"That would mean Nora and Jaxon aren't my only siblings. I have one, one from my Mother and if anyone would know of a lost child, it would be you. It would be you who owed me the truth" I locked eyes with her.

"I can't believe this."

"I have no idea, Eliana" Her voice was frail and barely convincing and I paced back and forth the crumpled leaves. "I can't believe this" I shook my head. "I can't believe this is one more secret you've kept from me. After telling, that was over. That there was no more" I muttered.

"When are you ever going to stop lying to me?!" I screamed and tears stung the back of my eyes. "I mean it, Eliana" My Grandma yelled back at me. "Even if Susannah had a child before you, I swear I had no idea. You have to trust me, Eliana. I would never lie to you." I shook my head.

"Not again. Not anymore."

"I'm serious."

"How am I supposed to trust you?" I whispered and there was a crack in her voice as she inched closer. She took my hands. "Because I would never lie to you. I'm the same Nana you knew even before you found out I was a Witch. I'm the same" Her eyes shimmered.

"How am I supposed to believe you of all people wouldn't know if my Mother had another child...she was your daughter too. And she trusted you. And you knew her—"

"But it wasn't always like that!" My Grandmother yelled and a tear dropped down her cheeks. I arched my brows at her. "What?" The forest returned an echo of my voice as she sobbed.

"It wasn't always like that, Eliana. Because just like you were mad at me when you found out the truth—that I was a Witch, and you were a Hybrid and how your Grandfather really died, just like that, Susannah was mad too. She was furious and she was betrayed and I couldn't even blame her but there was a time that she hated me, Eliana."

"A time she couldn't look into my eyes because I was so terrible to her"

“And she did everything to be as far away as possible from me as she could. She withdrew, hated me from a distance and my life was miserable. It lasted for months, Eliana and through those months, she didn’t speak to me. I knew nothing of her. I didn’t see her, nothing.” Nana whispered.

“Maybe that wasn’t just the only reason why she kept away” I thought and Nana shrugged her shoulders. “Why was my Dad in all of this?” I asked and a hard lump slipped down her throat.

“This was years before you were born, Eliana. Years before she met your father. We were only new in the Pack then. She was young and I was still trying to fit in with my secret and all. You didn’t happen until a while later” Nana told me and I pressed my lips together.

“Maybe she met someone before Dad. Maybe...” I paused.

“Maybe he was only her second chance mate.”

“I don’t know about that, Eliana. That is too far” My Grandmother beckoned but I shook my head. I was closer to the truth, I could feel it. I knew it. “And if there’s anyone that would know, it’s him.”

“Now, you believe me” She heaved out of his lips. “I have no idea whether there was any other reason why she kept away. Or whether she was pregnant—there was no way I could. Or whether this wild theory is even true, Eliana but it could change everything. It really could.”

I lifted my gaze to her.

“Do you think I don’t know that?” I asked, brazen with the idea of another Hybrid somewhere out there and the possibility that he or she was my sibling. My Mother’s first child.

There was a hollow sting in my chest as I pushed a hard lump down my throat. “I have to find him, or her” I blurted out. “I have to find my older sibling wherever they are because surely they must have gotten a hang of this whole Hybrid thing more than I have. And they may be able to help.”

“Maybe they could even know more about this whole Hybrid Curse and how to put an end to it. I have to find them” I nodded and color drained out of my Nana’s face.

“I’m afraid I can’t help you, Eliana. Because I, myself, have no idea where they could be.” Nana muttered but a crinkle crept to my lips and they parted slowly.

“I think I know who would.” I replied, immediately brushing past her shoulders once I sighted him from a distance—my Father. “Dad!” I called out his name, pushing through the leaves to make it out the other side.

And he threw a look over his shoulders.

“Any sign of Denver?” His eyes grew with optimism when I finally came to a halt and I was breathing heavily from my lips. I ripped the bandaid off almost immediately.

“Did Mom have another child?” I asked and a jolt of shock surged through his eyes like an unexpected lightning bolt, freezing every thought in its electrifying grip. And I could tell instantly that he knew.

He knew the truth. He was the one person that would anyway.

“You were her second chance mate, weren’t you?” I asked him. His hands fell uncomfortably by his side and a scoff escaped my lips. “I knew it...but then,” I whispered, my voice cutting off with a pause.

“Who was her first?”

Because whoever he was, he was the father of my long-lost sibling, the love child he had with my Mother and the real reason why she was away for those months. And he could not only be the key to finding them but it could bring us a step closer to finding a solution to the Hybrid Curse.

I stared into my Dad’s eyes as the winds swept through my hair. With all the thousand thoughts racing in my head, I could hardly believe all these.

But I’d come to accept that this was my life now. From one to another.

Chapter 93: The Day I Met Susannah.

## Chapter 93 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

GERALD JACOBS.

MORE THAN 30 YEARS AGO.

The forest was always my safe space.

Each time I found myself getting more and more overwhelmed and angrier with everything, which was a lot of the times this past few weeks, I would come here to find solace.

Among the towering trees, their branches stretched out like open arms and it was only here that I could truly breathe. It was only here that I didn’t have to be just the Alpha. I didn’t have to be anything. Just exist.

No responsibilities, no Pack duties burdening on my shoulders. Not for the few minutes I'd spend in the forest. I'd known no other life than being an Alpha, it was either that or being the Alpha's son.

But my father died a year ago, I was twenty when I was reinstated as Alpha of the Blood Hound Pack. I had to give up everything for my duty. I had been told ever since I was a little boy that it was destiny to rule.

Nothing more, nothing else.

And I had done that the past few months, even though nothing could've prepared me for the work that laid ahead. It wasn't something I could never back down from so however, through and through, I was the Alpha.

Nothing more, I knew nothing else.

But that day was about to change everything because it was the day that I met her. It was the day that I found out life could be more than just duties and responsibilities. And I remain glad that I was exactly where I was supposed to be.

I kicked my feet forward, crunching beneath them the crisp leaves. And I ran my hands through my long hair. The symphony of the rustling leaves was what eased my troubled mind. I heaved in a deep breath as I carried on. I was barely in the forest when I heard footsteps tussle.

"It's him! It's the Alpha! Run!" The children were always so scared of me. Everyone was. And it wasn't my fault, I was only ruling like my father and he told me everything it took to be an Alpha. That fear, that authority, that leadership. Nothing much about the empathy and love.

And the community. It was her who taught me all of that. Susannah.

A gentle breeze carried the whispers of leaves and sunlight filtered through the lush canopy, dappling the woodland floor with a mosaic of warmth. I passed where the kids were building their dirt castles and I tramped over them with my feet.

"Kids" I gritted through my teeth. Never for once had I thought of having my own. I would be busy for that anyway, I thought. I thought about a lot of things, especially when I usually came here. Right then, I was thinking as I walked deeper into the forest.

When all of a sudden, something struck my feet.

The impact left a searing pain and I looked down, thinking it was a stone from maybe one of the kids but however, it was an arrowhead that had grazed past the sole of my feet.

"Shit" I cursed, already boiling with anger as I reached to pick it up. I scented through my nose, trying to pick up a clue from where it must've come from. "Those bastard Black Mountain" I cursed. They were always so rebellious and they lived on the opposite side of the forest.



They were the only ones who came here as much as we did. They were as mischievous and unbearable as their leader—Malik Denver. We never saw eye to eye, not for once. Someone as ruthless and egotistical as him never saw eye to eye with anyone in fact.

I groaned under my breath, contemplating whether or not to charge to his Pack and lay my final warning because up until that time, I thought the evil culprit was one of them. But alas, I was wrong and it wasn't.

Because the moment I heard shrill movements from the leaves behind me, I turned back around. A lingering scent swept through my nose and I tasted the vanilla air at the tip of my tongue. I scrunched my face, brows furrowed as I awaited the culprit's identity.

However, nothing could have prepared me for the sight that I beheld. She emerged from the forest leaves with a bow in her hands. My eyes fell first to that and I was still brewing with anger but alas, when I looked up at her face, my heart calmed. My brows unarched.

"I'm so sorry" She apologized, fluently as she inched closer to me.

"That would be mine" She whispered, taking a bow and then taking her arrow. I stretched my arm out to her, mostly speechless because I'd never seen her around there before.

I'd never seen such a beautiful woman.

She smiled coyly, taking a strand of her hair and placing it behind her ears.

Her eyes were oblivious, like she didn't even know I was a King. She was nervous but she wasn't afraid. She didn't fear me like the rest of them did which led me to ask, who was this bold woman that threatened to strike me with her arrow?

"Shouldn't you be the rest of the women in the kitchen?" I asked. They were indoors preparing supper. What was she doing out here anyway?

"Do you think the only duties of a woman belong in the kitchen?" She bit back, almost ruthlessly and I was stunned. "I never said that" I quickly obliged. I had no idea why she made me so nervous.

But staring into her ocean-blue eyes knocked me off my feet. Her blonde hair cascaded her exposed shoulders. She was wearing a thin, silk dress, as yellow as the sun that morning. And though I caught a faint smile on her lips, it was hard to read her.

What exactly she was thinking at that moment?

"Don't tell you were out hunting?" I asked. "Would it be such a crime?" She threw a question back at me. I was stunned again. This time, even more convinced that there was no way she knew who I was.

“You know I haven’t seen you around here?” I asked. “Are you one of us, or are you one of the miscreants from the other side?” I referred to Denver’s Pack. He was nearly the same age as I was when we became Alpha but we led our Packs in significantly different ways. He was a man of Violence, I was never that kind.

I may have been angry, unapproachable, some might even say stoic but never violent. But at that moment that I stared into that woman’s eyes, I was none of those things anymore.

“Who are you?” She asked and I was tongue-tied, a smirk creeping to the corner of my lips. “Take a guess” I muttered. “I dislike cocky men, just so you know” She blushed slightly but she meant her every word.

“Cocky?” I echoed. “That’s a first. I don’t usually hear that word.” I said and she rolled her eyes to the back of her head. “Fine,” I clamored.

“I’ll tell you who I am if you tell me who you are.” I struck a deal and a bolt of panic flashed in her eyes. She cleared her throat.

“I shouldn’t even be here.” She muttered, turning around but I held her hands back. The moment our skin brushed against each other, there was a stilling sensation that ruptured across my body.

My heart throbbed and I had never felt it as much as I did at that moment. I couldn’t mistake it for anything else. My Dad told me this was exactly how he felt when he met my Mom. His Mate.

But that wasn’t a topic I thought so hard to think about. Of course, it was required of an Alpha to ultimately have a ruling Luna by his side but I just left that aspect to the Elders, hoping that they picked the best woman for me when it was time. The connection never mattered. The love never did but that was because I never felt it.

I never felt it until that moment.

It was like little balls of fire in my chest as my hair stood on edge. I sharply pulled away and by the way she looked back at me, it was obvious she felt it too. Her eyes were alluring. Dangerously captivating.

But enigmatic still.

“Are you running from someone?” I asked her. She shook her head. “More like avoiding someone” She replied. “Who?” I reeked of intrigue.

And her face went white.

“My mother.”

“What?” I scoffed in disbelief. How could someone be avoiding their mother? I only knew the value of mine after I lost her. The same could be said about my Dad. I’d give anything for a moment with them again.

“How?” I questioned. She pushed a hard lump down her throat.

“You wouldn’t understand any way” Her eyes blankly turned away.

“Try me,” I whispered. That moment, when she lifted her gaze again and they met my eyes, I could feel the tension in my chest. Her lips parted but then she paused. Shaking her head, it was like she took those words back but then she parted them again.

“I’m Susannah” She said. “And no I’m not new around here. Haven’t just been with the Pack in a while” A rogue...no wonder I never knew her. At least since I became Alpha.

“I’m...” I hesitated a bit, contemplating whether or not to tell her. Because to be honest, I enjoyed the fact that she didn’t know who I was.

That she treated me like a normal person, not like an Alpha. Not with the fear and the forced respect that at the end of the day wasn’t genuine. I enjoyed our connection but she seemed to be in a rush.

It was then I blurted it out.

“I’m Gerald” I said. Her eyes went wide almost instantly. The color drained from her cheeks.

“Gerald, as in The Gerald?” She questioned and this was what I didn’t want. However, I nodded my head.

“Alpha Gerald??” Perhaps she knew of my name, only never saw me to recognize me. “Flesh and Blood.” I replied. “Fuck” She cursed, immediately falling to her knees. “I’m sorry, Alpha Gerald” She begged.

But my hands reached for her immediately.

“Stop it” I reproached. “I should’ve called you cocky” She said. I couldn’t help but blurt out a chuckle as I hefted her to her feet. I held her wrists against and my heart pounded in my chest.

“That was pretty hilarious if you ask me” I whispered. As she got up, she was merely inches away from my face and my heart leaped into the back of my throat. I let my eyes fall to her lips. And reflexively, I leaned into her. Susannah paused for a moment before she pulled away from me.

“I’m so so...”

“No” I cleared my throat. She shook her head. It was an awkward moment. A stupid one. I should’ve never leaned in. Fuck him. Fuck my

wolf for ruining this. He could sense she was my Mare. I could too. But I wasn't sure what I was getting from her.

Her eyes glimmered with regret as she took a step back.

"I'm sorry, but I really need to go now." And before I could say anything, she left. She disappeared on me, quite literally. But her presence still haunted the air. I heaved out a deep breath, looking over my shoulders.

My hands slipped into my pocket.

"Shit." I never thought I'd see Susannah again, the chances were even slimmer if she was that slippery. But alas, I was wrong...

NOW.

Somehow, in the same forest, here I was. Standing right next to Eliana—I and Susannah's child. And she looked at me once I paused recollecting that special day that I met her mother.

My eyes gleamed with tears as we looked over the hills.

"Dad," She called. Our eyes met and a hard lump slipped down my throat. "What happens next?" Eliana asked and I nodded. "I'll tell you."

"I'll tell you the whole story." I replied and she heaved out a deep sigh.

"We've barely even started." And that was the truth. That was only the first day that I met Susannah—the day that changed the rest of my life.

Chapter 94: Second Chance Mate.

## Chapter 94 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

GERALD JACOBS.

MORE THAN 30 YEARS AGO.

"I met a girl!" I stormed through the chamber doors, eyes wide and my face bright with a smile. My most trusted Beta, Phil turned to me. He was the only one I trusted to ever come close to me and he had been my best friend for as long as I could remember.

So of course only he could understand the next words I said.

“I met my mate!” My wolf growled free at my attestation and Phil’s jaw dropped open. “Your mate?” He echoed with disbelief. As I took off my jacket, I turned to him. My hands fell to grip his shoulders, out of excitement.

“It’s a very funny story.”

“I was walking in the forest, on my break when something struck my feet. It was an arrow—“  
“An arrow?” Phil asked. “From a hunter. Behold the culprit was her. Susannah, she said” I smiled, recounting that single moment that changed my life.

“And she’s the most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen” I said softly.

“But she’s a hunter?” Phil was just as perplexed as I was earlier. “That’s not even the craziest part. When I first met her, she had no idea who I was. She was like the only person, besides you who actually treated me like a normal person” I muttered.

“When are you ever going to understand that you’re not a normal person anymore, Gerald? You’re an Alpha, of course people will treat you like one” Phil replied. He was right, it didn’t mean that was what I wanted.

“It was just...” I paused, a smile curling my lips.

“It was different with her.”

“Then what happened?” Phil asked. “I told her eventually and she fell to her knees but I’m not sure anything changed really. We shared a moment and I nearly kissed her before she turned away.”

“What?!” He exclaimed.

“The connection was there, Phil. It was there and it was strong. My heart was beating so much that it could’ve escaped my chest and there was just this longing to have her at that moment. It’s the mate bond. My Dad always talked about it but never did I imagine it would happen to me.”

“At that moment, I wasn’t even thinking when I leaned in” I explained to him. “But then she turned away and said she had to leave. Then, she just disappeared” The smile faded from my lips.

“And I’ve never met her before?” Phil looked at me.

“I don’t know. She has this really blue eyes that could see through your soul, a beauty that is out of this world. She’s unlike any woman I’ve ever seen before. She’s just alluring in every sense of that word. Every possible way. Her blonde hair is perfect and she wore on red lipstick.”

“Lipstick?” Phil echoed. “And she’s from around here? Are you sure she’s not Denver’s?” He asked. I shook my head. “She did say she was hiding from someone. Her Mom” I replied. “So I assume she doesn’t stay much around here.” I continued.

“So Part-Rogue?” Phil raised a brow. “Maybe it’s just me but she does sound like trouble” He added and I understood his skepticism. “I don’t know. What I do know is that I have to find her. I have to see her again”

Phil looked into my eyes and he could see the passion that burned in them for this strange girl, the girl in the forest. For days, Susannah plagued my mind. The haunting reminder of what it felt like to touch her.

It came by every night and I could barely sleep. The days, Phil and I will spend in the forest looking for her. We searched and searched for days, but she was nowhere to be found. Like she was a ghost, or a figment of my imagination. But even when Phil started to doubt, I had my memory as evidence against that.

And the wound on the sole of my feet from her arrow.

“She is real!” I yelled. The forest returned back an echo of my voice. I was standing in the exact spot I was that day, now, almost two weeks ago but there was nothing.

“Are you sure?” Phil croaked opposite me, sarcasm in his tone. I heaved a deep breath from my lips, the towering fear creeping into my heart that I really may never see her again.

“Maybe it was because I tried to kiss her” I plunged myself into thinking.

“That was too forward,” I ran my hands through my hair. “I blame my wolf! I blame my wolf!” I yelled, stomping the ground with my feet. Phil’s hand rested on my shoulder as he heaved a deep sigh.

“Unfortunately, I have to leave. We’ve not only been at this for days but for weeks, Gerald. I’ve never seen a woman have this much control over you” He muttered and he didn’t know about the sleepless nights.

Well, that was Susannah for you. Just the few minutes we had in the forest, she had such a lasting effect.

“You might want to stick around though” Phil said.

“Maybe you would see her then” He joked, laughing away and leaving me standing there. I rolled my eyes to the back of my head, leaning against a tree. I was already in my safe space, so I might as well just stay. The sun had gone down which was only a reminder that I had been at this all day.

Yet still, no Susannah.

Who was she? Was she really a ghost?

A beautiful one.

Perhaps, Phil was right. But then, no. She couldn't be.

I racked my head back and forth when all of a sudden, that scent breezed through my nose again. No way! I instantly stood up to look back. And, there she was.

My lips pursed. "It's you." Susannah glared back at me as if I hadn't just spent the last few weeks looking for her.

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

"You're stuttering" She noted. I paused. "An Alpha doesn't usually stutter" Susannah said and I scoffed lightly. I threw a look over my shoulder but Phil was already gone. He couldn't see her. I wanted him to.

"My Beta was just here. He called me crazy because we'd been looking for you and you just...disappeared" I arched my brows. "He doesn't give you much credit" She laughed. Her laughter was very shrill and soft.

And gentle.

"Well," I said. "You're the reason for that."

"No, I'm not" She turned around giggling and I followed her behind. We ended up trailing through the forest. Susannah was a fast walker, a skill I think she picked up being a rogue or Part-rogue.

It was harder to keep up with her but I managed.

"So where were you, actually?" I asked, breathless and she threw a look over my shoulders. "I don't owe you that until like the third date" She replied and I was flustered. "Third date..."

"So what is this?" I asked. "Second?"

"Second?!" She was taken aback. "What qualifies as a date to you? Walking through the forest, accidentally striking you with my arrow?" She asked and my lips just fell open. "I—" I stuttered.

"You can't cut all the corners just because you're an Alpha" Susannah said as we reached the peak of the hill we were climbing. Then, she came to a halt. The breeze wrestled through her blonde hair.

And I pressed my lips together.

“Or I’ve just not been on one before” I whispered to her and Susannah looked at me with disbelief. “You’ve never been on a Date?” She asked. I nodded. “Well, that’s...” She chuckled.

“I’m so sorry” She looked at me and I laughed too.

“I mean it’s pretty pathetic saying it out loud” I said and we both burst out into laughter. Once I met her eyes, I could tell how much she wanted to ask that question before she did.

“Why? How?” She blurted out and I only shrugged my shoulders.

“I don’t owe you that until the third date” I teased too and she bit into her lips, running her hands through her hair. “Nice one” She replied. A smile crept to my lips and we locked eyes again.

And this time, the winds swept between us, pulling us closer to each other like a magnet. We were at the edge of the hill but I didn’t care. Everything else was suspended around us.

My eyes fell yet again to her lips and this time, Susannah didn’t budge.

“Or at the first kiss” I whispered.

She wanted it. She felt it—that connection. I could see it in her blue eyes. And so I wrapped my arm around her, shifting her closer to me. I leaned forward towards her lips which she parted open and slowly, I placed a soft kiss on them.

I withdrew almost immediately to see that she was comfortable. And Susannah opened her eyes to me. Her arms held onto mine as she kissed me this time. And I could feel the pulsating desire between us. The thirst in her grip and the passion on her supple lips.

My hands fell to her waist as I pulled her closer. I kissed her back with everything I had inside of me and it was perfect. For the first few seconds, it was.

Until she suddenly pulled away and regrettably, I let her slip away from my hands. “I’m so sorry” She was suddenly agitated, running her hands through her hair. Her skin was pale and her eyes were filled with regret.

“I’m so sorry, I have to go.” She turned around but this time, I reached for her hands and held her back. “Where are you going?” I yearned. “I can’t do this, Alpha Gerald. I’m so sorry” She said.

“Why?” There was a crack in my voice.

“You feel it too, I know. You feel the connection, you feel the bond” I pressed my lips together. “You’re my mate. So what is the matter?” I asked her and at that point, a tear dropped from her eyes.



“Of course I feel it” She cried and I was taken aback. “What is so terrible about it then?” I still held her hands. “It’s not...” She halted. “It’s not you, Alpha Gerald” She lifted her gaze to me.

“Then what is it?” I asked, holding firm to her hands.

“You can trust me.”

“I know” She whispered. “I know I can, I feel I should but, it’s complicated” She bit the insides of her cheek and I furrowed my brows.

“Try me.”

“It has nothing to do with you, Alpha Gerald. It’s me...I’ve done this before and you should probably know now that I’ve been mated once.”

“I’ve been with a man once,” Her words hit me like a storm and I left her hands. “What?” I asked softly. “But—“ Her words were almost inaudible.

“But he died—almost a year now and I thought I could do this. I thought I could put myself out there but the grief, the guilt, it still stings and never did I even imagine that I would meet you and I would feel these intense feelings and everything. Because I do, Alpha Gerald. I feel it all.”

My eyes locked into hers as she said those words.

“I think,”

“I think you’re my second chance mate.” She muttered and through all of this, I didn’t even know how to react. It was a lot to process so I just stood there and Susannah’s arms fell right next to her.

“You see” She whispered.

“This is what I was talking about” She heaved and before I could even say anything. Puff! She disappeared into the leaves again. I reached out to her but Susannah was quick as light. I looked all around me, pushing a hard lump down my throat once I realized she was gone. And this time, it felt like I wasn’t going to see her again.

Chapter 95: See Her Again.

## Chapter 95 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

GERALD JACOBS.

MORE THAN 30 YEARS AGO.

“So she was mated before?” Phil asked as I sat there, damp by the edge of my windowsill. I looked out through the fog at nothing in particular.

It was raining that evening when I got back.

And I crossed my arms over my chest as I wallowed in my thoughts—where I had been for the past few hours and where I would remain for even days to come. Her words kept echoing in my ears, over and over again. The thought of being a second chance mate was something that never crossed my mind but it was my reality now.

And the mate bond between Susannah and I was undeniably strong. It was palpable, that even each second that passed that she wasn’t here, I was torturing my mind—my wolf. Because it was no longer that I didn’t know. It was that I did and I was only just hesitant.

Which meant my Wolf had already scented her, tasted her and wanted more so each second that I stayed away, I was only hurting my wolf which in turn was hurting myself. That’s how being mated worked with the Werewolves. But what it meant for me.

Was that I had to make my decision and I had to make it fast.

I could accept my fate and my mate, even though she’d been with another or I could spend the rest of my life alone. And I knew much about the latter because for so long, I’d been searching for my purpose.

Besides just being an Alpha. I’d been searching for myself.

But then these past few days, I’d never felt more like me. And it wasn’t until I met Susannah. Her bright blue eyes, her ethereal blonde hair. Her captivating beauty of thousands. My woman, my Mate.

Would I now let the mere reason that she’d been with another be what keeps me away from her?

I heaved a deep sigh because even if accepting her was what I wanted, I wasn’t sure it was what she wanted. Because her first mate died only a year ago. Was she truly ready for another?

Was I only chasing after a woman whose heart belonged to another?

My eyes grazed Phil’s and he stood at ease. “What are you going to do now, Alpha Gerald?” He asked and I should’ve known that each time he called me by my title, it was serious. I pushed a hard lump down my

throat as I got up from the chair.

“I should sleep on it” I replied, inching towards my bed after what was a long day. I grudgingly clenched around my sheets, pulling it closer to me.

My Beta Phil was hesitant but finally, he left the room, turning off the light on his way out. As my eyes fixated in the darkness and the echoes of the rain banging on the rooftop flooded through my ears, I felt tears sting my eyes. I just laid there.

Who was I kidding anyway, thinking I’d fall asleep?

My eyes remained open until the next morning and I still laid there with my mind heavy with the thoughts of Susannah. I couldn’t even think about anything else. There, the rain stopped. The sun rose and light poured in through my windows.

Phil was already by my side and he hefted me my breakfast like he’d done for the last few years but as I got up today, I didn’t even have the appetite to eat anything.

“I’m not hungry” I croaked, clearing my throat and I watched his shoulders sink. “Is this still about the girl...Susannah?” He asked and It was easy for him to be indifferent because he hadn’t even met her. All Phil knew was what I had told him.

“You’ve only met her for what? Two? Three days?” He questioned and I swallowed yet another lump down my throat. “You wouldn’t understand” I muttered and then Phil sat down next to me.

“Actually, I’m sorry” He said. “I’m sorry if I haven’t exactly been of help the past few weeks” He threw a look over his shoulders and I pressed my lips together. “You’re right, I may never understand. You know all about being mated and falling in love because it’s something I’ve never experienced. And sometimes, I think it’s something I never would.” I arched my brows at Phil.

“I’m a gay werewolf. The moon goddess isn’t especially generous to us” Phil muttered and I looked into his eyes, bridled with pain and regret. Of course, I had an idea that he was gay. This was someone who has been by my side for so many years and besides the fact that he never for once darted an eye towards any woman, it was just a sixth sense.

But since he never told me, I never asked. His truth wasn’t something he owed me, not unless he was ready or something he felt like he had to tell me. But at that moment, I was glad he did.

I was glad for that day, that I had someone like Phil. Because he was the one that ultimately led me to make the decision that I made.

“You don’t know that” I shrugged and he let out a scoff. “How many of us can you see around? We’re practically living in hiding because if she doesn’t hate us, the people would do that as well” Phil said.

“You know how they are, Gerald.” I nodded because I did. Maybe I hadn’t done such a spectacular job at ruling them as I thought I did. Because no matter how strongly I felt about a lot

of things, I thought every person should deserve love. Especially knowing Phil, he had a lot of that.

I, on the other hand, didn't even think I could feel that until I met her.

"But that's not what I wanted to say, Gerald" He shook his head. "I know I may have been sarcastic a lot of times or told you that you were crazy but if you truly love this girl, two days or not, if you truly feel it in her heart and your soul and your wolf, then you should go for her."

I narrowed my eyes at him.

"Second chance or not. What does it matter?" He asked. "Love is love."

"Some of us don't get it at all, some of us once and some are even fortunate to get it twice in a lifetime. But regardless of how many times, i feel love is something you must open your heart to. Something you must accept and I've seen the way you speak about this girl."

"You're clearly in love."

"But what if she's still in love with her former mate?" I didn't even know when I blurted out that question, my strongest worry. "Then that's something only you and her can talk about but you said she kissed you back. That doesn't sound like someone still hung over her past"

"She felt regret" I replied. Phil shook his head. "Grief can mask itself as a lot of things and sometimes regret is one of those things. It doesn't mean she still loves him. It's just a natural feeling" He explained. "You did say she was trying to put herself out there and you are the first person she's been with after him. So of course, she feels the grief."

"Just as much as she feels the connection. It's normal, Gerald."

"But then again, you do have to speak to her" Phil advised and I wondered for a moment, how someone who had never been in love could know so much about it. "You owe her that but most of all, you owe it to yourself. So there are no regrets in the future." He shook his head.

"No regrets." Phil added and a hard lump went down his throat.

"I feel it" I whispered. "I feel the connection and the bond, stronger than ever. She feels like it. Whenever I'm close to her, I can almost hear my

wolf growl at the surface, 'Mine'. I just feel it."

"Like she's my future. And I was supposed to meet her in the forest that day and as stupid as it sounds, she was supposed to strike me with an arrow" I chuckled and Phil did too.

"Well, my Mother used to say, when you know, you know." He replied.

“If you feel that way, you should probably go find her and tell her all this” Phil instantly prompted me to my feet and I exhaled, kicking my feet forward towards the door. I sucked in a deep breath through my lips.

“What if I don’t see her again?” I asked.

“Well, you won’t know if you don’t try at least” Phil replied and our eyes met from a distance. I halted, nodding back at him. “And Phil,” I paused.

“You’ll find someone too.” I assured him but there was something bittersweet about his nod. Almost like he’d only accepted that he wouldn’t.

“Don’t worry about my love, go after yours” He muttered and I whisked myself through the door. It was only morning but the surge of energy I felt was unlike anything before.

I only wanted one thing, and that was to see Susannah again. I found myself in the middle of the forest, right where we met the first time and I just waited patiently for fate to work her thing.

NOW.

I looked down at Eliana and she was so intrigued with my every word.

“Did you see her that day?” She asked and I nodded with a frail smile.

“Of course I did.”

Chapter 96: Little Boy.

## Chapter 96 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

GERALD JACOBS.

MORE THAN 30 YEARS AGO.

I sprinted into the forest with halting labored breaths escaping my lips. I threw looks over my shoulder as I stood there, right where we first met. I halted, desperation etched across my face as I looked at the trees.

Shafts of the morning sunlight filtered through them and I had to narrow my eyes because my vision dimmed. Suddenly, I couldn’t see so clearly but you see, the moment that I scented her again. The perfect Vanilla cologne with a stint of woody mint.

She spelled like nature herself, like blooming flowers and a crystal clear sky and then my eyes cleared. It was fate, no one could tell me otherwise because I wasn't even sure I would see her again. But there she was, standing in a small clearing, bathed in a soft, ethereal light.

Our eyes locked into each other and time seemed to pause for a moment. I lifted my feet to walk towards her and Susannah did the same. Tears stung the back of my eyes as I fell into her embrace, holding her tightly to me. She gasped softly, crying upon my shoulders too.

But there was just this sense of comfort that radiated when we were together. My heart was no longer beating so fast, my mind wasn't racing too. Perhaps, internally, I had already known I accepted her. I held Susannah without the urge to let go and we shared a profound moment in the forest that day. The forest seemed to come alive.

"You came back" Susannah whispered and there was a crack in her voice. I closed my eyes to the tears that fell. "Of course I did" I muttered. "Of course I did" She pulled away briefly to look into my eyes.

"I'm so glad you did, Alpha Gerald. I'm so happy you came back" I looked at her and swallowed a hard lump down my throat. "We should probably talk" I said softly and she bit into her lips, nodding her head.

Soon, we were trailing down the hill towards the edge of the cliff. The winds were in the trees and the sun was pouring through the canopy above. My hands slipped into hers as we walked.

Susannah knew most parts of the forest like it was her home. She said she had spent the last few months staying here and that being rogue wasn't so terrible. In fact, that was how she met her first mate.

And his name was Dante, he was a hunter, the one who taught her how to hunt. She only told me about Dante because I asked. And I read through her while she talked, little did she know. It was like a test but who was I fooling—Susannah wasn't like an open book.

She was the opposite, she was opaque and mysterious, and enigmatic.

I could hardly tell what she was going to say next before she did. We walked down the hill quietly. There was silence between her words.

"Why aren't you saying anything?" She asked me all of a sudden and I shrugged my shoulders. "I—" I threw a look back. "Just taking it in" I responded. Susannah chuckled.

"You make a terrible liar" She told me.

"I know you have a question, you can ask it" She muttered after a while and an arch first came between my brows but she was right. I did have one question—the one which had plagued my mind since yesterday. And so I parted my lips.

“Do you still love him?” I asked her. “Dante.”

A smile curled her lips. “I knew it” She whispered. “What’s so funny?” I asked. She met my eyes. “The truth is, I don’t know. I don’t know if I love him but whether or not I’ll always have love for him, that I do know”

“Because I met Dante at a very low point in my life and he helped me so much. He was so easy to fall in love with. Like a gift the goddess sent to

me herself and it was really good. It was good while it lasted. I carry a reminder of that everywhere I go” She spoke so highly of him that I gulped a hard lump down my throat.

“But I’m only just realizing the truth, more and more each day. Dante is gone now. I wake up each morning and I tell myself that. And it becomes easier, lighter, better. But the grief sticks and it does come back. Like maybe when I’m hunting and I remember that was his favorite thing to do. Or maybe...just maybe when I kiss the first person after his death and I happen to love it, but the grief comes” She whispered.

“I can’t stop it. But I can’t keep stopping myself from moving on too.”

“Especially when I look at you and I feel it so much in my chest, the fire, the heavy throbbing, the unmistakable mate bond. I can’t turn away even if I wanted to but I don’t even want to, Alpha Gerald.” Susannah paused and she reached for my hands.

“I want this” She said. Now, a smile crept to my lips.

“Undeniably, I want this and I want you. But it’s not fair if you don’t know the whole truth” She added, squeezing my fingertips. “What more is there to know?” I asked. “Come on,” She pulled my arms.

“Let’s go” This time, we went around the hill to somewhere I, myself had never been to but it was so fun exploring the forest with Susannah. She was leading me somewhere, even if I didn’t know it yet.

I always hated the silence when I was with her. Like I just wanted to go on and on with her about many things and everything. I just wanted to ask. I wanted to know her. Susannah Baker.

“So, how did Dante die?” I asked and she turned to me, arms wide.

“...if you’re okay with telling me” I subtly added and she laughed softly. “Of course, it was a fever.” Susannah said and I couldn’t help the shock that plastered on my face. “A fever?” I echoed.

“It’s okay. You can laugh. Dante would’ve too if he were here.”

“For months after he died, I racked my head at how that is such a stupid way to die especially for someone as strong as he was but I only realized none of that mattered. I was only constantly beating myself up for nothing. He died of Lunarbane Fever by the way” Susannah added. “Oh!” I exclaimed. See, that made a lot of sense.

Lunarbane fever is a rare disease that amplifies the adverse effects of a Wolf’s transition and it makes the shift a lot more uncontrollable and torturous so much so that the chances of the werewolf surviving are next to none. It was like how the humans have diseases, cancer maybe.

This was just like that.

And it happened to the best of us. No reason, no cure. Nothing. You just know you have Lunarbane Fever, and it’s like a death sentence. So I got Susannah, and I understood her grief. It was no easy sickness.

“What are you thinking?” She suddenly asked me and I opened my eyes.

“What?”

“You’re thinking about something” She muttered. I scoffed. “How do you do that?” I questioned. “Do what?” She blinked innocently. “How do you read people but never allow them to do the same?” I asked her.

“It’s a little gift” She whispered, a dark glint in her eyes as she winked. She kicked her feet forward. “Besides, why do you even want to read me? I’m already answering your questions” She shrugged her shoulders.

“You can ask away...”

I leaped forward towards her, running my hands through my hair. “You said you were avoiding your Mother when we met, why?” I asked her and when she looked at me, there was just something heavy in her eyes. She pushed a hard lump down her throat.

“If you want to tell me” I added. “I...” She stuttered.

“I live a very complicated life, Alpha Gerald. I know from far, I strike you as a bubbly, fun girl who somehow has it all together and loves being a rogue, all of that” She chuckled. “But I couldn’t even be more opposite”

When I looked forward, there was a house like a cabin we’d been seemingly approaching and only when we got to the front porch did we come to a halt. “I mean it, Alpha Gerald” She muttered but her fears were what drew me closer even more.

I inched towards her, my hands framing her soft cheeks and I smiled.



“I’m a complicated mess, you have no idea.” I still smiled at that moment. “You’re also my Mate” I guess that was the point that I truly accepted Susannah as mine and it was a liberating moment. A freeing sensation that washed over my body.

“And I’m your Mate, second chance or not, I’m still your Mate. So whatever it is, we’ll figure it out. I promise” I assured her and she sucked in a deep breath through her lips before pulling away. She walked towards the cabin on this lonely, quiet side of the forest and I guess she lived here because she had the key that opened it.

The door creaked open and we stepped in. A warm candle flickered in the dark and there was a net that hung over the ground. A shrill cry pierced my ears at that moment.

“About that reminder,” Susannah leaned over the table and she hefted in her hands a baby boy. I gasped softly as she turned to me. “Meet Boy” She whispered and there was a crack in her voice.

“Is he...” He stared with contemplation at first, a hard pill to swallow.

“Yes,” Susannah replied. “He’s Dante’s.”

“I was almost due when I died. And he never got to meet Boy. And his name is Boy because I haven’t been able to come up with anything. It’s just been...” She paused, tears surfacing in her eyes. “It’s just been hard and I’m trying, Alpha Gerald.” The grief was still evident in her eyes.

That all I did was inch closer to her and I held the baby up with one hand. Susannah looked at me and I smiled down at her. “You don’t have to—” “I want to” I replied her. “I want to, Susannah.”

Her eyes gleamed at me as I stared into his beautiful blue eyes, just like his mother’s and I nodded. “I want to.” Most of that part, I said to myself anyway and I looked in Susannah’s direction.

“This doesn’t change anything. Like I said, we’ll figure it out.” I assured her again and this time, she returned a soft smile, even her moist eyes.

“He really is beautiful.”

“Boy,” I whispered. “He’s beautiful, just like you.”

NOW.

At that moment, I watched the emotions fill Eliana’s eyes.

“He died?” Was all she could say. “Dante.” And I nodded. “And you knew?” She asked. My lips fell wide open. “She told me everything that day” I replied but Eliana took a step back.

“Not that, Dad. You know what I’m talking about.”

“You knew about the child, my brother but you never said anything. Until now, until I had to come to you” She raised her voice and when I reached for her hands, Eliana backed away.

“I can’t believe this” She shook her head.

“When is everyone going to stop looking me right in the eyes only to lie to me? You knew I had a brother, you knew she was Mom was a Hybrid and maybe you even know about the Hybrid Curse. I don’t know. I never would because how am I supposed to trust you now?”

“Eliana” I interrupted but she struck a finger in the air. “You know what, I’m done” She muttered. “What Hybrid Curse?” I called out to her. “She didn’t tell me about that, Eliana.”

“Well, I’m pregnant!” She yelled. “And it’s my second child which apparently my body can’t carry. It’s what’s going to kill me Dad if I don’t find a solution to the Hybrid Curse, just like...” She paused with a little reflection in her eyes. I just stared at her, shocked wasn’t even the word.

“Just like I killed Mom. Because I, was the second child.”

“Now, I just need to find Boy, wherever he is, please tell me you do know where he is because he just might be the only one who knows how to break the Curse. Maybe he somehow was able to start a family of his own now. I just need you to tell me where I can find him.”

“Please tell me you know” There was a crack in her voice and a tear that rolled down my cheek. I shook my head and Eliana bit into her lips. She clenched her hands and sucked in a deep breath.

“Where is he?”

“Where is Boy now?” She asked the question that ultimately led to the final part of my story. Because alas, I didn’t know where Boy was.

Chapter 97: Whether Or Not He Is Alive.

## Chapter 97 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I stood at the apex of the hills, winds running through my hair as I looked at my Dad. All he’d done was tell me the story about how he met my mother but he left out one part—the most important part and the reason I was here in the first place.

"Where is he?" I blurted out of my lips, realizing a child named Boy was a lot harder to find. "Where is my Brother?" I raised my voice, tears stinging the back of my eyes and a hard lump went down my Dad's throat. It was clear he was somehow replaying a core memory in his head.

And whatever it was, it was strong enough to let the tears flow down his cheeks. He was disheveled once our eyes met again.

"I don't know" He muttered.

"What do you you don't know?" I asked him. "You knew of the child even though you've kept him a secret all this time, from me and everyone else. You knew him because Mom told you. How can you stand there and then lie that you don't know where he is right now."

"I told you about the Curse, finding Boy could be the one thing that can save my life" There was a crack in my voice. "Eliana, I'm serious" My Dad chastised. "I don't know where he is" He added.

"The truth is I haven't known in a long time" He told me and an arch appeared between my brows. "What?" I asked. "Something happened" He answered. "Like a few days after I met Boy for the first time"

"Something happened" And there was as much hurt in my Father's eyes as he could muster. He sniffled through his nose as if being whisked back to the memory from over thirty years ago but his eyes blinked all of a sudden, as if putting a hold to the PTSD and then he said.

"They took Boy." I was so taken aback by those words that my heart stomped in my chest. "What?" I whispered. "Your Mom and I, we came back one day after spending some time in the forest. Since the day I accepted her, we ended up spending a lot more time together. She was very reluctant to come home with me so I only went to the forest to see her. There, we would hunt and talk about everything and laugh."

"We would forget completely about time until the sun began to set. We usually stayed only some kilometers away from her cabin. She would leave Boy behind because it was safe. I mean back then, Oakland used to be the safest place in all of town. Rarely was there any news about any death or murders or killing. Or abduction." My father paused.

"Until that day."

"We got home to find out that Boy had been taken."

"What?" I blurted out with a worrisome furrow between my brows. "By who?" I questioned. "That would ultimately haunt me for the rest of my life. Your mother and I, we didn't know. She was a wreck the next few days without him and she blamed herself constantly. I had never seen her so completely broken as she was back then."

"I couldn't blame her, hell I couldn't even comfort her. She was just devastated, losing a child was different but having one taken from you, whose fate you have no idea of whether he's even alive or not, constantly hoping only to have it shattered each passing day, that was different and it took a toll of Susannah that was heartbreaking to see"

My father cleared his throat. I looked into his eyes.

"Everything just changed from that day."

"So what happened? You didn't look for him?" I asked. He scoffed lightly. "I don't even think I ever fully stopped. There wasn't anything I didn't do, there wasn't any army I didn't send. Halfway across the state, the country. I deployed troupes in search of Boy. He was only little. For months, we were at it which back then seemed a little longer" He said.

"But we did everything. We tried everything and searched everywhere but that day would always remain the last day that I saw him" I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. Nothing could've prepared me for a revelation like that. "And what about Mom?" I asked.

"I don't think she ever forgave herself. He was the only memory she had of Dante, one she wanted to keep and she loved that child with all her heart. She wasn't the same after he was taken away. I know because I saw that. I watched her change and there was nothing I could do."

"Oh my God" I softly exclaimed. That was a fate far more devastating than I could imagine. Mostly for the child, Boy who now I didn't even know whether was alive or not. It was like taking a hundred steps back.

Further than where I even stood before.

"I can't even..." I stuttered, speechless. I rested my back against a tree, folding my arms too. "I can't even comprehend what she must have gone through" I muttered. I couldn't even imagine losing Elijah right now. Not to talk about when he was younger. I would have been broken.

Devastated, even.

No wonder my mother carried so much guilt and even if she knew about the Curse which I undoubtedly felt she did, it was no wonder she made the decision to have me too. Maybe she couldn't bear the thought of losing another child. That wasn't even an option for her.

So she scaled through the pregnancy which I was a result of. I wonder whether she had any hope, or faith that the inevitable wouldn't happen. Or whether she just fully accepted that it was going to. She was okay with it. I thought about her a lot these days—my mother.

She was so complex and intricate, yet so beautiful, things my father could attest to. I really wished I got to know her. Not even the version after Boy but the one my Dad met in the forest that day.

As I stood there, there was one thing that plagued my mind. Inescapable.

"What really happened to him, all these years?" I asked, a chill running down my spine at the thought—the most important question,

"Who took Boy that day?" I muttered.

Chapter 98: A Shocking Twist.

## Chapter 98 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"Who took Boy that day?"

My father pressed his lips together and he shook his head.

"There wasn't anything we didn't think about, any option we didn't consider but it came down to one thing. Who was so heartless enough to just rip a child from his mother without a care in the world? Oakland changed after that day, more so after the news had spread" He replied.

"We just couldn't think of anyone."

"That was until she told me" My Dad's voice went deep. "That she was a Hybrid?" I pieced it together. He nodded. "She told me everything. From the Witch's Curse to the fact that they'd been tailing

her for so long. It wasn't a life she wanted. Susannah hated it."

"All she wanted was to be normal. She didn't want to have a bounty placed on her head so she never felt safe. She hated that life and if there was one thing I was certain she wanted, it was to find a way to completely make her Witch side recessive. To be only Werewolf again."

"If only there was such a way." He heaved.

"Because she blamed herself for Boy's abduction, so much" My brows unarched with a grim realization. "You think the Witches took him?" I asked my Dad and he swallowed a hard lump down his throat.

"Susannah told me how they'd been after her. Something about her blood—" "And the sacrifice to break the Curse" I added, realizing my fate wasn't that much different from my Mother's. Like at all.

"Yes" He replied.

"They took Boy because he was a Hybrid too, that was the only thing that made sense even though we never really got an answer. "But," I heaved a deep sigh. "I don't think their plan worked" I added.

"Because if it had, there would have been no need for them to come after me then, if they already had my brother" My father looked at me.

"You're right." He said.

"I don't think they still have him, something must have happened" My eyes grew wide but my father was careful with his excitement. "But that doesn't answer the question of whether he even is still alive" He added.

"But it doesn't rule out all of our hope, not necessarily" I replied him.

"Even if he is still alive, how are you going to find him?" He asked. "A locator spell, anything? I'm a Witch..." "But it's been more than thirty years, you don't even know who you're looking for. Or what he looks like. I wouldn't even know myself" My father reminded me and I heaved a sigh.

"You're right" It was a deep sigh before an idea struck me. "I may not be able to locate him but maybe I can locate a Witch" I widened my eyes. "Carys" Her name escaped my lips.

"And how are you going to do that?" My Dad asked. I hefted forward.

"Being to the other side isn't something I haven't done before. I went there when I wanted to save Nora and I saw Adam and Carys and even Elyndra. Maybe I could take another trip in search of answers. Maybe Carys would be able to tell me."

"And what does your Grandmother think about that? Isn't it dangerous?"

"I could also search for Denver" I heaved, his words flying over my ears. Adrenaline fired in my heart. "And if he is dead, I would find him there. Not here, only then will I be able to bring him back" I muttered, spiraling.

But I didn't notice until Ivan crept up behind me and Cory was right beside him. They heaved deep breaths tirelessly from their lips. I turned to them and there was something especially across Cory's face.

"What is it?" I questioned. His hands loosely opened. "Did you find him?" I asked. "We found something" Ivan replied and my eyes fell to Cory's hands. His fingers parted to reveal the ring within his clasp and I gasped softly from my lips.

"That's Denver's ring!" I exclaimed.

"It's the ring that I gave him only a few days ago" I reached out for it, holding it firmly in my hands. "Where did you find it?" I asked. Ivan and Cory looked at themselves. "Right at the edge of the cliffs" He replied.

And my eyes darted over the edge here, staring into the voidness of the hollow ground. My breaths hitched in the back of my throat. "We think he may have fallen" Ivan said but his words drowned in my eyes. I took a good look at the ring in my hands and a thought struck me.

Perhaps I was able to siphon enough power from it that it could give me a glimpse of what really happened. Now, that I had something of his, something as precious as this ring, maybe a locator spell wouldn't be so hard to do. And so I closed my eyes, clenching my fist around the ring.

And I was pulled into a throbbing darkness. I could hear the car crash before I even saw the car and then Denver. The events played behind my eyes but there was someone else there. I could almost feel it.

That was before I caught a glimpse of a woman's face. A grimace was etched across her lips and she was standing in the middle of the road, her eyes on Denver. I only saw her for a second before I was pulled back to reality, my consciousness.

I gasped, one of revelation.

"She was a Witch!" I exclaimed.

Ivan and Cory arched their brows. "What?" My Dad asked and I put two and two together effortlessly. "I remember" I muttered. "I remember his words on the phone. Before the line cut off, Denver said something like 'she came out of nowhere'. That he didn't see her but I didn't read that much into it until now."

"But it makes sense" I continued, heaving a deep breath. "Denver didn't jump off the cliff, he was abducted—" I turned to my Dad. "Just like Boy was, by a Witch. I saw her right now, all of this, it was perfectly orchestrated but he's not dead. They don't want to kill him" I said.

"Because it's not him they want. It's me." And a light scoff escaped my lips. They all looked puzzled in my direction. "It's me that they want."

"My Grandmother and I had been thinking, we killed Elyndra but the Curse is still very much there and I think they're back" I whispered, eyes locking into my Dad's. "And they're here." I realized.

"There's no need going to the other side because they're right here."

At that moment, Nathaniel, my Grandma and the whole crew came together. "What happened?" The former asked and I looked at him. "I think I know who took Denver and I think I know where they are."

"The Haven's Place." My Dad echoed. They weren't in the forest, we could spend so long here but we would never find them. They were beneath it—in the Haven's Place. I'd already been there once when I was abducted myself. I hated the fact that I was only just remembering this.

"What are we waiting for?" Cory muttered. "Let's get going," I kicked my feet forward and landed right next to Ivan. "I have a brother" I told him. "His name is Boy and he was abducted when he was little."

"I still think he's alive and when I find him, he can help us with the Hybrid Curse" I said and Nathaniel had heard my words. There was a glimmer in his eyes once they met mine and he cleared his throat.

"Now, you believe it." He said.

Of course I did. It was how I was here. It was a fate that befell my Mother and just like everything else, it was now my turn. But I was confident in finding a solution, just like I was confident that Boy was still out there.

Perhaps, he was even closer to me than I thought.

"Eh," Cory's voice echoed from up ahead. "There's a little problem." I threw my head over my shoulders and the air was cold against my skin. I looked at Ivan. What was it now?

"We can't find Blake." He informed me and I looked around. My heart stomped in my chest because it was true. He had come up to search with us but now, he was just gone. My fingers pinched the bridge of my nose.

At that moment, I just heaved a deep sigh.

"Shit." I cussed.

Because if there was one more person that knew about the Haven, it was Blake. He had come there to take me from Elyndra when he wanted to resurrect Aurora.

He knew about the place and knowing Blake well enough, he was probably on his way there already which was why I could only cuss again.

"Shit."

Chapter 99: The Witch Is Back.

## Chapter 99 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby



DENVER.

As I charged my eyes open to the utter darkness, I felt soaked with the beads of sweat and blood that clung to my skin. The air was thick with the stench of decay and the chains around my wrists and ankles rattled with every slight movement.

I sucked in air through my lips, refreshing my lungs. It felt like I'd only just awoken from a state of trance. No idea how I got here. My wrists were bound, each link echoing the oppressive silence of the dungeon.

Panic surged through me like a torrential wave, and my breath quickened with each turn I looked over my shoulders. "Where am I?" I blurted out and there was a crack in my voice. "Eliana" Her name was the first to come to my mind as I remembered one thing.

I was on my way to see her when—

"The accident" I muttered. Slowly, I began to piece together the shreds that had become of my memory. I was driving. I remember driving, my hands groping the steering wheel and the sound of her voice echoing from the phone. I remember her anxiety, evident in her voice.

She wanted me to come back. I wanted to come back too. In fact, I was on my way. Less than half an hour to get back to her Pack. The road was free and the sun was clear. But suddenly, I saw her standing in the middle of the highway and it felt like a dream—a nightmare.

I remember the surge of emotions that flooded inside of me. The panic, the shock and the fear that ultimately forced me to drive off the highway. It was only a swerve, I thought. But little did I know the steepness of the cornered hills knew no bounds.

And that's how I tumbled down the hill, wrecking the car over and over again as my vision dwindled in the light. Finally, I crashed to the surface of the earth again and I was wounded and soaked in my own blood. I looked out of the window which was upside down.

The scent of fuel tickled up my nose. I forced the door open with as much strength as I could garner and I rolled out of the vehicle. I could feel the blood flow from my temples and my eyes were blurry. I managed to stagger to my feet, labored breaths escaping my lips.

I clutched my phone in my hands and Eliana was still on. Even though I could barely see a thing through the cracked screen. I tried to speak but I couldn't hear her. Up until the line cut.

I looked up the hills, sure as hell that I saw that face. But it couldn't be her—I thought. There was no possible way, no logical reason. But she hadn't aged a day since the last time I saw her.

The grimace was unmistakable, those eyes were unforgettable.

Then I scented her through my nose. Immediately, I turned around. Although I felt dizzy, I swear I saw her.

“It’s you.” Those words escaped my lips and alas, that was the last thing that I remembered. Until now, I shook my hands and the clanging of the metal echoed through the room.

The only other sound was a distant drip of water, a haunting metronome accentuating the eerie stillness. And I strained against my restraints, my mind racing with a thousand thoughts.

Firstly, about where Eliana was and then, the inevitable, the face of the woman that I saw. How was she alive? How was she here?

It could not have been my mind fucking with me, that wasn’t possible. Besides, it felt so real. And it would explain how I got here. My throat itched with immense thirst as my fingers explored the cold, unyielding iron. I tried to budge forward but it was too tight, too strong.

“You’re not strong enough to set yourself free” The voice of my inner wolf echoed from within and finally, I gave in. Maybe I would have been strong enough if I was feeding like a normal Werewolf. But the thing about dieting was the weakness that came with it.

And in that moment, I had never felt weaker. My bones ached, so did my joints and my clothes were still soaked with my blood. My wounds were bare to the cold, chilling air which caused it to sting. I shut my eyes tight, the realization of my captivity clenching my stomach.

“Who is there?!” I yelled at the top of my voice as fewer crept into my mind. “It can’t be you!” I continued. “Whoever it is, enough of this sick game you’re playing. How about you come out and tell me what you want!” I shouted.

“I won’t ask again.” There was a crack in my voice when all of a sudden, I heard a distant nose from behind, besides the sound of the water. It sounded like a door and the echo reverberated through my chest. At that moment, a dim sliver of light struck the room.

And I looked around, instantly recognizing this place.

It was the Witch’s Haven. When Eliana was kidnapped by Elyndra, she had brought her here. Now, I was here. All signs were pointing to one thing, my one fear. The Witches were back.

But it wasn’t just the Witches, it was the one Witch that I had seen on the highway that plagued my mind. Her sight poisoned my head and each time I remembered, my heart would drop in my stomach.

The chilling reality sank in at that moment and then I heard the sound of the door again, followed by footsteps. I remained still, holding my breath for as long as I could. But then, in a shocking twist of events, I scented him. There was no way, I thought.

But my brother’s scent was unmistakable.

I squinted my eyes, relief washing over my face as I muttered in shock.

“Blake?” He emerged from the darkness, his eyes meeting mine. He plunged himself across the room. “What are you doing here?” I asked him and he darted his eyes to me. “I could you ask you the same” He groped the metal chains and pulled strongly at the hinges.

The locks broke free one by one and the chains fell heavily to the ground.

“I came to save you” Blake muttered. “How did you even know I was here? Where’s Eliana...did she come with you?” I asked. My eyes grew wide with concern. “Eliana’s back in the Pack. She’s still looking for you. I tried to escape without her knowing because it was probably safer this way.” He replied. I swallowed a hard lump down my throat.

He freed my ankles and a searing pain shot up my limbs.

“Give me your hands. Let’s get out of here” He helped me up, wrapping my arms around his shoulders and I looked around the room. Her scent still lingered in the air in the most creepy way possible.

“Come on, what are you looking at?” Blake asked and I turned to him.

“It’s the Witches, I think they’re back for the Curse” I told him and Blake wasn’t even fazed. “I already put that part together. Once I realized, I knew there was no other place they could have taken you because we’d searched the whole forest. That’s why I came here” He replied.

But my eyes sunk in their sockets. I shook my head.

“Not just the Witches,” I paused. He carried me further as we neared the door and at that moment, Blake turned a harrowing gaze towards me.

“It’s her,” I whispered. An arch came between his brows and suddenly, there was a high-pitched noise that ravaged the room. It was almost deafening, affecting Blake and I the same. I growled beneath my breath and my eyes glistened in defense. I fell to the ground, clutching my ears.

“What the fuck is that?!” Blake yelled. And he fell too. A storm took the room and it was like someone was especially making sure that we couldn’t leave. I knew undoubtedly in that moment, that it was her.

Even before she came out.

“Wait” Blake muttered, immediately turning back to me. The doors flung open and the lights immediately turned in her direction. I knew I wasn’t mistaken. I knew it was her that I saw on the highway. She was here, she was standing right in front of me.

Which only made me wonder, How?

I watched Blake's eyes widen with shock as he turned to me. I marveled at her sight. She was no different than she was all those years ago. Her red hair cascaded her shoulders and her eyes, ever so bright. Her lips which curled upon entering the room.

And then, she came to a halt, striking the ground with her feet.

"What the fuck?" Blake cursed. Her eyes rested on me and she smiled.

Aurora smiled.

"Hello Denver." Her voice was sultry and thick and my breaths hitched in the back of my throat. I couldn't even say any words. Mostly, I was just wondering how the fuck this was possible.

How she was standing in front of me at that moment.

"Hello Blake." She turned to my brother who shook his head. "No," He whimpered. "No no, this isn't possible. This is some game. It has to be" He threw a look over his shoulders to me as we stood to our feet.

"You should be dead" He turned to her.

"Aurora, you should be dead" His eyes shimmered with tears and all she did was shrug her shoulders. Her eyes met mine for the umpteenth time, as if specifically making sure that I heard her next words loud and clear.

"Well, I'm here now." She whispered. "And I'm here to stay and I'm not leaving until I get what I want." Her soft voice was masked with a threatening tone as she smiled through her teeth.

I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. She was the one on the highway, she was the one who caused my accident and brought me here.

Aurora was alive.

And now, that was a twist I never saw coming. No one had.

Chapter 100: Reunited.

## Chapter 100 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

DENVER.

“Hello Denver” Aurora’s eyes fell on me and I pushed a hard lump down my throat. I got up now that the sharp ringing had stopped and so had the storm but I froze in my tracks.

Disbelief and astonishment etched across my face.

It had been minutes but I still couldn’t believe she, Aurora, in flesh and blood was standing opposite me. Her presence weaved a surreal tapestry of emotions that swept through me.

I looked at Blake, he was having a harder time taking it all in. This was someone he’d loved for the most of the last century. Someone he was willing to resurrect from the dead only for them to be together. I’m sure, the emotions were a lot more for him.

“What are you doing here?” He still scowled and a soft chuckle escaped her lips. “What am I doing here?” She inched closer but Blake stepped in between us. Aurora came to a halt, barely meters from his face and she sucked in a deep breath through her lips.

Her hands reached into his hair and she slowly swept her fingers through it. I pulled her away and the room echoed with her laughter. “Oh the brothers!” She softly exclaimed. “You lots haven’t changed.”

“One always jealous when I’m with the other” She turned to me and I rolled my eyes to the back of my head. “Or do you think you have, Denver?” She hissed. “What?” I gritted through my teeth, regrettably.

“Do you think you have changed?” Her voice echoed behind the rush of blood that flowed into my ears. She stepped closer to me. “I heard you got married. You met someone else, fell in love and got married” She whispered softly, a hard lump slipping down her throat.

“Her name is Eliana” I reiterated and she pressed her lips together. “Of course I know. Eliana, sweet Hybrid Eliana, whose blood is the key to a lot of things—“ “If you’re talking about breaking the Curse, you might want to stay away from her before it’s too late” I defensively lunged forward.

And a scuffle escaped her lips.

“Relax, Denver. You’re always so fierce and burning. Have you forgotten you were like that with me?” She whispered. “Now, I’m dying to know. What changed? What do you even see in the Hybrid because she’s nothing like me know. She could never be.” Aurora said.

“That’s more than perfect for me.” Once the shock had worn off, I was able to speak directly to her face. “What changed?” I could feel the fury course through my veins once she spoke about Eliana.

“You died, Aurora and you ought to stay that way. There’s nothing for you here, not here. Not with us” I snapped. “But I’m here now” She pouted her lips. “I’m alive, not so dead...” Her words were in a sing-song voice which made my skin crawl.

And then she laughed loudly again.

“Relax, Denver. I’ll never get tired of telling you that. It’s cute that you think you’re the reason I came all the way back here. Maybe you’re one of it but it’s a really insignificant amount.” Aurora said.

“Then why are you here?” Blake asked. “Who brought you here?”

“I’ll answer your second question only” She turned to him. “I’m here because a few generous but very angry witches, if I may add, sought me out to carry out a little task” She narrowed her eyes.

“The Curse” I blurted out. “I wondered how long until they came back.”

“Bingo!” She exclaimed. “Now, you’ve answered the first question yourself. You’re right but I’m out of rewards” She folded her arms, inching closer to me. “Unless you’re down for a kiss” In a split second, Aurora leaned in but I was fast enough, grasping her by the neck and tossing her away. She choked on her words, clapping her hands.

“That was a pretty nice move” She muttered.

“Don’t try that again” I replied her. “I mean it.” “Well, someone really has changed. Someone tore a page of the loyalty book it seems. It’s pretty cute” She added. “Get to the point, Aurora” Blake chastised.

“What other thing is there to say, really?” She asked. “I was sent here by the Witches because someone here has what they want. It’s such a v

shame that Carys and Elyndra’s fate ended up the way that they did but that’s why I’m here. You know me, both of you” She said.

“I wouldn’t stop until I get what I want and I have a pretty decent track record at doing just that. That’s why I was the perfect candidate, pretty proud if you ask me. But you see, the thing is I’m not here to fight today. In fact, I’ve taken a bit of a different approach to all of this...”

“You kidnapped my brother!” Blake exclaimed.

“Only to send a message, no hard feelings. Besides, since when were you even fans of each other?” I replied with an arch between my brows and she heaved out a sigh. “Things really have changed, I can’t pretend.”

“Then don’t.” I scowled, using my super speed to zoom in her direction but Aurora struck out her arms in the air and there was that deafening sound again. I clutched my eyes tightly, knocking my knees to the floor.

“Don’t be stupid, Denver” She hissed. “Don’t let your impulsivity be what kills you. But know one thing, you won’t be able to kill me this time. Not like how you did to Carys and Elyndra. I won’t be that easy to get rid of”

I trembled beneath the sound of her voice as she cast a spell through my ears until they started bleeding.

“Enough!” Blake had to shout. “Enough, Aurora” It wasn’t until he pulled her away that she finally stopped. My hands fell to the ground as I panted. I heard her shrill laughter in the background.

“Only because you asked” She pouted seductively at Blake, before pulling away. I staggered to my feet, meeting her dreadful eyes. “Like I said, be wise. You don’t want to make an enemy out of me. Not now.”

“Not so soon.”

“Right now, I only just wanted to make an appearance and give you a message to deliver to your sweet little wife at home. She’s pretty worried and by the scent of it, she’s pretty close. Eliana is a smart woman, an Alpha I heard too. She’s smart which is why I expect her to know the next thing to do. She must find a way to break the Curse” Aurora said.

“I won’t be as pushy as Elyndra was, like I said, a different approach. But mind you, I would be more lethal. I could take her right now, if I wanted and that would be it. No necklace would bring her back. The Hybrid is gone for good at the hands of the sacrifice. All thanks to her Grandma.”

“You stay away from Eliana!” I gritted through my teeth and it took Blake and a lot of self-control not to launch towards Aurora at that moment.

“It isn’t worth it, brother” His voice seeped in through my ears and I heaved out a deep sigh. “I would.” She said. “For now.” “I trust that you would deliver my message to her. She has to find a way to break the Curse, all by herself before I intervene” Aurora threatened.

“That’s all the Witches want. And that’s pretty generous, personally, I wanted to bring back the head of one of your people. Just as a little souvenir or maybe as revenge for killing our Queen. But then they convinced me otherwise. They’ve sought their comfort in knowing Elyndra was a terrible person. A terrible ruler” She continued.

“Now, we only want one thing and that is for this Curse to be broken once and for all. And maybe then, you can finally get rid of me” She smiled.

“All you have to do is have your wife sacrifice herself.” My heart stomped in my chest and my fist folded up tightly. “Mind you, there’s a ticking clock before I intervene. My generosity isn’t to a fault.”

“And you want to know the best part,” Her eyes lit up with a glimmer.

“You won’t even know the next time I’m going to show up. I’m just going to come like a thief at night and I’m going to take either one of your wife or your child. The decision is up to you both” Aurora stepped back.

“So what’s it going to be?”

Her eyes locked into mine and at that moment, I heard the sound of cars pulling up from the outside. The roaring engines, and the blinding headlights. It was Eliana and the rest of the Pack.

Relief washed over my face immediately.

“What’s it going to be?” Aurora repeated. “Remember, the clock is ticking” Her words dwindled with each step she took back. And then, her eyes met Blake’s. They exchanged an intense, lasting glare before I jerked him forward. “Hey!” I called him back to reality.

And he looked at me.

“They’re outside” I threw a look out of the windows and now the door was in the clearing so we could leave. Although, there was a stint in my chest that caused a little hesitation, I believed Aurora’s words.

She didn’t want a fight, not tonight. And that was a good thing but coming from someone who knew her and her malicious, manipulative ways, it was also the most terrible thing. Blake and I inched towards the door but before we left, I threw one last look over my shoulders.

She lurked in the darkness but I could see her eyes, and her lips which blew a kiss and then Aurora just disappeared. The door fell open and I squinted my eyes at the lights that struck into them. I looked up at the car and the few familiar faces. A hard lump slipped down my throat.

“Denver!” I heard her call my name.

“Denver.”

All my senses awoke at the sound of Eliana’s voice and I staggered forward, limping and drenched in my sweat and blood. She ran from the car and I inched towards her. Once she was close enough, I grasped her in for a lasting hug and she held around me.

“Oh Denver!” She cried upon my shoulders. “Oh” She heaved.

“I thought you were dead. I thought something happened. When I heard the crash, you can’t even imagine what was going through my mind” She stuttered and I had to pull her away, looking into her shimmering eyes.

Eliana was restive, even as I was standing there.



“I’m here” I whispered to her. Her hands framed my wounded face. “I’m here” I still muttered. She sniffled through her nose. “I don’t know what I would’ve done if you weren’t” She replied.

“You won’t ever find out” I nodded. “I promise you.”

She hugged me again, tightly. Regardless of the blood, or the sweat. Her arms just clinched around me and a tear dropped down my cheeks. She was the one who withdrew next and then she asked.

“What even happened to you? You said you saw someone on the road and that was the reason you swerved” She said and I nodded. “About that,” I heaved and she looked into my eyes.

“The Witches are back.” She was the one who added. “I know.” She said but that wasn’t all. My heart sank in my chest and she could tell there was more from my eyes. “What happened, Denver?” Eliana asked.

“The person I saw on the road, the Witch...it was Aurora” I whispered and that name hit Eliana like a storm. She took a step back. “Aurora, your—“ She couldn’t even complete it but then she darted her eyes reflexively to Blake too. He faced the other side with his hands on his hip.

I couldn’t even imagine what was going through his mind.

What was going through hers.

“I don’t have a good feeling about this, Eliana” I muttered. She looked back at me. “It’s never good when she’s around and I just want to make sure that you’re safe. You and Elijah” I said. “He’s safe. I left behind with some trusted caretakers and I can take of myself.” She replied.

“No, you don’t know her.” I shook my head because I had already underestimated Aurora once and I swore that wasn’t going to happen again. “Denver,” Eliana called. “I can handle Aurora.”

“Or any Witch at that. If she wants the Curse broken, she’s going to have to come to me” Eliana pressed her lips together and a hard lump went down my throat for the umpteenth time.

Eliana’s words fell into a silence and only then did I realize how tense and on-edge she was. It was crystal clear across her face, in her eyes. In her gestures. She was holding something back too.

And so I reached for her hands, locking eyes with her.

“What is it?” I questioned. “What was it that you wanted to tell on the call before the accident? At my words, her eyes drowned in tears and then she parted her lips. “Denver” There was a vicious crack in her voice.

And her hand fell to her stomach. My eyes too. We both shed a tear.

I knew it.

“I’m pregnant, Denver.” Eliana whispered and my heart melted in my chest. I gripped her hands in mine. “What?” I muttered and she nodded.

“We’re pregnant.” Eliana echoed and from the tears in her eyes, something told me that wasn’t exactly all. And of course, I was right.