

The Alpha Prince and His Bride

By: LaurG

Chapter 1 - The Proposal

Lucy's POV:

"What do you mean I'm getting married? " I asked the queen in utter dismay.

She stared at her nails under the lights, acting the least bit interested in what I had to say.

"Did you really think my husband adopted you because he wanted another daughter? No sweetie, you've always been a business investment ,this was the plan all along .You're finally going to serve your purpose and repay us for giving you a roof over your head all of these years."

I gasped at her cruel words, I always knew that almost everyone in the royal family disliked me but I never once thought that they despised me to the extent that they were willing to sell me off like this.

"What are you saying?" I asked, unable to hide the shock in my voice.

"I'm saying, first thing tomorrow morning you'll be in King Jeremy's castle, getting married to his son Prince Austin Lance Vinci." She explained with a wicked smile. "What they do with you after is none of our concern, if I were you I'd start praying for I'm sure they're going to treat you much worse than us considering you're so hard to love."

I fought hard at the tears I felt threatening to fall. No. . I wouldn't cry, for my entire life this family has mistreated me, to the point that I often tried to hide from them as much as I could. The less I was around them, the more I felt at peace. For these reasons as well as many others, I should be happy that I was finally able to leave. Right?

I could only hope that my new family would be nothing like my old. I knew nothing about them, so all I could possibly do for myself was pray that they would treat me better, at least a little.

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Austin's POV:

Ariana's hands tangled in my hair as I jammed her up against the wall, my mate. My lips crashed down on her neck and she m****d my name in response. . .and just like before, I couldn't do it. I couldn't mark her, what the hell was wrong with my wolf?

"Alpha, we have a problem."

My eyes shut to Alex in annoyance. "This better be good ." I warned him.

"I can assure you that it is."

I reluctantly dropped my hands from around my mate and followed Alex outside.

"We just had word from your parents, something that will affect you greatly. As you're already aware. . .our kingdom is in jeopardy and in order to save it they've accepted a marriage proposal from Princess Lucy Rosemary."

"What?" I roared.

NO! NO FREAKING WAY!

They couldn't possible think of doing this to me when they already knew that I'd found my mate. There was no way I would ever be able to accept anyone else other than her!

Within minutes I was storming into my parents room, I found them both discussing in a corner. "I'm not getting married to that woman." I stated matter of fact before either one of them could say a single word. I needed to get it through to them that this wasn't something that was negotiable. My mother gave my father a look of helplessness before speaking. "Son, I know this is very disturbing news but you need to understand this is the only choice that we have, you need to take this decision for the people of our kingdom. You need to finally prove your worth to them, you know how much they love and adore you already, this is not about us but about them. . ."

I loved my people with all my heart but I never thought that this day would ever come, a day where I would have to sacrifice my happiness. It was all too much to take in just in one day.

A photo in my mother's hand caught my attention and I slowly reached for it. "What's this?"

As my mother handed it over to me she said. "It's a picture of the princess," at the exact same time my eyes fell on the photo. I felt the anger within me slowly leave my body as I scanned the image. Long black hair framed a beautiful heart shaped face, bright blue eyes that seemed to see straight through you and sweet pink lips to die for.

Who was this woman? Why did I feel a connection with just a photograph?

After staring at the photo for what seemed like hours I finally faced my parents. "I'll marry this woman only for the sake of my people , however as you know I already have a mate , this woman can never have my heart."

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"What the hell is this story about you marrying this slut of a princess today?" Ariana shouted at me before her eyes took in my suit. "And you're actually going through with it?" She asked in disbelief.

"Ariana , I'm so so sorry , I never even knew of this arrangement until yesterday , I have to do this for my people, please try and understand...this is just as hard for me as it is for you."

"Your people? That's all you ever think about, what about me? Your mate? Do I mean nothing to you?" She demanded.

"Of course you matter to me , look I swear to you , if there is any way to get out of this marriage I will...if not, please know that she would never mean anything to me." I whispered. "No one can take your place in my life."

"Make sure you make her life a living hell."

"I think its already happening , I mean she isn't even having a normal happy wedding which every woman deserves, just a rushed private ceremony." I pointed out. "You have nothing to worry about." I said pulling her into my arms.

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Lucy's POV:

I bit down on my nails nervously as the limousine pulled up to my new home, my nerves were all over the place. I could feel my heart thumping louder than drums and it felt as though I was about to meet the man I was destined to be with. Wait, what? Where did that thought even come from? I was so nervous that even my thoughts were scaring me.

"Try not to embarrass the family like you're so used to doing." The queen snapped at me as soon as we stepped out of the vehicle. I saw the king nod his head in agreement with her. Like always, they both saw me as a complete embarrassment to the family.

"I can't wait to see the ugly prince she's being forced to marry." My step sister Ellie spat with an evil

smile. It never failed to amaze me how low these people would stoop just to see me unhappy when I'd never done a single thing to any of them. I tried to ignore everything my family said after that, I had enough on my mind already.

The nervousness in me only increased with each step I took closer to the beautiful castle, my stomach started to hurt, something that usually happened whenever I was nervous. I tried to ignore it at first but the pain was becoming unbearable.

"I need to use the washroom." I told the queen.

She rolled her eyes at me. "Don't expect me to carry you to find it, you can help yourself."

I shouldn't have been surprised with her response, I turned away from my family and headed in the direction a maid had shown to me, my eyes took in the full beauty of the place. This castle was even more beautiful than the one back home, everything here looked like it cost a fortune. From the window frames to the curtains, even down to the flooring. After a few minutes of trying to find a washroom, I was convinced I was lost until I heard voices. I followed the sound hoping they could help me find my way.

I was close enough now to hear everything that they were saying.

"If there is any way to get out of this marriage I will." I heard the guy say.

Any way to get out of this marriage? There was only one person getting married here today as far as I knew. . Which only meant one thing.

Was that the prince I'm supposed to be getting married to?

I continued to listen to the conversation, my heart broke into tiny pieces with each word that came out both of their mouths.

They suddenly stopped saying anything and I peeped around the corner to see why, what I saw next had me doubling over in shock. My soon to be husband had another woman in his arms in a full on heated make out session!

Chapter 2 - Married

The shocked gasp I suddenly heard forced me to break away from Ariana. My wolf demands that I do. And that's when I saw her.

She hurdled into a corner, clutching her wedding dress tightly as if it were the only thing keeping her from running.

My bride.

Her beauty in person was nothing compared to the picture of her I had seen just yesterday; as much as I hated to admit it, she was the most beautiful woman I had ever laid my eyes on; never had I seen someone look at me with such innocence and purity and it freaking undid me in a way impossible to explain.

But it was not her beauty or innocence that made my gut twist; the hurt and shock in her eyes. the protective instincts within me suddenly overpowered every other emotion raging through my body right now; the need to take away her pain was almost unbearable.

My wolf was raging inside me, and it took all of my self-control not to let him loose. I'd never felt him fight to be free this much before; his behavior confused me.

"This is the hideous woman you're supposed to marry?" Ariana asked, breaking the silence and

bringing me back to reality.

Princess Lucy's gaze went over to Ariana, and not a single word came out of her mouth. However, Her beautiful lips parted, making me want to k**s it gently.

"Damn, babe, I think your future wife is mute." Ariana continued with her insults.

Her gaze returned to me again; the confusion there was suddenly replaced with fear. Was she scared of me? The thought of that made me sick to my stomach. Before anyone could say anything else, she spun and ran off.

I paced again, fighting to control my raging wolf who wanted to run after my bride. the solid and unknown feelings caused me to hate the princess more than I already did. I didn't know anything about her, and already, she had my emotions all over the place.

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LUCY'S POV:

I ran and ran and ran.

Not for the reason you may think, I was accustomed to being treated the way that woman spoke to me; what scared me was my immediate reaction to the Prince. Something within me was pulling me towards him, and whether or not you chose to believe me, I could have sworn a voice within me said 'mate.'

I can't believe it; I was already going insane on my first day at this place.

Hearing voices, feeling an immediate pull to someone I didn't know, feeling jealousy ...what was happening to me?

My heart was racing, and the stabbing pain of betrayal was eating at me raw; seeing the Prince wrapped his arms around another woman was enough to make me puke.

I fell back against the wall, trying to keep myself together. come on, Lucy, be strong; you don't even know the Prince, so what if his arms wrapped around someone who wasn't you...you shouldn't care. I considered asking my family to cancel the wedding but knew that would end up in a huge uproar, with me collecting a slap to my face, most likely from the queen.

Whether I liked it or not, I was stuck in this situation with Prince Austin.

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My eyes scanned my surroundings nervously; I didn't know anyone in the room besides my family. To the front of me, King Jeremy and his wife stood with welcoming smiles, along with another person I assumed had to be the Prince's sister.

And, of course, none other than Prince Austin was suitable beside me, but I dared not raise my eyes to look at him after my earlier reaction to him. His gaze was burning into my body, however, and against my better judgment, my traitorous body responded desperately.

Traitor.

"There is no need for a full-on introduction; let's just get the wedding over with." The queen announced. Wow, so happy to get rid of me, I see.

I saw King Jeremy give his wife a quick, confused glance before responding."If that's what you wish, let's start the ceremony."

The marriage officer motioned for Austin and me to stand facing each other, and the rings were brought forward; the vows were quickly spoken between us, almost rushed.

"Please accept this ring as a token of our marriage and a symbol of all we share."

Austin reached for my hand, and the moment we touched, my body jerked alive, a small gasp escaping

my mouth at the shock of the feelings stirring inside me.

What on earth was that?

My eyes snapped up to Austin, and our gazes locked; he seemed to be at war with himself as he quickly placed the ring on my finger and let go of my hands as though they had burnt him.

Thankfully, the officer finished the vows without a mention of kissing the bride...I mean, even if he did, there would be none of that since Austin stormed off as soon as he declared us husband and wife.

My family, of course, found his actions hilarious since any embarrassment on my part was like diamonds served on a tray to them.

On the other hand, Austin's family seemed upset at his behavior and tried to reassure me that everything was okay. I didn't know how to react to their hospitality since all I've ever known was hate from everyone around me.

"Well, I guess this is it; goodbye, Lucy." The king spoke up, the queen and my step-sister repeating his words.

"Don't you want to stay longer until she gets more comfortable?" King Jeremy inquired.

"That won't be necessary." The queen cut in. "We have more important matters to see about."

My heart ached at their immediate dismissal of me; how could they let me go so quickly after years of having me by their side without a proper goodbye? They, indeed were cold, heartless beings.

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"So this is Austin's room and where you will stay." Princess Maya, Austin's sister, pointed out to me. I dragged my gaze from the beautiful princess to evaluate my surroundings.

His room screamed masculinity, not a pinch of a woman's taste. Nevertheless it was a beautifully crafted room with paintings on the wall and a huge bed in the middle. The massive stereo system next to the television caught my eye since I was never allowed the luxury of having one of those in my last home.

Maya suddenly cleared her throat. "Am, about Austin's behavior earlier today, please don't take it too personally; this whole marriage came as a shock to him, and I believe he just needs a little time before he adjusts to married life. I hope you can give him that time ." She pleaded.

I brought my gaze back to her and gave her a slight nod.

She suddenly cracked a huge smile. "I've always wanted a sister; I'm happy I won't be the only girl around here from now on. I know we will get along just fine, and I want you to know that you can always come to me if you need someone to talk to."

"Thank you for being so nice to me," I replied honestly. It felt nice to meet people who were nice to me for once; I just wish it were under different circumstances.

After a few hours of the princess giving me a tour of the entire palace, she finally left me alone in the room so I could get settled in by myself; I fell back against the bed, my senses suddenly on overdrive as I took in what was most definitely Austin's sexy masculine scent, it was all over the bed, I turned and as if I had no control over my body whatsoever, took a sniff at the sheets, inhaling deeply.

And, of course, that is precisely when Austin chose to come storming into the room; he paused as soon as he caught me in the act, his eyes zeroing in on my hands tugging at the sheets, his eyes flashed with something I couldn't read before he slowly shut the door behind him.

His entire movement screamed menace as he walked over to the bed.

Oh no.

What was he going to do?

Chapter 3

"Let's get something straight, there is only one woman in my life and there will always be only her. That being said, I can't sleep in the same bed with you." He hissed with so much hatred that I winced at the intensity.

I blinked up at him, this was definitely not what I was expecting from him. "Excuse me?"

Did he really just say what I think he just said? We barely knew each other and we were already married.

Then why did he think I had to accept something like this?

He narrowed his eyes at me. "We aren't sleeping in the same bed together."

"Not that I want to be sleeping in the same bed with you." Lies. . . okay, who said that? I ignored the inner voice and continued with my rant. "But why did you agree to this marriage if you already had a woman in your life?" I demanded. He could have saved us both from this horrible arrangement if he had just stopped this wedding and be with that awful woman.

He gazed past me as he stared off into the distance. "I don't owe you an explanation."

What a jerk, we were now officially husband and wife and he didn't owe me an explanation?

"Where do you expect me to sleep then?" I demanded.

His eyes swept over my body once before clenching his jaw and looking away. "I've already arranged for another bed to be sent to the room, it should be here before tonight." He informed me in a dry tone.

Before I could respond a knock on the door interrupted our unhappy conversation.

"Come in," Austin called, his face still set in an unhappy frown.

"Sire," the maid called, her cheeks red as she kept her gaze down. "The King has asked for you and your bride's presence in his study. He said that it is urgent and you must come now."

Austin glanced at me and without waiting for me to ask any questions, already started making his way out of the room. I had to hurriedly follow behind him so as to not get lost.

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"What's all this about mother?" Austin inquired taking in all of the arrangements taking place around him.

"Your father and I had a discussion and we've decided that it would be best if we hosted a welcoming party in Lucy's honor where we introduce her as your wife."

Both Austin and I stiffened at this news. I was never one to be fond of parties, it always left me extremely uncomfortable. I hated to receive weird stares or listen to any of the gossips about me, like I'd often witnessed back home.

"I thought we agreed on not doing that." Austin demanded, his mood getting worse by each second that went by, I didn't think that was even possible.

"This had to happen eventually Austin, it's better we get it over with tonight. Besides, Lucy deserves a proper welcoming."

"Now Lucy, we have already organized an entire new wardrobe for you, when you return to your room there will be a dress waiting for you on the bed, wear that tonight."

"Yes your majesty."

"No sweetie, you can call me Lisa."

"And you could call me Jeremy." The king announced with a warm smile.

I returned their smile, thankful to at least be around a loving family for once, excluding the prince of course.

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Austin's POV:

The pack would have to be more careful around the castle now that Lucy was here and had no clue about werewolves .I felt my hatred towards her grow once more, she just kept disrupting everyones lives and she only just got here.

"Everyone's here."Alex reported.

"Good."I responded turning to face everyone."This meeting is to discuss the arrival of Princess Lucy.She has absolutely no idea that we are werewolves or that they even exist for that matter, as such, no one is allowed to be around her in werewolf form.Everyone must go about the castle with caution from now on to ensure that she never finds out."I announced as the pack went up in an uproar.

"Why must we do this for a newcomer ?"Anthony demanded ,he always opposed anything I said so this wasn't anything new to me.

"Yeah."Everyone else agreed .

"Look I assure you no one could be more upset about this than me but we also can't forget that she is the only reason our kingdom was saved , this is not only for her but the safety of our pack.We can't have a human knowing about us ."I reasoned .

"Alpha, we have a problem."Alex interrupted .

"What's wrong?"I asked on alert , he never interrupted me unless it was a serious matter.

"We just got word that there is a rogue on the loose and he is getting closer to the castle as we speak."

"Why do I sense that there is more to this?"I asked studying his tensed posture .

"Alpha."He started."I think Princess Lucy is in the castle's gardens ."

My eyes snapped up to his at his words, my wolf suddenly becoming restless and was that fear I sensed? My wolf had never been scared of anything in its entire life.

What the hell was happening ?

Before anyone could respond I shifted into my wolf and raced towards the castle.

I had to get to her.

NOW!

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Lucy's POV:

The palace's garden was beautiful , much more than the one back home , I inhaled the scent of the gorgeous red roses in front of me and sighed .Something about being around plants always managed to help me feel at peace and this time was no exception.

My mind wandered back to Austin against my wishes ,he had disappeared from the castle yet again, could he be with that woman?The thought of him with her made my heart ache in a way I've never felt before which was absurd , I barely knew the prince , why did it affect me so much already?I only just got here and every time I didn't know where he went bothered me and at times I caught myself hoping to catch a glimpse of him ,something inside me felt at home whenever he was near.

I placed my hands on my chest, right above my heart and pressed hard , hoping it would somehow help the pain I felt there.

What was wrong with me?

A loud howl came from the woods just outside the gardens and I fell back against one of the trees in shock.

What was that?

Wait...did I just hear growling?

Maya came running out along with two other guys I hadn't seen before , they rushed passed me and out into the woods while Maya stayed behind.

"What's wrong?" I asked alarmed .

"Oh it's nothing for you to be concerned about sweetie." She assured me."My brothers just always like to uh take a run in the woods every evening."

"But is it safe?I just heard a howl...like from a wolf."

"Oh.I'm sure you misheard it Lucy, there aren't any wolves on this side of the forest."

"Are you sure?"

I knew what I heard.

"Yes , now let's get you inside so we could get you into your dress and get you all dolled up for tonight." The reminder of tonight was enough to draw my attention away from what I just heard, at least for now.

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My eyes studied the dress in front of me , my cheeks suddenly enflamed ...they wanted me to wear this?The material was a soft red velvet with a low cut at the chest area and a long slit at the bottom.The dress was extremely sexy and I've never worn anything like it before.

I quickly slipped into it , my makeup and hair was already done by one of the helpers .I studied my reflection in the mirror in shock, who was I?Never before have I ever looked this beautiful and seductive.

With a long sigh I stepped out the room and headed down the hall.

I peeped around the wall to examine the crowd and immediately fell back , the entire room was full and I knew absolutely no one there but the royal family .I hated being around crowds , I always somehow managed to make a fool out of myself.

After taking a few seconds, I finally convinced myself to step out from my hiding spot and into everyone's view.I felt many eyes on me and it took every ounce of my self control not to run back into the room.

A loud growl suddenly erupted from the crowds and my eyes widened as I realized who it came from. Austin.

Chapter 4

D-did he just growl?

I gripped my dress tightly as I saw him make his way up the stairs ,his eyes shooting daggers ,he moved almost as if someone else was in control of his body.

His breathing was hard and he looked ready to pounce on someone.

I took a deep gulp as he reached me in an instant, before anyone could react he gripped my waist tightly and pulled me in front of him, almost as if to hide my body from the crowd.I gasped at the shock of his touch ,my skin burning where his hands rested on my body.Immediately I could feel an irresistible

pull towards him,a pull I couldn't explain even if I wanted to.

Mate.

What was that?

Why did I keep hearing that voice in my head?I wanted to scream at him to stop touching me so that all these feelings and the voice in my head would go away but I knew that would only cause a scene.

His eyes burned into my skin as we just stood there staring at each other,another growl escaped his mouth as he picked me up bridal style and paced out the hall away from all prying eyes.

He opened his room door and slammed it shut before throwing me onto the bed.

"What the f**k are you wearing?"He demanded.

"W-what?"I stammered .

His eyes narrowed as they travelled up and down my body, taking every inch in,I felt my body tremble in response."Do you like the attention of men so much that you would wear something like this?"

My eyes widened ."You do not know a single thing about me to be accusing me of such utter nonsense, this dress was already picked out for me , I didn't choose it."

"Austin get out here!"The queen's angry voice came from the doorway.

"This discussion isn't over."He promised before leaving me to go talk to his mother.

After a few minutes Maya entered the room with sympathy in her eyes."Are you okay?"

I nodded my head.

"I saw everything...well everyone saw everything,I have no idea what Austin was thinking or what came over him for that matter."

"Does your brother usually... growl like that?"I inquired suddenly remembering his earlier actions."I felt like I was looking at a completely different person , if that makes any sense."

Now that I thought about it, the growl sounded very familiar to the one I had heard coming from the woods earlier today.

D-did he just growl?

I gripped my dress tightly as I saw him make his way up the stairs ,his eyes shooting daggers ,he moved almost as if someone else was in control of his body.

Maya's eyes widened for a second before she quickly tried to hide her reaction from me."Growl?I didn't hear any growling ."

"But--"

"Can we continue this discussion later Lucy?We have to give you a proper introduction to the people and it's getting a bit late."She cut me off.

Was she deliberately trying to change the topic?This was the second time for the day she tried to change the topic, something didn't seem right at all.I was beginning to think they were hiding something from me.

I nodded my head in agreement and followed her outside where Austin was waiting not looking to happy, whatever discussion he had with his mother didn't help his mood, it seemed to make it worse.

"Put a smile on your face so my people don't suspect anything about the wedding."He warned.

"Don't worry, I'm used to forcing a smile when I'm unhappy."

It was the truth, I often had to feign happiness in front of the people back home in order to hide being mistreated by the royal family.So this wasn't anything new to me.If anything ,it only made me feel like I was back home.

Austin turned to study me upon hearing my words, his eyes tracing my face as if trying to figure out what exactly I meant by it.

"Guys." Maya cut in. "I really think we should do the introduction now."

Austin reluctantly moved his gaze from me to look at his sister before nodding his head and the three of us walked back into the hall where the king and queen waited with worried looks to their faces.

The entire crowd got quiet at our entrance, everyone's gazes held a hint of curiosity, awe and jealousy all in one.

"Good evening ladies and gentlemen, as you all may already know, tonight's main focus is to introduce Prince Austin's lovely wife Princess Lucy to our people. I know that everyone will welcome her and show her all the love and support you've always shown to us our entire lives. Anyone who'd like to get to know her better, please feel free to come introduce yourself to her personally." The king announced.

It didn't take long for people to start surrounding me, throwing questions upon questions at me, I didn't mind since they were all kind for the most part. Austin's parents and sister stayed by my side the entire time, Austin on the other hand had disappeared yet again, something I was getting used to by now.

What confused me was that no one seemed to mention Austin's behavior from earlier on, did I really just imagine the growling in my head? I wouldn't be surprised considering the strange voice I had been hearing in my head ever since I arrived here.

What confused me was that no one seemed to mention Austin's behavior from earlier on, did I really just imagine the growling in my head? I wouldn't be surprised considering the strange voice I had been hearing in my head ever since I arrived here.

"It seems I need to make an appointment to meet my own sister in law." A voice whispered catching my attention.

My eyes snapped up to meet gorgeous blue eyes, and a face strikingly similar to that of Austin's. "I'm Lucas, Austin's brother." He introduced himself with a bright smile.

I returned his smile. "It's a pleasure to meet you Prince Lucas."

"Uh-uh, it's just Lucas to you Princess." He gently scolded me.

I smiled. "And it's just Lucy to you."

Another nice member of the family, was everyone in the family nice except for Austin? That's highly unfortunate for me, but I was used to all the bad luck by now.

I was deep in my thoughts when I felt the presence of someone behind me. I slowly turned and was greeted by a middle aged man, his eyes were studying me intently, searching my face as if he were seeing someone else and for a minute I could have sworn his eyes narrowed.

Who was this man?

Something about him made me feel uneasy inside.

"Are you going to introduce me to the lovely princess?" He asked the queen.

"Oh yes, Lucy dear this is a very old friend of ours Eric Bradwin, he has never hesitated to help us in the past and we couldn't be more lucky to have someone like him in our lives."

"You're to modest Lisa. When I heard from Ariana that Austin had gotten married, I was shocked but thrilled at the news."

I felt the queen stiffen besides me at the mention of this Ariana.

Ariana? Who was she?

"Ariana is my daughter." He added as if reading my mind. "In fact let me introduce you two so you can be good friends from now on."

"Ariana" He called.

The person I saw next made me feel sick to my stomach.

It was her.

The one I had seen earlier with her arms wrapped around Austin!

Chapter 5

She had eyes the color of grass on it's brownest days and short shoulder length brunette hair that framed her face nicely, she was dressed in a high neck short black dress with a slit that showed of her long legs, it pained me to admit it but she was beautiful to say the least.

She smiled at me with a knowing wicked glint in her eyes. "It's nice to finally meet you Lucy." She greeted me ,pretending as though we hadn't met earlier when her hands were wrapped around my now husband. She held out her hand for a hand shake and I warily accepted it .

I forced myself to return her smile. "It's a pleasure to meet you as well Ariana." I felt her hand grip mine tighter , so tight that I was sure it would leave a bruise by tomorrow .

"So where is Austin?" Eric inquired ,his eyes searching the room.

"Oh he was just outside with me a few minutes ago, I'll go call him father." Ariana answered ,finally letting go of my hand.

My entire body stiffened at her words, so that's where he was the entire night , I should have guessed.

"Those two have always shared an unbreakable bond." Eric commented staring after his daughter.

"Well not always." Prince Lucas cut in. "A few years back Austin didn't so much as fancy Ariana, but something changed in him like a switch one day ,it's pretty hard to explain,it's almost like if he went under a spell one would say."

Eric seemed disturbed by Lucas's words and quietly excused himself while the queen left to make sure he was okay.

"Thank you for that."

Lucas grinned at me. "Anytime Lucy. I know what it's like being a newcomer and having all the attention on you, don't worry, I'll try my best to make this entire experience easier for you."

"I wish there was some way I could thank you for your sweet words ." I responded smiling brightly up at him , for once I actually felt like I had an older brother looking out for me and it felt amazing.

"A hug will suffice!" He suggested with a cheeky grin.

A low menacing growl came from behind us and I saw Austin glaring at Lucas, the look on his face was deadly , almost as if he wanted to attack his own brother.

She had eyes the color of grass on it's brownest days and short shoulder length brunette hair that framed her face nicely, she was dressed in a high neck short black dress with a slit that showed of her long legs, it pained me to admit it but she was beautiful to say the least.

This time there was no mistaking that it was a growl I had heard coming from him ,nothing was making sense to me ,never before had I heard anyone in my entire life growl like that and believe me I've been around a lot of people before .

""Wow there brother,just be grateful it was me asking her for a hug and not any of the men staring at

her right now."

"Austin!" Ariana almost shouted, trying to get his attention, she seemed shocked at his reaction to Lucas asking me for a hug.

It did work however, he seemed in control of himself once again as his glare was now focused on me. I gave him a perplexed look. What exactly did I do?

His eyes moved from me to scan the room and a scowl formed on his face. I followed his gaze and noticed a few faces were looking in my direction, all mostly men.

A muscle ticked in his jaw and it seemed as though he was fighting to control himself.

"Where is my father?" Ariana asked.

"I think I said something that upset him, you should go check on him." Lucas confessed with a smile, it was clear as day he didn't like her and that confused me, why would he prefer to be kind to me when it was her his brother preferred?

Her eyes flashed. "What did you say?"

"Ask him."

"Lucas." Austin said his name in a warning tone, not pleased with his brother's behavior.

Ariana rolled her eyes and linked her arms through Austin's. "Let's go find my father."

My eyes rested on where their skin touched and again just like before I heard the voice in my head, this time it all but screamed 'mine'.

It hurt, it hurt like hell to see him so close to another woman, especially when the woman was her. I still didn't understand why it did however, how could I already have feelings for someone I had just met? The emotions were already so strong, like if I had known Austin my entire life and that was simply absurd since I'd never met the prince before, I was certain of it, he had the type of face one couldn't help but remember.

Unable to see anymore of it, I quietly excused myself and walked into the palace's garden, wanting to get some fresh air to clear my head, away from everyone and especially away from Austin and Ariana. For the first time since I reached here I began to miss home, even though I was mistreated back there, I still knew almost everyone and I didn't have to worry about a husband who didn't want anything to do with me. I felt like a complete stranger here, the only thing giving me courage was how nice Austin's family was to me.

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I was experiencing a new kind of pain at this palace and it was becoming almost unbearable.

A sound from the woods suddenly caught my attention and against my better judgement I inched closer to get a better view.

"Is anyone here?"

I walked a little further, my feet coming to an immediate stop when I heard a soft growl. My eyes widened as they settled upon a huge brown wolf. It looked angry or hungry, I wasn't sure at the moment. But either one wasn't a good sign for me.

I slowly began to move backwards but that seemed to make it more angry as the ferocious growling only got much louder.

My hands flew to my mouth to stop the scream that threatened to escape, I feared any noise would make the damn thing attack much faster.

I looked around me frantically , hoping to find something that could possibly help me in this situation.I felt the sweat build up on my forehead as I listened to my own racing heart beat while the wolf stealthily approached me.

My heart dropped in defeat as I realized this might be it for me , there was no way I could survive an attack like this from something as huge and vicious as this wolf.

The wolf snarled at me ,preparing itself to attack as its eyes focused on me, it launched forward and I let out a frightened cry.

This was it.

Suddenly, a loud howl rippled through the air ,all the hairs on my body stood up at the power that radiated from the sound.Out of nowhere a huge jet black wolf jumped in front of me and barreled into the other wolf,I watched in horror as they both tackled each other .

What the hell was happening ?

Chapter 6

If I thought the other wolf was huge before, I was definitely wrong, for this one was even bigger, much more magnificent.Almost beautiful; how could I think of something so dangerous as beautiful?That didn't make any sense to me, then again, nothing made sense to me ever since I arrived at this place. I watched in fear as I saw the two step back and start to go around in circles, growling at each other; it wouldn't be long before one attacked the other again.

Out of nowhere, two other wolves joined the fight, it seemed as though they were on the side of the black wolf as the three of them begun to corner the lone wolf , he started to slowly retreat,obviously realizing he was outnumbered ,not that he could have won a fight against the black wolf .He eventually jumped over one of the wolves and ran off into the woods, the others chasing after him.

The black one stayed behind as he slowly started to approach me.My eyes widened in shock, was it about to attack as well?For some reason I wasn't scared of this one , which was insane , this one was so much more dangerous than the other in terms of strength.

He watched me with alert eyes , almost as if he was scared I'd run off ,it felt like he was trying to speak to me ,trying to tell me that I was safe with him .

It was official , I was going insane.

He laid down besides my feet , resting his chin on his forelegs as he continued to watch me with careful eyes.

I slowly crouched down besides him and even more slowly reached out with my hands to touch the fur on his back.It was surprisingly extremely soft, the wolf seemed to like it as he reached out and licked my neck.

I laughed in shocked delight ."You like that huh."

"Lucy!"I heard Maya's voice from a distance.

The wolf immediately sprung up upon hearing her voice and within seconds he was gone ,damn he was fast .

Austin's POV:

I stormed into the pack's house ,fighting hard to control the rage burning inside of me.I was sure everyone was already in a panic from the mind link I'd sent ,they would all be able to feel the anger radiating through me from the link alone.

"Alex!"I roared , the entire pack growing quiet .

Alex immediately came to my side ,his eyes full of worry .

"What's wrong Alpha?"

I let out a low menacing growl."As my Beta you are in charge of the safety of this pack and everyone connected to it,so what the f**k was a rogue doing in our territory ?"I demanded.

Alex gave me a look of shock."I swear to you Alpha, I didn't sense its presence ,I don't understand how it happened without our knowledge."

"It did happen!"I shouted."And the princess almost lost her life because of the carelessness of this pack,and you call yourselves the strongest pack ever known ?"

"But we are."

"Well next time f*****g prove it!"

I turned to the oppressors of the pack which entailed of Asher,Alexander ,Adam, Anthony,Nick,Caelan,Ethan,Nathan and Xander .They were just as much to blame as Alex was.

They all were looking at me expectantly , bracing themselves for my outburst.

"If something like this ever happens again, the punishment would be severe.I promise that to each one of you.Now, Lucas and James have captured the rogue, you know what must be done to him."I ordered .

Xander nodded his head ,his gaze dark."He would be dealt with accordingly Alpha."

Xander was very good at what he did , the best tormentor this pack had ,sometimes it felt like he enjoyed his position as head tormentor a bit too much but that's what made him good at his job.

My wolf was still agitated and it made me uneasy as well , it seemed almost as though he wanted to be near Lucy after the attack and hated being away from her , the thought made me sick.The one he shouldn't want to stay away from should be Ariana , our mate! Not a spoilt princess who didn't even know the first step of defending herself , Lucy seemed weak especially since she was human.I could already feel my wolf's disagreement to my thoughts and it was strong as hell.He thought Lucy to be perfect and not weak in any way.

I could feel and hear him growling aggressively in the back of my head, threatening me to change my thoughts on the matter .'You're just smitten because she touched your fur earlier on.'

He seemed to calm down at the reminder of the fur touching , I hated to admit it but it did feel pretty damn good , what surprised me was how brave she was , any other sane human would have ran off in the opposite direction , not Lucy, she did the exact opposite when she reached out and touched my wolf , it sure as hell left me shocked for a good few minutes , I still haven't come to terms with it.

I begun to wonder whether she would have touched another just as easily and carelessly .

I felt anger slowly creep up at the thought of her touching another wolf or another man for that matter , for once I could feel my wolf agreeing with me, he was pissed off as well at the thought.

But as quickly as I thought it I let it go , Lucy wasn't and would never be my main concern , Ariana was .

.....

Lucy's POV:

"Are you feeling better?"Maya asked .We were in the family room, the king and queen with us as well, ensuring that I was okay.I was still a bit shaken up but yet I kept looking at the door, hoping to see

Austin walk in .Did they not tell him what happened or did he just not care?The latter seemed more like the right answer, I meant nothing to him .

"I'm doing much better , thank you Maya."

"I really don't know how this happened , we've never had an attack like this before , there shouldn't even be any wolves in this area."The king pointed out.

The queen popped open a bottle of wine and took a seat next to us."I need a drink after tonight , anyone else?"

Maya shook her head at her mother."This is my mother's solution to any problem Lucy ,you'll get used to it."

I smiled but before I could respond the door flew open and Austin stepped in, his presence as always made it hard to breathe, God he was breath taking.His eyes scanned the room until they rested on me, he looked me up and down slowly , almost as if he was checking my body for any injuries, I felt my body tremble in response, oh how I hated the way my body reacted to him.Without saying a single word , he turned around and stormed out the room.

That was it?

He wasn't even going to ask me if I was okay?

Why did I even expect more?

I saw everyone else in the room looking at me and I could tell they wanted to apologize for his behavior , yet again.

"Am ,I think I'll head to my room now,I'm really exhausted from all of the events of the day."

Everyone nodded their heads in understanding.

Before anyone could say another word ,I quickly walked out and headed to my room.

What I saw there made my feet come to an immediate halt, Austin was sprawled out on the bed , fast asleep.

He was beautiful when he slept ,now that his eyes weren't open and watching me I could study his features properly.He had tousled thick dark brown hair, a strand falling on his forehead gracefully ,I wanted more than anything to reach over and touch it.His face was strong and defined with a sharp jawline.His skin slightly tanned to give the perfect complexion ,my eyes moved to study his lips,they were a perfect deep red and I couldn't even control my own emotions as I moved closer to study them,wondering what it would feel like to have those lips on mine.I was so close to him now that I could hear and feel his hot breath on my skin ,so close that his pure masculine scent was once again pulling me in, leaving me feeling as though I was intoxicated .

I closed my eyes and inhaled deeply, God that scent made me weak to my knees.I slowly opened my eyes and gasped in shock, his eyes were no longer closed but staring straight back at me!

Chapter 7

My lips parted at the blatant need I saw there, hot raw need deep in his eyes.

My knees suddenly felt weak and I was grateful that they were pressed down onto the bed, preventing me from falling.

Austin leaned even closer, I slowly placed my palms gently on his chest for balance, his breath hitched at the contact. He was all heavenly man beneath my fingers, his muscles hard and leaping at my touch.

How I ached to run my hands all over them, I hated that there was clothing between us.

Where were these thoughts coming from?

He leaned forward, his breath fanning my neck and without warning kissed the spot right beneath my ear, I m****d, my body feeling like it suddenly came alive for the first time since my existence.

Austin immediately pulled away from me , seeming to wake from whatever trance he was in ,he stared at me with hate in his eyes.Without a single word he rose up from the bed and stormed out the room. I fell back against the bed and fought the urge to let out a scream against the pillows.What on earth was wrong with me?My body was hot all over , writhing with a need and thirst I knew deep down that only Austin could quench .

I hated this.

.....

I walked into the kitchen area the next morning ,everyone was already seated and having breakfast , everyone except Austin again.Did he not spend time with his family or was it that he didn't like being around me?

"Good morning Lucy."Austin's parents greeted me with a warm smile.

"How are you feeling this morning?"Maya asked.

"She's glowing this morning if you ask me, it looks like Austin did his part as her husband last night ." Lucas commented with a wink sent in my direction .

I felt a blush creep up to my cheeks at his words.

Maya rolled her eyes."Ignore him Lucy, everything that comes out his mouth somehow is always connected to s*x."

The queen coughed and glared at her children."Can't we ever have a meal like a normal family?"

Lucas raised his hands up in defense."I don't know what Maya is talking about mother,I was just pointing out that Austin took care of his wife last night , probably gave her a nice massage or something ,it's Maya who mentioned the s*x."

"Enough."The king warned."Don't make this breakfast uncomfortable for Lucy."

Maya took a sip of water before turning to me."Have James introduced himself to you as yet?"

"James?"I asked confused.

Maya shook her head in disappointment ."That jackass, James is my next brother.I honestly thought he would have introduced himself to you by now."

"Don't take his actions personally Lucy, he's not a very social person ,he spends most of his time alone and doesn't let others into his life easily ."The queen informed me before taking a bite of her salad.

"Speaking of James, where is he this morning?"Lucas inquired .

The king stiffened at that question."We've gotten word of some unwanted guests around the village lately, some villagers have reported seeing them to us .Austin and James left earlier this morning to see if it were true ."

"And if it is true?"Maya asked.

The king shrugged."They'll warn them that they aren't allowed here and if that doesn't work we would have to use different methods until they are gone."

"Those fools really left without me?"Lucas demanded.

"Well after you cause trouble anywhere you go, they were actually smart to leave you home."Maya teased.

"I pray for the poor soul that has to marry you one day." Lucas mumbled .

While the siblings continued their bickering ,my mind begun to stray.

Who were these unwanted guests?Were they dangerous?The king definitely seemed unhappy with the possibility of having them around the kingdom.Could Austin be in danger?

That last thought made me uneasy and I couldn't stop myself from asking."Do these unwanted guests pose a threat to the kingdom?"

The king looked taken aback by my question."Not so much a threat Lucy but they are untrustworthy people , we had a close alliance with that family once but they broke our trust and since then they were banned from entering our kingdom.They've never tried to make contact before so it may just be someone spreading rumors , they wouldn't dare step foot into our kingdom knowing what would follow if they did."

"Wait , are you speaking about the Fire Cross Pack?" Maya inquired , her eyes widening by the warning look everyone gave her.

"Fire Cross Pack?" I asked ,completely lost.

What exactly did that name mean?

"Oh it means nothing dear , that's just a name given to the family."The queen explained.

Families actually gave themselves names like that?

"But yes Maya, its actually that exact family that your father is speaking off."

"I can't believe they would show us so much more disrespect after everything they did to our family!"

Lucas shouted, and for the first time ever since I'd met him I saw this angry side to him...it was scary to say the least.Even though I hadn't spent much time with Lucas he seemed like the fun , playful type , I never once thought to one day see this side to him , definitely not so soon.

"Stay calm son, you're scaring Lucy."

At the mention of my name Lucas turned to study me, his face softening at my expression."Sorry Lucy , this is what happens when I don't have enough food for breakfast ."He explained placing an entire sandwich into his mouth as if to keep himself from saying another word.

"What's all that commotion going on outside?"Maya asked.

Commotion?

I wasn't hearing a single thing.Yet everyone immediately stood up from their seats obviously listening to something I couldn't hear.What kind of ears did these people have?

Whatever they heard had them storming out the door.

I followed everyone outside the palace's gates and came to an immediate halt in shock at what I saw.

Five gorgeous men stood glaring at the guards who were now on the ground, most likely put there by the men.All of them were clearly over six feet tall , and they all shared a strikingly similar face to the other , they were most definitely brothers.

"What is the meaning of this ?"The king demanded.

The tallest one , who also seemed like the oldest stepped forward, his eyes narrowed and he looked pissed as hell.

"Where is Princess Lucy?"He asked in a low growl.

My eyes widened in shock.

Why was he asking for me?

Chapter 8

Austin's POV:

"Do you really think that Alpha Richard would take the risk of crossing the borders?" James asked as we continued to scan the village, looking for any signs of intruders. So far, there was nothing that looked suspicious.

I shrugged. "Richard never seemed like the type to fear war, however, the Fire Cross Pack have never stepped into our territory before, not after what happened years ago. I don't see why they would suddenly decide to show up to cause trouble."

Nothing made sense to me. After all of these years, why now? What exactly could they possibly want from here?

"Maybe, and I think father is thinking the same . . . they were waiting until their pack got strong enough to host another attack on us, they failed before, this time they may be more prepared." He responded while spinning a pocket knife in his hands.

I paused and thought about that for a moment. "Either way, everyone knows that my pack is the strongest, yours comes in third in strength, with both of our packs combined, we're almost invincible. Only an i****t would try to cross us."

James seemed to ponder on that for a moment before changing the topic. "Your wolf likes her, doesn't he?"

My steps slowed at his words. "Who?"

I already had an idea of whom he was speaking about but I wanted to confirm it before I responded.

"Lucy."

I stopped walking altogether at her name, I had absolutely no idea why just the name alone affected me so much. My wolf was on high alert at the mention of her as well, he was suddenly interested in this conversation when he hadn't been before. I turned to face my brother. "Why would you ask that?"

I didn't like his question, he made me think about things I'd rather bury inside.

He threw the knife at one of the nearby trees, something that he often did when he was deep in thought. When we were younger and didn't have the strength of our wolves yet, father would teach us to be good with our hands, training with pocket knives was one of the many lessons taught to us back in the day.

"It was more of a statement than a question brother."

"I don't understand why he's so smitten with her, it's driving me insane." I finally confessed before I could stop myself. It was driving me more than insane, after my reaction to Lucy yesterday, after the strong urge to claim her as my own. I didn't dare step back into that room. I couldn't even remember ever having such a strong need to claim Ariana before and that thought had me uneasy.

"Hmmm." Was all he had to say.

I pulled the knife out of the tree with ease, handing it back to him. "It doesn't matter whether or not he likes her, it doesn't change the fact that Ariana is our mate, we could survive without Lucy, it's losing Ariana that would kill us both. As an Alpha, I have a duty towards my mate, she would always come first. Nothing could change my views on that."

James nodded, he looked like he was about to say something before a dark expression crossed his face.

"What's wrong?"

"I just got a mind link from Lucas, something's wrong." I informed him. "He said to get home now."

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Lucy's POV:

"What does the Fire Cross want with Lucy?" Lucas demanded.

"That's none of your business ." The tallest one snapped.

"Just show us the girl." Another ordered before his eyes travelled to me.

I saw immediate recognition in his eyes , all at once the rest of them turned to me as if he had somehow told his brothers he'd found me without speaking a single word to them. They all looked like they were holding their breaths , but why?

Why did I feel like I'm supposed to know them?

Who were they?

"Lucy." They whispered , each of them taking a step in my direction.

Before any of them could reach me however a figure came right in front of me , blocking me from their view. I didn't need to look up to know who it was , my body's immediate reaction was enough to tell me who .

Austin.

"Don't f*****g come near her." He warned in a deadly calm tone , the threat evident in his voice.

"Or what?" The tallest one asked taking a step further.

I felt Austin stiffen besides me, his knuckles tightening into a fist at his side. "Are you really ready to start a war with us?" He asked stiffly .

"Does Richard know you are here?" The king inquired. "Do we need to contact him and let him know the trouble his sons are causing , knowing fully well none of you are welcome in our kingdom?"

They tensed at his words , answering the King's questions with their expressions alone...their father didn't know they were here.

"This isn't over." The tallest warned , he seemed like the one in charge as the rest of them were following his orders , all except one who just stood glaring at Austin with hatred in his eyes.

"He better take good f*****g care of her!" He shouted , the rest of them pulling on his shoulder as if to force him to leave with them.

I was so confused , why would he say for Austin to take care of me? Why did they care ? I didn't understand anything that was happening , so many questions were swamping around my head , making me dizzy. From the little I knew , they were supposed to be the bad guys , so why did I feel like they were good people?

When they were all out of sight , everyone around me seemed to relax a little. "This isn't right , we're missing something." The queen muttered.

"It doesn't matter if we're missing anything , they crossed the borders , they broke the rules for peace between our families , if they want war they would get it." Austin promised , his gaze dark. "We have to set up a meeting , put things in place in case they come back."

I felt Maya's hands on my shoulders . "We're so sorry you have to go through so much already Lucy."

Austin turned to study me at Maya's words, his eyes narrowed as if he was thinking of something, without another word he stormed into the house and everyone except Maya followed after him.

"Do you know those men?" Maya asked.

I shook my head. "It's the first time that I've ever seen them but I don't know why, I feel like I should know them, it feels weird." I answered honestly.

"My mother is right, something is definitely wrong. We're missing something." She noted while deep in thought.

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Austin was glaring at me and I couldn't comprehend why. I had only just entered the room from spending the day with Maya. He was already waiting inside when I got in. His penetrating gaze seemed to see straight through me and I suddenly felt like covering my body with a blanket.

Anything to stop him from looking at me like that.

"How do you know them?"

I stared at him blankly . "I don't know them."

"Don't lie to me Lucy!" He snapped. "Those men clearly knew you, so who the f**k are they to you?"

"I told you I don't know them." I pressed. "I also don't appreciate the tone you're using with me when I've done absolutely nothing wrong."

"Did you have an affair with one of them?" He accused.

My eyes widened. "You know nothing of me to be accusing me of things like this , and even if I did , what does that have to do with you?Only one woman matters to you , what I do or don't do is absolutely nothing of your concern."

That seemed to piss him of further.

He appeared beside me in an instant , his hand gripping my waist tightly and pulling me back against him."You are mine , we're legally bonded Lucy ,by right you are MINE."He growled into my ear, the hairs on the back of my neck standing up at his words.

He spun me around so that I was now facing him , his eyes were dark and deadly ,staring into mine ." f*****g MINE!" He roared before crashing his lips to mine.

Chapter 9

My body felt like it had just been struck by lightening , my senses on overdrive .I couldn't think , couldn't breathe with Austin's mouth on mine.

Couldn't even remember what we were just talking about.

His scent and touch was consuming my mind and body , making me all weak and needy inside .I felt like I wasn't getting enough of him , felt like I would die if I didn't get closer to him.My entire body feeling like it was going up in flames , surely this wasn't normal, right?

He pulled my bottom l*p into his mouth and sucked gently .

"F**k."Austin g*****d."So f*****g sweet."

My knees went weak instantly , my hands wrapping around his neck to keep from falling to the ground.Austin gently lowered me to the bed behind us , his body pressing into mine and that's when I felt it ,his hardness pressed between my legs.I gasped at the contact and he used that opportunity to thrust his tongue into my mouth .

My body begun to shake in need beneath him and a helpless m**n escaped my mouth. Austin pulled away from me immediately as a string of curses left his mouth and just like before he jerked the door open and stormed outside ,disappearing for the rest of the night.

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Austin's POV:

"You're not going to like this." Ethan reported placing some documents in front of me.

I studied the papers in front of me , one name stood out more than anything, 'The Black Council'.
The Council.

Every single person in the supernatural world knew of them , they were a large group of vampires , werewolves , witches and shapeshifters .They stood together and killed anyone and anything that prevented them from getting what they wanted.You're taught from small to never cross them , if possible try your best to avoid having any dealings with them.They got their strength from feeding off the weak , usually in the case of werewolves , if their pack wasn't strong enough they would offer their services to the council to be given protection in return.As long as you joined them you couldn't get out , I've heard of cases where entire packs were executed when they no longer wanted to be part of the council.

"What does the council have to do with The Fire Cross Pack?"I asked.

"I did some digging up like you asked me to , the Fire Cross joined the council , they are now there allies , have been for over ten years now."

f**k.

"I'm sure you know what this means Alpha."Asher cut in."If they really want Princess Lucy , there is a very good chance they could take her from here."

I growled , my fist connecting with the table in front of me , breaking it in half.

"What did you say?"I roared."Take her away from me?"I demanded glaring at Asher.

Asher looked shocked at my outburst."I'm sorry Alpha , I was just stating facts , we are indeed the strongest pack but the council is dangerous , they fight dirty and they have way more members and connections than we do...If it is that they want Lucy , the safest thing would be to hand her over , if we retaliate and fight back it will be the greatest loss this pack have ever seen."

My wolf was furious at Asher's words , he wanted to rip the man in half for even speaking such words but the man in me knew he was right , I couldn't fight Asher for speaking the truth , it was his job , he worked with the facts and numbers .He was just informing me of the outcome .

This whole situation just took a whole completely new direction , a completely dangerous one , so dangerous that if the Fire Cross came back for Lucy , I may have to choose between my pack's survival and her.

But why did that make my insides twist ?Shouldn't I want this to happen , if they came for Lucy then I could live happily with Ariana , all my troubles would go away .So why the f**k did it make me feel empty inside and why did it feel like I would fight till my death to keep her?

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ERMANNNO'S POV(Where the Black Council Resides):

My boots hit against the glass floors loudly , my brothers following my quick steps , we were heading back to the council , to meet our father who had called for us.

"Do you think father suspects anything?"Nolan asked .

"He's been suspicious of us for a while now Nolan , we've all went missing for days , it's only natural that he would suspect we were up to something he didn't approve off."

"But we were careful."Thane cut in."He knew the council sent us on a private mission , we could still pull

this off."

"Dad isn't stupid ." Marcus commented ."We've never taken days to complete a mission , no matter how dangerous ."

Marcus had a point , we've been on countless missions before , slaying the most dangerous of kinds , killing mercilessly and we've never once taken days to complete it .

"Uh guys."Luthais whispered."I think it's safe to say he knows."He said staring straight ahead ,I followed his gaze and froze.

Yeah , father knew alright.He stood a few feet away from us , a furious expression masked his face , there was only one topic we disagreed on , so there was no doubt he knew who we went to see.

"Where did you go?"He asked in the scariest tone ever used on us before.

When every one of us refused to answer ,his eyes narrowed."I asked you , WHERE DID YOU GO!"

I felt Luthais flinch besides me , not used to this side of father.

"We went on—"

"Do not even bother lying to me , speak the truth now ,I'm only giving you one chance to do so."He warned.

"Father."I started."We went to see Lucy."I confessed , there was no use lying to him , he already knew , he was just waiting for the confirmation from us.

He shook his head at us , not saying a single word , his silence seemed more deadly than his outburst and I could sense my brothers discomfort increase by each second that went by.

"We've had this discussion before , on countless occasions ,I've pleaded with you boys to leave this matter alone.Why would you disobey a direct order from me?"He demanded.

"We wanted to see her father."I stated the obvious .

His eyes flashed dangerously at me."I told you when the time is right you would all meet her."

"And when is that?"Thane demanded."She's been separated from us for over seventeen years now ."

"She's everything we thought she would be and more ."I shouted."Aren't you even the least bit interested ?"

Father remained quiet at that.

"She deserves to know father ."I added quietly.

It was the truth , Lucy has been living in the dark for years , she deserved to know the truth and my brothers and I were determined to give it to her if it was the last thing we did.

Chapter 10

I kept looking at the floor , embarrassed to look at Austin after what happened between us last night .Surprisingly , he had stayed for breakfast this morning and I couldn't help but wonder if it was because of the incident that had occurred yesterday .

We were all seated around the dining table , for once the entire family was here , even James , the brother who had yet to introduce himself to me was seated comfortably opposite me.

"Austin."The king started."Your mother and I have been talking and we think that it's a good idea for you to take Lucy with you to the village , so that the people could get to know her a bit more."

"Why must I do that?"He questioned his father , clearly unhappy to be spending any alone time with me.

"Austin." His mother cut in with a warning tone.

I didn't want to stay and hear the rest of the conversation so I quietly excused myself and made my way to the washroom, halfway there I felt the presence of someone behind me. I stopped walking altogether and spun around to come face to face with Austin.

He took a step closer, his deep ocean blue eyes pulling me in. "I'm not finished with our discussion from yesterday."

Sigh.

This again?

Another slow step brought him within arm's reach. Whenever he was this near it became almost impossible for me to think clearly. Especially when his warm gaze poured over me, making me weak, those eyes had the power to bring me to my knees and I hated the feeling, hated the weakness, I needed to be stronger.

God but I would be lying if I said that warm gaze didn't do amazing things to my body, making me all warm and fuzzy inside, melting my insides, devouring me whole.

I forced my gaze to move from those hypnotizing eyes and focused on his broad chest instead but even that didn't help, as even his masculine chest left me wanting more, wanting to run my hands and tongue all over Damn it Lucy.

I snapped my gaze back up to his eyes and regretted it instantly, there was that raw dark need deep in his eyes again.

"We leave at noon." His voice was a soft husky whisper and I clamped my legs together to keep from falling.

Without another word Austin turned and left me to suffer in my own uncontrollable need for him, I silently fell back against the wall and covered my face with my hands.

When would this torture end?

.....

Austin's POV:

"I can't stay long." I told an already pissed off Ariana.

"Why not?" She asked.

"Father asked me to take Lucy to meet some of the villagers and have a tour of the village." I answered honestly.

Her eyes narrowed immediately and I could feel the tension in the air. "You're telling me you're leaving me to go spend time with that w***e?"

I felt my wolf stir angrily at her words, usually when I was around Ariana he would disappear completely from the conversation, almost as if he liked going into hiding as soon as she entered the picture, which never made any sense to me, I always thought the reason for his disappearance whenever she was near was due to the fact that my feelings for her were so strong because of the mating bond that it scared him but now I wasn't so sure because for some reason he was always around once Lucy was concerned. Now, was the first time he'd ever been present in a conversation with Ariana and it was only because he was pissed at Ariana's words about Lucy.

"Ariana—"

"I don't want to hear anything." She screamed. "Ever since you married her you haven't given me much attention, you promised me this wouldn't happen! I'm your mate Austin, do you not remember?"

I hated seeing her like this , she was right , she was my mate and I needed to prove to her that she was still the most important woman in my life.

"Let me just take Lucy this once , after that I promise to spend all of my time with you."

She shook her head."NO."

"No?"

"I want you here with me now , let someone else take that b***h to meet the villagers , why do you have to be the one to take her?I'm sure you can find someone else, any replacement would do , it's not like she's that important ."She snapped."Even her own family didn't want her ."

My eyes snapped up to meet Ariana's at her words.

Lucy's family didn't want her?

"What do you mean by that?"

I couldn't explain why but for some reason this news gave me discomfort , I wanted ,no I needed to know more.

She crossed her legs and leaned back on the rocking chair."You didn't know?"She asked with a quirked brow."Father did some digging up , Lucy is the adopted daughter of the royal family , she was left on their doorsteps with nothing but a note with her name on it and some money meant for whoever decided to keep her.Even the royal family didn't want her , they just kept her around so that they could use her marriage to strengthen their kingdom since they didn't want that to happen to their actual daughter.Even though they adopted her they treated her as though she were a maid."

I lifted my face to glare at Ariana ,the anger I felt was like a raging bull inside of me ,desperate to escape .I hated that Lucy was mistreated to that extent , I didn't like the girl but no one deserved such treatment .I wanted to rip apart the entire royal family , wanted to kill them all with a raging passion.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"She asked bringing me out of my dark thoughts , I hadn't even realized that I 'd focused all my anger towards Ariana.

My hands curled into fists at my sides ,fighting the urge to actually fulfill the recent dark desires that had entered my mind .Instead , I tried to focus on my mate in front of me."What made your father look into Lucy's background?"I asked suspiciously.

Ariana looked taken aback by my question , and was that fear I sensed?

With her cheeks flushed she waved her hands at me dismissively ."It's nothing to be bothered about really, he was just curious as to who you'd been married to , you know father has always considered you as his own , he just wanted to make sure Lucy came from a good background."

"Did he find out who's her actual fami--"

'Enough talking ."Ariana cut me off rising up from the chair and wrapping her arms around me."I've missed you."She whispered reaching up to press her lips to mine.

.....

Lucy's POV:

""Where is Austin?"I asked the blond haired man in front of me.

"I'm sorry princess ,Austin got caught up in some other business and asked me to take you instead."

I tried to hide the disappointment , I hated to admit it but I was actually looking forward to spending some time with Austin.I knew it was pathetic to feel that way considering the way he's treated me since my arrival but it wasn't a feeling I could control .

He cleared his throat as if sensing my discomfort at the news."My name is Adam , one of this family's

most trusted bodyguards , I'll take you to the village and bring you back safely , you have nothing to fear."

I nodded and forced a smile on my face."Thank you Adam."

He opened the limo's door for me and got in besides me , informing the driver that we were ready .The drive to the village was quiet , Adam hadn't spoken another word to me , his eyes were always focused out the window , he seemed like he was on high alert and I couldn't tell whether he was just doing his job or if he sensed that we were in danger.

The car suddenly came to an abrupt halt ,Adam's hand shut out to grab my shoulders , preventing me from hitting my face against the glass that separated us from the driver.

"Why did you stop?"Adam demanded .

"There are three men in the middle of the road sir Adam and they aren't moving."He answered.

Adam stiffened at his words, his hands gripping the handle of the door."Whatever you do , do not step out of the vehicle unless I tell you to."He warned ."Lock the doors ."

I silently prayed in the back seat , please just let this be a false alarm .

My heart rate picked up as I heard shouting outside , surely this wasn't a friendly conversation .Suddenly a figure appeared right next to me , his hands reached out and to my horror punched the glass windows , I screamed and covered my face as the glass shattered into a million tiny pieces.

He unlocked the door and opened it ,grabbing a handful of my hair , he forced me out the vehicle and threw me on the ground next to a bleeding Adam and an unconscious driver.

"Look what we got here."The man chuckled .My eyes squinted as I tried to focus on the three men staring at us , each of them looking amused.

The one who had grabbed me by my hair focused his gaze on Adam."You're trying really hard not to shift , is it because she's human?"He inquired with a knowing glint in his eyes.

I felt Adam stiffen besides me , a low growl escaping his mouth.

Human?

Wasn't everyone here humans?

"You don't want to do this ."Adam threatened ."If any harm comes to the girl Austin will have your heads...literally."

The three men looked at each other and burst out laughing ."Austin? Care for a human.The mighty Alpha?"They asked between laughs."From what we've gathered she means absolutely nothing to him .In fact , he might even thank us for getting rid of her."

I felt my heart break at their words , it hurt more than any physical pain they could have inflicted upon me.

Adam took a quick glance at me before turning to glare at the men."You know nothing ."He spat .

"It seems like the one who knows nothing is the little one besides you , we can help with that , shine some light into the situation."They offered.

What were these psychos speaking about?Whatever they were referring too clearly didn't sit well with Adam as he swiftly rose up and grabbed two of the men by their necks.

"Oh you shouldn't have done that."The one who wasn't locked in a neck hold by Adam spoke up.

Before anyone else could react a loud howl escaped his lips and right before my eyes the man shifted into a huge dark brown wolf.

Chapter 11

Austin's POV:

I couldn't understand why I felt so uneasy , my mind constantly kept going straight back to Lucy , something telling me that I should get to her immediately.

I'd left Adam in charge of her , he was the best in the pack when it came to protecting alongside his brother Alexander.He often gave his life for me and other members of the pack and I expected that same loyalty towards Lucy , I knew he could be trusted but yet I couldn't stop the constant nagging of my wolf , it was as though he sensed she was in danger.Something was pulling me towards her , it wanted me next to her desperately.

I still couldn't make sense of these unwanted thoughts and feelings towards Lucy, I had my mate in my arms and yet all I could do was think about her , she was slowly consuming my body and mind.Impatience and annoyance begun pumping through my veins as I realized bitterly that I didn't want to be here with Ariana , not only my wolf this time but I as well preferred to be next to Lucy.

Bloody hell.

What the f**k was wrong with me?

My hands clenched at my sides as my head throbbed with this new information buzzing within me , a string of curses threatened to escape my mouth as the restlessness within me only increased with each f*****g second that ticked by.Lucy was becoming a drug to me , a dangerously unhealthy one that threatened my peace of mind , threatened my f*****g existence.

'Alpha.' Pause.'Lucy ... she's in danger.'

Fear quickly engulfed me , swallowing me whole.My heart hammered loudly against my chest as my brains tried to catch up with the emotions attacking me all at once at the mind link I'd just received from Adam.

I shot off the bed so fast that Ariana fell off the sheets in a loud thump .She got up glaring at me."What the hell is wrong with you?"

My head pounded as my gaze swept over Ariana without actually seeing her , all I could hear was Adam's words repeating in my head , over and over.I struggled to stay focused as I tried to trace their location from the mind link , clinging to the connection , desperate to find her.

"I don't have time for explanations ,I have to go now."I answered her frantically.

"You promised to spend the day with me."She reminded me , crossing her arms in front her chest.

"I'm sorry."I apologized hoarsely , rushing out the door without a second thought.

"Austin!"I heard her scream behind me but ignored her calls , Lucy was in danger , that was the only thing on my mind , I had to get to her...had to bring her to safety before I went f*****g insane.

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Lucy's POV:

My body was shaking uncontrollably ,I was finding it difficult to wrap my mind around what was happening in front of my very eyes.

A man just shifted into a wolf?

Was it possible that this was all just a nightmare ?

As if on cue , the other two men shifted into wolves as well , all three wolves were different shades of brown , every single one of them just as big as the other.

Oh God.

I whimpered , fear consuming me whole , the three wolves growling at me aggressively as each of them took a step closer in my direction.

Adam stepped back ,blocking me from their view."I'm sorry you had to find out this way princess."

Not long after he said those words to me , Adam shifted into a great grey wolf.He was bigger than each of the three but unfortunately still outnumbered .

They growled at each other , the grey wolf keeping his position to the front of me , protecting me from the others.

I watched in horror as the three of them attacked him at the same exact time , he yelped in pain as one of the brown ones bit into his legs , b***d splattering onto the ground.

I felt completely helpless , I didn't know how to help the grey wolf or Adam or was it both of them as one ,I had absolutely no idea!! I looked around me frantically , searching for some sort of object that could possibly help him.

My eyes rested on a pocket knife inside the unconscious drivers jacket , I reached down cautiously , not taking my eyes off the scene in front of me and pulled it out .Taking deep breaths I forced myself to calm my racing heart.If I wanted to save the grey wolf who was no doubt fighting to protect me ,I needed to be thinking clearly.I swallowed down my panic and tried to focus on the scene in front of me , the brown ones were no doubt winning the fight , which was expected since it was three against one.I needed to choose one of them and attack with all the strength I had ,it would at least help to have one less wolf attacking the grey one , assuming I was successful in the attack.

I zeroed in on the one to the left , he was closest to me , with its back turned so he wouldn't see me coming from behind.Not giving myself time to back out , I got up on my feet and jumped onto the wolf , grabbing onto his fur and stabbing the knife into its side.The wolf howled in pain , trying to shake me off .I held on tighter and dug the knife even deeper, promising myself not to let go until he released the grey wolf from his deadly grip .Another brown wolf grabbed onto my hair with it's teeth and flung me to the side , my forehead hitting against a tree .I winced and cried out in pain , feeling the b***d trickle down my face.

A loud howl rippled through the air , shaking all the trees around us with its power ...I knew that howl.Knew that power.

My eyes snapped up just in time to see a jet black wolf dip from the sky as he crashed into the fight in his full elaborate beauty.He was no doubt the same wolf that had saved me last time ,looking pissed as hell .He didn't waste any time as his teeth grabbed onto the neck of the wolf that had flung me a few seconds ago ,with one hard pull he ripped the head off the body.

I screamed in horror as b***d splattered all around us, tainting the ground and trees .

He let out another powerful howl as he jumped onto another, I recognized this one as the one I had stabbed a moment ago , the black wolf grabbed onto the open wound I had left with its teeth ,the brown wolf crying out in pain.I watched as he aggressively ripped him apart , not stopping until the wolf was in pieces.The remaining brown wolf whimpered and backed up in fear , I covered my eyes as I heard his helpless cries, the scene in front of me all too brutal for me to take in.

When all the noises had stopped , I forced my eyes open .The black wolf stood a few feet away from

me , panting hard next to the badly injured grey one with b***d dripping from his mouth.He was watching me with those alert eyes again, he took a step towards me and I pushed back against the tree in fear , a small whimper escaping my lips.

He stopped , as if sensing my fear and from the look that he gave me, he didn't like it one bit.He stood there for a moment just staring at me as if having a battle within himself and right before my eyes he shifted into a man.

Not just any man.

Austin.

Bruised, covered in b***d and very much naked he stood in all his glory in front of me.What a magnificent man he was , a unique masterpiece before my eyes.

My knees shook and that was the last thing I remembered before I blacked out.

Chapter 12

Austin's POV:

The scene in front of me was a bloody mess , every single one of the wolves who'd attacked Lucy dead.My wolf was full of rage , I couldn't stop him even if I wanted to , not that I did .As soon as we'd witnessed her being thrown into the air , we had both snapped and so my wolf didn't stop until they were all brutally killed , their bodies in pieces before our eyes.And still it didn't feel like enough , I wanted to put them back together only to rip them into shreds again.

And repeat.

They'd hurt her , hurt Lucy.Their death was too easy for the pain they'd inflicted upon her.

In one swift motion I placed on the shorts I'd dropped nearby and hurried to her side.She was lying motionless on the ground , her bloody hair covered her face and I gently reached over and pushed it back , there was b***d all over her face ,I felt the anger resurface at the sight of her and resisted the urge to howl in frustration.

I gently picked her up into my arms ,holding her close to my chest .

"I'm sorry Alpha."Adam apologized bowing his head in shame."I couldn't protect her."

While I wanted to be angry at Adam and blame him for not protecting Lucy , I knew I couldn't , besides the fact that he was outnumbered , the truth remained that I was the one to be blamed , if I hadn't stayed back with Ariana none of this would have happened.My wolf huffed in agreement , he blamed me for what happened and was just as pissed at me as I was with myself.

My eyes swept over Adam now , assessing his injuries now that Lucy was safely tucked away in my arms.He was bleeding from head to toe , badly injured with bite marks all over his body ,looking over him now I could see that he was struggling to stand, he had fought risking his life for her.That was all that mattered.

"You tried your best Adam , let's get her back to the pack house , we need to get this b***d off her and ensure she isn't seriously injured."I commanded .

Adam would heal at an abnormal rate , Lucy was human so she wouldn't.

.....

As I stepped into the pack house , a few surprised gazes flew my way .

"What is the human doing here?"Andrew demanded taking a step in front of me as if to block my

entrance, his tone disapproving .

My gaze darkened , this was not the time for him to be testing my patience. Before a growl could escape my lips Adam stepped in front of us. I was grateful that he did since I was more than ready to rip apart my own pack member with the burning rage inside me.

"The human as you call her." Adam snapped. "Is our princess and she risked her life today to save mine. She could have left me there to fight off the three wolves that were attacking me but instead she bravely latched onto one of them and stabbed him , not letting go until she was forced to and thrown in the air by another. She got hurt while trying to protect my wolf , if anyone has a problem with her being here they'll have to go through me."

My chest swelled with pride at his words , Lucy fought to protect one of my own , risking her own life knowing she was no match for a wolf .

I cradled her closer to my chest as I watched the amazed gazes of my pack members who had assembled around us at Adam's words , they all studied her in my arms and I could feel each of their respect for her grow.

Adam was well loved by the entire pack , he had saved many of the members on countless occasions so the fact that Lucy risked her own life to save him without barely knowing him was a big deal. In other words , the majority of the pack would now treat her like their own.

"Nick." I called. "And Caelan , the roads are a bloody mess from the fight , you need to get rid of the bodies and b***d before any humans get on the site."

Nick gave a quick nod while Caelan spoke. "We'll take care of it Alpha ."

"What the hell happened to her?" My mother's panic-stricken voice came from the doorway.

I spun around with Lucy in my arms , my entire family stood at the doorway with worried looks on each of their faces.

"Who the f**k did this to her?" Lucas demanded , taking a step closer, I growled possessively when he reached over to touch the bruise on her forehead , he immediately pulled back his hand and shook his head at me. "I'm just worried about her."

"You could worry without f*****g touching her." I snapped.

My b***d was boiling and everyone was testing my patience.

"Boys." My father cut in sternly.

"How did this happen on your watch?" James asked curiously , my brother knew fully well how strong my wolf was so I completely understood why he asked such a question , I just wished he didn't choose now to ask it.

I swallowed the guilt ."I ordered Adam to take her to the village and on their way they were ambushed by three wolves ."

"YOU WHAT?" My mother shouted glaring at me. "Your father and I specifically asked you to do it Austin , none of this would have happened if you had listened and did what was expected of you."

"I can't believe you." Maya whispered , disappointment etched deep in her voice.

"Which pack were the wolves from?" James demanded , his stare deadly , my brother just like I , was always ready for a fight when anything threatened our family.

My gaze darkened. "I didn't wait to find out , I killed them on the spot and I would gladly do it again in a split second."

My father shook his head at me seeming distressed ."I understand why you did but you should have

kept one alive to extract information from him , how would we know what the attack was about or if there is more to come?"

I stiffened at his words , there was no f*****g way I was letting something like this happen again .I would kill any and everything that threatened Lucy's safety.

Lucy g*****d in my arms , distracting me from the conversation at hand."We would have this discussion later , right now her wounds need tending too."

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LUCY'S POV:

I awoke with an excruciating pain in my head , I touched my forehead and winced as the pain doubled.My eyes snapped open and I had to blink twice as they adjusted to the bright light in the room.

Where was I?

"Lucy!"

My eyes followed the voice and it was only then that I realized I was surrounded by a group of people.Austin's entire family were staring at me , their eyes filled with relief , I continued to scan the room and found what I was looking for.

Austin.

He stood in a corner , leaned up against the wall studying me and that was when it hit me.All the events of what happened flashed before my eyes , the wolves..Adam..Austin.

What were they?

"We need to talk."The queen said ."About what you saw today."

"What are you?"I asked hoarsely , my voice sounding thick to my own ear.

"We're called werewolves ."The king answered."We all are."He continued as his gaze swept over his family.

Werewolves.

I've heard that term before , that name was often associated with vampires .I've read countless stories about them , they always seemed to intrigue me but never in a million years did I ever think that they actually existed.Before marrying Austin I've never met anyone that seemed to possess the qualities of that of a werewolf , never even encountered anything close to what I saw today.

"I thought werewolves only shifted on the full moon?"

The king gave me a faint smile."So you have heard tales of us before.Our ancestors before us , the very first group of werewolves could only shift on the full moon however as centuries past werewolves learnt to better control when they shift , our bodies adapted with each new generation that entered the world.Now it's completely normal to see a wolf shift whenever they see it fit .It's usually easier if they sense danger or need to protect someone or something."

Oh.

"What else would you like to know about us?"Maya asked gently.Her pretty brunette hair which was usually tied in a messy bun fell like curtains around her round face , her dark expressive eyes , a warm pool blue wandered over me now with a guarded look, almost like she wasn't sure how to talk to me anymore , unaware of how I would react.

I studied her for a moment , how could someone this sweet and gentle be a werewolf?

My gaze reluctantly went back to where Austin stood , he was looking at me with cautious eyes almost as if he expected me to snap any minute now , his gaze never leaving mine.I trembled , feeling pinned

by his open stare.

Everything they said to me was too much for me to take in all at once , I didn't know how to respond with the new information thrown at me.

Werewolves existed?

And I was married to one , one so dangerous that he could possibly wipe out an entire village if he really wanted to.

I instantly paled.

How did any of this happen , I had so many questions but yet I wasn't sure if I was ready for them to be answered.

"Can I have some time to myself?" I asked. "Please." I added when I saw each of their faces instantly set in disapproval , Maya's smooth forehead had creased at my words , Lucas and James stiffened while the king and queen gave each other guarded looks...And Austin , he seemed like the last thing on his mind right now was to leave me in a room by myself.

After what seemed like an eternity ,they eventually nodded their heads."We're right outside if you need anything from us."

As soon as I was left alone , I opened the bedside window and quietly climbed out .I needed the fresh air more than I needed anything else right now .From the moment my feet touched the hard ground , my body shook and as if I had no control of my feet whatsoever they begun to move on their own accord. I ran and ran ... and ran.The woods were consumed by darkness , not even the moonlight above helped but yet somehow I could still see as clearly as one would see in the day , my feet moving like it were one with the forest , like it knew every inch of it , every narrow path , every knotted root.The cold air lashed at my pale skin as I continued to race through the woods with no apparent destination in mind.While the darkness pressed against me from all directions something within me screamed to be set free , I felt something within me grow stronger the more I ran , almost like my body was spinning out of control and needed to be let loose.

I didn't know how long I was running for but I finally stopped and leaned back against a giant tree. My eyes remained closed as I tried to take in everything that happened today .I begun to breathe in the cool air more rapidly as the images of the day kept flashing before my eyes.The jet black wolf mercilessly killing ...The great grey wolf fighting for his life ...The terrified cries of the brown ones ..Austin standing naked before my eyes. I stood like that for a while until I heard someone clear their throat.

My eyes snapped open and right there in front of me stood the five gorgeous men from the Fire Cross Pack.

I gasped in horror.

Holy crap.

Not again.

Chapter 13

Ermanno's POV:

"F**k." I whispered.

"Did you have to drug her?" Luthais asked , staring at our sister in my arms with a sad look on his face.

"He had no choice Luthais." Nolan cut in. "We all know she was about to scream ,if we allowed her to make any noise it could have easily alerted anyone from the Moon Pack , an encounter with them right now is the last thing we need."

Nolan was right , it's not like I enjoyed drugging her any more than my brothers did but the fact remained that we were in Austin's territory , the smallest noises could alert them.

"Why the f**k is there a bandage on her forehead ?" Thane demanded , his voice as sharp as a knife. I followed his gaze and sure as hell there was a huge a*s bandage plastered there.

"We can't discuss this here , we could get answers from her when she awakes ."
And f*****g kill anyone who hurt her.

"Where do we take her?" Marcus asked taking a look around us.

"We definitely can't stay here." Nolan pointed out.

"And we can't take her back to the council , not when dad doesn't know what we're up to."

Not that the council is a safe place for her either way , whether my father knew or not , the council is the last place I'd carry Lucy, not after what happened to my other sisters there.

"We can take her back to our old house , no one stays there anymore and that's the last place Austin would be looking for her." I suggested , it was the best option we had for now.

As my brothers all nodded in agreement I looked down at Lucy once more , it was time to tell her the truth.

.....

LUCY'S POV:

I g*****d out loud , my eyes finding it hard to focus at the bright light .I blinked a couple of times before I could finally see clearly.

As my vision cleared I suddenly wished it hadn't , as the five men from before all surrounded me , watching me closely.

I gasped and gripped the sheets around me in fear.

They had kidnapped me!

"Hi I'm Marcus—"

I let out a loud scream cutting him off.

"Nice going jackass." The only blond haired one of the group shouted. "You scared her."

"What did I do?"

The tallest one shook his head at the two. "Lucy please calm down , we're not going to hurt you."

"That's what murderers usually say." I whispered.

They all chuckled at that. "Well we're not murderers ..."

"Well actually—" The shortest of the group started but quickly shut his mouth as the others turned to glare at him.

"H-how do you know me?" I stuttered .

"Who wants to tell her?" The tallest asked.

"How about we all say it the same time." The one who had tried introducing himself to me as Marcus before quietly suggested.

I waited patiently for them to speak.

"Lucy." They started. "We're your brothers."

I blinked up at them.

My brothers?

"This is some kind of joke right? Or a plot to get back at Austin and his family?" I finally asked when I could find my voice.

They snorted. "Like we would give Austin and his family that amount of attention, our sole purpose in bringing you here was to tell you the truth."

"I don't understand, why wait till now to come find me and break the news to me that you're supposedly my brothers."

The tallest spoke again. "Because we only recently found out where you were this entire time, father hid the truth from us about your whereabouts, as soon as we knew exactly where you'd been all these years we wasted no time in sorting you out. Paid a visit to your old family, there we learnt that you'd gotten married to that son of a bitch."

"Why should I believe you?" I asked, constantly reminding myself to breathe with this new information.

"We don't have any reason to lie to you Lucy, how would us telling you that we're your brothers benefit us in any way? Tell me you don't feel the sibling connection between us? We haven't seen you in years and yet at first glance we knew it was you. Because you're the print of our mother, you look exactly like her." He said pulling out an envelope from his pockets, he reached inside it and pulled something out.

"Take a look." He said handing it to me.

I stared at the photo in my hand in shock, he was right, I was the print of the woman in this picture.

My mother?

My actual real mother?

My hands trembled as I ran my fingers gently over the delicate photo, was I really looking at my mother? All my life I've wondered what she'd look like, she was stunning to say the least.

"You can ask us any questions and we'd answer them all." He continued.

"What are your names?"

They seemed pleased at that question as slow smiles formed on their faces.

"Well I already tried introducing myself as Marcus before but you cut me off with that loud scream."

I flushed.

"I'm Thane." The blond haired one introduced himself, he was leaned up against the wall studying me intently.

"I'm Nolan." Another added, I dragged my gaze from Thane to look at him, he was surprisingly the most quiet with eyes strikingly similar to my own. He flashed me a dazzling smile and I couldn't help but return it.

"I'm Luthais." The shortest continued with the introductions, he seemed like the youngest of the five and the most sensitive at that too if I'd read him right.

"And I'm Ermanno." The tallest said lastly. "We've waited our entire lives for this introduction Lucy."

I felt my heart tug at his words as another thought suddenly crossed my mind.

"Are you werewolves as well?"

A shocked look crossed each of their faces at my question, as they gave each other confused glances.

"You know about werewolves?" Ermanno asked in a shocked whisper.

I nodded my head. "I found out yesterday that werewolves exist and that Austin and his family are werewolves as well."

Thane's gaze darkened ."Is that how you got that bruise on your forehead?"

Oh.

I almost forgot about that.

"Yes but--"

"THOSE MOTHERFUCKERS!" They shouted as they all rose up as if ready for a fight."I'll kill that bastard." Ermanno shouted.

"What are you guys—" I started but none of them were paying any attention to me ."STOPPP!"

They finally turned to stare at me , seeming surprised at my outburst .

"Finally." I mumbled ."Austin wasn't the one to hurt me , I was attacked by three other wolves and Austin was the one to save me."

"Which pack were they from?" Thane demanded .

"Pack?" I asked confused .

Marcus quirked a brow at me."I see you still have plenty to learn about us."

Us?

"So you guys ARE werewolves as well."

Marcus chuckled ."We're not the only ones Lucy ...You are one as well."

I stared at Marcus as if he were mad .

"Lucy?" Luthais called , seeming concerned at my dazed look.I couldn't answer , couldn't speak , my tongue felt heavy and I was left dumbstruck.

"Nice going Marcus , you broke her on the first meeting." Thane said in dry tone.

"It's not possible , I've been a human my entire life ." I disagreed , they didn't know what they were speaking about, I couldn't be a werewolf , it simply wasn't possible.

"I'm sorry Lucy but you are no doubt a full blooded werewolf , you have the Cross b***d running through your veins." Ermanno informed me.

I swallowed ."Why haven't I experienced any signs of being a werewolf ?I don't have any of the strength that they possess , I'm completely physically weak." I stated pointing at the bandage on my forehead ."

As you can see I bruise easily unlike werewolves."

Thane nodded."While that is true , it has been brought to our attention that father had a witch put a spell on you , to keep your wolf inside of you so that you wouldn't shift while living amongst your human family .Sadly , when it comes to you father keeps everything bottled up inside , so we have no idea what breaks the spell or who's the witch that put the spell on you .If we knew whom it was we could have forced her to reverse the spell."

"You mean there is a possibility the spell could break on it's own?" I asked in fear , I didn't want to be a werewolf , didn't know the first thing about being one.

"Usually when a spell is put on someone there is only one possible way the spell can be broken unless reversed by the witch herself ." Ermanno informed me."Are you sure you've never felt a connection to your wolf before?Something within you , never even heard an unknown voice in your head ?"

I paled at his words.

Voices in my head?

Is that what those weird voices were when I'd first met Austin?

No.

It couldn't be.

"Nope .Never ."I lied.

"Oh."Ermanno commented , disappointment laced in his voice.

I looked at the men in front of me now and somehow I knew , I just knew they were telling the truth , they were indeed my brothers in flesh and b***d.

I had brothers , the thought thrilled me , I actually had the brothers I've always wished for my entire life and they came to find me , actually wanted me in their lives.

The thought made me overflow with happiness , but just as fast as it had appeared it quickly disappeared as another thought crossed my mind almost bitterly .

My parents had chosen to keep their other children but gave me up for adoption?Why?

Why didn't they want me?

It hurt , it hurt more than all the agony I'd had to face without them.

All these years I've suffered with a family that didn't want me and now I came to know that my real parents , my own flesh and b***d didn't want me either but wanted their other children.

I felt the first tear slip from my eyes .

"Lucy-"My brothers gasped in horror.

"Why didn't they want me?"I cried , the pain almost too much for me to bear .

My brothers each gave me a pained look.

"Lucy please-"

"No."I stopped them , I didn't want to hear any excuses , the truth remained that my own parents didn't want me."Please take me home." I begged.

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"Are you sure this is what you want?" Ermanno asked as we stood outside the palace's gates , behind the trees so that the guards didn't spot my brothers .

I nodded , this was my home now , these people actually cared for me , everyone except Austin of course .

But was that even true?

For Austin had saved me more than once already in his wolf form , so did he really not care for me?He could have just left me to die on both occasions but he didn't .

"We will miss you Lucy."Marcus whispered .

I felt the tears form in my eyes again , it felt amazing to have brothers who cared this much for me , I've been separated my entire life from them but yet I knew I would give my life for the men in front of me now and I also knew they would do the same for me.

"Oh for f**k's sake Marcus , look what you did now."Thane grunted.

A sad smile made its way on my face. "Thank you so much for coming to find me , the fact that you did means the world to me ."I confessed .

My brothers pulled me into a group hug as they all surrounded me ."We will always be here for you Lucy , whenever you need us , we're always watching over you , remember that."

I nodded my head and turned to go.

"Are you sure you don't want us to go in with you?"Thane asked for the hundredth time.

I shook my head ."No Thane . I already saw what happened on the first meeting between Austin's family and you , I don't want a repeat of that.So please don't."

Thane sighed but nodded in understanding .

I gave them all a faint smile before waving goodbye .

It was time to face Austin and his family and tell them everything I'd just found out.

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Austin's POV:

"WHERE THE f**k CAN SHE BE!" I roared , Lucy had been missing for an entire day and we'd already searched the entire f*****g kingdom.I hadn't slept , had ensured none of the pack members did either , every single person I could command I had them out in their numbers searching for her.

And still, we got nothing , not even a single lead on where she could be.How could this be?It was like she vanished without a single trace .When I barged into the room last night to check on her , restless on being away from her for too long with the condition she was in and found the room completely empty with the windows opened , I f*****g flipped .Not a single soul had seen me act the way I did last night , it was hard to explain but not knowing Lucy's whereabouts was driving me insane and I was growing more insane with each passing second that she wasn't near me.

"Alpha."Alex interrupted my thoughts.

"What?"I snapped , my anger on the verge of collapsing .

"We just got word from your parents , they found her."He informed me."She's home."

I didn't waste time at the news and immediately made my way home...to her.

It wasn't long before I was inside the palace's gate , opening door after door,impatient to finally see her, my footsteps slowing only when I spotted her .Her beauty filled my vision and I couldn't help but let it sink in ,both my wolf and I relieved to see her.

For a moment I just stood there taking in the sight of her ,enjoying every little detail , her long dark hair was flowing gracefully around her shoulders while her delicate fingers slowly pushed it out her face as she stood there talking to my family , her gaze suddenly looked up in my direction as if sensing my presence allowing me to finally see her face.

My heart clenched like a fist at what I saw , her cheeks were flushed and under her eyes swollen , had she been crying? The thought made my gut twist .

I crossed the room to her , intent on pulling her into my arms but froze as a familiar scent caught my nose .

A muscle ticked in my jaw as I felt anger quickly overcome all my other emotions , felt it rushing through my veins .

"Lucy."Her name dripped from my mouth like venom. "Why the f**k do you reek of the Fire Cross Pack?"

Chapter 14

I flinched at Austin's tone.

How did I explain to him that the family that betrayed his family was my very own?

How did I explain that even though my brothers hadn't spoken about the past that deep down I believed that they were good people and could have never done anything bad to his family?

"|-| -"

"WHY DO I SMELL THEM ON YOU LUCY!" He roared .

"That's where you went missing for an entire day? You were with them? "He demanded. "After knowing what they did to my family you would actually stoop so low and still leave with those bastards?"

When I said nothing , Austin grabbed hold of my hair and brought me inches away from his face so that my only option was to stare deep into his eyes.I gasped at the hurt I saw there , my heart clenched tightly in my chest , unable to see him this tortured because of me.

"I hate their scent on you." He whispered against my ear, my body trembling in response." Only my scent should be all over your body Lucy ."

"No one else." He added , his voice a hoarse whisper as he closed his eyes and leaned his forehead against mine.

His lips were inches away from mine and his sweet breath fanned my face , my knees suddenly felt like molten lava .

I was left speechless , my body paralyzed .

When he finally opened his eyes it was as though the hurt was buried deep inside , replaced by anger . His gaze hardened as he let go of me abruptly and it took all of my strength to not fall at the sudden abruptness .

"Are you going to f*****g answer me?" He shouted , my entire body jumping at his deadly tone , surprised at the sudden change in pitch of his voice.

"Who the f**k do you think you're speaking to like that?"

That voice.

I froze.

Surely they didn't ? I swung my gaze anxiously towards the distant sound.

Sure as hell , there my five brothers stood at the doorway with a murderous expression on each of their faces.

Those stubborn idiots.

Austin stiffened next to me , the tension so thick in the atmosphere around us that it almost hurt to breathe.

It all happened so fast that it took my mind a minute before it could wrap itself around what was happening.

Austin , Lucas and James along with Maya were in front of my brothers within seconds , both sides growling aggressively at each other . I watched in utter dismay as they started to size each other up as if getting ready for a battle.I felt like a horror movie was being played before my very eyes , except this was real and not some made up story.

When I saw Austin's fist tighten , ready to throw a punch at Ermanno , panic immediately overcame me. "Austin."I screamed.

"Please don't!"I begged , not wanting to see a fight break out between the people I cared about.

Austin turned to me with a look of betrayal blatantly displayed on his face and instantly I knew that it would haunt me for the rest of my life. He might as well have stabbed me straight through the middle of my heart , that would have been less painful than the dreadful look he was giving me now.

Not only Austin however but his entire family were looking at me as though I'd hurt them.

The entire room was suddenly dead quiet , Thane was the first to break the cold silence.

He glared at Austin before turning his gaze to me ." Let's go Lucy."

Austin's pale gaze sought me out , completely pinning me with his stare as he waited to see what I would do.I walked towards my brothers , intent on telling them to leave and let me explain the truth to Austin and his family.

Before I could reach them however , Austin grabbed my arm and pulled me close as he leaned down to whisper dangerously against my ear . "Don't step foot into our kingdom ever again."He warned , his ice cold voice sounding unforgiving and completely distant.This was the harshest he's ever been to me since my arrival here and it hurt like hell. I gasped in tortured distress as he let go of my arm abruptly and before I had a chance to respond , stormed out of the room , leaving me feeling completely empty and lost.

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AUSTIN'S POV:

Flame coursed through my veins and pumped my heart aggressively as I lay against the floor in conflicted pain.

I'd let Lucy go and told her never to step foot in my kingdom again.My own words were haunting me now.

My wolf was restless within me , he was fighting me almost vigorously to be let out , to go after Lucy .This was the most he'd ever fought me before and it had me at war with myself.

When I'd smelt those bastards on her , I'd completely lost it , wanted to take her in my arms and f**k her so hard that only my scent would be on her body for f*****g months.The urge was so hard I could have done it right there in front of my entire family. Even now , the reminder of their scent on her beautiful body had me going f*****g insane.When Lucy had stopped me from attacking that a*****e , it was like the last straw had been drawn and I lost my f*****g mind.

And then I'd seen her make her way towards them , the thought of her leaving me for them undid me in a way impossible to describe. I wanted to hurt her like she'd hurt me but at the same time I didn't want to cause her any pain , wanted to be the one to put a smile on her God damn breath taking face.

I was still clearly losing my mind.

"I told you she was a whore."Ariana said breaking through my thoughts , her words cutting deeper than a knife.

A muscle ticked in my jaw.I was ready to block Ariana out of my mind , her voice sounding annoying to my own ear when she suddenly spoke again.

"I was talking to father today , remember he had someone look into her background?"

That immediately caught my attention , what more did her father find out?

"Well."She continued. "Lucy was having an affair with one of the members of the Fire Cross Pack."

I saw red at her words.

"Is the source a trusted one?" I asked , not wanting to believe those words that completely flipped my insides and filled me with so much hate and anger that could possibly cause my body to explode.

"Of course."She answered glaring at me ." My father is the best when it comes to those things , whoever he hired would have spoken the truth and nothing but the truth, Lucy is a complete and utter –"

I didn't hear anything Ariana said after that.

I wanted to kill , needed to kill.

When I saw those bastards again and I would make sure I f*****g do , I would mercilessly kill every single one of those motherfuckers .

.....

LUCY'S POV:

I stood glaring at my brothers while they each gave me a guilty smile .

"I thought I told you not to come in?" I asked.

"You expected us to stay put and do nothing while that son of a b***h was speaking to you like that?" Thane demanded .

"He's lucky we didn't beat the s**t out of him right there and then." Ermanno added .

"He feels he runs the f*****g world just because he's the Alpha of the strongest pack." Marcus commented . "Someone needs to give him a wake up call."

Luthais nodded his head in agreement .

Nolan was the only one who was silent , he was leaned up against a tree taking in the conversation and studying me closely .

"You weren't even supposed to be listening in on the conversation!" I pointed out angrily.

"We weren't going to ." Marcus confessed . "But then we saw Austin rushing inside and knew he wasn't up to anything good."

"Well thanks to you guys now I'm homeless and the only people who ever accepted me into their lives think I've betrayed them and want nothing to do with me." I snapped.

My brothers winced at my words , looking hurt.

"I'm sorry." I quickly apologized . "I know you were only thinking about me but I could have cleared up the misunderstandings on my own , all these years I've learnt to fight my battles alone , you don't have to protect me from everything ."

"We're sorry Lucy." Luthais apologized .

"It's okay." I said giving him a faint sad smile. "But where am I supposed to go now?"

My brothers were silent for a long minute , Ermanno the first to break the uncomfortable silence.

"We're taking you back to the council with us." He announced earning surprised looks from my other brothers.

The council?

What was he talking about?

Chapter 15

LUCY'S POV:

Black pillars stood on each side of a long bridge that at the moment seemed never ending . I peeped out the window of the vehicle to get a better look at the ocean beneath us.

The fresh sea breeze plucked at my hair and for a moment I lifted my face and inhaled deeply , allowing myself to get lost in the moment but for a few seconds , closing my eyes and imagining my life wasn't filled with so much pain.

Content with my daydreaming I sighed quietly and leaned back against the seat.

After a few minutes I opened my eyes to study my brothers who'd been surprisingly quiet the entire drive , all of them for some reason seemed tense , it was the first time I'd seen them look this worried.

"Where exactly are we going?" I asked.

"The council is built on an island ." Ermanno explained . "They built it centuries ago to keep far away from humans ."

This was the first question about the council he had actually answered . In fact none of them were

willing to tell me more about this council they spoke off .It was beginning to worry me.What were they hiding from me?

After what felt like hours , the island finally came into view .I rose up from my slouched position on the seats and looked out the window again .To the side of us , what seemed like hundreds of young boys or more were training to fight , each had swords in their hands and were attacking each other...Fighting as though to survive .I watched in horror as one boy stabbed another and he fell to the ground completely motionless .

Where the hell was this place?

"Why are they killing each other?"I asked in horror , my chest hurting at the horrible sight in front of me.

"The council only wants the best working for them."Thane said bitterly before turning to stare straight at me."Only the strongest survive here Lucy."

My heart ached for these poor boys , why were they even here?

"Why would anyone want to work for these people?"I demanded .

Luthais looked at me with sad eyes."If a family isn't strong enough to survive on their own they join the council for protection and in hopes of a better life ."He explained."Sadly no one knows exactly what they're getting themselves into until they finally join."

Why did he speak like he was one of them?Unless —No!It couldn't be.

I gasped ."All of you work for them , don't you?"

They nodded their heads at me.

"How long now?"

Ermanno spared me a quick glance before answering ."Over ten years now."

"Don't look at us like that ."Thane complained .

"We're doing absolutely fine as you can see." Marcus pointed out with a grin.

I wanted to respond but no words formed in my mouth , I couldn't even begin to imagine what they had to go through in this horrible place.

We passed through a small village before the car finally came to a stop in front of a gigantic black gate , 'The Black Council ' imprinted bold and black on the stone walls .

As the gates opened a statue of a great dragon was the first thing that caught my eyes , there were two demon like horns on the sides of its face ,its eyes sitting lightly on a narrow skull was the scariest most intimidating feature of all , it seemed as though it were looking straight through your soul, almost as if the statue were alive. The mouth was opened widely showing off rows of large teeth and my mind subconsciously imagined the mighty roar that would have escaped the dragon if it were indeed alive.It's massive demonic wings were spread out high up in the air along with two of the creature's massive feet.

That dragon.

I'd seen it somewhere before .

My eyes suddenly snapped up to my brothers as my gaze travelled to each of their arms and there it was , the same exact dragon was drawn in black ink , imprinted on each of their shoulders.

My brothers caught my open stare .

"It's the symbol that lets everyone know you belong to the black council." Thane explained before the question could even escape my lips.

"Here she goes giving us that pity look again." Marcus g*****d .

"Lucy." Ermanno said , placing emphasis on my name. "You have no reason to worry about us , at first it was difficult but we all eventually adapted , we wouldn't be the men we are today if we didn't go through those hardships , it only made us stronger."

Before I could respond the car came to an abrupt stop in front of a massive castle , my eyes widened , it was the biggest structure I'd ever set my eyes on. Even though it was daylight and the sun shone its light on the castle I still couldn't help the sudden shiver that ran down my spine in fear at the powerful negative vibes that radiated out from it. The entire castle was covered in black , everything except the windows which were tinted in a dark red , resembling the eyes of the devil himself.

I slowly stepped out the vehicle , never taking my eyes off the sight in front of me.

"Ah I see the Cross brothers have finally returned." My eyes studied the middle aged man in front of me who was watching me with curious eyes. He slowly moved his gaze from me back to my brothers. "I'm sure you know your father has been in a bad mood ever since you left , thanks to you men we've all had to deal with his wrath for days."

Father?

My heart raced at his words , my father was here?

And my brothers didn't say a single word to me? Is this the secret they were keeping from me?

They all turned and gave me apologetic smiles , all except Marcus who had his hands stretched out above his head behind him , avoiding any eye contact with me whatsoever.

Those traitors !

"It's nice to see you too Uncle." Thane said dryly.

Uncle?

This man was my uncle?

"Well I would advise you boys to not waste any time in going to see your father , that is if you want any of us to live to see another day again since your father is going to explode any minute now."

Suddenly every single one of my brothers stiffened besides me , their faces a pale white. My eyes followed their gazes and spotted a man who stood a distance away from us at the castle's entrance. His entire being radiated power , his stance demanded everyone's attention , even the magnificent castle drowned out behind him , his eyes were on my brothers with a look so deadly that if looks could kill they were already dead by now . I actually felt sorry for them to be under a gaze that strong but all thoughts immediately flew out my head as he turned those eyes on me.

And I knew .

I just knew ...from the blond hair that looked very much like Thane's to the green eyes that was strikingly similar to Marcus's and the face that closely resembled every single one of my brothers . This man ... was my father.

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AUSTIN'S POV:

I stumbled onto the bed , feeling completely lost. My room was the one place I craved being these days since it was the one place where Lucy's fragrant scent still lingered . I inhaled deeply , her sweet scent filling my nostrils and calming my racing heart but only a little , for the body couldn't be fooled , it knew Lucy wasn't here by my side.

I g*****d in distress , the restlessness was becoming unbearable and soon enough not even her scent

in the room would be able to comfort me for even that was slowly withering away with each second that ticked by.

Sudden footsteps outside my door caught my attention , followed by a loud impatient knock.

"You may want to hear this ." James said barging into my room.

"What's that?"I asked on alert.

"Follow me."

I did as he said , everyone were already in the living room with a strange young boy I hadn't seen around before .

"Tell the rest of them what you told me."James commanded him.

The young boy looked scared to speak but eventually went on. " I was ordered by Alpha Eric to dig up on Princess Lucy's background."He started , my heart leaped in my chest at just the mention of her name.

"What did you find out?"I demanded , impatient to know what he knew.

The boy looked shaken at my tone. "A-Alpha Richard is her father , the Fire Cross Pack is Princess Lucy's real family."

Shock raced through my veins at the speed of light , paralyzing my entire body.

They were her brothers?

Her brothers?

Lucy didn't have an affair ?

What the f**k did I do!

My mother gasped. "Oh no , what have we done?"She asked in horror." We didn't give the child a chance to explain herself."

Lucas shook his head at me ." I told you Lucy wasn't capable of having an affair ."He snapped.

"You said Alpha Eric told you?"I asked the boy."Did Ariana know as well?"

The boy swallowed and slowly nodded his head.

The betrayal ate at me raw , she knew all along?

"Why did you come to us?"I asked suspiciously ."What is it you want?"

"I would like to join your pack Alpha .I have no where else to turn too."He answered honestly.

It made sense now.

"I see."I said studying the boy in front of me , he looked like he really had no where else to turn. "I will discuss it more with you when I return in the meantime have James help you."

"Where are you going?"My father asked anxiously .

"To pay someone a visit." I answered , my voice sounding ice cold to my own ear.

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As soon as Ariana saw the look on my face she doubled back against the wall in fear.

"You knew?" I spat at her in disgust ."All this time you knew ?"

Her face instantly paled.

"I-I don't know what you're talking about ."She stuttered .

"Don't lie to me Ariana , you knew all along that they were her f*****g brothers!"I roared as my fist connected to the wall behind her ,some of the blocks falling to the ground into a million pieces."And yet you continued to say all those things about her , making me believe she really was having an affair."

I looked at her in disgust for the first time ever since I'd found out we were mates.

"I was scared I was losing you ."She cried ."I needed to do something ."

"I don't want to hear anything ."I shouted . "Don't expect to see me for a few days."

"Where are you going ?" She asked in horror.

I gave her a death glare. "To bring Lucy back."

She gasped. "You can't"

"I can."I growled . "And I f*****g will."

I was halfway out the door when her next words lashed out at me.

"You don't understand they took her back to the council!"She screamed .

My body froze , the council?

For a moment I stood there paralyzed , unable to think or breathe properly .

They took her to the f*****g council? Lucy couldn't be there , it wasn't safe for someone as delicate as her , f**k even the strongest struggled to survive in that hell hole! I had to leave now before anything happened to her.

"Don't go!"Ariana screamed again."Please Austin , I love you!"

I ignored all her calls as the anger of her betrayal mixed with my fear for Lucy's safety pounded against my temples , giving me an instant excruciating headache .

I felt my gut twist in agony ,I needed to get to Lucy , needed to see her in front of my eyes , needed to touch her , caress her , needed to see for myself that she was safe and out of any danger , needed these things more than I needed f*****g air to breathe.

Chapter 16

LUCY'S POV:

As my father took slow steps towards us each of my brothers stiffened further , if that were even possible.

"Why did you bring her here?" His voice was a deadly calm , like the quiet before the storm.

All of my brothers remained completely silent , none of them meeting father's eyes.

"I ASKED WHY DID YOU BRING HER HERE!"He roared with so much power that even the birds around the palace flew away in fear. The look in his eyes reflecting the anger within.

When they still said nothing my father's fist clenched at his sides ,his rage doubling ."

Take .Her.Back.Now.

"

My heart howled in pain at the repeated rejection , shattering into a million pieces at his words.My brain struggled to come to terms with the sudden rejection , what more should I have expected from someone who'd given me up when I was but a child?

"Father."Ermanno cut in angrily ." We're not taking her back there , she stays."

"If Lucy goes , we go."Thane threatened , his eyes a glassy glare.

"You didn't see the way Austin treated her."Luthais added unhappily . "We can't let her go back there."

Father shook his head in disappointment at them. "You fools , you think the notorious Alpha Austin would just let his wife leave without starting a war?Do you even know what you have done? You boys always act without f*****g thinking of the consequences of your actions!"

Luthais flinched besides me .

Did he really believe Austin would start a war for me? He could barely stand me , why would he risk harming his family for me , my father was clearly wrong. Austin wasn't capable of doing that for someone like me who meant absolutely nothing to him.

"She stays father ."Marcus repeated his brother's words."At least until we find somewhere else for her."
"DID YOU NOT HEAR ME—"

"What's all the commotion about."Someone interrupted .

My father stiffened as the man who was dressed all in black joined the conversation. He had an amused look on his face and reeked of evil , everything about him spoke volumes on his cold dark aura , his eyes reflecting his black soul.

He had a pitch black crow on one hand while he used his other hand to gently pet its head.The man c****d his head to the side and studied me , the bird copying his actions ."Who is this lovely young girl Richard?"

My father glared once more at my brothers as if to say 'see the s**t you've done ' before turning to bow his head at the man .

This man clearly held a position of high authority , for even my brothers bowed at his entrance.

"Good day Prosecutor."He greeted the man. "This is one of my daughters."

The prosecutor , as father called him , scratched his chin as his eyes openly took me in , his cold gaze making me uncomfortable . "I've met all your daughters already , why have you not introduced this one and why does she not have our signature dragon on her neck?"

Daughters?

I had sisters?

And what nonsense was he speaking about a signature dragon on my neck? Was he referring to the dragons on my brother's shoulders?

"She does not belong to the council."My father grit out . By the way his fists tightened at his sides and the vein at his temples popped out , you could tell he was trying hard to keep it together.

"Oh , what a pity."The man concluded. "Surely we can change that , have her join , I hear Sir Vincent's son is looking for a bride."

"She's already taken ."Ermanno growled.

He raised his dark eyebrows."I wasn't speaking to you boy , Richard your boys are becoming quite disrespectful , they're lucky that they are beneficial to the council ,lucky that father favors them for now."He said bitterly ."Now , who pray tell is she already wedded too?"

"Alpha Prince Austin Lance Vinci."My father answered stiffly .

The prosecutor's eyes widened with interest."I see. The famous Alpha has always sparked interest within our council , have heard much about him and I must say we like what we've heard so far. It would be our pleasure to have his wife stay as our guest for a few days ."He announced."On one occasion , as long as we get to meet him."

My heart pounded at his words , no...I didn't want Austin anywhere near this place , not that I had anything to fear , he wouldn't come.

Right?

.....

"Where are you taking me now ?" I asked my brothers suspiciously , knowing I couldn't trust them especially when it came to introductions .

"You'll see eventually." Marcus replied with a huge grin.

My gaze took in the beautiful scenery in front of me , out of everything I'd seen so far , this was the only area that pleased me. It was not what I expected , everything about the island was dark but yet this was one of the most beautiful forests I'd ever set my eyes on. The enchanted forest helped calm my raging nerves that was at it's peak from the events that had unfolded earlier , the sweet perfume of the trees around me drawing me completely in.

When I thought it couldn't possibly get any better , I spied a turquoise blue stream a little distance away , the luscious sound of the water flowing helped to calm my nerves even further , that is , until I spotted a figure near the stream.

The woman's long black hair glowed as chords of soft light gently touched her from the bright sun above , she reached over and gently pushed the hair back , her face coming into view.

I froze , my feet unable to take another step , my brain suddenly incapable of forming words.

It was the woman from the picture.

My mother .

She was leaned down patting some dirt next to the stream with a content smile on her face , as if sensing our presence she glanced up in our direction . " I see my sons have final—" Her words stopped halfway as her gaze landed on me.

Her hands flew to her mouth in shock as soon as her eyes rested on me , brimming brightly with unshed tears that resembled that of diamonds.

Seconds passed as we just stood there staring at each other , my brain struggling to come to terms with my mother being but only a few feet away from me , struggling with the fact that it wasn't a picture this time but my actual REAL mother in flesh right in front of me.

I couldn't help my own reaction as tears of my own formed in my eyes as my heart welled with emotion.

"M-mom." I whispered .

The first tear rolled down her cheeks upon me calling her mom and she quickly closed the distance between us before pulling me into her arms. I felt my body shake uncontrollably against her as I let out all of the tears I'd held back throughout the past years of not having her by my side. I clung to her as I let all of the emotion bottled up inside me out for the first time.

We stood in that position for a long time before she pulled away drying my tears with the palm of her hands. "My Lucy." She whispered , happy tears flowing down her face like a fountain .

Her face suddenly went pale white as if remembering something . "What is she doing here?" She demanded from my brothers who gave her their famous guilty smiles.

"What have you boys done now?" She asked covering her face in her hands. "You can't stay here Lucy." She added turning to me.

I paled.

"Please do not misjudge me my sweet Lucy , I'm very happy to see you but this place is not safe for you , you belong with Austin , you don't belong here." She quickly added.

Belong with Austin?

Was she referring to our marriage? Why did it seem like she meant way more than that?

At the mention of Austin , I couldn't help but ask my next question.

"Did our family betray Austin's family?"

Her eyes widened before she motioned for me to take a seat on the ground next to her.

"It all happened when you were but only two years old Lucy , King Jeremy was at that time the Alpha of the Moon Pack .One day the pack was ambushed , attacked by other wolves , many died that day , Austin who was six at the time was also badly injured , he almost died ."She narrated in a sad tone. "Some of the wolves who were held from the attack were captured , turns out they were wolves from our own pack .When questioned about who was in charge of the ambush they blamed your father." "That's awful!" I gasped in dismay .

"Your father tried to prove his innocence but the evidence said otherwise , it caused a major drift between both of our families with Jeremy banning us from ever entering his kingdom again." She continued. "Since many of the wolves from our pack were involved in the attack , our pack lost many of its members thus becoming weak. We struggled for years until your father decided to join the council in order to provide protection for us."

"Was this why you gave me away?" I demanded at the sudden reminder of their betrayal to their own daughter .

Tears flowed down her cheeks once more . "I can't give you the exact reasons Lucy but please know that both your father and I never wanted to give you up ,it was the hardest decision we've ever had to make."

If that were true then why wouldn't my father speak a single word to me ? It seemed more like he just wanted me completely out of his sight.

Why did I feel like there was so much more they weren't telling me?

.....

AUSTIN'S POV:

We were in the woods just before the bridge that connected the land to the island where the black council resided . My eyes took in the pack members around me , everyone looked extra tense , it's probably the first time I've ever seen my pack on edge like this , they were usually confident before any battle .But they had every reason to be , if things went south , it would be like walking into our own graves . James had brought along his entire pack as well , as he understood exactly what we were up against.

"This isn't going to be easy."James announced .

"I know." I admitted ."At least we have the advantage of the element of surprise."

We did.

I had one of my good witch friend use a spell on all of us so that the council members wouldn't be able to smell our presence .

The plan was to go in, get Lucy and leave without being spotted or noticed by council members .If things didn't go as planned and something bad took place I'll let out a howl for my pack members to know we were in danger .What happens from there , no one would know unless it actually came to that. James nodded . "Ready?"

"Yeah." I confirmed turning to Lucas."You are in charge of both packs until we get back."

"I'll handle things on this end , you both just come back with Lucy in one piece."He said.

"Alpha." Adam called catching my attention."Bring her back to us."

I looked at the rest of my pack and they reflected the same look Adam gave to me now , they all wanted Lucy back just as much as I did and once again my chest overflowed with pride , Lucy wasn't even around them for long and already had earned their hearts.

"I will." I promised.

And get her back I would , even if it meant ripping apart the entire f*****g council.

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LUCY'S POV:

I leaned against the tree with my eyes closed, taking in the fresh scent of the nearby stream , my mother and brothers had left me alone for a few minutes after I had asked for some time to myself .

Too many things happened in but a few days , so much information for me to take in with the little time provided.

I sighed unhappily , I was restless , haunted by thoughts of Austin , missed him terribly , needed him by my side more than I needed air to breathe.

And then I felt it .

All the hairs on the back of my neck stood up .

And I knew without turning that he was here.

Austin...was here.

Chapter 17

Emotion swirled deep in his eyes. A mixture of relief , anger and... raw primal l**t. He just stood there for a moment taking me in , his eyes slowly scanning my body from head to toe . My body like always trembled under his hungry gaze.

He looked as though he couldn't believe I stood there right before his eyes and when I thought I would die if he didn't take me into his arms soon , he crossed the field to me , his boots crushing the fallen leaves beneath his feet.

Before I could even fathom what he was doing , his hand gripped my waist ."Lucy." His voice was a deep throaty husky whisper before his lips came down on mine.

My body shook uncontrollably at the emotions racing through my veins at having Austin's lips on mine. He backed me up against the tree , his mouth kissing me with an urgent hunger , kissing me as though he'd die if he didn't get a taste of me. When I felt his e*****n pressed up against me a gasp escaped my mouth at the contact and Austin used that opportunity to stick his tongue down my throat , sucking and tasting , taking all of me with every swipe of his tongue.

He kissed me like a man who's control had slipped and was starving out of control for me , his breathing quick and hard. I broke the k**s so that I could come up for air , Austin didn't stop there as he bent his head and grazed his nose against my throat before leaving soft sweet k****s there, and then my body shook as all coherent thought left my mind as I felt the warm suction of his mouth against my neck .

My body instantly wept for more of him , all of him, every God damn piece. A burning need deep in my belly that melted my insides , making me all warm, wet and needy .

Austin suddenly froze and I whimpered at the lost of contact before he g*****d and buried his head against the crook of my neck.

"f**k baby." He growled. "I can smell your sweet f*****g arousal ."

The wetness between my legs increased at his words , the ache there too much for me to bear. Suddenly , without warning his hands gripped both of my breasts roughly as he gently squeezed.

My body jolted against his in response .

His fingers pulled the straps of my dress down along with my bra almost impatiently as his eyes hungrily took in my exposed breasts.

When he bent his head and begun to suckle on one of my n****e I instantly cried out, my body trembling against his.

With a throaty cry my hands shut to his hair , gripping it tightly and pushed his head tighter against my breast , he increased the pressure of his tongue as his hand reached over to cup my other breast , tentatively squeezing and pulling at the hardened n****e.

"A-Austin." I m****d as I rubbed my lower half against his hardened member .

He moved from my breast as he went back to devour my lips once more ."So sweet ... so f*****g sweet." He g*****d .

And then , like a dash of cold water on my face I suddenly remembered where we were. .

No!

The prosecutor's words replayed in my head , sending me into a panic.

No no no.

He couldn't be here .

I forced myself to pull away from him. "What are you doing here ? " I demanded anxiously, my hands trembling .

Sweat broke out on my forehead as I fought to stay calm.

"What are you—" He started to say.

"No Austin , you have to leave now , you can't be here!" I cried in fear.

He leaned back , his penetrating gaze searching my face , his eyes still clouded with hunger and need.

WHY WASN'T HE GOING!

Just as he was about to say something I heard multiple footsteps getting closer by the second.

"Lucy !" I heard Thane call from a distance .

"I think we gave you way more than enough time to yourself." Marcus added .

My eyes widened as I quickly fixed my straps and moved away from Austin upon hearing my brother's voices.

My body shook with anxiety as my brothers came into view , they all tensed as their eyes settled on Austin next to me. Their gazes turning murderous as they studied the scene in front of them.

"What the f**k is he doing here?" Ermanno demanded .

Austin growled possessively . "I'm taking back what's f*****g mine."

My brothers stiffened at his words . "Like f*****g hell you are." Marcus growled.

"It's about time he learns his f*****g lesson." Thane shouted .

"Guys please—" I started to say but before I could even begin to comprehend what was happening my brothers were already shifting into their wolves.

Luthais shifted into a huge silver grey , Nolan a dark grey , Marcus and Thane a mixture of grey and black, Ermanno the only full black , similar to that of Austin's just slightly lighter.

I watched in horror as Austin did the same , the great black wolf growling aggressively as my brothers advanced on him slowly.

"Please stoppp !" I begged as my brothers begun to circle Austin's wolf.

Ermanno was the first to attack before all of my brothers joined in , I watched in horror as my brothers

all bit into different parts of Austin's wolf , the jet black wolf never once crying out even as he started to bleed. My heart clenched painfully at the nightmare in front of me.

"STOPPP!" I screamed but no one was paying any heed to me except Austin's wolf who glanced in my direction upon hearing my cry , but was quickly distracted when Thane's wolf lunged for his throat. A cry wrenched from my soul. How could I help save Austin from my own brothers? He was powerful but my brothers were also strong and it was five of them against him.

The more they attacked , the more I felt something within me grow stronger , something inside me was fighting to be let loose , fighting to save Austin.

Panic shook me as an internal scream started in my head , drowning out everything else.

The more I saw Austin's wolf bleed , the more the b****d within me boiled , a strange sensation rushing through my veins like energy surging through my entire body and when the first cry escaped the jet black wolf's mouth I completely lost it , lost control of both mind and body as I begun to shake uncontrollably.

My senses suddenly feeling like they were on overload.

I let out a shocked terrified scream as I felt my body begin to change , shifting , becoming something that was no longer human , becoming a ...wolf.

Chapter 18

AUSTIN'S POV:

Motherfucker.

Lucy's brothers were fighting to kill and I couldn't f*****g focus properly with her terrified screams.

Both my wolf and I were desperate to get to her and calm her down , it made us restless seeing her so scared.

I swear if these assholes weren't her brothers I would have ripped them into f*****g shreds already for causing Lucy pain , they didn't even see what their actions were doing to her . I didn't want to seriously injure any of Lucy's brothers , I knew the last thing she would want is something to happen to them and if it meant harming her I just couldn't bring myself to do it. So I forced myself to exercise restraint on my emotions and not fight back. Instead I tried to dodge most of their advances , however it was hard considering it was five of them , her cries didn't make it any easier , it called out to me , every time I heard a sound escape her lips I felt a tug at my heart.

My heart howled in protest as both my wolf and I felt powerless for the first time since our f*****g existence , torn between wanting to get to Lucy and not being able to do so without harming the people she cared about .

It was f*****g torture.

Another one of her screams broke my concentration and once again it was like I had no control over my own body as I quickly glanced over in her direction , my heart clenched at the look on her face , something was wrong and my wolf could sense it but before I could even fathom what was happening one of her f*****g brothers lunged for my throat.

f*****g bastard!

Her scream had caught me off guard as I didn't have time to block the grey-black wolf's attack , his teeth digging into my wolf. A surprised cry escaped me at the unexpected pain.

And that's when it happened , another terrified scream echoed through the forest stronger than the ones before and travelled straight through my veins and made it's way all the way to my heart ...Lucy. My wolf staggered back in shock as she shifted before our eyes into the most beautiful wolf I'd ever laid my eyes on.

A breath taking snow-white wolf with thick glossy fur , everything around me moved in slow motion as I continued to stare at the wolf's beauty in awe ,taking in as much as my mind would let me.

I winced.

f**k.

The distraction had cost me another painful bite yet again from one of her brothers.

And then right before my eyes the white wolf leaped into the air and crashed into the fight , taking one of her brothers down with her. She growled aggressively , letting out a loud howl that shook the trees around us as she attacked another one of her brothers , grabbing onto his fur with her teeth and flinging him towards a tree. Without stopping she proceeded to fling another until all of her brothers stood sprawled out in all different directions , a blank confused look on each of their faces.

She growled once more at them , a warning , letting them know she wouldn't stand down if they proceeded to attack. When none of her brothers made an attempt to move she slowly turned to me , watching me with careful , curious eyes .

Her stance confident and her breathing hard as her penetrating gaze drew me completely in , she stood like that for a while never taking her eyes off my wolf , and then right before our eyes her body dropped to the ground completely lifeless as it shifted back to her human form to reveal a very naked Lucy.

f**k.

My eyes shut to her brothers who were still in their wolf forms and a possessive death threatening growl escaped my wolf as he proceeded to cover Lucy with his body , shielding her from their eyes.

"What have you boys done!" A middle aged woman who shared a strikingly close resemblance to Lucy shouted as she took in the scene in front of her.

Lucy's mother , I silently thought as I watched her reaction.

She was studying Lucy motionless on the ground with frightened eyes before she turned to glare at her sons . "You boys have really done it this time ."

The five wolves bowed their heads in shame at their mother's angry glare.

I didn't leave Lucy's side until her mother returned with blankets to cover up her naked body , she came back with shorts as well since my clothes had been destroyed thanks to the unplanned shifting brought about by her brothers .

After shifting to my human form I quickly made my way back to Lucy's side , I didn't want to be away from her for even a second , especially not while she was unconscious . I dropped to my knees next to her and gently took her into my arms , holding her close.

"Why the f**k is he holding her ?" Thane asked angrily .

I growled , glaring at her brothers as my deadly gaze pierced straight through them , if they thought they could take her from me when she was in this state they could go f**k themselves . That was only happening over my dead body , my patience was already on borderline and I was ready to f*****g kill anything or anyone that separated me from Lucy.

"Don't test me , I'm already tempted to kill every f*****g one of you ." I roared , Lucy in my arms was the only thing preventing me from shifting back into my wolf and letting them feel the full wrath of my

wolf. I held back before only because of Lucy but seeing her like this in my arms was making me lose my grip on my sanity .

"Thane." His mother warned , her voice stern. " Austin is Lucy's husband whether you like it or not , sooner or later you boys are going to have to get along , so I suggest you start to learn to accept it from now. "

Lucy's brothers stiffened at her words but none of them said anything after that and I was grateful for the silence as my main concern was Lucy in my arms .

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LUCY'S POV:

I g****d , my body felt sore all over and I had a killer headache that made it almost impossible to think clearly.

I slowly opened my eyes , blinking a couple of times before studying my surroundings .

The first person that came into view was my mother , her eyes were swollen and it looked as though she were crying .

"M-mom." I croaked .

"Lucy." She whispered , taking my hands in hers.

"What happened ?"

Everything was foggy and I could hardly remember anything.

"You shifted for the first time sweetheart , without any guidance or help from an elderly , since it was your first shift and you immediately got into a fight right after , it strained your body and mind , you have been unconscious for an entire day."

An entire day? I kept feeling like I was forgetting something important but for some reason my memories refused to cooperate with me , my mind completely blank.

A small noise at the back of the room caught my attention , I followed the sound as my gaze fell on two faces I hadn't seen before now , both women were extremely beautiful and were looking at me as if they were deeply concerned about my well being .

Mother followed my gaze and smiled ." They are your sisters ." She informed me. "Come introduce yourselves girls , you've been dying to meet Lucy for the longest while."

They both approached me hesitantly , the one with the blond hair and green eyes was the first to introduce herself . "I'm Eden." She whispered with a warm smile.

"And I'm Isabella ." My next sister introduced herself , unlike Eden , Isabella had shiny black hair similar to my own but her green eyes matched that of Eden's . She also gave me a warm gentle smile that reached her eyes.

I struggled to focus on anything else as something on both of their necks caught my attention , a gasp escaped my mouth in shock as realization of what it was dawned on me . It was the same dragon that was tattooed on my brothers' shoulders , the only difference was that it was located right beneath their ear .

"Why are the tattoos of the signature dragon on your neck and not on your shoulders like our brothers ?" I asked before I could stop myself .

Eden and Isabella gave each other knowing looks before turning back to me ." I'll let Eden explain this one." Isabella announced taking a seat on one of the chairs to the side of me.

"Do you know what a mate is ?" Eden asked .

A mate?

"Judging by your blank expression I'll say it's safe to say you don't know." She concluded before continuing . " Every werewolf is given at least one mate , their other half . It's usually very easy for a wolf to know his/her mate as he/she can sense it immediately , you crave being around the person all the time . In some cases your wolf even screams mate when you've found them , nothing seems to matter as much anymore but keeping your mate safely by your side , you simply live and breathe for that person after you find them , the feeling is quite intense and very hard to miss ."

"What does this have to do with the dragon being on your neck ?" I inquired , the explanation making me more confused than before .

Eden sighed running her fingers lightly over the tattoo . "This is usually where your mate marks you to signify that he has accepted you as his , completing the mating ritual . Since Isabella and I belong to the council , we are not allowed to have mates as we are already promised to someone else . The women who belong to the council are married off solely for the purpose of forming alliances that could benefit the council . "

My entire body shivered at her words . "What if you end up finding your mate , what happens then ?" Eden stiffened at my question. "If he is out there , I pray that I never find him for it would only bring pain to us both , as we could never be together . "

"That's horrible !" I cried . " Surely there is some way to get out of this , what if you refuse to give up your mate to marry another?"

Eden's pretty eyes were sad before she answered . "It means death for both of us if I ever refused ." Death?

My eyes swept over to Isabella now , she wore a similar expression on her face . My sisters were both living a horrible life in this hell hole . My gaze continued to travel to my mother , she looked helpless and devastated , it broke my heart to see them this way .

An uncomfortable silence fell amongst us as they waited for me to come to terms with everything they just told me , Isabella the first to break the silence . " Enough about our sad lives , this should be a happy reunion , I'm so happy to have you within arm's reach Lucy , our family feels like it is complete once again."

"We've felt like a piece of us have been missing our entire lives without you ."Eden confessed . " I'm also so very happy that you're finally here ."

I felt my heart warm at their sweet words , they weren't even aware of how much their beautiful words affected me . It felt like the ice I'd had around my heart for the family that had abandoned me shattered upon meeting them .

I returned both of their smiles . "I didn't even know I had sisters , in fact if our brothers hadn't come to find me at –"

My words trailed off at the reminder of my brothers coming to find me at King Jeremy's castle.

Memories flashed before my eyes as everything flowed back to me all at once .

I instantly paled as my body begun to shake uncontrollably .

Austin!

The fight between Austin and my brothers !

My God.

I rose up instantly and winced as the headache and soreness of my body forced me to lie back down.

"What's the matter ?" My mother asked in a worried tone as she tried to get me to sit still.

"Where is Austin ? " I demanded , trying my best not to freak out . " Is he okay?"

Everyone in the room stiffened at my question making me more anxious than I already was . Did something happen to him ? Why wasn't anyone saying anything ?

" His wounds from the fight are already halfway healed ." Mother started.

I sighed and leaned back as relief flooded through me , instantly calming my racing heart.

"But-"

Why was there a but ?

My eyes snapped back up to my mother's waiting impatiently for her to continue .

"The council requested his presence . "

I froze .

"What?" I asked completely shaken at her words.

My worst nightmare was coming true .

" The fight in the woods between Austin and your brothers alerted the council of his presence and so they wanted to have a few words with him while he was here ."

"About what ?"

Mother gave me a sympathetic look . "I have no idea Lucy but your father and brothers went along with him to make sure the meeting went smoothly and to ensure that no one gets hurt. "

How would that make me feel any better considering my brothers had literally just tried to kill Austin in the woods right in front of me despite all of my protests and screams ... and my father , the man seemed like he didn't give a care in the world about me , why would he care about Austin?

I needed to get to that meeting immediately , my sanity depended on it.

Chapter 19

AUSTIN'S POV:

Hell.

The perfect word to describe the insides of the council's dark palace. It was so cold that even my inhumane warm body temperature wasn't enough to keep me warm , it reeked of evil and dark magic from all directions ,in fact every f*****g corner you turned there was something that reminded you of just how cruel the council really was . From the creepy frozen statues that seemed very much alive to the slaughtered heads they kept hung up on the walls as souvenirs from battles they had won , even down to their f*****g weird paintings .

f**k.

Lucy's brothers along with her father led me through a room filled with deadly weapons and down a hallway , no one had spoken a single word to me . The tension in the air was at it's peak , even my own body which was usually calm under most situations as long as it didn't involve Lucy was buzzing with tension now , considering what was about to go down in a few minutes . The council members had called for me , demanding that I meet with them. I had absolutely no idea what the meeting concerned and unfortunately I wasn't in the position to refuse their request.

Even though I wanted to take Lucy and leave without meeting these psychos , I wasn't f*****g stupid , the council wasn't a force you could easily say no to , they played by there own f*****g rules and unless

you had a death wish , you did as they asked of you . I also didn't want to put the lives of both my brother's pack and mine at risk unless I really needed it , they would be my last resort . If there was a possibility that I could leave this hell hole without bringing them into it , I would gladly take it. My thoughts eventually died down as my eyes fell on what I assumed was one of the council members . "Prosecutor ." Alpha Richard greeted the man with a bow as Lucy's brothers repeated his actions . I quirked a brow at his expectant gaze , surely he didn't expect me to bow to him as well ? When I made no movement to bow before him he motioned for me to come closer . The prosecutor's eyes held a hint of interest as he continued to study me in silence as I stepped closer to him. " You look a bit different from what I expected the leader of the most powerful pack to look like." "Sorry to disappoint . "I apologized dryly , what the f**k did he expect me to look like , was he looking for two horns on the sides of my head? The prosecutor scratched his chin . "Well let's have some introductions going , shall we." He announced motioning for me to join him in another room where a few members were already waiting. My eyes scanned the room slowly , taking in all the curious stares . "This is Sir Vincent , the council's representative for vampires ." The vampire stretched out his hand for a handshake and I warily accepted it , his ice cold hand gripped mine tighter as he tried to intimidate me with his dark stare , something vampires' enjoyed doing since they had the ability to terrorize someone with just a simple look from their soul sucking eyes. When I didn't budge he seemed pleasantly surprised that it had no effect on me . I moved on to the younger man besides Vincent , he had a close resemblance to the vampire and I knew who he was before the Prosecutor introduced him. "This is Vincent's pride and joy , his son Draven ." The boy gave a small nod but unlike his father didn't extend his hand for a handshake , his face held a hint of arrogance as he watched me . "And this is Cassandra , the council's representative for witches ." Power radiated off the witch in great waves , her eyes a deep brown with gold flecks were studying me with interest , watching me like a hawk watched it's next prey. "Unfortunately the rest of the council members aren't here , they've been sent off to deal with a little trouble we've been having and wouldn't be back until after a few days." The prosecutor said with a hint of disappointment latched onto his voice. "Since you already know Alpha Richard , our main representative for werewolves , I'm sure you don't need any introductions ." He concluded . Lucy's father's face was void of emotion , giving nothing away of how he really felt about the events unfolding before his eyes. "Well let's not beat around the bush anymore and talk about what we really invited you to this meeting for ." He continued when I chose to remain quiet. "As I'm sure you already know , you've made quite a name for yourself Alpha Austin . Both the highs and lows in our society have at least heard of your name . From the powerful Alpha who wiped out an entire pack by himself when the pack members had tried to rape his little sister to the Alpha that defeated one of the world's most dangerous vampires ." I stiffened at the reminder of Maya almost getting rape , it still made me furious to this day , if I could kill those motherfuckers again I would gladly do it in the blink of an eye . "I'll say you and your pack deserve your title , have worked for it and that's the kind of passion and

devotion we look for in this council . We only keep the strongest amongst our group , in fact we only WANT the strongest , only the best work for us as I'm sure you're already aware off since you're not the only one who's made a name for yourself as we also have made a name for ourselves ."

Was he seriously comparing his sick council to my pack ? We fought for what was right , the council didn't give a f**k about right or wrong , all they cared about was power.

" With that being said , we would like to give you an official invitation to join the council. " He offered . Complete silence fell amongst us upon his words , my brain refusing to believe he just spoke those words to me.

He couldn't be f*****g serious .

Why the f**k would I ever join this sick place ?

Alpha Richard along with his sons stiffened at the prosecutor's words , each of them giving each other shocked looks .

"I have no interest joining the council now or ever." I answered without a second thought .

"I see." He responded dryly with his face void of any emotion , his tightened fist to his side was the only thing that gave away his anger at my response to his offer . " That's too bad , you just gave up a very goo--"

His words were cut off by the sudden opening of the door to the right of me , the main entrance . My entire body stiffened at who I saw walk in next , all the b***d draining from my face.
f**k me.

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LUCY'S POV:

I felt sick to my stomach .

This place gave me the creeps and it didn't help that I was already desperate to find Austin. Eden and Isabella had finally agreed to let me in the meeting with Austin and the council members after I'd threatened to go by myself .

I took a deep breath before opening the large door before me and walked inside with my sisters by my side , my feet stopping in it's track at all the creepy stares sent in my direction .

My father looked like he wanted to murder my sisters for letting me in , while my brothers gave me a look that said 'are you f*****g serious' . Austin on the other hand looked like he'd just seen a ghost .

"Is that the lovely Lucy you've been telling us about prosecutor ?" One of the members asked as his eyes looked me over , making me uncomfortable under his creepy gaze .

"She would make me the perfect bride father ." His son admitted with l**t filled eyes .

Before anyone could fathom what was happening Austin grabbed the boy by his neck and shoved him up against the wall . "She's f*****g mine vampire ."He warned .

Vincent hissed and with inhumane speed he was besides Austin within seconds , to my horror he grabbed onto Austin's neck , squeezing tightly . "Let go of my f*****g son ."

Austin didn't budge , in fact he seemed unaffected by the vampire's hold on his neck as he continued to tighten his own hold on the boy's neck giving him a death glare .

"Now there is no need for any violence right now , I've just finished furnishing the insides of this beautiful place , let's not destroy it in one day ."

The prosecutor started to say , to my relief Vincent immediately let go of Austin at his words , which again proved how much authority this man had within the council .

"Say it ...say she's f*****g mine ."Austin growled , refusing to let go of the boy who was turning more pale than he already was with each passing second.

"She's y-yours ." The boy choked out , a few seconds later Austin finally let go of him . He turned to glare at all the other members in the room as if to emphasize his point that I belonged to him and no one else .

"Well I for one think we need some drinks shared after this little incident ." The prosecutor announced with a chuckle , it seemed as though he enjoyed what just occurred , almost as though it brought him excitement , that man was sick in his head.

"Eden ." He called . " Go serve us some wine ."

Eden nodded . "Yes prosecutor ." She said as she quickly obeyed his words and rushed out the room.

"So where were we—"The prosecutor started before a loud knock interrupted him ."Are you f*****g serious ?" He asked , clearly unhappy about being disrupted.

"COME IN!" He shouted in an irritated tone.

My eyes widened in shock and horror as a few guards walked in dragging James along with them . It seemed like one guard alone wasn't enough to hold him down as they even struggled to drag him in now . Long , heavy chains travelled from his tied hands behind his back straight up to his neck . He was bleeding from head to toe , his body full of deep nasty wounds , the b***d was dripping onto the floor , tainting it. His breathing was hard as his gaze went to Austin's as if to apologize for getting caught , my heart ached at the look he gave him. If I was feeling this way at seeing James like this , I couldn't even imagine what it felt like for Austin to see his brother in such a state.

"We caught this one lurking around the castle ." One of the guards finally spoke , pulling at the chains once more so that James fell forward.

Austin stiffened besides me . "Get those f*****g chains off him !"

The prosecutor rose a dark brow at Austin . "I presume you know this intruder ."

Austin's dark gaze pierced through the prosecutor , I could practically feel the anger radiating off his body ."He's my brother ."

"Ah I see ." The prosecutor said taking a step closer to James . "As far as I know you have two brothers ."He continued as he placed a finger under James chin forcing him to look him straight in the eye . "What's your name ?"

James spat b***d at his face . The guards pulled harder at the chains at his sign of disrespect , I winced unable to imagine the kind of pain he was in.

"His name is James ." I answered frantically when it seemed like James wasn't going to answer them anytime soon , I just couldn't stand to see him in pain , couldn't see them torturing him with the chains . James looked like he rather died than speak a single word to the members of the council , his lips were set in a straight line and he had a murderous expression on his face.

"Alpha of the Moonlight Shadow Pack ." The prosecutor said , his eyes regarding James with interest now . "Like your brother's pack , we've also heard a lot about yours , the third most powerful pack ever known with a lot of similar stories to that of Austin's ."

James remained silent , his eyes narrowed .

"We have two of the world's most powerful Alphas' in our company today ... interesting ." The only female member of the council finally commented .

A door opened providing us with a distraction and a few seconds later Eden walked in with the glasses

filled with wine on a tray , her eyes taking in the scene in front of her , they travelled from my horror struck face to Austin's deadly pissed off one and finally fell on James on the ground.

I watched the terrified look on her face as her eyes widened , James looked up in her direction as if sensing her eyes on him and as soon as his gaze fell on her , a loud possessive growl escaped his mouth as he pulled at the chains aggressively as if to get to her. A mighty roar escaped his mouth when he realized he couldn't break the chains . Eden gasped and the tray fell from her hands , crashing to the floor.

What the hell was happening ?

Chapter 20

When James continued to roar and thrash against the chains almost desperately , the guards took out a long whip and before any one of us could react lashed it against his bare back .

I winced at the loud sound it made upon contact as more b***d flowed from his body , the stifled gasp that came from Eden caught my attention as my gaze snapped back up to her . My breath hitched at what I saw there .

She looked as though she'd seen a ghost and as if her mind had suddenly caught up to the scene in front of her , a loud terrified scream escaped her mouth as she all but ran to James side . "STOP ITTTT !" She cried throwing herself on top of him to stop the onslaughts .

I stood completely dumbfounded at her response , she acted like someone who had known James her entire life and couldn't bear to see him in any pain .But I was sure Eden hadn't seen James before , so none of this was making any sense to me . Even the guards had stopped there torture , unsure of what to do next.

"Somebody get these chains off him !" She screamed .

Everyone in the room remained completely still at her reaction , no one moved , not a single soul said a word .

Austin was frozen like a statue besides me , my brothers looked like it was suddenly the end of the world , father seemed like he was on the verge of collapsing ... and the prosecutor , for once he didn't seem calm and collected . His face twisting into an ugly expression , I came to the sudden conclusion that I hated this look far more than I did his creepy happy one.

What was I missing here ? For everyone seemed like they knew something I didn't and whatever it was , wasn't any good as no one in the room was happy about it . In fact , it seemed as though it was bad news for every single person present in the room now .

"Eden !" Father shouted , finally breaking the silence and shattering the invisible ice within the room. "Get out of here NOW!"

Eden trembled at father's words . "Father—" She whispered , giving him a helpless look , refusing to move from James's side .

His eyes narrowed into one of those dark looks he usually gave to my brothers ."NOW!" He roared as the palace windows shook at the power that radiated off the terrifying sound.

A loud menacing growl tore from James at my father's tone . Eden climbed to her feet and ran out the room without speaking another word . James watched her go with a pained look before pulling aggressively at the chains once more , the guards struggling to keep him under their control . In fact , if

he continued with his actions there was a high chance he would break free and no one could predict what would happen from there , especially with the rage bottled up inside of him now . His breathing was hard , b***d leaking from his forehead down his eyes , giving an illusion of bloody tears as it continued down his face .

"You better control your brother ." The prosecutor warned as he turned to Austin . "If you don't , we will ." He threatened . The deadly look in his eyes alone spoke volumes on what that threat meant . Austin stiffened once more , not pleased at the unmistakable threat towards his brother . " Get these f*****g chains off him first ."

The guards looked at the prosecutor for confirmation and after a few seconds he nodded .

James sprang up from the ground instantly , b***d dripping onto the floor as he glared at the prosecutor .Before he could say anything however Austin was in front of him in seconds . "Let's talk outside brother ." He insisted placing a hand on James's shoulder .

James reluctantly moved his angry gaze from the prosecutor and aimed it towards Austin , his eyes softening a little at the look Austin gave him. His breathing slowed and it became clear that he was trying hard to gain control of his body once more . After a few minutes he finally nodded his head and motioned for Austin to lead the way.

The tension in Austin's body seemed to lessen a little , that is until his gaze settled on the vampire a little distance away from us , he was in front of Draven in the blink of an eye , growling aggressively at him . " I don't want Lucy in the same room as this bastard when I'm not around." He snapped , glaring at him.

"Isabella ." The prosecutor ordered . " Take Lucy to see Eden , we have more important matters to discuss and I don't want any disturbances ."

Isabella nodded ." Yes Prosecutor ." She obeyed taking my hand in hers and leading me out the room. I looked over my shoulders and caught Austin's eyes on me , the look there making my body tremble , something I would never get used to. I continued to stare into his eyes , trapped by his hungry gaze , unable to look away for even a second , it was only when the doors closed behind us and I had no choice but to look the other way did I finally stop.

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AUSTIN'S POV:

James was tense besides me , in fact it was the first time I had ever seen him like this , he was usually calm and collected even under stressful conditions . But this was expected , something that couldn't be controlled .

"I know . " I told him before he could say anything . " I know she's your mate brother ."

It was also the first time I'd ever seen him this helpless and out of control , it looked as though he had absolutely no control over his feelings now , I could see the battle in his eyes as he battled between what was the sane thing to do and taking what belonged to him.

It was a werewolf's natural nature to want what belonged to him , your mate gave you a reason to live , a reason to fight , now that James had found his mate , it was only normal for him to want her by his side , the need to claim her as his own would be strong , the need which was almost impossible to ignore was enough to drive any sane person mad .

A raw insatiable need.

A need that I felt whenever I was around Lucy , who was I f*****g kidding , it was there even when she

wasn't near .

f**k.

Even now with everything going on around us I still had a soul shattering need to claim her in every f*****g way possible. A need to mark her , a need to let every f*****g person know that she was f*****g mine , MINE. I almost murdered that vampire's son in cold b***d when he suggested to make Lucy his bride , I still felt like ripping him apart now .

I shook the thought out of my head , what the f**k was wrong with me ? I had more important matters at hand . Like the fact that my brother's mate happened to be the worst possible pick ever , as I watched him now I could see the strain it put on his body having Eden so near and not being able to claim her .

In this case however , it wasn't possible for the claim to happen ,especially not now , this was the worst possible time for James to try to claim his mate , she belonged to the council , by right she was their property and there wasn't much we could do without starting a war . A war that I couldn't possibly start when Lucy was around , her safety mattered to me more than anything else . The thought of her in danger made my gut twist and my heart clench painfully .

No , I couldn't bring any danger to Lucy. Not now , not ever .

"Leave . You must leave brother ."

James eyes snapped up to mine at my words , he looked like that was the last thing he expected me to say.

"No." He replied almost instantly ,in a flat tone .

"James ." I pressed . " We have too much at stake right now , Eden belongs to the council , if we plan on taking her from here it would require a lot of planning . If you leave now the council wouldn't feel as threatened , we could take them by surprise another time . "

He still didn't look convinced .

"Taking her from the council now is a great risk you'll be taking brother , think about it , if we lose the battle Eden would be the one to be harmed by the council with the worst punishment being death , the best and smartest decision is to leave ."

James stiffened at my words , his body motionless and I could tell those words did the trick at convincing him to leave.

He shook his head . " What about you ? How can I leave you here with Lucy ?"

It would be a risk letting James leave , but I also couldn't take the chance of having him here when Eden was around , the smallest thing could flip him off , after seeing his reaction from earlier there was no way I could have James anywhere around Eden. If James started a fight , things could go south quickly , I could end up losing both my brother and Lucy.

No.

He had to leave.

" I'll be okay ." I promised , it wasn't the first time I was placed in a difficult situation by myself . " If you still have doubts about our safety , you could remain with Lucas and stay back with the packs ." I suggested .

I could see him battling with himself as he fought to comply with my words , obviously not wanting to leave when there was so much at risk . I saw the moment he finally gave up , not finding any other better solution . James was the type who looked at all possible outcomes of a situation , he was always

the one to think rationally . But this time I knew that this was the most difficult situation he has ever been faced with , since it involved none other than his mate.

"James . "I said , catching his attention once more . " Do not return unless you hear my signal. "

He swallowed but eventually nodded . " I give you my word brother . "

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LUCY'S POV :

"What's happening ?" I asked alarmed .

Eden was on the ground in tears , looking completely lost and broken . My heart ached at the sight before me , both Isabella and mother were trying to comfort her .

"James is her mate ." Isabella answered , wiping Eden's tears .

My eyes widened in horror . Everything Eden and Isabella had told me before replayed in my head now ... Eden and James could never be together and if they chose to disobey the council , it meant death for them both .

No.

This couldn't be happening .

"What's going to happen now ?" I demanded , my hands shaking .

"There is nothing we can do ." Mother answered in a broken tone . "We can only hope James leaves this alone , if he tries to fight for Eden it would only make things worst for everyone ."

Eden's eyes widened in horror, pulling away from mother's embrace as if a switch had suddenly come on upon the mention of James fighting for her .

"I just want to see him at least once ." She cried ,climbing to her feet . "I need to see him."

Mother and Isabella blocked her way immediately . " You know you can't do that Eden." Isabella stopped her . "Did you see what happened in there a few minutes ago ? They were torturing James , if you went to meet him now things would only get worst , he can lose his life ."

That seemed like enough to stop Eden in her tracks , her face went pale as she dropped to the floor once more with a defeated look.

I dropped to my knees in front of her and gently took her into my arms , not saying a word for I knew there wasn't anything I could possibly say to make this any better. She held onto me as she continued to sob uncontrollably .

Nothing.

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Sir Vincent's POV:

Everyone was silent after the meeting , things had taken a completely different turn.

The prosecutor's usually calm demeanor was tensed now , a sight that was very rare to see . " We may have a problem . " He admitted . " That Alpha James is Eden's mate , if it were any other normal werewolf everything would have went smoothly but he's a powerful Alpha along with his brother . Both of their packs together could be fatal to us ."

I saw where the prosecutor was coming from , James and his brother Austin were powerful and posed a threat to our original plans with Eden .That is , if James decided to fight for her , which judging from the scene today was more than likely to happen.

"She's already promised to Hunter ." Alpha Richard pointed out . "That's all that matters ."

The tension in the room only increased at the mention of Hunter.

Hunter.

The heartless monster . After his mate was murdered right before his eyes , the alpha had turned dark , he became one of the most feared killers in the supernatural world , in fact, he was one of the council's most important clients .

Richard's words surprised me , did he really not care that James was his daughter's mate ? Would he really rather she got married off to that killer Hunter ? Or was it just an act , to get on the prosecutor's good side . I wasn't sure , Richard was never easy to read , it always annoyed me that I couldn't read the wolf , now more than ever .

"James isn't going to just let his mate go , any Alpha with that power would fight till death for his mate , what we saw in the meeting room was only just the beginning ." The prosecutor pointed out stiffly . "We have to inform Hunter that his bride is ready for the claiming , he needs to claim her before James can ."

"And if James does so before Hunter ?"

The prosecutor's gaze snapped to mine angrily . "No such thing could ever happen , you know Hunter , he's a brutal killer , if he doesn't get his promised bride we could lose his alliance with us and even worse become one of his enemies , it's not a risk I'm willing to take ." He snapped . " I don't care what we have to do , Eden belongs to Hunter and that's the only person allowed to claim her ."

" But can we really stop James and Austin ? " Cassandra asked with a wicked glint in her eyes as she proceeded to make herself comfortable on the cushions , the witch enjoyed these kind of events , it excited her more than any man in her life ever could . " I mean just look at how Austin attacked Draven today, not a care in the world that he was in the presence of the council ... and James , you saw how many of our best guards were needed to keep him at bay . If you ask me , they're even stronger than we originally thought ." She continued , as she intentionally directed her words to me , knowing just how much it would piss me off . Something the b****h enjoyed doing .

The sudden reminder of what that f*****g a*****e tried to do earlier had my temper rising , threatening to explode .

The prosecutor turned to study me as if sensing the sudden change in my mood.I knew what he was going to say before he even opened his mouth .

"Don't let your rage ruin my plans." He warned , his usually calm gaze turning to stone as he glared at me . "You will do as I say , do not interfere with Austin .I know you have a rage after what he did but I may need the alliance of that wolf in the future . So leave it alone ."

"Am I clear Vincent ?" He snarled in his deadly tone when I refused to make any comments on the matter.

We had enough power and connections , we could survive without one f*****g Alpha.

"Yes prosecutor ." I forced myself to say.

"Good. "

I quietly waited for everyone to leave the meeting room before calling for John. The vampire watched me with curious eyes upon entering . " You called ?"

" Who the f**k does he think he is ?" I roared pelting a glass against the wall. "Attacking my own son in front of my very eyes , he must have a f*****g death wish."

John quirked a brow . "I'm guessing I missed out on all the fun ." He concluded ."Who are we speaking about."

"Alpha Austin Lance Vinci." His name slipped from my mouth like venom. I hated that fucker .

The servant rushed to pick up the broken pieces of the shattered glass , shivering at my rage . John's eyes widened upon the mention of the Alpha's name , a reaction most people had upon hearing his name , my rage intensified further .

" Well he is the most powerful Alpha—"

"I don't care who the f**k he is , he disrespected us the moment he placed his filthy hands on my boy." I shouted , glaring at John.

John was my closest in command , the vampire handled most of the council's assassinations along with The Cross brothers . He was studying me now , sensing just how much the incident from today affected me .

He gave me a knowing look , his gaze darkening ." What do you want me to do ?"

I thought about his question for a moment , the answer right there in front of me . What could possibly hurt the Alpha , bring him the most pain in the worst way possible ?

I smiled . " Hit him where it hurts the most ... his wife Lucy."

Chapter 21

LUCY'S POV:

I sighed , dropping myself onto the bed . I'd spent the entire day trying to comfort Eden but nothing Isabella or I did was enough to make her feel better. After hours of nonstop crying we had finally gotten her to fall asleep . Right after mother had insisted I get some rest as well and so she had assigned me to this room for the remaining of my stay here .

I hadn't heard or seen Austin ever since the meeting with the council members , it had me restless , I had no idea where he was or what happened with James . I desperately wanted to see him , wanted him near me , wanted to ensure that he was safe .

Footsteps outside the door caught my attention as the room door swung open.

"We need to talk." Ermanno announced upon entering the room. Under his eyes were dark and he looked like he'd been through hell for the past hours .

I rose up immediately . "What's wrong ?" I asked studying his tensed frame .

What wasn't wrong was the question that should have been asked however , for everything seemed to be going in the wrong direction at this point .

"Come with me ." He ordered .

I didn't waste any time as I quietly followed my brother down the narrow hallway and into another room where the rest of my brothers stood waiting . My eyes immediately connected with deep blue eyes that seeped straight through me ... Austin.

What was he doing here ?

Did I miss something?

They were in the same room together and no one killed each other yet ?

"Lucy. " Marcus started . " First of all , we owe you an apology . Father was right , just like always we acted without f*****g thinking and made a big mess out of everything ."

"We want to help fix things ." Luthais added . " We would provide a distraction for you and Austin to leave ."

My brows furrowed at their words . Wouldn't this put them in danger for having any part in our escape ? I saw how brutal and heartless the council was , I didn't want to put my brothers in any kind of danger because of me .

"Don't worry ,we will handle everything from here ." Nolan cut in as he took in my expression , almost as if he read my mind . " The council is brutal but we are beneficial to them , they wouldn't give us any punishment we couldn't handle ."

Austin was leaned up against the wall , his gaze burning into my skin , he hadn't taken his eyes off me since I'd stepped into the room and it was doing crazy things to my body.

I tried hard to focus on my brothers' next words but he was making it very difficult to concentrate , he made it seem as though we were the only two in the room , like he didn't care for anyone else's presence but mine .

"Lucy ." Ermanno called catching my attention . " Tonight you are to meet Austin in front of the statue of the dragon , I would already be there waiting for you . I can get you both out of here without being spotted by any of the guards ."

When all of my brothers had finished planning our escape , Ermanno quietly turned to Austin with a pleading look . " Please keep my sister safe , we're leaving her life in your hands ."

Austin gave a slow nod . " She is safe with me ... I give you my word ." He promised .

I stared at all the men in the room with a blank expression clouding my face .

What exactly happened while I wasn't here ? Suddenly they seemed like they didn't hate each other anymore , what caused the sudden change ?

"Lucy. " Ermanno said my name with a sad smile . " Once again we would like to offer our deepest apologies for bringing you into this mess , we hope you can forgive us one day . We never meant for all of this to happen , we just wanted to bring our sister home and see her happy and safe amongst her family ."

"Don't apologize . " I cried walking into their embrace as they all held me in a warm hug . " It means the world to me that you wanted me near you so much that you took this big risk , nothing else matters but that you did it out of your love for me ..Nothing ."

A low growl tore from Austin behind us , forcing us to break away.

"Are you f*****g serious ?" Thane grunted . "We're her brothers , not some random stranger trying to grope her."

I hid my blush as a scowl formed on Austin's face .

As I scanned the room looking at the grin on each of my brother's faces at Austin's expression , I instantly knew that I was going to miss all of them dearly .

.....

I turned to Eden , her eyes were still swollen from all of the crying but she still managed to give me a small sad smile . " I'm so happy to have been given this precious time with you Lucy , I would treasure it till I get to see you again ."

I returned her sad smile . " I wouldn't trade us meeting for anything in the world , please take care of yourself ."

Isabella took my hands in hers . " Sister , you truly have shone light into our lives with this one visit , nothing compares to the happiness we felt having you by our side . We love you so very much and always will."

"Thank you for your sweet words Isabella ." I whispered wiping the tears on her cheeks .

I swallowed , unsure of how to say goodbye to my mother , she didn't look okay , in fact she looked as though she would faint any minute now . "I don't know why Lucy but this goodbye is even more difficult than the first ... It's selfish of me but I wish there was some way you could stay here ." She cried pulling me into her arms . " I love you my beautiful daughter , you're everything I always knew you would be and much more ... I'm so proud of you ." She whispered as I felt her tears drop onto my shoulders . I held her closely as she continued to sob.

"Nothing in this entire world could have made me happier than getting to see you after so many years ." I whispered , my eyes brimming brightly with unshed tears . " Please take care of yourselves and know that I love all of you more than anything ."

As she let go of me , I turned to scan my surroundings once again , have been doing so for the past twenty minutes .

My father was nowhere to be found , apparently he didn't even care to say goodbye to me . It hurt but at least I was given the love of everyone else in my family , that is all that should matter . It just didn't feel complete without him being here , he hadn't spoken a word to me since my arrival and it seemed like I would also leave this place without hearing anything from him. It hurt.

I held in the tears that threatened to fall , I didn't want to say goodbye to my family , the little time spent with them filled a part of me that I didn't even know was missing , I didn't want to lose them once again . Wished there was some way I could take them back with me , wished there was a way they could be close friends with Austin's family once again.

If only it were possible , but I knew as long as the council was involved , those dreams would never come true .

.....

The knock on the door caught me by surprise , I wasn't supposed to meet Austin until the next hour , so who could be at the door?

My feet started to move of their own accord , hoping that it was indeed Austin coming to greet me instead of I having to meet him by the statue .

I opened the door to come face to face with a very tall muscular man with scary dark brown eyes that seemed to see straight through my soul .

I shivered.

Vampire.

I hadn't seen him around before and for some reason he gave me the chills .

"Lucy ?" He asked .

As soon as I nodded I instantly regretted it as a creepy smile formed on the vampire's face , he quietly closed the door behind him , never taking his eyes off my face .

My heart sped up as my nerves exploded .

"What are you—"

I didn't get to finish as he grabbed me and shoved a cloth over my face , covering both my nose and mouth. I struggled against his hold , my feet hitting against the table next to me as it crashed to the floor , throwing other appliances down with it . I continued to fight against his hold , trashing from side to side and throwing down other things in the process . A whimper escaped my mouth , my cries muffled against the cloth as I fought to be free. Nothing worked however , the vampire was too strong

for me .
My mind crying out to Austin was the last thing I remembered before darkness completely engulfed me .

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AUSTIN'S POV:

Where the f**k was she ?

My wolf was on alert , even he sensed that something was wrong . Lucy was supposed to meet me over twenty minutes now , we were scheduled to be out the palace by now but there was no sign of her anywhere . I'd searched the entire arena but got nothing , not even her sweet f*****g scent was anywhere around.

There was only one place I hadn't searched yet and was heading there now , my feet pounding against the floor impatiently .

I pivoted and made my way into the room she was supposed to be staying in , my heart rate accelerating at what I saw . The room was in a f*****g mess , showing clear signs that someone had put up a strong fight . What the f**k happened in here ?

I continued to scan the room anxiously , searching for anything that could possibly give me clues on what happened . Something folded neatly on the bed caught my attention ... a note . I grabbed the small piece of paper and impatiently unfolded it , my heart turning to stone at the words written there in black ink.

' Come to the northern woods , near the cliff , we have Lucy . Do not come in your wolf form or we harm the girl.'

Sweat broke out on my forehead . Fury lashed through me like a whip as the words sunk into my brain , panic overtaking my entire body in strong waves made it difficult for me to breathe .

I struggled to keep a clear mind as I rushed out of the room , crashing into everything that was in my way , I had to get to her , had to get to my Lucy... before it was too late.

Chapter 22

I struggled to control my wolf as I rushed through the woods , running as fast as my body would let me . He was fighting to be let loose , fighting to reach Lucy , needed to see to her safety just as desperately as I did .As my feet neared the cliff , I could hear the violent waves crashing against it's base almost violently , the water mimicking the sound of my own heart as it viciously beat against my chest in fear of Lucy's safety .

I used my keen sense of hearing to drown out the sound of the water and focus for any other noises that could point me in the direction of Lucy. My throat tightened as I fought to catch my breath while I continued to search for her , when the first sound of her cry hit my ear I felt my feet stumble forward , fear racing through my veins , consuming and swallowing me whole .

Where the f**k were they?

I channeled all my energy on focusing on her as I began running faster than I ever did in my entire f*****g life . My feet only stopping when I spotted her . Her eyes were wide open , terror struck as Vincent held her roughly by her hair , they were surrounded by five other vampires . All eyes snapped up to me , sensing my presence . Their stances immediately turned defensive as the vampires hissed at

me aggressively , Lucy followed their gazes and the fear in her eyes doubled as her gaze landed on me , I could literally feel the fear radiating off her body in great waves .

Vincent pulled harder on Lucy's hair and she cried out at the pain .

I saw red at the burning rage inside of me as I started in their direction. I wanted to kill the f*****g vampire , needed to see b***d leaking from his body , needed it more than I needed f*****g air to breathe , when he was motionless before me , only then would I be satisfied .

"Don't come any closer ." Vincent warned as he held a syringe against Lucy's neck.

I froze.

What the f**k was that thing?

"You know " He started . "I was wondering when would be the perfect opportunity to test out this little invention of ours . It's supposed to poison the heart upon contact , it takes literally seconds before the poison overtakes your system , whether you be human or a supernatural being . If you decide to take another step I'll be happy to test it out on your beloved Lucy."He threatened and as if to emphasize his words applied more pressure against her neck.

My body stood motionless , completely paralyzed at his words . My eyes never taking itself off the needle straining against Lucy's neck.

"What do you want me to do?" I asked , unable to hide the desperation from my voice . The longer he held the needle against her neck , the harder it became to breathe .

How the f**k could I reach her in time before he could inject the poison into her system ?

"I would do anything you ask of me . " I added when he refused to answer my question .

Vincent chuckled . " I like the sound of that , the great mighty Alpha agreeing to my every terms ."

"I bet you're wondering why I asked you not to come in your wolf form ... It's quite disappointing and an embarrassment really , a dent to our pride that you would think we wouldn't notice the presence of two powerful packs within our territory . I mean the witch's spell was good but it wouldn't have taken a genius to know you wouldn't come to the council alone without any back up ." He pointed out . "And how else would you have let your pack know you were in trouble unless you sent a mind link to them or let out your signal howl . Don't even bother trying to mind link , it wouldn't work , Cassandra has bounded the entire island with her spell , meaning your mind link wouldn't reach beyond the island ."

I stiffened at his words , all the b***d rushing out of my face.

" Yes Austin , we know that your pack as well as your brother's is here and we know exactly where they are hidden as well. "He confessed with a smile . " In fact , right after we're finished with you here , we plan on paying them a little visit . I mean after all they came all the way here , how can we let them leave without a proper welcoming to the council ?"

f**k.

The packs were in danger and I had no way of informing them .

When I said nothing he continued further . " To answer your earlier question , I would like you to stand down and let these friendly vampires attack you . The minute you retaliate and fight back , Lucy gets the poison injected straight into her system ."

I stiffened as I heard Lucy's small gasp at his words .

I saw her terrified gaze as the five vampires approached me with a smirk on their faces , the f*****g vampires were having fun , it didn't help that Vincent seemed to have chosen the very best of his kind for the fight either .

When the first one grabbed me by my throat Lucy screamed , her voice which echoed through the quiet forest made it's way all the way to my heart .

f**k!

I already knew that the most difficult part of this attack would be hearing Lucy's screams , none of the pain compared to what I felt hearing her terrified cries , it f*****g undid me in the worst way possible . I swallowed as I fought to not make a single sound at all the pain the f*****g vampires brought to my body , I couldn't frighten Lucy further ... no , I had to fight the pain and suppress my tortured cries , for her sake I had to.

.....

Lucy's POV :

I didn't know how to help Austin , I kept trying for my wolf to resurface like last time but for some reason she wasn't rising .

DAMN IT! HOW DOES THIS THING EVEN WORK!

I watched in horror as the five vampires attacked him the same time , each taking turns at digging their sharp nails into his skin.

"PLEASE STOPP!" I screamed , unable to move an inch with Vincent's strong hold on my head . "STOP HURTING HIM!"

The vampires paid no attention to my cries as they all took turns in punching him in his stomach , I watched in horror as one of the vampires locked his head in a neck hold while the rest took turns to punch him in the face , my own heart felt like it lost the will to beat as b***d started dripping from his mouth , making the horrifying scene even more difficult to look at .

He wasn't fighting back ! My heart hurt , the pain unbearable as it dawned on me that he was only doing it to protect me , Austin was in danger and it was all because of me .

"AUSTIN!" I screamed . " PLEASE FIGHT BACK ... PLEASEEEE."

He wasn't listening , why wasn't he listening to me !

"Please ." I begged Vincent . "Please let him go , I would do anything you ask me too , just please ... I beg of you, stop hurting him." I cried when it became clear to me that Austin wasn't going to fight back .

"Shut up girl." Vincent hissed . "You're making it hard to focus on the fun ." He growled as he pulled on my hair tighter forcing me to look at the horrific scene in front of me.

My body begun to shake uncontrollably as they dragged Austin's body closer to the cliff's edge , they continued to attack him from all directions , his b***d dripping onto the ground as he struggled to stand .

I felt all the life being sucked out of my body as I saw one of the vampires kick Austin right off the cliff . "NOOOOO—" I screamed , I turned and bit down on Vincent's hand as hard as I could . The vampire hissed and slammed me against the ground , before any of the other vampires could react I jumped to my feet and ran towards the cliff's end , jumping off without a second thought , ignoring all the screams of protest behind me.

The wind lashed at me harshly , my own hair whipping against my face as tears flowed from my eyes like a river at the thought of losing Austin and before I know it I'm crashing into the water below me . My heart is pounding against my chest vigorously ... crying out for both Austin and air to breathe at the same time . I didn't know which was more painful at the moment , for it seemed like I couldn't live

without either one of them . Darkness begun to suck me further and further in as the water completely engulfed me .

Austin , I inwardly cried .

Austin.

.....

ERMANNNO'S POV:

Something was wrong , there wasn't any sign of Austin or Lucy , they knew the gravity of the situation so there was no way they would have reached late unless something happened ... something bad .

My feet started to move of their own accord as I raced through the palace , searching for them both . I paused as some voices near the meeting room caught my attention .

"Lucy wasn't supposed to jump off the cliff with f*****g Austin!" Vincent roared . "I had other plans for that stupid girl."

"You think they survived the fall ?" Draven asked .

"Austin is strong , more than likely he would survive , I'm unsure about Lucy." John muttered as if already bored with the conversation .

My heart turned to stone at his words and it took all of my self control not to go into the room and rip every single one of them apart .

f*****g assholes.

If anything happened to my sister ... no , I saw her strength that day , she would survive ..she had too. I pivoted , impatient to get to my brothers and relay the news to them , that is until something they said caught my attention once again.

"When do you plan on ambushing their packs ?"

I could almost see the smirk on Vincent's face as he answered John's question. " They really thought that we wouldn't know that they would bring along their packs for back up in case anything went wrong ." He chuckled . " We will attack later , I just need some time to assemble our best warriors , then we leave and attack . I can't wait to see their surprised faces when we kill them all ."

"This is going to be exhilarating ." Draven grinned .

What the f**k?

Chapter 23 - Mating Heat 1

ERMANNNO'S POV:

This wasn't happening . Things had went from bad to worse in f*****g seconds. Not only did I not know the condition Austin and Lucy was from the fall or where the f**k they were , the packs were in danger , serious danger , there was no way they would be prepared for an attack from the council if they had the upper hand from the surprise attack .

Vincent wasn't stupid , he knew Austin's and James's packs were two of the most powerful packs ever , he would only assemble our very best for the attack . He wasn't thinking in the best interests of the council however , for many of our warriors would also die in the attack , both sides would suffer a serious loss .

"What's wrong ?" Thane demanded as soon as I rounded the corner . The rest of my brothers looked up in my direction at his words , each waiting for me to say something .

"We have more than one problem on our hands ." I confessed . " Austin and Lucy never showed so I went in search of them , you wouldn't like to hear what I found out ."

Thane stiffened at my words as he waited impatiently for me to continue .

"What ?" Nolan asked on alert , slamming the cup in his hand on the nearby table .

"Vincent ordered John to kidnap Lucy for payback after the incident with Austin and Draven . "

"Those motherfuckers ." Thane roared , his fists tightening to his sides.

"That's not the worst part ." I continued , feeling the rage within me intensify at my next words . " Austin and Lucy fell off the cliff , they have no f*****g clue what happened to them ."

My brothers stiffened at my words , fire burning in their eyes . " We have to go search for them—"

"I'm not finished ." I told Marcus . " They know that Austin's pack along with James's is waiting in the woods before the bridge , they plan on ambushing them later today , Vincent is already preparing our best warriors ."

"f**k!" My brothers shouted in unison .

"Why don't we just bring this news to the prosecutor ? He already warned Vincent not to make any moves without informing him ." Nolan suggested .

I shook my head . " The prosecutor would have Vincent punished for going against his words concerning Austin but he would agree with Vincent's plan to ambush the packs since they are in our territory without our consent , he would see it as a breach ." I explained , there was a chance he would stop it but the chance was also high that he would let Vincent do as he pleased , it wasn't a risk I was willing to take . " The fact also remains that he has left the premises with father to set up a meeting with Hunter , we wouldn't make it to them in time ."

My brother's heads snapped up to me at my words and by the look they gave me , they each knew what it meant by the prosecutor going to meet Hunter ... to complete the arrangements to have Eden wedded to the heartless monster . I shook that thought out of my head , we had more serious problems at hand right now , I couldn't think of Eden and Hunter now , had to deal with one problem at a time .

"What are we supposed to do now ?" Luthais asked taking a step forward .

I ran my hand through my hair in frustration . "I've been asking myself that question the entire walk here , the best solution I came up with was to warn the packs of the ambush . They also need to know what happened to Austin and Lucy , if we make it in time they could go in search of them while we stay back and buy them some time . If we're successful they could return back to Austin's territory where it's much safer , Vincent wouldn't take the risk of attacking there , at least not anytime soon ."

Thane nodded . " We need to move now." He agreed clutching his blade tightly in his hand.

.....

As we approached the packs , the oppressors turned to growl at us , sensing a threat at our arrival .

"What the f**k are you doing here ?" James growled as the rest of the pack got into a defensive stance , as if preparing for a fight against us .

Thane leaned against one of the trees with bored eyes . " We didn't come here for a fight ."

James narrowed his eyes suspiciously with a fierce scowl on his face . " Then why are you here ?"

"We came to warn you , Vincent is planning an ambush against your packs , you need to leave now , we don't have much time ."

"I'm not leaving without Austin and Lucy ." He growled .

"Yeah ." Lucas shouted . "Where the f**k is my brother and his wife and why didn't they come with you

to warn us?"

I stiffened at the reminder of the danger my sister was in . " That's another thing we need to talk about." I announced loud enough for the entire pack to hear . " Austin and Lucy fell off the northern cliff while fighting off an attack from Vincent . We have no clue where they are now , so you must search all the nearby shores for them while my brothers and I try to hold back Vincent ."

I felt the rise of the tension in the atmosphere as my words sunk in.

"How the f**k—"

"We don't have time for explanations ." I cut James off roughly , sensing the depth of his anger and knowing it wouldn't bring any good to any of us here if he let his rage get the best of him . " Vincent is already on his way , you need to leave NOW . Find Austin and Lucy and go straight back to your territory ."

James stood motionless for a few seconds before he finally exhaled heavily , the alpha knew what was at stake and as such he didn't need to be told twice as he quickly commanded the rest of the wolves to prepare for the escape .

When he was finished giving orders to the betas and oppressors ,he turned to me with a grateful look clouding his face . " Thank you ."

"Just get back your brother and my sister safely home ."

Our families may have had their differences in the past but whether either sides liked it or not , the truth remained that we were now connected through Lucy and Austin . In other words , we now had each other backs , for the happiness of those we loved .

He nodded , his eyes showed signs that there was much more he wanted to say to me . In fact it seemed as though he was having a battle within himself on whether to say it or not . As if the inner battle had won , he eventually spoke the last words I expected him to say. "Please keep Eden safe ." I understood why he said it , only James would know the pain he was feeling now to leave Eden behind , but he had a duty to his pack and to his family . They would come first , for they were the ones facing the most danger at the moment . Also , there wasn't much he could do , Eden belonged to the council just like my brothers and I did , trying to take Eden would lead to the exact same thing he was trying to escape from now .

"I give you my word , no harm would come to my sister . " I promised . " Now go ."

.....

AUSTIN'S POV :

I g****d , rolling over to my side and opened my eyes . I squinted at the blinding sun.The hot sand stinging my back.

Sand?

What the f**k?

Where was I ?

Memories of the night flashed before my eyes , my body froze as I felt all the b***d drain from my face , my heart clenching painfully in my chest .

LUCY!

My eyes scanned my surroundings desperately , my heart stopped altogether as my gaze fell on the body a few feet away from me .

Lucy was sprawled out on the sand , completely motionless . I couldn't breathe , couldn't think clearly ,

couldn't even bring myself to stand .

As soon as my feet could function once again , I rushed to her side , dropping on my knees before her .
I gently placed my palm against her forehead to check her temperature .

f**k!

She was burning up. I scanned our surroundings once again, I couldn't keep her here under the hot sun , needed to find some sort of shelter for her immediately .

I gently picked her up , cradling her against my chest before I rushed into the woods . She g*****d against me and I shifted her in my arms so I could get a better look at her face , her lips were dry from the fever , her eyes still closed . The fever seemed to be getting worse by the minute , making it hard for me to focus on anything but cooling her body down , I continued to race through the forest , only stopping when I spotted a river nearby .I gently laid her down , tearing a piece of my vest as I quickly soaked it into the water and placed it onto her forehead .

After leaving it there for a few minutes I gently removed the cloth and replaced it with my hand .

f**k!

The fever wasn't f*****g going down. I removed the vest completely , almost ripping it off my chest impatiently and shoved it into the water . I swallowed as I slowly begun to wipe her body , starting from her neck and running the cloth slowly down her chest . My breath hitched as I neared her breasts , the reminder of having them within my reach made it hard to think clearly , my hands craving to hold them once again , aching to caress the soft buds , my throat tightened as I once again fought to think straight .

Lucy m*****d besides me ." A-Austin" She cried out ." It hurts ...I need--"

"Tell me ." I whispered , desperate to help her in whatever way I could . "What--"

"AAHHH--" She screamed thrashing from side to side as she grabbed my hands and pressed it tighter against her breasts .

"More!" She cried out rubbing her thighs together .

I froze..it couldn't be .

My body shook , my shaft tightening in my pants as I dropped to my knees before her as waves of her arousal hit me harder than anything ever did in my entire f*****g life .

Oh f**k!

Lucy was going into heat .

MOTHERFUCKER.

Chapter 24 - Mating Heat 2

When a female went into heat the pain didn't stop until her male's seed was buried deep inside her ... over and over again . The thing usually lasted for over ten f*****g hours which meant if I wanted to help Lucy I'd have to spend half of the day buried deep inside her .

The chances of a she wolf becoming pregnant during this time was also very high. I felt all the b****d drain from my face at the possibility of that happening .

Lucy let go of my hand as another cry escaped her lips .

Holy f**k!

No , I couldn't take that risk , if Lucy got pregnant things would get a hundred times worse than it

already was . I had to find some other way to help her .

Lucy gasped and I staggered back as another wave of her energy hit me , my hands gripped the wet cloth in the palm of my hands tightly , my knuckles turning white with the pressure in which I held onto it with . I desperately needed something to hold on to , anything that prevented me from touching Lucy again ,because f**k , there was no way I could resist the s****I urges if I had any part of her within my reach again.

I exhaled heavily , what the f**k was I going to do? This was only just the beginning , her s****I need would only increase and intensify with each passing minute . I could barely resist her now , what would I do then ? I was f*****g screwed !

"A-Austin please—"

I shut my eyes , fighting for control and when I finally opened them , Lucy's eyes were open for the first time , gazing at me , the need I saw reflected there almost undid me and I couldn't stop myself even if I wanted to as I involuntarily inched closer .

Lucy's lips parted ,as she reached for my hands one more time and before I had time to react shoved it between her legs . My breath hitched as it came in contact with her soaking wet panties .

MOTHERFUCKERRR—

I growled.

All rational and coherent thoughts immediately flew out the window .

f**k this.

My body took over , Lucy's need triggering my own . My fingers gripped her waist tightly before lifting her dress off her body , my eyes zeroing in on the tiny white satin covering her s*x . Another growl tore from me as I ripped the material off , leaving her p****y bare to me .

HOLY f**k!

My e*****n strained almost painfully against my jeans at the sight of her . When another one of her waves hit me , I stumbled forward grabbing onto her legs and gently spreading them apart . I grazed my hands against her thighs lightly before touching her core , I froze . A soft g****n escaping my mouth .

So f*****g wet.

Lucy cried out at the contact . I pushed a finger in as her sweet cries echoed throughout the quiet forest . I felt her inner muscles quiver as her first o****m hit .However, the f*****g thing only seemed to make the needing worse as the force that escaped her this time lashed out at me with so much power that it nearly threw me straight back, flat on my a*s . A string of curses left my mouth ... this wouldn't do , only my seed would be able to help her .

I frantically climbed to my feet , unzipped my jeans and tug them off as quickly as my shaking hands would let me. My thick aching hard length immediately sprung free , begging to be buried in Lucy and ease both of our torture .

My hungry gaze swept over Lucy sprawled out on the ground, taking in every inch of her , she was f*****g beautiful even when she was in pain. A goddess .

"Austin." She m****d , trashing from side to side .

"Shhh—"I whispered dropping back onto the ground next to her . "I'll make it better baby." I promised .

I gripped her waist tenderly , gently positioning her body beneath mine as I lowered myself on top of her , my breath hitched as our bodies molded together into one , fitting together like a puzzle who was separated it's entire life ... almost as if she was f*****g made for me.

I g*****d against her neck as my hard length touched her entrance . I gently thrust forward and froze as I came into contact with an unexpected barrier .

MOTHERFUCKER.

Lucy was a f*****g virgin .

A part in me that I didn't even know existed swelled with joy at that sudden revelation , she was mine to touch , taste , mark and f*****g claim.

"This is going to hurt a little sweetheart ." I gently told her before pushing forward with more force .

Lucy stiffened beneath me but after a minute eventually relaxed . When I knew it was okay to move , I slowly pulled out and pushed right back in .

A string of curses left my mouth at the eternal bliss as I once again buried my head against the crook of her neck , my body shook at the feel of her tight s*x around my hard member ... and then I really started to move , pounding into her , leaving my mark deep inside her beautiful body .

"FUCKKKK –" I roared as I felt my release nearing .

Our bodies were slapping together as I continued with the grinding motion in and out her tight s*x , her sweet m***s filling my ear , blocking out the sound of anything else . In fact the only thing I could feel , smell and hear was the gorgeous woman beneath me , the God damn world could be ending now and I wouldn't f*****g care .

"Austinnn–" She cried out as another o****m hit her .

s**t s**t s**t! The spasms of her muscles totally did it for me , snapping my control as a loud roar tore from within me as I buried my seed deep inside her , completely filling her up . I shuddered as my seed continued to pour out of me in great waves , f**k! I didn 't remember the last time I came this hard , the f*****g thing wasn't stopping as it continued filling Lucy , her body soaking up every f*****g drop .

When the last spill was finally over , I lifted my head and peered over at Lucy with hooded eyes . Her lips were parted , cheeks flushed and her eyes closed , but the pain had definitely lessened for she was no longer writhing beneath me .

Her skin was still on fire however . I unwillingly pulled out of her sweet heavenly s*x before gently picking her up in my arms , walking with her into the river . I slowly lowered myself into the cool water as I gripped her thighs and guided her legs so that they were now wrapped around my waist . I took some water into my hand and poured it onto her head as I watched it flow from her face and down her body . I leaned even closer , licking and sucking the trail of water , stopping at the spot right beneath her ear. Her hands moved to grip my hair as she held me even tighter against her neck while she rubbed her p***y against me .

My body shook as I fought for control , both my wolf and I desperate to mark her and claim her as ours . I felt the control within me slip but before I could act on it , a wave of Lucy's arousal hit me once again . f**k , her need was back !

She trembled against me . "OH GODD–" She screamed as my shaft once again tightened in response to her need .

I lifted her in my arms as I strode out the water and once again positioned her beneath my body before burying myself deep inside her p***y .

I g*****d at the contact as Lucy shuddered beneath me.

FUCKKK ! It felt better every f*****g time , I buried my head against the crook of her neck as I held on for dear life and once again got lost in her tight sweetness ... wishing I could stay here all my life ,

buried deep inside her , forgetting about everything and everyone but the gorgeous woman beneath me .

.....

JAMES POV:

We've been searching for over ten hours and still there wasn't any sign of Austin or Lucy , the tension in the air was thick as everyone wrestled with themselves to remain calm .

"Talk." Lucas muttered looking over at me .

I gave him a blank look ." What?"

His eyes narrowed . " Don't give me that look brother , something happened out there that you haven't told us ."

I swallowed as I felt my anger return . "I found my mate ."

Lucas slowed at my words . " Shouldn't you be happy ?"

Happy?

I was anything but f*****g happy , the woman I wanted to f*****g claim and have my name plastered all over so that everyone knew she was mine didn't f*****g belong to me !

How could I be happy ?

" It's Lucy's sister and she belongs to the council ."

Lucas stopped walking altogether as everything I just said sunk in . "F**k."

Before he could say anything more , Alex approached us with an anxious look . " I scent Austin , he was definitely here ."

I stiffened , he was right , my mind was so caught up on my conversation with Lucas that I had missed my brother's scent . My eyes scanned the shoreline , searching for any other clues to point us in their direction . Austin and Lucy had definitely been here , they most likely washed up here after the fall .

"Where do you suppose they went?" Lucas asked .

"I'm not sure , let's follow their scent , they definitely went south of here ."

I could feel the tension ease up around us as the packs released a sigh of relief upon knowing that we were closer to finding Austin and Lucy . Everyone picked up the pace , impatient to find them and ensure that they were okay .

We were about fifteen minutes in when their scents hit us stronger ... Something was off .

My eyes widened when I realized what it was , OH f**k.

I looked at the packs , ready to stop them from walking further but it was already too late as Austin and Lucy were right there in front of us .. completely naked.

Chapter 25

AUSTIN'S POV :

I g*****d and rolled off Lucy , feeling completely exhausted and lifeless , in fact at the moment I could barely feel my f*****g legs as I laid flat on my back with my hands sprawled out to the sides of me . I looked above me ,staring at the sun that was about to set . F**k... which meant we'd been at it for approximately half of the day but luckily for both of us , the needling was finally over . I didn't think I would be able to last another round .

Lucy sighed in contentment besides me as she leaned into my side , resting her hand on my bare chest

... her eyes still closed .

I desperately wanted to roll over and take her in my arms . Desperately wanted to ask her if she was okay but had absolutely no energy left in me , so I settled for just looking at her from this angle . My eyes were slowly scanning her body from top to bottom , taking in how beautiful this woman really was ... unable to wrap my mind around the fact that I'd spent the last few hours buried so deep inside her , I fought back a g***n .

I stayed in that position for a few minutes , waiting impatiently for my energy to return as my body healed itself from the strain . The needing was indeed something special that provided both male and female with tremendous pleasure but at the same time it also completely drained you both of all the energy within your body , it was unfortunately ten times worse on the female than it was on the male however ... so I desperately wanted to regain my strength to properly take care of Lucy , the way in which she deserved .

Sudden footsteps caught my attention at the same time familiar scents filled my nostrils .

I froze , my head snapping up in the direction of the sound so fast that I felt a wave of dizziness flash through me . A string of curses left my mouth as I tried to blink through the dizziness , as my eyes focused on the scene in front of me . I was greeted by shocked looks of all of the members' from both my pack and that of my brother's .

Nick was the first to break the silence with a low whistle , while the rest of the oppressors had an amused look on their faces , my eyes went to James who's face was completely red , which was a very rare sight to see. My eyes continued to focus on the faces of my brother's pack , and I saw red ... the motherfuckers were staring at Lucy's naked body with a hungry gaze .

A loud growl tore from me , shaking the trees around us as I rushed to cover Lucy's body with my own , sending a death glare their way .

The men immediately took a step back and turned the other direction without another word . Lucy buried her head against my chest in embarrassment as I picked her up with me before placing her down on her feet .

I took a deep breath , trying to suppress my anger towards the males , I needed to constantly remind myself that they were my allies not my enemy .

"Are you okay ?" I asked Lucy while handing her dress to her .A blush made it's way on her face as she looked down at her torn underwear on the ground .

"Yes. " She whispered , refusing to look up at me .

A smile formed on my lips at her reaction as I continued to stare at her while she quickly threw the dress on , her cheeks a beautiful shade of red .

"Is it safe to turn around now ?" Lucas called , the grin evident in his voice .

A scowl immediately replaced my smile as I tugged back on my jeans .

"You can now ." I growled .

"I guess we were worried for nothing ." Asher teased as they all turned around looking more amused than before . " It looks like our Alpha has been doing way better than we expected ."

"How did you escape Vincent ?" I asked suddenly remembering that the vampire had claimed that he was going to ambush the packs . My eyes scanned the men , none of the members were injured so clearly there hadn't been any fight .

"Lucy's brothers came to warn us ." James answered .

I felt Lucy stiffen besides me , the color draining from her face at the sudden mention of her brothers .
"Are they okay ?" She asked , her forehead creasing with worry .
James gave her a sympathetic look ." We can't say for sure , they risked a lot by coming to warn us ...
We can only hope Vincent doesn't suspect their betrayal ."
"Vincent is way too experienced to not expect a betrayal from the Cross brothers for the safety of their sister ." I pointed out . " Hopefully they have no proof against them ."
"We aren't in the clear yet ." James announced loud enough for everyone to hear ." Lucy's brothers would try to hold off Vincent for as long as they could but there is no doubt the f*****g vampire would send out a search party for us , in fact I'm sure he already knows exactly where to look for us since anyone would guess that the first place to start looking would be on the shorelines , since that is where you and Lucy would be expected to wash up."
"You're right ." I nodded in agreement . "We need to start moving now , get out of this place and back to our territory as fast as we could ."

If the vampire decided to still come for us , we had a better chance in our own territory . I would have a lot more time to prepare and get back up from other pack alliances in which I'd helped in the past . At the mention of the council many of the packs would instantly want to back out but I knew a loyal few that would fight along our side if it ever came to that.

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LUCY'S POV :

I was glowing , could feel the happiness inside of me reflecting on the outside . Austin had been by my side the entire trip back home , ensuring that I was okay , at times he had even lifted me in his arms , refusing to let me walk on my own feet to the amusement of the pack members , it was as if they had never seen their alpha act that way before and for some reason I think they loved it .

I on the other hand , couldn't even bring myself to look at Austin after what had transpired between us , everytime I thought about it I felt my face burn with embarrassment . It was however one of the best days of my entire life , never before had I experienced such pleasure and happiness mixed in one . It was a day I would never forget , for Austin brought me to places I didn't even know existed . Another blush made it's way on my face as I thought about how many times he'd been buried deep inside me. I was ashamed to admit it but even now I wished that he still was , already missed feeling that irreplaceable connection with him.

It also seemed as though Austin's possessive side had doubled after what had happened between us , if that was even possible for there were multiple times where he wanted to attack some of the men for even looking my way , in fact I think most of them were even afraid to speak a single word to me now . All thoughts suddenly left my mind as I noticed we had finally made it back home . Already I could feel the tension ease up around us as everyone released a sigh of relief , at times I'm sure many of us wondered if we would have even made it back here alive with how brutal the council was , we owed everything to my brothers for risking their own lives to save ours .

"They're back!" I heard Maya scream as we entered the pack house .

I watched as she pulled her three brothers in for a hug . "I missed you idiots !" She cried as they returned her hug , James ruffling her hair and making it all messy while Lucas pinched her cheeks . I felt an emptiness in the pit of my stomach as I watched their loving exchange , I already missed my siblings , it didn't help that I wasn't even sure in what state we had left them in , for all I knew they could

be getting punished all now for helping us escape . The thought made my heart clench almost painfully , I wish there was some way I could get some sort of update on their well being , just to ease my mind a little .

Maya turned to me with a bright smile that travelled all the way to her beautiful eyes . "I've missed you as well Lucy , I'm so so happy we have you back with us ."

I returned her smile , leaning into her embrace . "Thank you Maya , I'm also very happy to be back ."

And I truly meant every word , before my brothers had even introduced themselves to me , Austin's family was the first to have ever welcomed me with open arms and made me feel like I was someone important . The first family who'd actually openly accepted me into their homes , something I've always wanted and wished for .

"Yes we are !" Austin's parents confirmed as they also pulled me in for a tight hug .

I smiled against their embrace . "Thank you ." I whispered , it felt nice to have people that cared for me be so close to me . Without even knowing it , they were helping me to be strong and deal with the fact that once again I was separated from my loved ones .

"We truly are sorry for the way we let you leave Lucy...I hope you can find some way to forgive us ." The queen apologized .

I shook my head at her. "Please don't apologize , I understand why you did ... No one did anything wrong and it is all in the past now . There isn't anything to forgive ." I assured all of them for even Maya and Lucas seemed to fully agree with their mother's words .

"Austin!"

A high pitched scream echoed from the doorway , the entire room growing completely quiet and still. I froze .

No... Please don't tell me it is who I think it is , I had totally forgotten about her existence with everything that was happening around us with the council and my family .

I turned just in time to see Ariana walk in , staring at Austin as if she didn't believe he was right there before her eyes . I don't know why but her expressions seemed all fake , as though she'd rehearsed it multiple times before coming here.

I stiffened as she ran straight into his arms , holding onto him tightly as though I wasn't here standing right next to him . When he raised his arms and wrapped them around her , I completely lost it .

I felt like my whole heart had just shattered right before my eyes as reality sunk in . My eyes stung with tears as my legs shook with the sudden reminder that Ariana was the woman he loved ... not me. Austin didn't love me .

No...he loved her.

Chapter 26

LUCY'S POV:

I felt everyone's eyes on me , surely they all wanted to see my reaction to Austin and Ariana embracing right before me . Like always , a lot of sympathetic gazes were sent my way. This time however , I noticed many of the pack members giving Austin and Ariana disappointed looks , clearly just as unhappy about it as I was .

I clutched my tummy in pain , my stomach suddenly feeling uneasy , as though I wanted to throw up .I

rushed through the narrow hallway without saying a word to anyone , not stopping till I reached a washroom . I threw open the door and shut it behind me before leaning over the sink , trying hard not to puke .

However the wave of nausea that attacked me had me doubling over as I emptied my stomach into the sink to the front of me . Hot tears filled my eyes as I blinked through the hurt and pain , compared to before , my reaction to seeing Austin and Ariana had definitely gotten much worse , was it really so bad to the point of me throwing up ?

I dropped to the floor and covered my face with my hands . Things were really bad , I couldn't imagine a life where I had to see Ariana around Austin , it would destroy me to have to see something like that every day .

"Lucy!" I heard Maya call from the doorway . "Are you in there ?"

I forced myself to get up from the floor and open the door. Maya took one look at me and scrunched her nose , a crease forming on her forehead .

"You don't look well ." She pointed out with a concerned look . " Are you ill?"

I shook my head , not wanting her to worry about me . For I knew if I told Maya she would announce it to everyone outside and at the moment I just wanted to lock myself in a room and stay away from everyone . Needed some time to myself , no... needed to be away from Austin and Ariana . I'd been so caught up with all the drama that took place at the council's palace that I'd forgotten about the sad reality of my life . What I saw a few minutes ago was like a cold dash of water to my face , reminding me of my life here .

"I don't know if this is the right time to tell you this ." Maya started warily ." But my parents have decided to hold a party tonight to celebrate everyone's safe return ."

I held back a g***n , I didn't want Maya to feel bad , after all they were doing this for our safe return , I couldn't not attend .

The last thing I wanted to do was attend a party tonight however , knowing exactly what I'll have to deal with if I did . The last time they had a party Ariana was all up on Austin and I had to stand there and watch . I didn't know if I would be able to handle that this time . For it seemed as though my reaction to seeing them together had definitely gone from bad to worse .

.....

We were finally back home and I was happy to be in my room , away from everyone . I dropped onto the bed and buried my head against the pillows .

I heard the door crack open and I didn't need to look up to know that it was Austin.His scent immediately filled the room , everything else drowning out around me .

"Lucy?" I heard him call in a gentle tone .

My heart ached . How could he say my name like that after having that woman in his arms right in front of me like I meant absolutely nothing to him ? The thought about that earlier incident made me sick to my stomach once more , the sudden urge to throw up appearing once again .

I rose up from the bed slowly without looking in his direction as I placed my feet on the ground , feeling for my slipper . As soon as I felt it , I slipped it on and rose up gracefully .

"How are you ?" He asked when I chose to say nothing .

How was I ?

Why did he even care ? I felt his eyes on me , trailing my every move , his gaze burning into my body as

I moved away but still I refused to say anything or even look at him for that matter .

I wanted to scream at him , tell him how much he and that girl had hurt me , tell him how heartless he was to put me through this after everything we've been through together the past few days . I bit my lip and blinked back the tears , no... I wouldn't cry in front of him.

I ignored his question as I strode out of the room .

I felt him following me but didn't bother to stop or turn around .

"Lucy ." He called once again , panic evident in his tone .

I refused to speak a word to him , completely heart broken and hurt that he would just run back to Ariana after every thing that happened between us .

Before I could reach any further however he grabbed onto my arm and pulled me to a stop. He spun me around so that I was now facing him , his finger reached below my chin , forcing me to look him in the eye, He peered down at me , his eyes searching my own as though he was trying to understand what my problem was and why I was acting this way .

Were all men this clueless ?

"What's wrong ?" He whispered , his forehead creasing with concern .

How could he not know ?

How clueless can one person be ?

"Are you not feeling well ?" He inquired softly, when I chose to remain quiet . His deep blue eyes like always pulled me in , making it hard to think clearly , especially when they looked at me the way he was staring at me now ... like if he didn't know what was wrong but desperately wanted to fix it.

I forced myself to look away , his eyes always made me weak ... I wasn't about to let that happen again , at least not this time .

"Lucy please—"

"Alpha!" Alex interrupted , his eyes going back and forth between Austin and I .

Austin gave Alex a death glare for the interruption and he instantly paled ." I'm sorry to interrupt Alpha but there is an issue that needs tending to immediately ." He announced .

He reluctantly let go of me , not before giving me another look of longing however . I ignored it and turned the other direction . He could go give that look to Ariana . Even though I was the one who had thought of those words , it hurt like hell , I didn't want him looking at her period .

I inwardly cried .

God , this was so hard .

.....

A quiet sigh escaped my lips .

The party had just started and already I wanted to leave the moment I saw Ariana enter the room . Her presence immediately put a damper in my mood , it wouldn't be long before she went to find Austin .

I hadn't seen him since our last encounter where I'd completely ignored him , whatever Alex had called him for seemed to have kept him preoccupied for the rest of the day .

"I see we meet again ."

I stiffened as my gaze fell on Eric , Ariana's father . The last time I'd met him , he had completely creeped me out , things hadn't changed . He still made me feel extremely uncomfortable .

I forced a smile on my face before shaking his outstretched hand .

"The word is out that your father is none other than Alpha Richard ." He pointed out , taking a drink out

of the cup in his hand . " We were once good friends until he betrayed your husband's family ."

My eyes narrowed , why was he bringing this up now ?

"Your point ?" I asked , not the least bit happy with where this conversation was going .

The man's gaze darkened , his face looking ten times creepier than before ." Everyone here may have forgotten that your family are traitors but I won't ... the apple doesn't fall far from the tree , I'll be keeping my eyes on you ."

What exactly was this man implying ? He continued to glare at me until the queen joined us ." Is everything okay ?" She asked me , studying my tensed state .

"Everything's fine , I was just asking the princess about her time spent at the council ." Eric answered before I could say a word to Austin's mother . My lips pressed together in anger and frustration , this man was just as bad as his daughter .

He was right ... the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

I quietly excused myself at the uncomfortable silence that followed between us , not wanting to be anywhere near this pathetic man .

I didn't make it far however as none other than Ariana was standing in front of me , blocking my way .

When I tried to go around her , she pushed forward and grabbed onto my arm roughly , her nails digging into my skin . " I know what you're doing ." She hissed, glaring at me .

I gave her a blank look ."Excuse me?"

She flipped her hair and rolled her eyes . " I know you're doing everything to take Austin from me but he's mine b***h ." She threatened . " The only reason he's been protecting you thus far is because of his caring nature . In fact , tonight I'll show you just how much more I mean to him than you do ... watch him spend the entire night with me ."

A few hours later and I came to the conclusion that Ariana was right , I'd spent the entire night so far seeing Austin tend to her , he didn't leave her side for a second ... even though I was just a few feet away from them . It was like he couldn't even see me as long as she was around and it broke me in a way that was difficult to put into words . I just felt completely lost and broken inside , like a part of my heart had been ripped out and stepped on in the most brutal way possible .

My legs were shaking from the pain the hurt brought to my body and I had to grip the chair next to me to keep from dropping to the floor and letting out all of the tears I had bottled up inside .

"Hi there beautiful ."

I was so lost in my thoughts that I didn't notice someone standing before me . I glanced up at the tall stranger , he had ash blond hair and scary dark eyes . His lips were curved in a smile as he focused all his attention on me .

I gave him a confused look . " Were you speaking to me ?"

He chuckled . "Well you are the most beautiful in the room ."

I looked around me , trying to find some way to escape from this man's presence but I couldn't see anyone who could help . Something about him screamed trouble and I found it weird that he would openly flirt with me knowing that I was married to Austin. Since everyone else around seemed to respect that fact and kept their distance .

"Can I have this dance ?" He asked when I remained silent after I saw no reason to entertain this conversation .

I shook my head . "I'm sorry , I don't think—"

The guy grabbed my waist without my consent , pulling me against him ." Come on , one dance wouldn't hurt sweetheart . "

Before I had a chance to react and push him away , a loud menacing growl rippled throughout the room .

I jumped as the entire crowd grew silent .

"GET YOUR f*****g HANDS OFF HER!" Austin roared .

Chapter 27

ERIC'S POV:

I studied the scene in front of me with interest .Just as I had expected , Austin's control had slipped upon seeing someone touch Lucy . The anger and hatred that poured out of him was directed straight at Zagan and was simply impossible to mistake , everyone in the room could feel the tension that radiated off the Alpha in great waves .

"You must have a f*****g DEATH WISH!" Austin roared .

He had Zagan by his neck , holding him up against the wall . The crowd was in an uproar , everyone dumbstruck and in shock at his actions , they all seemed unsure of what to do next for no one wanted to step between Austin and Zagan with the rage burning within him. I watched as Lucas and James rushed to pull their brother off him but even they struggled for Austin wasn't letting go . The Alpha's grip was way too strong and it was clear that even if they managed to pull him down , he was taking Zagan down with him.

I sighed as everything came to light within seconds .

From the moment Princess Lucy had entered the picture I knew she was going to bring trouble for me . Austin's actions towards Ariana had drastically changed from the moment he married the girl , I knew I had to do some sort of experiment to find out the truth of whether or not Austin and Lucy were mates , however the whole incident with the council had put a hold on my plans and so I had to wait until they had returned . As soon as I'd gotten word of their return I knew I couldn't waste any more time .

Zagan was one of the best oppressor's from my pack , after my suspicions about Lucy being Austin's mate I'd explained to him exactly what I wanted him to do for me and the party today was the perfect opportunity for my plan to be put into action . I needed someone to flirt with the princess but not just flirt with her , actually have skin contact ... that would have been more than enough for Austin to go crazy if Lucy were truly his mate . All that would be left to do was to study the Alpha's reaction closely . I continued to study the scene before me , no one could get the Alpha off Zagan , in fact I was sure that he would kill him right there just for his own satisfaction. He was most definitely acting like someone who'd lost his mind and was out for b***d .

So it was true ... Lucy was most definitely Austin's true mate . Which meant , it wouldn't be long for the spell to wear off , I didn't have much time . As long as Lucy was around the spell would continue to weaken and everything I've been planning over all of the past years would go to waste .

No... I've come this far and was so close to achieving what I'd worked so hard for , I couldn't let some girl destroy my plans . Especially not the daughter of f*****g Richard . When Richard's friendship with Jeremy had posed a threat to my plans I'd done everything in my power to get rid of Richard and his family ... and it had worked . Their friendship was completely ruined in one day and it was the happiest

day of my life till date .

Now years later , his daughter had the ability to destroy it all with a flick of her finger and I wasn't about to let that happen . If I was able to get rid of Richard , then I could do the same to his daughter .

All it took for the spell to completely break was for Austin to realize Lucy was his true mate , from the time he recognized her as his own , the spell would no longer have a hold on him. At least that's what the witch had told me , it was the only way for the spell to demolish . Her exact words replayed in my head now ... 'The spell in which I'm giving to you is very powerful , the alpha would never doubt Ariana as his true mate UNLESS he comes into contact with his actual real mate ... she would be the only one to break the spell, if he gets into contact with her , you wouldn't have much time left before he recognizes her as his own , from the moment he does the spell would no longer be in effect .'

I immediately tensed realizing the gravity of the situation .

I had to get rid of Princess Lucy ... before it was too late.

I sighed as my gaze fell on Austin and Zagan once again , I had to part the fight before the Alpha killed the man . I would need Zagan for the upcoming battle if it came to that , I couldn't let him die just yet. I strode over to where they stood glaring at each other , it would be seconds before Austin took a strike at Zagan , the only thing that was preventing him so far was his brothers holding him down. I had to act fast , without another thought I gave Zagan a powerful punch in the face , the oppressor immediately fell unconscious in Austin's strong hold.

Everyone gave me surprised looks to see me knocking out one of my own men .

"I apologize ." I told Austin ."He was in the wrong and would be punished severely ."

He turned his attention to me without letting go of Zagan , even though the man was already unconscious in his hands . I watched as he fought to gain control of himself once again ... I could see the inner battle within him and it was clear that he wouldn't be satisfied until the oppressor was lying on the floor completely lifeless .

I motioned for Ariana to step forward , I'd already discussed this with her , if things had reached this state she was supposed to help calm down Austin , the spell was enough to do that trick ... we had to make use of it for as long as we could .

My daughter nodded her head and stepped beside me , placing her hand on his shoulder . "Please let go now Austin ... my father would see that he's punished ." She promised .

I saw Lucy's eyes zero in on where Ariana's hand laid on his shoulder , the hurt I saw there just about made my night . Without staying to see what happened she turned and pushed her way out of the crowd . Austin sensed her absence and looked over his shoulder at her leaving . He immediately let go of Zagan and pushed out the crowd after her ... his movements resembled that of a lion following his prey . I watched them both go , time was running out ... my next plan had to be put into full effect .

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LUCY'S POV:

Austin turned his heated gaze on me, his hold still strong around the man's neck . And then I saw Ariana step in , placing her hands on him , pulling his attention away from me .

Pain lanced through me.

His hold on the man immediately slackened and it hurt that she had so much power over him ... I couldn't stay to watch any more of this .

Without saying a single word I turned and walked up the stairs . Heading straight for my room , the

hairs behind my neck eventually stood up and I knew he was following me , could feel his gaze burning a hole into my back .

I opened the room door , ready to snap it shut in his face . I still didn't understand him , it was okay for him to be openly holding another woman in his arms but from the time someone showed me any attention he was ready to rip their heads off ? Not that I was happy about the guy touching me , Austin was the only person I wanted touching me , the only person I wanted loving me ... Austin pushed his hand between the door , preventing me from closing it . He surprised me when he closed it shut and locked it before turning back to me.

His gaze was deadly as he took slow steps in my direction . He only stopped when he had me backed up against the wall .He was so close that our bodies were pressed against each other , his sweet breath fanning my cheeks and making it hard for me to breathe . So close that if I moved my face a little forward his lips would brush against mine softly, it annoyed me that even through all the hurt and pain I was still this attracted to him , still wanted him with a raging passion .

"I've tried talking to you nicely the entire day , begging you to tell me what was wrong so that I could fix it but instead you've chosen to totally ignore me the entire day ... then tonight I see you in the arms of another man !" He growled . " Are you ready to tell me what the hell is wrong now or do I have to force it out of you ?"

My control snapped at his words . Was he really going to talk about me being in the arms of another man ? What about what he was doing to me?

"Do you really want to know what's wrong ?" I shouted, glaring at him. " I'll tell you what's wrong !" Austin winced at my tone , seeming confused at my outburst .

"After everything we've been through together these past few days , the first thing I have to see as soon as we get back is ANOTHER WOMAN IN YOUR ARMS ! And you expect me to be happy about that ? Am I some sort of robot with no feelings to have no reaction to seeing something like that ?" I demanded from him.

Austin's gaze softened as he took a shaky breath. "Lucy-"

"I can't believe you would hurt me like this but who am I kidding , you never even wanted me in the first place . She was the one you wanted all along not me so why was I even surprised to see that ? I had foolishly begun to think that maybe you had developed some sort of feelings towards me , maybe you cared and I guess that is why it hurt so much ...I should have known , should have never expected anything more from you ." I whispered , my voice breaking . "She means everything to you ... I mean nothing , I'm just someone who was forced into your life and it's all I'll ever be ."

I turned my tear filled gaze to him , finally looking him straight in the eye ."So what if I was in the arms of another man ? You don't want me so what's the problem if another man wants me ?"

Austin stiffened , his gaze hardening once more .

"I'll kill anyone who f*****g touches you Lucy."He growled , his fists tightening to his side while his massive chest expanded as he took a long deep breath . It seemed as though he was fighting for control and I was pushing every single one of his buttons .

"Are you saying that you could have an affair and I can't?" I demanded . "What if I said I liked it when he touched me , maybe I want to be with him and not you ... in fact , I think I should go see him now."

A low growl rumbled from his throat as our eyes met , Austin's glassy stare immediately turned to ice at my words.

"OVER MY f*****g DEAD BODY!" He roared before gripping my waist tightly .

Austin picked me up and threw me on the bed with ease , before I had time to react he was on top of me .

His gaze held me completely in place and I couldn't move an inch even if I wanted to .Leaving me with no choice but to stare into his beautiful eyes .

I gasped at the anguish and hurt I saw there , the emotions he felt inside were reflected deep in his eyes and I would be lying if I said it didn't break me further .

Chapter 28

"Don't ever say something like that again Lucy ... I won't be able to control myself the next time you do ." He warned , the pain in his voice tugging at my heart . " I want to f*****g rip him apart ... I could go downstairs and finish him off Lucy ... I'll f*****g kill him for touching you ."

Austin closed his eyes and inhaled deeply , when he opened them again the hurt was buried deep inside and was now replaced with a mixture of rage and l**t .

His eyes travelled from my eyes to my lips and he slowly traced it with one of his fingers , my lips parted at his touch . He leaned in close as his eyes grew a shade darker . "These lips are mine ... all mine ." He whispered before leaning down and gently brushing his lips against mine almost teasingly . " To touch ... k**s ... suck ." He continued as he pulled my bottom l*p into his mouth and gently sucked on it .

His gaze went lower before he slowly lowered my dress to reveal my breasts , his breathing becoming much heavier . My n*****s hardened at just the sight of him looking at them , he shifted so that he was now directly over them , his hot breath making them harden even further . He gently took one of my n*****s between his fingers and played with it , my breathing quickened as a quiet gasp escaped my mouth . His l**t filled eyes gazed up at me as he looked me straight in the eye before opening his mouth and closing them over my n*****e . My eyes shut close at the intense pleasure as he gently sucked on them , he stopped immediately to my horror . " Open your eyes Lucy ." He ordered . "Watch me as I suck on your n*****e ... WATCH AS I LEAVE MY MARK HERE ." He whispered hoarsely . I opened my eyes just in time to see him take my other n*****e in his mouth and suck hard .My mind completely lost it somewhere between his mouth on my n*****e and getting lost in his deep blue eyes that seemed to see straight through me .He didn't stop his torture until my n*****s were swollen and red .

My dress suddenly rode up and I gasped as I felt his e*****n pressing against my wet core , the thin material not much of a barrier . I couldn't stop myself even if I wanted too as I rubbed my lower half against his hardness in uncontrolled rhythms , the grinding motion sending me over the edge as soft m***s escaped my mouth . Austin's breath hitched at the contact as he roughly pulled away , his gaze was heated as he shifted once again so that his face was now between my legs . He spread them apart before ripping my underwear off with a low growl , his eyes hungrily taking it all in .

"Who's p***y is this Lucy?" He asked possessively as his finger inched closer to my wet folds . He pushed a finger in and slowly brought it back out before pushing it back in with more force than before .

I thrashed against his hands , his touch igniting a fire deep inside me , a fire that begged to be let out by him and him alone . My mind and body no longer belonged to me ... controlled by whatever Austin

asked of it , as if it breathed and lived only for him .

"TELL ME!" He roared , as he increased the speed and pressure .

"Y-yours !" I screamed as his mouth took the place of his hands , my butt shooting off the bed as he buried his tongue inside my p***y , sucking and tasting all of me . I was completely blinded , lost in a current that I had no control over , drowning in it all . Austin continued with his sucking and licking until I fully came apart in his mouth , my o****m shook my entire world and completely wrecked me , leaving me lost and breathless ... my body unable to keep up with all the pleasure he brought to me .

Austin's lips were wet from my juices and he was staring at me like he wanted to eat me alive . "You're mine Lucy , don't you ever f*****g forget that."

Now that my head was clearer from the o****m , I swiftly rose up and covered my body with the sheets . Austin growled in disapproval at me hiding my nakedness from him .

"This is the last time I'll ever let you touch me ." I threatened as I felt the tears form in my eyes . " If I have to see you with her one more time Austin I swear to God I'll leave this place and you'll never see me again ."

Austin's eyes widened in shock and horror at my words . Before he had a chance to respond or recover from my words, I quickly rushed into the bathroom and locked myself in as I broke down in tears .

As my words ... my actions ... everything made it all clear to me now .

I LOVED HIM!

I LOVED AUSTIN.

God I loved him , I really really loved him , with everything in me .

I couldn't pretend anymore , I was so deeply and madly in love with him , to the extent that I would give my life for him ... to the point that I'd die inside if I had to see him with someone else . To the point that if he ever left me , he would be taking a part of me along with him.

.....

AUSTIN'S POV:

I stormed out the room , fighting the urge to punch the walls . When I had seen Zagan holding Lucy my control had snapped , I wanted to f*****g kill the a*****e . It didn't help that she had ignored me the entire day either , it only fueled the fire burning inside me.

I took a long deep shaky breath remembering the hurt in her eyes and the way her voice had broken while telling me that she would leave me if she ever saw me with Ariana again .

The worst part was that I desperately wanted to stop her pain , desperately wanted to make her happy but I didn't know how to f*****g do it with Ariana being my mate.

I made my way down the stairs and pushed through the crowd ... I needed to be away from everyone right now , needed to let it all out before I went insane . As I made my way out the hall , I reached over and held onto the door handle tightly , my hands trembling at the thought of losing Lucy .

I pushed the back door open , as soon as it shut behind me I dropped to my knees on the grass and let out a soul shattering roar , not a care in the world that there was still a room full of werewolves inside the ballroom and that they all would be able to hear me . When that didn't seem like enough , I picked myself up and started punching at the gates in anger and frustration .

Even that wasn't enough to stop the pain I felt growing inside of me ... I continued to punch harder , letting out another loud roar .

I wanted to rip out my shirt and tear my own body apart ... wanted to harm myself in the most painful

way possible for hurting Lucy.

I felt helpless and lost .

I didn't know what to do ... didn't know how to fix this problem and it was slowly killing me .

"Austin!" James shouted my name as he approached me . "You need to stop that ... what the hell is wrong with you ?" He demanded as he grabbed hold of my shoulder to stop me from attacking the gate .

"I don't know what to do." I confessed , my hands dropping to my sides completely void of life ." I feel trapped ."

"Talk to me brother ."

I breathed heavily . " I can't let her go ... ever ." I whispered more to myself than to him.

I'll f*****g die if I ever had to let her go.

"I can't let her go ." I repeated in agony .

My brother's forehead creased in confusion . " Lucy or Ariana ?"

Lucy...

My breath hitched at that thought . My head throbbed painfully and my heart hammered as a thought suddenly crossed my mind .

" Is it possible to have two mates ?"

That would explain a lot of things , for the feelings that I had for Lucy wasn't normal but yet they were still different from what I felt for Ariana .

So f*****g different ... I couldn't even explain it . God , I was f*****g going insane !

James paused at my question , as if searching his mind for an answer . "I've heard of instances before so it isn't exactly impossible but it is a very rare case ."

I wasn't even sure why the f**k I was asking this question , I've also heard of werewolves having more than one mate but it usually happened if their first mate died , I've never actually heard of them having two mates at the exact same time .

"I feel like time is running out on me and I need to make a decision soon ." I g*****d dropping my head into my hands helplessly .

James sighed before placing his hand on my shoulder once again.

"I'm positive you'll make the right decision ." He assured me . " You always do , it's what got you the title of the most powerful pack in the first place , you'll figure it out brother ... trust me , you will ."

.....

ERIC'S POV:

"You heard that ." Ariana whispered .

"Everyone heard that ." I told my daughter at the sound of the Alpha's deafening roar just outside the palace . I watched as James rushed out the room upon hearing the roar . "You stay here and find out what more you can about just how far Austin's and Lucy's relationship has reached while I go and listen in on their conversation ."

I was careful not to make a sound as I searched for a hiding spot where both men couldn't possibly see me , though I doubt they would be looking out for anyone with the rage Austin was in.

I listened in on the brothers conversation , my body tensed with each word that came out their mouths . I had even less time than I had originally thought . If Austin was already questioning the possibility of having two mates , it wouldn't be long before he realized that Lucy was his one and only mate . When

that happened he would question why his feelings for Ariana suddenly disappeared and then it wouldn't take him long again to figure out he was under a spell .Things would only get worse from there , I needed to get Ariana and leave now to plan my next move ... Lucy would be gone before Austin even got a chance to figure out she was his mate , I would make sure of it .

Chapter 29

LUCY'S POV:

I awoke the next day in pain , my entire body felt sore and not like itself at all . I lay in bed just staring at the ceiling , the throbbing headache making it hard to think clearly , not that I wanted to be thinking clearly for my mind always travelled straight back to Austin . In fact it didn't matter where I was or what I was doing , for some reason he was always on my mind . I closed my eyes , hoping to clear my head but it only made things worse as images of Austin flashed across my mind . I buried my head against the pillows in frustration , maybe a shower would help. I slowly picked myself off the bed and strolled into the bathroom . With tired drowsy eyes , I hastily slipped out of my clothes and wrapped my body in a towel . As I neared the bathroom mirrors my gaze immediately caught my reflection there ... I looked like hell .

With a frown I slowly scanned my face , moving from my swollen lips to my dark swollen eyes which was a result from all of the crying last night .

I dropped the towel , my eyes immediately drawn to the beautiful love marks Austin had left on my body last night . I ran my hands over them slowly , remembering the wonderful feeling of having his lips on me and wishing they still were there . I sighed , my eyes dropping to my stomach . My forehead furrowed , my tummy seemed a lot more bigger than what it usually looked like , I ran my hands over the small bump and froze when I felt a small movement inside me .

I stood completely still , waiting to see if I would feel the movement again . Was it possible I had imagined it ?

Before I had time to process the thought even further I was hit with a wave of nausea just like yesterday , I leaned over the sink and emptied my stomach . When I thought it was finally over it hit me even harder than before and I stumbled forward over the sink again , what the hell was this ?

Something was definitely wrong with me , I needed to visit a doctor . I buried my face in my hands with a g***n , I always hated being in a doctor's office ... how much worse could things get for me ?

It took me like an hour to fully compose myself before I finally made my way down the stairs , Maya was the first person I saw and I was happy for that .

"Good morning ." She greeted me with a bright smile . However as her eyes took me in , the smile was immediately replaced by a frown . " You still don't look so well ... have you been crying ?"

I shook my head at her . " I just didn't get much sleep last night ." I lied . " I also wanted to ask if it were possible for me to visit the village today ."

"You want to visit the village?" Maya asked , repeating my words .

I nodded .

"Okay sure , I'll get a driver ready for you ." She informed me with a smile . " Do you want me to accompany you ?"

I thought about that for a moment , if Maya accompanied me she would know I'm going to visit the

doctor , the last thing I wanted was anyone worrying about me .

I shook my head at her . " No it's okay , I just wanted to walk around a bit and have some alone time . "

Maya nodded her head in understanding . "I totally get it Lucy , hopefully this trip helps clear your mind a bit . "

I smiled at her , happy that she didn't press the matter further . A thought crossed my mind and I couldn't stop myself from asking the next question .

"Have you seen Austin?"I asked her , afraid of her response . I hadn't seen him since last night and I feared he was with Ariana .

Her eyes softened . " Austin wasn't in his best state of mind yesterday , so he and James went for a run last night ... I don't know where they went after but I haven't seen them since then . " She informed me .

I breathed a sigh of relief to know that he was with his brother . However , despite everything I was still concerned about his well being and didn't like hearing that he wasn't okay . I shook the thought out of my head , there was no use worrying about it now .

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ERIC'S POV:

My eyes took in the scene in front of me as a pleased smile formed on my lips . My men were proving just how strong they were , their training had improved tremendously over the past few months . They understood that our time was coming soon , what we had worked so hard for over the past years was finally almost within our reach . No longer would we be known as the second best , the word 'second' alone darkened my mood . I hated our title , from day one we deserved to be number one ... not second . But it wasn't long for it all to change , wasn't long at all. I already knew of a way to dispose of Lucy and I couldn't wait for the plan to be put into effect . When she was out of the way , nothing else could possibly disrupt my plans . I felt giddy with excitement , I couldn't wait a second longer .

"There would be no breaks today . " I told my men as they all nodded their heads , sweat trickling down their bodies . Not a single one of them complaining for they all knew what happened to the last person who complained ... he was no longer here with us . After giving several orders to my beta I climbed the stairs to my chamber .

"Mandy !" I shouted .

The maid immediately rushed in and gave a low bow . " What can I do for you today Alpha ?"

"Let my daughter know that I wish to see her immediately and after you're done serve us some food . " I ordered . "Move FASTER!" I roared , the maid jumped at my tone and flew out the room in panic .

I took a sigh and leaned back against my chair , I needed the constant reminder of what was to come in order to stay calm . The thought once again thrilled me .

I watched as Ariana made her way towards me , we had a lot of important matters to discuss today.

"What do you want to do next father ?" She asked me as she took a seat on one of the metal chairs .

"How is the spell ?" I answered her question with a question of my own.

She sighed . "It continues to weaken , I'm losing my control on him."

I nodded my head , just as I had expected .

"I've asked around and done some digging up . " I told her . " From what I've heard , Lucy has no idea that Austin thinks you are his mate . We can use this to our advantage , she's already insecure about your relationship with him , if she believes that you're his mate it may be the little push we need for her to leave . "

Ariana shook her head in agreement . " How do you propose I tell her or when ?"

"I'll have one of my men tell Austin that you are in danger while he's in the presence of Lucy , it would be more than enough to help our case since she would be able to see just how fast he runs to your side when you're in danger ."

Ariana smiled , her eyes lighting up at my words . "I like the sound of that."

"After Austin leaves her presence to 'save you' , she would be left alone and completely vulnerable ... it would give you enough time to make Lucy believe that Austin is your mate ... I'm positive that she would leave after you confront her and all of our problems should leave with her ."

Ariana's smile broadened further . " You truly come up with the best plans father , this ought to be fun ."

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LUCY'S POV:

Adam gave me a puzzled look . " A village doctor?"

Maya had assigned Adam to take me to the village , apparently just like Austin she wanted only the best of the best protecting me . She also claimed that Austin wouldn't be too happy about me leaving the palace without him but she understood that I needed this and so she wouldn't let me leave unless I took Adam along with me . Not that I had a problem with Adam , I just wasn't sure I wanted anyone digging too much into this .

"Yes , a doctor ." I repeated myself .

Adam held in a smile .

What was so funny ?

"Ah Princess ." He started . " It's best we take you to a werewolf doctor , not one of the village doctors , few of them actually know of the existence of werewolves and if there is a problem with you , a werewolf doctor would be of much more better assistance ."

Oh.

I never had that problem before in my old kingdom but then again I was under the spell from the witch my father had hired that hid my werewolf background from everyone .

"Can you take me to one then ?" I asked . "Where there isn't much people ." I added , the last thing I wanted was a crowd .

He studied me for a moment before responding . "Sure but should I mention something to Austin.."

I immediately shook my head . "Please don't . " His eyes narrowed suspiciously . "It's just that I don't want to worry anyone , I've just been having these constant headaches , that's all."

Adam seemed to buy that excuse for he quickly nodded . It wasn't long for us to reach the doctor's office and once Adam explained to the werewolf whom I was , everyone there immediately came to my aid and took all the tests they saw fit after I described my symptoms .

After some time , the doctor whom I had seen earlier finally motioned for me to join him in the room once again .

I couldn't understand why but for some reason I was very nervous for the results . My hands were shaking and I actually wished Austin was here with me right now .

As I took a seat on one of the chairs given to patients , he turned to me with a bright smile . "Well Princess Lucy , your results are finally in ."

"And?"

His smile broadened . " Congratulations . "

Congratulations ?

W-what?

Chapter 30

Was I missing something ?

What doctor congratulated their patient when they were sick? I continued to gape at him , waiting for him to say more , not exactly sure what he was congratulating me on .

"Excuse me ?" I asked him when he didn't say anything further , feeling completely lost and needing the doctor to add to his last statement .

He studied me for a minute without saying a word , looking as though he didn't understand why I hadn't figured out what he'd meant as yet . "You're pregnant ." He finally announced after studying my blank expression .

W-what?

My body turned to stone at his words , my mind taking some time to wrap itself around this new information .

"P-pregnant ?" I repeated in shock . "How did this even happen ?" I whispered to myself .

"Well Princess when a man and woman — " The doctor stopped talking when I turned to glare at him . " Too soon for jokes ? "

Was that what I had felt earlier this morning ... my baby ?

"I don't understand , how was I already able to feel movement in my stomach , isn't it too soon for that ?" I inquired .

The doctor gave me a confused look . " How much do you know about your kind?" He asked before his eyes widened . " Oh right , you didn't know of your background until recently ... So basically the pregnancy of a werewolf lasts for only 3 months unlike humans , so the development is a lot faster in the case of werewolves ."

THREE MONTHS ?

Just three months ? Three months and I'll have a little angel in my arms ?

My heart welled with emotion , my mind and body finally coming to terms with the doctor's words . I placed my hand over my stomach , my eyes brimming with happy tears ... I was going to be the mother of Austin's baby . The thought alone filled me with so much joy that I couldn't wait to have our baby in my arms , our little angel . It was only a few minutes since I'd found out and already I knew that this baby would be my life , my everything , nothing would ever come before him or her .

He or she would be a blessing in my life , I could already feel it ... feel all the love pouring out of my heart for my baby ... our baby .

.....

I was in a complete daze on my trip back home .

I considered giving the news to Austin's family but I knew that I didn't want to let anyone know I was pregnant until I'd told Austin . I wanted him to know before anyone else , after all he was the father . I also wasn't sure what his reaction was going to be like , what if he didn't want our baby ?

My heart clenched at that thought , no , I had to keep thinking positively . Even though he hasn't been

the best husband , he's always protected me and kept me safe . If he could be that way for someone he didn't love , then he would have to care for his own baby .

"Princess ." Adam called . " We're back home ." He informed me .

Oh , I was so lost in my thoughts that I hadn't realized he was trying to get my attention .

"Are you sure you're okay ?" He asked for like the hundredth time .

I nodded my head .

He sighed . " Good ... the last thing I want is Austin coming for my head because I let something happen to you on my watch ."

"I'm okay ." I assured him once again before exiting the vehicle and making my way inside the palace .

Luckily , I didn't run into any of the family members . I wasn't sure how good I would be at keeping this information from them . It didn't take long for me to reach my room , with a sigh I dropped myself onto the bed and tried hard to keep my composure .

How was I going to break the news to Austin ? I didn't even know where he were , was he even back home since last night ? I spent the rest of the day in the same position , not moving an inch as I kept replaying the doctor's words over and over in my head . I probably rubbed my stomach over a hundred times as well , wanting to feel my baby's movement at least one more time for the day , now that I knew what I had felt came from him or her , I just wanted to feel it once more and this time treasure it with all my heart .

I knew the moment Austin had entered the room , felt his presence even before that.

I slowly turned and found him at the doorway , my eyes immediately connected with his bare chest ... why was he shirtless ? Not that I was complaining . I continued to openly stare , my eyes taking it all in as he stood there in all his glory , his divine sculpted very much masculine chest making me forget everything but the sexy beast of a man in front of me .

God. My cheeks immediately reddened as I realized the direction of my thoughts , was this a part of the pregnancy hormones ?

I took a deep breath and forced myself to look away as the word pregnancy reminded me of exactly what was about to come . My eyes slowly travelled to his face and I gasped at the hunger I saw etched deep in his eyes while he openly took me in as well .

"We need to talk ." I finally willed myself to say , realizing that neither one of us were planning on moving from our original position and if we kept it up we would just spend the rest of the day staring at each other .

Austin nodded , his eyes held a bit of curiosity as he approached me . " What is it?" He asked as he hesitantly took a seat on one of the chairs to the front of me .

I fidgeted with my hands on my lap as I tried to build up the courage to tell him.

Austin got up from the chair and stepped down in front of me, he gently reached over and placed his finger under my chin , forcing me to look him in the eye . "What's wrong ?"

Just like always I got lost in his eyes as they completely pulled me in , making it hard to think clearly . I swallowed and took a deep breath as I tried to find my voice . I wanted more than anything to throw myself into his arms and hear him tell me that everything would be okay , that he would love our baby and I had nothing to worry about . I wanted to hear from him that I was the only woman in his life , that from now on nothing mattered but both of us . But I knew that was all just me dreaming , for I couldn't possibly expect him to say that in reality when Ariana was the woman he loved .

Austin continued to search my face as he waited for me to speak , he seemed to be growing impatient with each second that passed by .

"I'm-"

I didn't get to continue as footsteps outside the door interrupted me right before I could finish what I was about to say , it was also quite clear that the person was shouting Austin's name . Who was that ? It wasn't a voice I'd heard before since I'd come to live here .

Austin quickly picked himself off the floor and rushed out the door , I followed him outside in panic . Was something wrong ?

"Austin!" The man called once more , seeming out of breath . " Ariana-"

Austin immediately stiffened upon hearing her name . " What happened to her ?" He demanded taking a step closer to him .

My heart broke as I saw the worry on Austin's face for Ariana's safety . I also didn't want anything to have happened to her but it still hurt to see him care so much for a woman who wasn't me .

"S-she's in danger ."

I watched in shock as Austin took off storming down the stairs not even waiting a second more to hear what else the man had to say , not even caring that I was right here ... completely forgetting that I had important information to share with him . Was this how it would always be like ? Austin forgetting about the existence of both my baby and I while he went to tend to Ariana ?

I placed my head in my hands as I tried to fight the tears that threatened to fall once more . I didn't know how long I stayed like that but a moment later I felt the presence of someone near me . Was it the same man from earlier ?

"Hi Lucy."

Ariana!

What was she doing here ? I lifted my head out from my hands as our gazes locked .

"I thought you were in danger ?" I accused , narrowing my eyes at her .

She laughed as she rolled her eyes at me . " It was just a false alarm , a little stunt I put together so that you could see just how much Austin loves me ."

My eyes widened . "WHAT?"

"Oh naive Lucy ." Ariana hissed while shaking her head at me . " Do you still not get it ?"

What was she trying to tell me ?

"I AM Austin's mate . " She announced throwing her hands in the air . " In other words, he can't possibly live without me ... so there is absolutely no place for you in his life ."

Her words shocked me to the very core , taking away my will to breathe and shattering my heart into tiny pieces .

Every single word my sister had said to me while I was at the council raced through my mind now , if Ariana was Austin's mate then she was right , I could never have a place in his life . It also meant he would never leave her and I already knew I couldn't see them together for if I had too it would completely break me .

What was I going to do ?

"You're really pathetic if you're actually considering staying with Austin after finding out I'm the only one he will ever want ." She spat disgustingly .

She was right .

I couldn't stay here anymore after what I'd just found out , especially not after I was pregnant. My baby was now my everything , my whole life , I lived for the angel in my tummy and I would never allow him or her to grow up under these circumstances .

The next thought completely shattered everything within me .

I had to leave .

Leave Austin ... forever.

Chapter 31

As soon as Ariana left I fell to the ground , unable to stop the tears from flowing down my cheeks . I didn't know how to do it ... didn't know how to leave Austin . I trembled , I couldn't think of a life without him in it , not after everything I've felt for him , after everything he has made me feel ... not after the fire he had ignited within me , a fire that only he could control . I blinked through the tears , fighting hard to think clearly . If I wanted to leave before Austin got back , I had to stop thinking about him , had to stop my heart from feeling before I cried my life out .

Where was I going to go ? I couldn't possibly go back to the council , I would never let my child grow up in that sick place . As much as I wanted to be near my family , it wasn't a risk I could take . I needed to go somewhere my baby would be safe .

I considered going back to my first home but I knew my step parents would never accept me back there , they were happy to get rid of me . It also wasn't some place I'd want my baby growing up . They hated me with a passion and would no doubt hate my baby as well .

Then it hit me , the house where my brothers had taken me too the first time they'd introduced themselves to me , our first home . It was the perfect place , there was a quiet village nearby and Austin hadn't been able to find me there back then . I could find a work , I already had the house ... I was sure my family wouldn't mind me staying there , after all it had no one there at the moment .

It wasn't hard to find either , I think I remembered everything from our trip back from after my brothers had kidnapped me and were bringing me back to the palace .

I picked myself off the floor and stepped into the room , trying hard not to look at anything that reminded me of Austin , it would only make it much harder to leave .

I pulled a suitcase out of the wardrobe and began packing . I wiped at the tears as I continued to shove my clothes into it .

I considered just leaving without letting Austin's family know but I quickly dismissed that thought , after everything they'd done for me , I at least owed them a thank you and a proper goodbye .

.....

I found Maya and her parents in the dining room . Maya was the first to look my way , her brows furrowed as her eyes fell on the suitcase in my hand . " Why are you holding a suitcase ?"

Austin's parents finally turned to me at her words . " Lucy ?" The queen questioned as she waited for me to answer Maya's question .

"I'm sorry . " I whispered , unable to look at them as I spoke . " You have been the family I'd always wished I'd had , every one of you made my stay here an extremely beautiful one . I can't thank you enough for your hospitality and the love you've showered upon me . However , I can't stay here any longer ."

The complete silence that fell upon the room made me look up , the shocked horrified looks on each of their faces almost made me drop the suitcase and forget about the whole thing ... I hated hurting the people I cared about .

"No." The queen responded in a flat tone . "We aren't letting you go anywhere ."

"I'm with mother on this ." Maya added .

" Please don't stop me . " I begged . " Each time I see Ariana with Austin it completely breaks my heart , I can't stand it anymore ... I really can't . So please , if you have any heart for me at all , let me go . Please."

"I don't want to let you go ." Maya cried . " You're the sister I've always wished for , I really can't imagine home without you here anymore ."

"Lucy , please reconsider ." The king whispered in a sad tone . " You're family now , how are we supposed to just let you go like that ?"

When I remained quiet , the queen took my hands in hers . " We're sorry for the pain you've had to endure , we honestly wish things were different but if this is what you wish to do ... we will respect your wishes ."

My eyes stung with tears as the three of them pulled me into a hug . " You'll always be family and if you ever need anything please remember we're here Lucy . We will always be here for you ."

I nodded as I blinked through the tears . I didn't know how long we stood like that , but after a lot of crying I was finally on my way out of the palace . Austin's parents had forced me to take some cash with me , they gave me more than enough to last months , saying that they wouldn't let me go unless I took it with me since I'd already refused transportation to where I wanted to go . I didn't want anyone knowing where I was going , couldn't risk Austin coming to find me .

I rubbed my tummy . " We're going to be okay ." I whispered to my baby as I took one last look at the closest place to home I'd ever had . After a few seconds I finally forced myself to turn and walk away , leaving behind a piece of my heart ... the love of my life , for both his happiness and the sake of my baby .

.....

AUSTIN'S POV:

"I can't believe she f*****g played such a trick on you ." Lucas growled . "Like if such a sensitive matter is something to joke about ."

Usually when Lucas said something against Ariana I would quickly defend her but he was f*****g right about this one . Who made a joke about being in danger when they were actually out shopping ?

Apparently she'd just wanted to see how quickly I'd come to her rescue if I thought she were in danger . My fists tightened at my sides as I remembered her foolish words .

" Something doesn't seem right about her story ." James cut in , not looking pleased about this matter either . I couldn't blame him for thinking that way , I didn't buy Ariana's story either . There was something she wasn't telling us .

" All I know is that I left the comfort of my bed for that b***h and I don't even like her ." Lucas mumbled . " At least we're finally home and I could go back to forgetting about her existence ." Yes home ... To Lucy .

She was in the middle of telling me something when I had heard Ariana was in danger , like a fool I had left her there without hearing her out or letting her finish . A string of curses left my mouth , I was even

more pissed off now at the game Ariana had played . I had left Lucy there for absolutely nothing . That fact had me restless the whole trip back , at least I was back home now and could finally ask her what she had wanted to tell me .

I knew something was wrong the moment I stepped into the palace . My wolf was beyond restless but for some reason I couldn't put a finger on what was wrong . I tried to remain calm but even my wolf was losing his cool , the look my brothers gave to me told me that even they sensed my edginess .

My body froze as my mind finally wrapped itself around what had me so uneasy ... Lucy's scent was no longer strong , in fact it was very faint ... which meant she wasn't here . My wolf started to pace within me , wanting to know where the f**k she was ,his thoughts mirroring that of my own feelings .

Where the f**k was Lucy ?

I rushed inside impatiently , desperate to find my family to get to the bottom of this , someone must know where she went . My temper flared , why would they let her go anywhere without accompanying her ? I continued to race inside , my eyes scanning my surroundings and following their scents .

I didn't have to look far as Maya along with my parents stood right before my eyes . I stiffened at the broken looks on each of their faces , a chill tingled down my spine figuring out that something must have happened and it definitely concerned Lucy .

"Where is she ?" I demanded , my voice sounding weird to my own ear .

My parents exchanged hesitant looks with each other , neither one of them speaking a word , almost as if they were afraid to tell me . Why were they all quiet ? I turned to Maya , unable to hide the desperation from my voice this time . "WHERE IS SHE ?" I repeated .

Maya shook her head at me, tears trickling down her cheeks . " She's gone ."

Gone ?

What the hell was that supposed to mean ? For Maya to look this upset things had to be pretty bad , it meant Lucy hadn't just went on some trip , no she had to have went somewhere very far . My wolf paced once more at that thought , I felt him trying to rise , fighting to be set free .

"What do you mean by that ?" I asked taking a step closer , searching my sister's face .

"She left Austin ... for good ." She snapped . " And she's not coming back ."

I staggered back at her words ... NO!

That wasn't possible ... she couldn't ... she wouldn't . Panic filled me as my eyes scanned my surroundings , this had to be some kind of sick joke . My mind refused to come to terms with Lucy leaving but I couldn't deny the broken looks on each member of my family's faces nor could I deny the fact that her scent was definitely faint and she wasn't anywhere to be seen .

"W-why?" I stuttered .

Maya narrowed her eyes at me , the look of disappointment on her face making me wince . "You know why." She accused .

My heart clenched at her words , nothing compared to the pain I felt there , in fact not even the feeling of having a knife put straight through my heart , over and over again could compete with the pain I felt now . Even with all of the evidence , I still refused to believe she had left me ... I wouldn't believe it until I had seen it for myself , until I had searched every inch of this palace .

I raced up the stairs , ignoring the calls of my brothers and pushed the room door open with so much force that it slammed against the wall . My head was spinning as I scanned the room for anything that belonged to her ... NO!

Gone , it was all gone .

'If I have to see you with her one more time Austin I swear to God I'll leave this place and you'll never see me again .'

Lucy's words rocked my brain as I fought to keep my composure , fought to not lose what was left of my sanity . How could she have left me so easily , without so much as a goodbye ? Was it that easy for her to let go of me , when the thought of losing her alone sent me into a frenzy ? How could she have done this so easily ?

HOW!

IT f*****g HURT ! BURNED LIKE A MOTHERFUCKER .

I was angry , hurt , distraught . Panic was making me lose my s**t and my heart wouldn't stop throbbing , feeling like it might explode any second now if I didn't see Lucy anytime soon ... If I didn't know in what state she was ,if I didn't know whether she was happy or whether she was safe .

Everything within me was spinning out of control now that Lucy wasn't here , she had left me ... left me and took my whole heart with her .

NOT JUST MY HEART ... SHE f*****g TOOK MY WHOLE LIFE ALONG WITH HER !

Clarity struck me harder than anything ever did in my entire f*****g life ... it was her .

God.

It was her .

It was Lucy.

LUCY WAS MY MATE!

Lucy was my f*****g mate .

Lucy ... not Ariana .

Lucy.

Lucy.

As soon as the recognition hit me a stabbing pain attacked my head and I doubled over , crashing to the floor . I held my head as I g*****d out loud , feeling a force within me completely shatter . I stayed like that for a few minutes , unable to move through the pain .

The moment the pain stopped I felt something lift from within me .

I froze as more clarity shocked me , my body turning to stone .

Ariana.

I felt nothing ... nothing at all for her . All of the feelings had just magically disappeared like if all this time she had never meant a single thing to me ... as if all of the feelings was never even there in the first place .

I stiffened .

What the f**k ?

Chapter 32

Eric's POV:

As I made my way inside the receptionist's area , I noticed the way the patients and nurses ducked their heads in fear . One of the spies I'd hired to track Lucy's every move had reported that she visited this doctor recently and I was more than curious to find out why .

I totally disregarded the head receptionist and stormed into the doctor's office , I spotted him looking through some documents on his desk . He looked up from the files and froze as soon as his eyes fell upon me .

"Alpha Eric ." He greeted me hesitantly , it was usually easy to tell whether my presence intimidated someone and he was most definitely afraid . "What can I do for you today ? "

"Tell me why Princess Lucy came to visit you ." I ordered , not bothering to waste any time on letting him know about my intentions .

All the b****d drained from his face at my words . He immediately looked away , his hands trembling as he picked up some files from the desk .

"You know I'm not at liberty to discuss any of my patients—" He started . I gripped his collar roughly and pulled him onto the table , not giving him a chance to continue the rest of that sentence .

"Don't make me force it out of you doctor ." I threatened , glaring at him .

His eyes widened and he raised his hands in surrender ."S-she's pregnant ." He blurted out .

Shock tore through me .

Lucy was pregnant ? When did they even have time too ... it had to have happened when they were at the council .

This changed everything , I couldn't have her coming back three months from now and yet again ruining my plans by bringing her baby .

I had no choice but to kill her now .

I mind linked Zagan . ' Bring her back to my territory .'

It was a good thing I had him tracking Lucy since she'd left Jeremy's residence . As soon as we had her back in my territory , that was it , I would get rid of her for good .

.....

AUSTIN'S POV:

" You're saying all of your feelings for Ariana just vanished ?" Maya asked in shock , looking at me as if I were mad for speaking such words .

I nodded , trying to stay calm and keep a clear mind from everything that had unfolded in just one day .

"How is that even possible ? " My mother asked , leaning against my father for support .

"I've come to one conclusion ... I had to have been under a spell ." I finally muttered , my body stiffening at my own words . " It's the only thing that makes sense to me ."

"And it had to be from Ariana ." Lucas concluded ." For if you were under a spell to make you believe she were your mate then what was her excuse for sticking around ... she must have known you weren't her mate all along ."

He was right . I had already thought about that , Ariana would have already known I wasn't her mate and she didn't mention a word to me which meant she was the one to put the spell on me .

But why ? I didn't want to put any false accusations however , the only way to prove this were true was to visit an actual witch and have them confirm it for me .

If it were true however ... my b****d boiled at that sickening thought , someone was definitely going to f*****g die .

Loud footsteps brought my attention to the doorway , my eyes falling on the two figures there .

"What is he doing here ?" I asked as James entered with Valerio , the young boy who had asked to join my pack after giving me information that Lucy was Alpha Richard's son . James and I had discussed it

after our return from the council , Valerio was to join his pack instead and the boy was happy with that decision so we had stuck with it . Now they looked like they had important information to give to me , I knew that look from James all too well and I was impatient to find out what they had for me . My brother waited for the boy to speak but just like our last encounter he was afraid to say anything , especially after studying my rage . "Valerio isn't just a werewolf ... he's a hybrid . " He explained . " His mother is a witch . "

I took a step closer to the boy at my brother's words , if this were indeed true then he could give to me the confirmation I needed to hear .

"I sensed a spell on you the first time we'd met but I didn't say anything because I wasn't sure ... my witch senses aren't that strong yet . I didn't want to point it out unless I was positive . " The boy finally willed himself to say , looking everywhere but at me .

I peered at the boy without actually seeing him , his words clawing at me and ripping me apart . Fire raced through my veins and fueled my anger at the clarity his words brought forward .

It was confirmed .

I was under a f*****g spell ?

All this time I stood up for Ariana thinking she was my mate , it was all for nothing ? All because I was under a f*****g spell ?

I lost Lucy over A f*****g SPELL ? My mind burned with images of the many times Lucy had hurt because of me foolishly taking Ariana's side over hers .

All along Lucy was my mate and she had to stand there and watch me claim to love another , I couldn't even begin to imagine the pain I'd put her through , it would have broken her heart into tiny pieces to see her own mate with someone else , the one person who was supposed to love and cherish her with everything within him , giving that love to someone else right in front of her . The hurt in her eyes that I'd put there on multiple occasions were haunting me now , killing me inside .

What had I done ?

I'd put my true mate , my true love through the worst pain possible ... All because I couldn't recognize that someone had f*****g messed with me and placed me under some God forsaken spell . How could I have not seen it ? All the signs were there , from the minute I'd laid eyes on Lucy I should have f*****g known that she was MINE .

I was a f*****g piece of s**t , I hated myself ... I wanted to rip myself apart with the amount of self hatred racing through my veins now .

"WHAT HAVE I DONEEEEE –" I roared , my voice crazed and unrecognizable to my own ear . The guilt within me was eating at me raw , taking away the little sanity I had left within me after finding out Lucy had left me .

I fell to the ground as I let out another soul shattering roar of agony , I rose up and started pelting furniture throughout the room , smashing my fists against the glass tables . My brothers were immediately by my side , pulling me back and forcing me to stop harming myself . But I didn't want to stop , seeing the b***d trickle down my hands was helping , the more I hurt myself for causing Lucy pain , the more would I feel at ease ... but I knew nothing would fully cure me until I had gotten Lucy's forgiveness for what I had done .

But would I get it ? For I wasn't even worthy of forgiveness after what I'd done to her .

Was it too late to get back my mate ?

I didn't know what it would take to get her back but I was willing to lay down my life if she asked that of me . But first , I was going to f*****g murder every single person responsible for putting this spell on me and separating me from the one person I couldn't f*****g live without .
Fury lashed through my body like a whip , what was left of my sanity was now completely gone .
I WAS OUT FOR f*****g B***D!

.....

LUCY'S POV :

I trembled in fear , I wasn't sure what had happened ... one minute I was on my way to my parent's home and the next I had a bag over my head and was being dragged to Lord alone knows where . My hands were tied tightly behind a chair , the rope digging into my skin and I couldn't see anything but blackness . My panic continued to rise as the seconds ticked by , fear for my baby's life making it hard to concentrate on anything or think clearly for that matter . I cursed my luck , it seemed as though a single day couldn't go by without my life being in danger , but things were a lot more serious now . I had a baby to protect and I was determined to kill anything or anyone that threatened my baby's life . I stiffened as sudden footsteps sounded a little distance away . I could hear multiple voices as well , they were getting closer by the second . How many kidnappers were there exactly ? The voices were becoming a lot clearer as the men neared me .
I froze upon hearing a new voice amongst them .
I knew that voice .

Before I had time to ponder more on my recent thought , the bag was roughly pulled out from around my face without warning . I blinked , my eyes adjusting to the bright light before focusing on the person in front of me . My b***d crawled at who I saw next .

"Hi Lucy ."

Chapter 33

Eric was standing over me with a predatory look as he waited for me to respond .

A shock of pure horror lashed through me as my eyes scanned the room , I was surrounded by five other men and they all were looking at me as if they were just waiting for orders from Eric before they pounced on me . My gaze fell on the only woman in the room , her presence a strong one amongst the men ... she gave off a powerful dangerous aura , everything about her screamed black magic .

A witch , I silently thought ... and not one of the good kinds either .

" What do you want from me ?" I asked , trying to calm my racing heart as I turned my attention back to Eric .

He smiled and took a seat opposite me . " Your death ."

I gasped , staring at him completely terror struck .

"Why? " I asked , my hands shaking . " What have I ever done to you ?"

He sighed turning to the rest of his apprentices in the room . " What has she done she asks ?" He told them , shaking his head at me as if to say I should have already known what I did .

"You know Lucy , before you came everything was going as planned and then as soon as you entered the picture my plan started to fail . I should have expected this from you however , like father like daughter . Your father almost ruined my plans years ago and you came to do the same . Luckily just like

your father , I would get rid of you and get away with is just like I'd done in the past ."

"What are you talking about ?" I demanded , his words not making any sense to me .

He chuckled . " Should I tell her ?" He asked the witch .

She smiled licking her dark lips . " I think you should ."

"My plan has always been to overthrow Jeremy , then Austin took over the pack and my plans changed to overthrowing Austin instead , my pack always deserved the number one position you see . Anyway , years ago your father overheard my plans to ambush Jeremy's pack but before he had time to tell Jeremy of my evil plot , I turned the entire thing on him . My allies weren't strong enough at that time to finish off Jeremy's pack , so I knew I had to at least get rid of your father so that he couldn't sell me out . Some of the members of your father's pack had already agreed to join forces with me and thus I had them attack Jeremy and put all of the blame on Richard . A brilliant plan don't you think ? It doesn't matter what you think actually for it did work . I separated good friends in a matter of seconds and it was honestly one of the best days of my life till date. "

"You sick –"

"But wait , there is more ." He cut me off with a wave of his finger ." I needed someone close to Austin , someone who could spy on his every move ... someone he would listen too . Someone he thought he couldn't live without and who else would that be but his mate ? I put two and two together , I had a young daughter who could possibly bring the alpha to his knees , the problem was that she wasn't his mate and he wouldn't look her way for even a second . That's where this powerful lady comes in ." He continued motioning for the woman to step forward . " This is Marianne Leslie , one of the most powerful witches I know . She created a spell so powerful that Austin never doubted Ariana was his mate for even a split second ... until you entered the picture that is. "

"Now why do you think that is Lucy ?" He asked .

When I refused to answer he continued to tell his story , answering his own question . " Because ... his true mate is none other than you ."

Shock tore through me , my body paralyzed by his words . It all made sense now , the way I always drowned in Austin's eyes , the way his touch always ignited a fire deep within me ... it explained why the more I had of him the more I wanted as though he were a drug that I was crazily addicted too , a drug I needed every single day of my life in order to survive. But it was more than that , much more than that , for I knew that even without the mating bond , I would have loved Austin with all my heart ... I just knew that the love I had for him ran way deeper than that , so deep ... like I was destined to be with him , like I was made just for him .

" I had my suspicions from the moment you arrived , for Austin had already been drifting away from Ariana . My suspicions were confirmed however when he almost killed Zagan for merely touching you ... It's such a shame that both of you were so clueless and couldn't even recognize the mating bond right there in front of you . I knew how insecure you were about Ariana , could tell by your body language whenever she was around and so I told her what she had to tell you to make you leave and guess what ... it worked ."

"You're a disgusting person ." I shouted , thrashing against the chair as I tried to break free . I wanted to murder this man for everything he put all the people I cared about through . Because of him I was separated from my parents , because of him my family lost their closest friends and were forced to join the council . Because of him Austin didn't recognize me as his own mate , we were all in this big mess

because of this monster and his greed for power .

"If you think so now what would you think after you've heard the rest... For I had a spy following your every move and I paid your doctor a little visit only to find out that you're pregnant with Austin's baby . It's a pity , I was going to let you go as long as you left the palace and never returned but after I found out you were pregnant I knew I had to get rid of you for good ."

My b***d crawled at his words . How sick could one person be ?

He finally rose up from the chair with a wicked smile , I wanted more than anything to wipe that smile off his face .

" It felt good to actually tell someone my story after all of these years ." He said taking a step closer to me . " It's a pity though that you wouldn't live to tell the story to anyone else ."

A loud noise outside the room caught his attention and he stepped back from me to stare at the doorway .

"Father !" Ariana shouted rushing through the door , her hair was in a mess and her eyes were wide with terror .

"What's wrong ?"

"The spell ." She gasped out . " It's broken !"

For a moment Eric's eyes were unfocused and it took a second for him to interpret her words but when it finally sunk in on what she had said , he was pacing the room and shouting out orders for everyone around him to follow.

"f**k !" He roared . " We need to act now !"

Her words gave me hope , if the spell had broken then Austin should know we're mates by now , which meant he would come for me . Despite everything happening around me I felt glee at that thought . But the happiness immediately died down at Eric's next words .

"Show them no mercy , kill them all ." He told his men .

The thought of any harm coming to Austin and his family sent me into panic , the anger that was growing within me intensifying further .

" You'll never overthrow Austin , he's too powerful , his pack would destroy yours in a second ." I shouted , my words echoing throughout the room .

Eric stiffened , turning to me with a glare . " That's where you're wrong , you really think I waited patiently all these years just to fail in the end ? I've thought this out a million times in my head , I've assembled over five packs to defeat Austin , in fact all who's held something against him in the past have teamed up with me to bring him down ."

I gasped , my body shaking in fear ... afraid of what was about to go down. Austin wouldn't even see the attack coming , which meant he wouldn't have time to prepare , no one would . I could feel my own pulse quicken at the thought of losing Austin to these heartless beasts .

"It's going to take us almost a day to assemble all of the packs so we must leave now ." He ordered the men in the room .

"Ariana ." He called turning to his daughter . " I thought I would have gotten the pleasure of killing Richard's beloved daughter but I would leave the honor in your hands ... Finish her off ."

"Yes father ."

As soon as the room emptied out Ariana turned to me . " Scared ?" She asked .

I narrowed my eyes glaring at her .

All this time she knew Austin was my mate and she deliberately made me believe he was hers , making me leave before I could have told him about my pregnancy .

"How could you do this to Austin and his family ?" I asked in disgust .

She laughed . " I've always had an obsession with Austin , he was one of the very few men who didn't look my way no matter how hard I tried to get his attention , so when my father proposed the witch's spell I was more than happy to go along with his plans . However , I've never cared for Austin or his family , they mean nothing to me ... In fact , I despise half of them ." She explained . " I admit it was fun , especially when you came here Lucy . I enjoyed seeing the pain on your face each time Austin tended to me and totally forgot about you ."

" You're just as bad as your father ... you both deserve death ."

She gave a fake yawn at my words . " This conversation is getting quite boring , let's kick it up a notch ." She said as she walked over to a table with several knives laid out on top of it . She glided her fingertips over each of them before picking out the sharpest one .

"So I heard you're pregnant ." She announced as she took a step closer to me with the knife in her hand." How about we get rid of the baby first ." She suggested as she grabbed onto my hair and pulled my head back roughly .

My b***d boiled at her ruthless words and never before had I ever wanted to rip someone's throat apart .

NO ONE THREATENED MY BABY'S LIFE AND GOT AWAY WITH IT ...NO ONE!

Chapter 34

LUCY'S POV :

I bit down hard on Ariana's hand , before she had time to recover I pushed myself up and slammed the chair against her with so much force that she crashed against the wall , the knife from her hand flying halfway across the room .

I pushed myself backwards and crashed the chair against the wall , the wooden furniture immediately broke into tiny pieces , my eyes zeroed in on the knives on the table and I hastily gripped one and worked the knife on the rope . My hands were freed just in time to prepare for Ariana's next advancement , catching her by surprise I grabbed one of the broken wooden pieces and smashed it against her head .

I didn't wait for her to make any further attempts to harm me as I charged forward , tackling her as soon as she made her first attempt to get up . I grabbed her hair and slammed her head against the wall . Ariana touched her forehead in shock at the b***d trickling down her face .

"You f*****g b***h !" She screamed as she lunged for me . I dodged her attack , my outstretched foot tripping her as she fell to the ground flat on her face . She stayed there for a few seconds unmoving and when I thought she had given up the sly b***h grabbed my foot , totally surprising me . She pulled hard , causing me to lose my balance , totally shocking me she slammed her fist against my stomach and I dropped to the ground in pain . My eyes widened as I clutched my belly in fear of any harm coming to my baby .

Anger stirred in my veins , my b***d boiling as I turned to Ariana , giving her a death glare .

A strong force was growing within me and I could feel my wolf's anger as she clawed at me to break

free , she wanted to rip apart Ariana and I was going to let her . The b***h tried to hurt my baby and she was going to suffer for it .

I let out an angry cry that echoed throughout the room as I felt myself shift . Ariana followed right after , shifting into a reddish brown wolf .

My wolf watched her with angry alert eyes , as if examining her movements , waiting for her first strike . Ariana's wolf growled and leaped forward , before she could even touch us , my wolf's teeth came down hard on her foreleg , biting and pulling aggressively at it , the sound of bones cracking travelled throughout the room .

The wolf cried out and dropped to the floor in pain . My wolf stood tall , waiting , giving her a chance to get up and fight . After a few seconds she was on her feet again , this time limping as she growled violently at us .

Within seconds bodies were slamming against each other , teeth sinking into flesh and claws slashing against fur and flesh as we violently fought . After a few minutes of constantly going at it , both wolves stepped aside to catch their breaths , breathing heavily .

Finally , as if my wolf was saying ' that's it , enough playing ' she let out a loud menacing growl and leaped into the air taking Ariana's wolf down with her , they both crashed into the wall , the bricks crumbling to the floor as she took her straight out into the open .

Without giving her a chance to recover from the fall , my wolf pinned her down with so much power and force that she couldn't even move an inch . My wolf's teeth immediately sank down deep into the wolf's neck at the exact same time her claws dug deep into her belly , not stopping until a ripping motion sounded throughout the forest .

The wolf's desperate cries were like music to our ear , she had determined her own fate the moment she tried to harm my baby and this was the punishment she deserved .

The wolf's cries continued to echo throughout the quiet forest as my wolf persisted to bite and rip her apart ... it was only when the wolf was motionless beneath her did she stop with her merciless attack . I released a satisfied sigh within me , one felt by my wolf as well . Ariana had inflicted so much pain upon me and finally I had gotten my revenge and it felt pretty damn good . All the pain and suffering she had put me through every God damn time I had to see her with Austin , all the pain she had me go through while making me think all this time that she was the one he wanted , that she was his mate . Finally , finally ... I had gotten my revenge , not just for me but for both Austin and I .

The feeling was quickly replaced by panic and fear as I suddenly remembered the battle wasn't finished yet , wasn't even close to it . Austin , his family , his pack , they were all in danger and needed to be warned . I came to the conclusion however that even if I got there in time to let them know of Eric's horrible plan , it still wouldn't be enough . For Austin wouldn't have time to assemble help from other packs , I searched my mind , desperate to find some way to save them , some way to help .

And then it dawned on me , my brothers . They were the only ones I could think off to help in a situation like this . I've seen them fight before , they were extremely powerful and were trained for situations such as this , from everything I've learnt off the council and the lives they'd lived there , they would be off great help and could be just what Austin and his pack needed to defeat Eric and ruin his devious plans .

But there was also the prosecutor and that disgusting vampire , we had barely escaped from them before and here I was going right back within their grasps . But it was a risk I was willing to take , for the

sake of Austin and the people he cared about ... the people we cared about .

As soon as I'd made up my mind my wolf started in the direction of the council , she dashed through the woods , leaping over fallen trees and making her own path through the forest . The wind lashed against her fur with the speed in which she moved , desperate to get to our destination as fast as possible , she understood the gravity of the situation just as much as I did . Our vision blurred as the thought of losing Austin crossed my mind but I quickly pushed it out just as quickly as it had entered , I had to keep a positive mindset , I would reach my brothers in time and we would help save the packs , as I was sure James pack would also be involved in the fight .

My wolf continued to race through the woods , our thoughts aligned for we both wanted the same thing ... to save the people we loved .

Maya... Lucas... James.. their parents ...the packs and Austin . I still couldn't believe the fact that we were mates or that he was under a spell , all this time we wasted where we could have been together . And now , I wasn't even sure if I would ever see him again , for I didn't know whether or not I would make it back in time , didn't even know if I would be able to get out of the council this time . These thoughts only encouraged my wolf to move faster , her jumps and leaps even bigger than before . We needed to protect them , couldn't let Eric plans prosper . He already destroyed my family , I couldn't let him destroy another . After everything that disgusting , greedy bastard did to us he had to suffer and I was going to make sure that he did .

I didn't know how long we were running for but I felt a sense of relief as I neared the bridge that connected the land to the council's island , my wolf crouched down and threw her head back before letting out a loud howl that pierced through the forest , shaking the trees around us. A howl so powerful that any wolf within miles would be able to hear it .

And I knew , I just knew ... that my brothers would come . They would come , even if they had to rip apart the council to do so ... they would .

And together , we would fight , fight to save the people we loved , fight to get revenge against the man that put us in this mess , we were going to destroy him until he wished he never did what he did to us . Alpha Eric was going to SUFFER.

Chapter 35

ERMANNNO'S POV :

"THANE!" I shouted. "Catch!"

In one fluent motion, Thane caught the sword in his hand and pierced it through the rogue's heart. Nolan followed right after and pierced it through the skull. I spun with a high kick landing on top the bleeding rogue and with one swift swipe ripped it's head off.

Marcus leaned against the tree while watching us. "Well that was easy." He drawled. "Are we ever going to get a real challenge?"

Thane shook his head at our brother. "Be careful what you wish for."

I was with Thane on this one, from the way things were shaping up, my brother might actually get what he was asking for, a real challenge. It wasn't like we had never been faced with a real challenge before, we were hit with many dangerous battles in the past, but as of recently things had calmed down in the battle field, only for problems to escalate in our family lives.

Luthais threw a water bottle my way. "Thanks." I mumbled before taking a big gulp.

"You guys ready?" Thane asked as he took a quick look at our surroundings. "I don't think we should be out here too long."

I nodded. "Let's go home." I told my brothers while lighting the body on fire.

Our trip back to the council didn't take long, this, I was grateful for. Ever since the entire incident with Lucy, my brothers and I haven't gotten any proper rest. Vincent had tried to make our lives a living hell, especially after he'd tried proving that we helped Lucy and Austin to escape and had failed miserably due to the fact that he didn't have any solid proof to support his claims. He couldn't accept the fact that we had gotten away without any punishments when instead he had gotten punished from the prosecutor for disobeying his direct order.

"What's going on here?" Nolan asked suddenly. His question raised my alertness and I quickly forgot about my thoughts.

I followed his gaze, it seemed as though the entire castle was experiencing some sort of make over, it looked like they were preparing for an event. Which was insane, no one had told us anything about any upcoming events.

"We're about to find out." I told him as I spotted our father leaned up against one of the doorways. His face was grim and his eyes shadowed with worry and concern. He met my gaze and started to move in our direction.

"What's happening?" I asked him, scanning all of the decorations and chairs coming in from all directions.

"The marriage arrangements between Eden and Hunter is taking place." He explained. "The Prosecutor just left, taking Vincent along with him in order to have the final discussion with Hunter, it wouldn't be long before the engagement happens and right after the wedding is set to take place."

I stiffened, so did all of my brothers. "Father you can't possibly be allowing this wedding to take place?" I demanded, his words striking a nerve.

He sighed, staring off into the distance. "It's not in my hands son, Eden belongs to the council, it's a sacrifice that must be made ... I wish I knew how to get her out of it. Believe me, I haven't slept the past few days thinking of ways to stop this wedding but every idea I've come up with so far seems to have a bad ending for all of us. It pains me to say it but there isn't a way out of this."

He was staring out the window at something when his eyes softened. I followed his gaze, Eden was out there laughing and spinning with one of the villager's little girl child, my heart broke at the image. She was so pure and innocent, to be given to someone as ruthless and deadly as Hunter. From the happy look on her face, I was sure father hadn't broken the news to her as yet. We all had once thought it would be a very long time before we had to give her away, in fact, this was the last thing either one of us expected to have thrown at us this soon. It was the last thing either one of us thought that we would have to worry about ... but I knew why it was rushed. The prosecutor wasn't taking any chances, he understood what it meant by Eden and James being mates. He also knew the power James and his family had, if James really wanted too, he could wreak havoc upon the council.

Silence fell amongst us as we all just continued to stare at my sister, our minds got lost in ways to possibly help her. Lost in the anger and frustration building up inside of us with how helpless we felt in this situation.

"I think you should get some training done today." My father finally said, breaking the silence amongst

us. He was looking at us without actually seeing any of us and I understood why, we all felt it. If Eden was given away to Hunter, none of us will ever be happy knowing how unhappy she was. It didn't help that James was her true mate, giving her away to Hunter would be like killing her slowly, killing us as well in return. It wasn't something I'd ever hope to see happen to any one of my sisters.

It was sad that Isabella would also share the same faith. For once, I was happy that Lucy wasn't caught up in this mess. It was the only good thing that came out from her separating from us. She didn't have to be tied down to the council like we were and that was a blessing on its own.

"I can't believe this s**t ." Thane grumbled as we neared the training court outside the castle's walls. We needed to let some of the steam off before we did something all of us regretted. Like murdering Hunter in his sleep, it wouldn't be easy, not with the power he held and none of us would be ready to deal with the consequences of our actions either ... I understood now what my father had meant when he said he'd thought about all of the ways to get Eden out of this marriage but none of them had a good ending for all of us. No matter what direction we turned, there was danger all around us. I felt like we were surrounded and all of the darkness was closing in on us.

A sigh escaped my lips as I took in the training area, luckily for us, it was empty today as most of the warriors were still out on individual assignments. Like always, we were the first to finish each task. It was one of the reasons why the council favored us over the others. Another reason why Vincent gave us a hard time. We were often given the chance to escape punishment because of the speed in which we did things, we had learnt to do it the hard way and were still learning.

I picked up some of the swords laying on the ground and threw them for my brothers to catch. One by one, they grabbed onto the weapons and faced each other.

"Think of it as Hunter's head." Marcus commented as he poked the sword outwards.

Thane's eyes darkened as he charged forward with his sword and knocked Marcus's sword out of his hand with the power of his strike. We all watched as the sword made contact with the wall giving of a loud bang .

Marcus chuckled , staring at his broken sword on the ground . " I see that definitely helped . "

My head snapped up , my gaze connecting with my brothers as a loud howl broke our concentration .

My sword dropped from my hand in shock . It took me a moment to recover before my brain could finally remember how to speak again .

"Lucy ." I whispered .

"What's she doing here ?" Luthais asked the question that we were all thinking .

"Does it matter , she's clearly crying out for our help ." Thane shouted , his face in distress .

"Thane's right , let's go !!"

Within seconds we were all shifting into our wolves , not waiting for any explanations as we raced to our sister .Whatever it was she needed , whatever help she was crying out for , we were going to give it to her !

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AUSTIN'S POV:

"Are the packs ready ?" I asked Alex , taking one last look at the outlined plan in front of me .

He nodded . " Everyone's already here , they're just waiting for your signal."

"Okay ." I told him ."Let them know I'll be out in a minute . "

"Yes Alpha ." Without another word he turned and left me to my own thoughts .

It's been a rough day so far , one of the most difficult days of my life till date . I was torn between wanting to go after Lucy and bringing her back safely home and getting revenge for the injustice that was done to us both . No matter how much I wanted her here with me now , I didn't want to have her back until I had punished every single person behind the spell that was put on me . Nothing bothered me more than knowing I'd hurt Lucy because of it , at the same time I was pissed at myself for not recognizing her sooner , if my wolf had sensed it all along I should have as well . I let a damn spell separate me from my very own mate , the woman I loved . The woman I was supposed to lay down my life for and fill her own life with happiness . Instead I had only brought sorrow upon her , from our very first meeting till now , she had to suffer because of me .

With a mighty roar I pushed the table in front of me over , everything shattering onto the floor . I gave a frustrated sigh as I rested my head against the wall , forcing myself to remain calm . This was not the time for me to lose control , no, it was time for me to get revenge , for both Lucy and I . I owed it to both her and myself to let the people responsible for our pain to suffer for their evil deeds. And we were very close to getting that revenge , I'd spent the entire day getting the packs ready to invade Eric's territory , we wanted answers and if the answers weren't what we wanted to hear then a freaking war was going to break out , the friendship my parents shared with Alpha Eric all these years would be broken in but a few seconds .

I didn't understand why but I felt very uneasy , my wolf felt it as well , it had me on edge and I knew this feeling had nothing to do with Lucy's absence ... Something wasn't right and I couldn't put my finger on it , couldn't explain the feeling within . It was as though my wolf sensed that we were in danger , could it be because of the upcoming confrontation with Eric and Ariana or was I missing something ? James entered followed by Lucas and Maya , breaking my concentration on the matter . " Everything's set ." He told me .

His gaze wandered to the overthrown table on the floor before turning back to me . "Is everything okay ?" He asked , his eyes shadowed with concern .

I exhaled . " I just can't f*****g believe I didn't see all the signs before now ... I should have known ." I whispered more to myself than to him.

He placed his hand on my shoulder . " Don't beat yourself up over this , it's in the past . You have to focus on getting Lucy back now . All that matters is that you realized that she was your mate even while under the spell , it took you longer than you would have liked but you still did and that's what is important . "

Before I could respond , a loud howl echoed throughout the quiet night . I instantly froze as I stared at the shocked , terrified looks plastered on each of my siblings faces .

"BREACH!" James roared , within seconds we were all shifting into our wolf forms and crashing out the pack house from all directions .

I took in my surroundings as soon as I was out in the open , the first thing I noticed was both packs all huddled in a corner ... trapped . There were wolves to the front , the back , the sides , all growling and closing in on us .

F**K!

We were surrounded .

Chapter 36

There was a wolf to the front that was nearest to me, I recognized him as a wolf I'd faced in the past. He was the Alpha of the Reds Pack and we didn't have a very pleasant last encounter. He charged forward and aimed his attack for me. I grabbed onto the Alpha's neck and with one aggressive pull ripped his head off his body. That seemed to be the cue for the rest of packs who were against us to attack, for within seconds wolves were attacking from all directions. There was growling, yelping and ripping sounds echoing throughout the entire forest. If anyone was near, they would surely fear for their lives. The sounds were similar to that of a horror movie but even that wouldn't be as bad as how it was now. Damn it.

How many packs exactly were here? From the looks of it, each of these were packs I'd faced in the past. All of whom I'd defeated in the worst way possible. It was safe to say that they all held some sort of grudge against me.

Each time a wolf came at me, I finished him off within seconds. These wolves were not a match for me or my brothers . . . not even for my oppressors, they were all being wiped out with ease. I'd trained my pack for situations like these and I was damn proud of each of my members. They were fighting with everything I'd taught them and I would have been impressed if I wasn't so caught up in everything happening all at once. The problem was the fact that there were many more wolves coming at us one after the next. Eventually our energy level would decrease, it would be difficult to fight that many all at once and not fall in the end.

I took a quick glance at all of my pack members. They were already growing tired, we were outnumbered by a great number.

How long would we be able to keep this up for?

As I continued to evaluate my surroundings and take a closer look at my opponents. Something seemed extremely off about this entire ambush, none of these alphas were capable of pulling off something like this or even putting a plan like this into motion. Whoever was behind this had to be plotting for years and had to hold some sort of high power So, who was it?

It was hard to follow through on that thought for wolves were coming at me one after the next, sometimes more than one at the same time.

I didn't know how long we were fighting for , the sound of bones breaking was all I've been hearing for a long time now , I studied our surroundings , more wolves were still coming . My pack along with my brother's pack was getting worn out , they were too much for us .

I watched in agony as I saw many of my pack and brother's pack members fight to stand strong despite having more than one wolf on each of them . It wouldn't be long before we fell , we couldn't hold off all of them , it was impossible . So far I knew every single one of the wolves that attacked , what the f**k was going on here and why the hell hadn't any of us seen this coming ?

Then it happened , everyone suddenly paused as a new pack joined the fight ... I froze for I recognized that pack instantly without even seeing their alpha .

Eric's pack .

Eric stepped forward in his human form , surrounded by his entire pack who were in their wolf forms as his protection against me . So he was the whole mastermind behind this ... MOTHERFUCKER!

Was this his plan all along ? To get Ariana to use that spell on me so that she would be so close to me that she would be able to find out all of the packs that held grudges against me ... and then bring them

all together to attack ?

How could I have been so f*****g stupid ? I've been defending the enemy for years now , thinking they were on my side when all along they've been plotting my own pack's destruction . I was breathing hard as I glared at Eric and his pack , my wolf out for b***d .

Eric turned his gaze directly towards me and offered me an unapologetic smile . "Interesting , all that fighting and you haven't lost a single one of your pack members yet ." He stated taking a look around at all of the dead bleeding bodies lying motionless around us with none of them belonging to any of my pack members nor my brother's , we were badly injured and bleeding but none of us lost our lives and I prayed it stayed that way but it wasn't looking good for us ... definitely not with Eric's pack being here , his pack was just as dangerous as ours. " We all know that's because you haven't faced my pack as yet ." He drawled .

I growled , my wolf ready to pounce on him , his emotions a mess with a mixture of rage , pain and confusion .

"Wait , you might want to hear this ." He said , stopping us from advancing ." I presume you already know that you were under a spell and that I was the one behind it ..."

WHAT AN A*****E!

" What you don't know however is that I had your mate Lucy kidnapped . I also left Ariana to finish her off before we came here ."

My heart sped up , my wolf standing still as we waited for him to continue what the f**k was he talking about ? All this time Lucy was being by him and I didn't know?

No ... that couldn't be true , I should have been able to sense she was in danger .

"Yes Austin ... Lucy is probably already dead by now ."

Everything around me became motionless as my mind refused to come to terms with his brutal words ... no.... it wasn't possible ! Nothing could have happened to Lucy , I would be able to feel the loss of the bond the moment something did , would be able to feel my heart lose it's will to beat . She had to be alive ! But by the way Eric seemed so confident about her death made me panic , everything around me beginning to spin , she couldn't be gone ... no , I couldn't live without her . Lucy couldn't be GONE!

My wolf threw his head back and let out an ear piercing howl of agony towards the bright moonlight followed by the howls of all of my pack members , crying out for the loss of Lucy . My wolf was raging as he turned back to Eric , one thing on both of our minds and one thing only TO DESTROY ERIC AND HIS BLOODY PACK!

I leaped into the air , trying to reach him and rip him into shreds but was blocked by his pack members . They all pounced on me the same time , preventing me from going forward .

I'd have to go through every single one of them before I could reach him but I didn't care , I would kill them all even if I had to do it with my last f*****g dying breath !

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LUCY'S POV :

I was becoming more anxious by each second that went by , after I'd explain to my brothers what was going down they were more than happy to help me ... a bit shocked at first but still happy to help .

In fact Ermanno's exact words were ' We're more than ready to f*****g rip Eric and his pack apart ' , followed by Marcus's 'HELL YEAH' and the rest of my brothers nod of agreement , they seemed just as determined as I were to finally get rid of Eric and his evil minions . I couldn't blame them , they were in

trouble now only because of that piece of s**t and I couldn't wait to see him pay for making all of us suffer .

We had been racing through the forest for hours now , our wolves pacing through the narrow pathways , leaping over fallen trees and running as fast as we could . I was becoming restless for the trip back to Austin seemed to be taking forever and it was slowly killing me inside not knowing in what state he or everyone else was in .

And then we heard it , a powerful howl followed by multiple howls of agony ... I stopped running in shock , my b***d crawling in fear of what those howls meant .

OH NO! Were we already too late ? Did someone I care about already die ?

I couldn't move , fear clamping down on me and making everything around me turn motionless . My brother's wolf gently nudged me , telling me that we had to keep going , that we couldn't stop now . I didn't need to be told twice , my wolf gaining more strength and determination than she ever did before , her long jumps even bigger than that of my powerful brother's .

We were racing to those we loved , racing to save them , racing to see them once more and keep them safe from those who wanted to harm them ... I'm coming Austin ... I'm coming.

.....

AUSTIN'S POV:

I was in the middle of ripping apart Eric's pack when a loud howl rippled through the air and shook the trees around us , I froze recognizing the sound immediately ... Lucy .

My head snapped up in time to see five wolves jumping into the fight , a group of powerful wolves I'd once fought Lucy's brothers . What were they doing here?

I didn't have time to ponder on that thought for right after I spotted Lucy's wolf , she made a grand entrance as she leaped into the air , her beauty like always shone brightly , power radiating out from her in great waves as she landed right in the middle of Eric's pack , followed by each of her brothers on all different sides of her .

My mate .

My love ... the woman of my dreams ... my everything .

She was alive , the relief I felt at that fact made me the happiest man alive , she was alive ... Lucy was alive .

And she came to save us , she came back to save my pack and I even after everything I'd done to her , even after the way I'd treated her , the fact that she did blew my mind . She was an amazing woman indeed , no one could compare ... I didn't deserve her ... f*****g no one did . I could feel the relief and happiness of all of my pack members through the pack link at seeing her and her brothers , we had hope now ... things were actually going in our favor , we could all come out of this alive .

I suddenly felt a bolt of energy rush through my body , the strength of my wolf increasing at having his mate alive and at his side ... we were about to take Eric DOWN!

Chapter 37

LUCY'S POV:

Eric was staring at my brothers and I in shock , probably shocked to see that I was still alive and breathing after leaving Ariana behind to finish me off , probably even more shock that I'd had time to

bring my brothers along with me to help bring him down and see to it that his plan was a complete failure . His eyes narrowed as he glared at us , hatred pouring out of him in great waves before he let out a loud roar and shifted right before our eyes into a huge reddish brown wolf that resembled Ariana's but was just a lot bigger .

He growled at us , his eyes moving from one brother to the next until they finally settled back on me . It was official , the wolf wanted me dead ... nothing new there .

My brothers and I begun to circle his wolf , Ermanno was the first to attack sinking his teeth into Eric's back , my brothers and I joined in right after , biting into different parts of him . Eric's wolf yelped in pain as he tried to shake us off him but none of us were letting go ... and we weren't planning too until we were finished with him , none of us stopped not even when some of Eric's pack members started to advance on us from all different directions . Suddenly , out of nowhere I felt a sharp pain in my bones , I let go of Eric unable to concentrate through the pain and looked around only to realize that all of the wolves on our side were experiencing the same torture .

What was causing this ? My eyes continued to scan my surroundings until they spotted a woman a little distance away from the battle . I froze , understanding what was happening now .

Marianne... The witch responsible for putting Austin under the spell !

She was Eric's back up plan , that was why she was here . To help him if things went bad , it all made sense now , Eric truly had thought about everything for his plans to succeed this time .

Things weren't looking to good for us anymore , she was preventing us from using our full strength , giving the enemies the upper hand . I watched in horror as Eric's pack begun to attack us from all directions , my brothers as well as Austin and the packs were trying hard to fight back despite the pain infliction we were experiencing from the disgusting witch .

A loud powerful howl suddenly echoed throughout the night sky , I followed the sound and spotted a large black grey wolf in the air before he came crashing down onto Eric's wolf W-what?

Surely it couldn't be true , but it was ... my father !

H-he came ?

There was a woman on his back and she quickly stepped down and faced Marianne.

Another witch , I silently thought .

How did my father know about this and how did he know we would need a witch on our side ?

The pain immediately stopped as the other witch used her magic to fight against Marianne's spell .

Within seconds the battle field had turned against Eric and his wolves , with Austin's pack and his allies overcoming them all . It was clear as day that Eric's pack was going to fall and they were going to fall hard , I doubt any of them would even survive with the way Austin and my brothers along with my father were blazing through them .The scene around me was hard to look at , dead bodies and b****d tainting the ground and trees everywhere .

"How does it feel Eric ?" The witch who had arrived with my father shouted . " To have your plans from all of these years completely fail right before you ... you know what's the worst part , you don't even know that your daughter is no longer alive . How do you think Lucy escaped ? Yes Eric , Lucy killed her , your daughter was no match for Richard's powerful daughter just like you are no match for Austin and his family ."

"This is payback for murdering my daughter in cold b****d!" The witch screamed at Eric . "Now your daughter is also dead and you'll be joining her very soon ."

Her words seemed to strike a nerve in Eric for he suddenly turned to me , his wolf had a murderous expression on his face and before anyone had a chance to decipher his next move ... he attacked me and did it the exact same time I felt a excruciating pain all over my body that most likely had to be another spell from the witch . I couldn't move , just stand there and watch as Eric launched himself at me . As I stood there , time seeming to slow down with everything around me moving in slow motion ... all I could think of was my baby ... my baby ... OH GOD MY BABY !

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AUSTIN'S POV:

Time seemed to have stopped as I watched with horror and terrified eyes as Lucy was flung with a powerful dangerous force and landed against a large tree , I looked on in shock ... my body immovable as stone as she fell to the ground completely motionless , shifting back to her human form. Everyone stood completely still for a few seconds until we all got over the shock of seeing the person we loved and cared about be thrown into the air like that and then within seconds there was chaos everywhere . Ermanno let out a loud roar and attacked Eric first , followed by his father and the rest of his brothers while James and Lucas along with Maya helped take down the witch on the opposite side .

Eric's yelps and cries echoed throughout the forest as Lucy's brothers and her father begun ripping him apart , all the other wolves involved in the ambush suddenly retreated at seeing their leader breathe his last breath . I eventually closed out all of the sounds around me as all I could see was Lucy bleeding and unmoving before my eyes , the sight was too much for my wolf and it made me feel like someone had just stabbed a knife straight into my heart and was twisting it in the most painful way possible . As soon as I felt my feet being able to function once again I quickly shifted back to my human form and made my way to her side as fast as I could .

"Lucy." I whispered , gently moving her bloody hair from her face . "Lucy." I said again , my panic growing the more I saw that she wasn't moving not even a little bit .

I hastily leaned down and lowered my ear to her nose , her breathing was very faint ... along with her pulse . I had to act fast but I didn't know what to f*****g do to save her ! If I tried to take her to a doctor I didn't think she would be able to last that long , her pulse was already too low .

I could feel everyone crowding and surrounding us ... knew that all of my pack members would be able to feel my pain through the pack link and were probably feeling the strain from it all .

I felt someone approach us but paid no attention to it , unable to take my eyes off Lucy ."You have to complete the mating ritual Austin ." Lucy's father told me , unable to hide the worry in his voice . " It's the only thing possible to save her , the strength of your love and the mating bond could help defeat the effects of both the witch's and Eric's attack ."

I didn't need to be told twice , whatever I could do to save the love of my life I was going to do it .

I held Lucy near me , holding her head gently in my arms before leaning down as my pack begun circling us ... stay with me baby , please . Without another thought I bit down hard on her marking spot , the sound of multiple howls of every single one of my pack members echoed throughout the forest for acceptance of their luna .

As my b***d injected into Lucy's veins ,sealing us together and fully making us one I could feel the mating bond strengthen as our minds , heart and soul connected and became one . Each shock of heavenly bliss was stronger than the last , the bond filling my wolf and I with never ending contentment and satisfaction . I would never be the same again and I was happy of that fact for it meant I truly

belonged to Lucy now just as much as she belonged to me . I was finally joined to my other half , the piece of me required to finally be complete and it would have felt amazing if she was awake when it was done and hadn't been unconscious and bleeding in my arms .

The pounding of my heart was so loud that for a minute it was all I could hear as I waited for Lucy to regain consciousness . After a few minutes of waiting and nothing happening the tension amongst us begun to rise , my body turning cold with fear and anticipation .

"I love you.. " I whispered ." I love you Lucy , please I beg of you ... please wake up for me ."

I felt my body turn to stone when nothing happened , the life draining out of me as I realized with horror and dread that the mating bond wasn't working , everything around me started to spin , my own body turning against me .

WHY WASN'T SHE f*****g WAKING UP!

Chapter 38

I turned to everyone around me without actually seeing them . " W-why?" I asked, my voice sounded alien to my own ear. "Why isn't she waking up?" I asked them in a broken voice .

No one answered me, in fact the entire forest was filled with dead silence, not a sound ... not even from the trees around us.

I turned back to my unconscious mate in my arms. "Lucy . . ." I said in a hoarse whisper, hoping that she would get up and respond to me. A cry wrenched from my soul when she remained completely still in my arms.

I felt a sharp pain that travelled straight through my heart as everything I'd put her through since she'd entered my life raced through my mind, haunting my memories ... I was a disgusting pathetic excuse of a mate, of an alpha . . . I was nothing, nothing without Lucy. I felt my inner strength begin to falter, I didn't know how much longer I could hold onto my sanity ... I was losing my mind. The longer Lucy stayed unconscious in my arms, the more I lost a bit of myself.

I threw my head back and let out a loud roar, the agony that rushed through my veins completely replaced the flow of b***d there. I couldn't live no more, not when Lucy wasn't by my side, I felt dead inside ... I would never be able to live pass all the guilt. I needed Lucy more than I needed anything in my life, I wished I'd known this before I completely made a mess out of my life.

"Lucy . . ." I cried as I my face against her neck. " I'm so sorry baby . . . I'm so so sorry for everything I did to you, I hate myself . . . I hate myself for what I did to you . . .I didn't know . . . I swear to God I didn't know baby and I know it's not an excuse but God I DIDN'T KNOW . . . I'm so sorry . . .so sorry."

The more I let out, the more angrier I felt. Angry with myself for everything I'd done. Angry that I was so blind all along. I should have been able to see all of the signs, they were all there and yet I'd chosen to ignore it.

What did I do?

I froze as I felt her stir in my arms , I hastily pulled back and watched her while I held my breath . Her eyes slowly drifted open , she looked around at her surroundings before her eyes settled on me and as if suddenly remembering something her hands immediately flew to her stomach almost protectively .

The look of horror in her eyes had my entire body going into a state of worry . Something was wrong ... was she in pain there ?

"My babyyyy !" She cried out , her voice echoing throughout the forest .

I stopped breathing , Lucy's words leaving me completely dumbstruck .

B-baby?

Lucy was pregnant ?

With my baby ?

And I didn't know ?

How?

I felt all the b***d drain from my face .

"AUSTIN!" She screamed . " MY BABY ! PLEASE SAVE MY BABY... PLEASEEE." She cried even louder , her terrified screams breaking through my shocked daze and bringing me straight back to her . I stared deep into Lucy's teary eyes , taking her face into the palm of my hands ." I swear to you Lucy

NOTHING , absolutely nothing would happen to our baby ... I swear to you!" I promised her , I would never allow any harm to come to our baby ... NEVER!

"I'll get the car ready !" Lucas announced before I could say anything , he shifted and raced out the woods .

I pulled Lucy into my arms and held on tighter than I needed too as I lifted both of us off the ground . I leaned down and laid a k**s against her forehead before I started running through the narrow pathway that leaded to the roadway .

Nothing ... nothing would happen to our baby .

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As soon as I got out the car I raced into the doctor's office , he took one look at Lucy bleeding in my arms and immediately started giving out orders to the nurses around him . During our ride back she had gone unconscious again , exhausted from crying out for our baby , she was scared and it drained all the energy out of her until she couldn't take it anymore . It was very hard to see and even more difficult that I didn't know what condition our baby was in .

"Please ." I begged the doctor . " Please save our baby ."

I carefully followed his orders and laid Lucy onto the patient's bed .

"I'll need you to step outside with everyone else Prince Austin ." He told me . " Please , allow me to do my job ." He added before I could respond . I didn't want to prevent the doctor from starting his examination and so forced myself to leave even though everything inside of me was begging to stay with Lucy .

I dropped to the ground in defeat , my heart racing and feeling as though it was about to explode any second now . I pulled at my hair as I felt tears form in my eyes as I pounded my head against the wall ... I didn't remember the last time I've ever cried , didn't even know if I ever did before . It hurt , both my baby and Lucy was put in danger because of me ... it burnt like f*****g hell . A wave of depression crashed down on me as the tears poured out my eyes like a river .

I didn't know how long I was waiting for before the doctor came out , all I knew was that it was the longest minutes of my entire life , each second that I didn't know what was happening inside the doctor's examination room felt like a second closer to my very own death .

Everyone waited impatiently for the doctor to say something , my anxiety had reached the sky and I didn't know how I would take the news he was about to give to us .

" Both Lucy and the baby are safe from any harm ." He announced with a bright smile .

The tension in the atmosphere around us was immediately reduced . Happiness and relief exploded within me at his announcement ... My mate and my baby were both okay , it was everything I could ever ask for , in fact I didn't think I would ever wish for something ever again after this day as they were all I would ever want in life from this day forward , after everything I'd put Lucy through , having both her and our baby in my life healthy and alive was the biggest blessing I could ever wish or ask for . I knew what I had to do now , I had to beg for Lucy's forgiveness ... had to beg that she gave me another chance to show to her just how much she meant to me , to show to her just how much I loved her and just how much I loved our baby . To show to her how sorry I was for not recognizing her sooner , to show to her that I would never ever let another tear come to her eyes because of me again ... there was so much I wanted to say and do for her , so much and I couldn't wait to do it all ... I only hoped that Lucy would let me back into her life , let me into our baby's life .

Our baby .

I loved the sound of that , God Lucy was actually pregnant with my baby , the happiness that suddenly engulfed me at that thought was more than I had ever felt in my entire life .

And they were both out of danger , the two most important people in my life were completely safe and in my life ... after everything , after all I put the love of my life through ... how could I still be so lucky to have been blessed with such happiness ?

Happiness that I owed all to her , I'd given her the world of pain and instead she'd only given to me happiness upon happiness . What had I ever done in life to have been blessed with someone as amazing and precious as Lucy ? I still couldn't believe that she had come back to save us , if Lucy hadn't returned with her brothers there was no way my pack and I would have survived that attack by ourselves ... she had saved us , when she didn't have to . Lucy had shown time after time again the love a mate should have for their own , without even knowing about werewolves Lucy had somehow been a better wolf than I had ever been .

"Can we see her now ?" I asked the doctor .

He took a look around the room and realized it was filled with people waiting to see Lucy , from my family to Lucy's family and even the pack members . The office was packed to say the least , in fact there were more outside .

"All of you can't at the same time , but immediate family can see her first , then the rest could see her in turns ." He answered , motioning for me to follow him . " She's already awake and I explained to her that the baby is out of harm's way just to make sure she didn't go into a shock again ."

I nodded but before I could step forward her father placed his hand on my shoulder . " Please , let me talk to my daughter first ." He told me with pleading eyes .

I took a deep breath and nodded , the desperation in his eyes was enough to persuade me , whatever he had to say to Lucy , it had to be important .

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LUCY'S POV:

I had almost lost my baby ... it was the only thing on my mind right now . My precious baby was almost killed even before I could have met him or her . I clutched my stomach before rubbing it gently ... my baby , my sweet sweet baby .

"If I had lost you a part of me would have went with you ... thank you for staying strong for mummy , thank you my little angel ." I whispered .

I was deep in my thoughts when I felt the presence of someone in the room , I looked up with surprised eyes to see that it was my father . I didn't know why but tears immediately begun to form in my eyes as I openly stared at him .

"W-why? " I asked him in a broken voice . " Why did you give me up and why did you act like I meant nothing to you only to show up to help when I needed you the most ... WHY ?" I demanded from him . My father's entire face softened at my words , in fact he looked like I had broken through some sort of barrier and like he was finally ready to spill the whole truth . His eyes watered and he finally was looking at me in the way a father would look at the daughter he loved and cared about ... the daughter he couldn't live without .

"I've always loved you Lucy , from the moment I first laid eyes on you ... you were my baby girl . I never wanted to give you up-"

"THEN WHY DID YOU!" I cut him off in pain , I hadn't even seen my baby's face yet and already I knew I would never be able to give him or her up ... so then how could he have done that to me and claimed that he loved me... how?

"I'll tell you the whole truth ... from beginning to end , I'll tell you it all. It's time that you knew Lucy , it's time that they all knew ."

What?

What was he talking about ?

Chapter 39

My father motioned for everyone to enter the room and join him. I watched in anticipation as my brothers walked in, followed by Austin's entire family. My eyes kept searching the crowd until I found him there in the middle, he wasn't looking at me, his gaze was down and it looked as though he was ashamed of himself to even be seen looking at me. His thick dark brown hair was in a complete mess, anyone would think that he'd been pulling at the strands for an entire day. It had me thinking that it was exactly what he'd been doing while I'd been in here. I wasn't sure how I felt about that .Now I knew that the only reason he'd treated me the way that he did was because of the spell. But still, he should have known, he should have known I was his and even if he couldn't tell, he should have never treated me the way that he did. But at the same time, he was my mate, he was the one I wouldn't be able to live without. . .he was mine, we were made for each other and I couldn't imagine my life without him in it. I relaxed in slow stages, reminding myself that I now had a baby to protect. It would do my child no good if I kept stressing over this entire thing. I was at least grateful to know that we'd all come out of this battle alive and with just a few scratches. I turned my attention back to my father as his voice echoed throughout the room. He was finally ready to explain the truth.

"It all started the day I overheard a conversation between Eric and his Beta. I was on my way to let him know of a surprise birthday party I wanted to throw for Jeremy and instead I'd gotten the shock of my life after hearing of his brutal plan to overthrow Jeremy's pack. Unfortunately for me, I didn't realize one of Eric's pack members had seen me and told Eric I'd heard everything. So, before I had time to warn Jeremy of the attack, Eric had already set his plan into motion. Apparently, he had already bribed some of my pack members to join him on the ambush. He knew that he wouldn't be able to overthrow Jeremy with the little power that he had back then and so he only let my pack members do all the attacking so

that he could frame me and make it look like I was the whole mastermind behind everything. That way, no one would believe anything that I had to tell them about that specific incident I'd witnessed. After the whole attack, no one listened to a word I said. "My father explained as he turned to gaze at King Jeremy. "You didn't wait to hear my side of the story. . .didn't give me a chance to prove my innocence. It did hurt, because you were like a brother to me, I've always spent my life proving my loyalty to you and your family because I've always considered them as my own. I understood why you did what you did however, all the evidence said I'd done it. So you banished my family and I. . . Without many of our pack members, we could no longer support ourselves."

Austin's parents were looking at my father, their eyes brimmed brightly with unshed tears. I could see the regret in their eyes for everything they'd done as they gazed at my father almost pleadingly, they hadn't said anything yet but the look on their faces spoke volumes on the way that they felt about my father's confession.

My father's eyes were distant as he continued with the story. He seemed to be reliving the past and I couldn't imagine how hard it must have been to have kept all of this inside for so long. "We suffered for a while, could barely afford food with what we had left. One day I came across this woman crying in the forest near our new home. After approaching her I realized that she was a witch, her eyes were b***d red and she was shaking as though she'd just lost something important to her, as though something tragic had occurred, I took her into my home and there is where she told me her story. Her name is Paige Snow and she is the same witch I brought with me today. Eric murdered her daughter, that was why she was in such a horrible state. A mother grieving for her child, it only proved just how disgusting Eric truly was. I don't know whether it was faith that brought us in the same place at the same time but what happened next completely shocked me a lot more than the news of Eric killing her innocent daughter. As soon as her eyes had fallen onto Lucy in the arms of my wife, it was as though she'd stopped breathing, her eyes were distant and it looked as though she was in another world. She had seen a great vision that involved Lucy. She requested that we bring the child closer to her and she pressed her hands on her forehead in hopes of seeing more than her last vision." My father explained as he turned to face me once more. I held my breath for what more was to come, this could be the answers I'd desperately been searching for in the past.

"She then explained to me what she'd seen. In her visions she saw the destruction of Jeremy and his family because of Eric. But that wasn't what had frightened the woman, there was something dark. . .something dangerous, something that was coming to earth, something that could destroy us all. You're probably wondering what this has to do with Lucy. In her visions she saw a couple, a chosen couple, this couple was the first of many couples to be chosen in order to save us all from the destruction that's coming for us. Lucy and Austin happened to be the couple she'd seen in her visions, the first couple chosen to save us all. She's a powerful witch and she'd seen plenty by just touching Lucy once, she was the one who explained to me everything I had to do in order to get Austin and Lucy together. The first step, which was the most difficult, was to give Lucy up."

I was completely stunned, in fact everyone's faces had gone completely still.

"I never wanted to give you up Lucy, it took me a long while before I could agree, it also took a lot of convincing. I realized that if I didn't do as she said, Jeremy's family could lose everything they had and sooner or later if you weren't ever reunited with Austin we would all be in danger, you two are destined for each other, it's already been written in the heavens, you are a match chosen by the Gods. . .chosen

to fight to save many lives. And you two aren't the only ones, there are many chosen couples to come. . .I don't know who they are but they have already been chosen and they would all join you in the fight that is to come. . . After your mother and I gave you up we were completely broken. That didn't stop us from keeping an eye on you however, any chance we got we would watch you from afar, where we were positive no one were watching and could see us. We were always looking over you, the witch was also by our side to guide us along the way, she also wanted revenge against Eric for what he had done to her daughter and therefore, she was willing to help us every step of the way."

He took a deep breath before continuing, his eyes once again distant. "And then we were forced to join the council, it was my last resort and it was all I could do to support my family after our lives were threatened on multiple occasions, I couldn't risk my family going rogue. It wasn't easy, we all fought to make a name for ourselves in the council, fought to survive. . .And then your nosy brothers wanted to make sure that you were okay. They almost spoiled my plans when they brought you to the council. I couldn't be the loving father you needed there, it's a place that you cannot show any emotion for if any is shown, they thrive on using it against you. I also needed you back with Austin as quickly as possible for like I said, he is your destined mate, the bond between the both of you runs deeper than any other werewolf mated couple." He said before walking towards me and taking my hand gently in his. "I could say so much more Lucy but this is everything that you needed to know, I know it may still take some time for you to forgive me but I would continue to watch and love you from afar and protect you in whatever way I could, until you're ready to allow me into your life and be the father that I've always wanted to be for you."

The tears were flowing uncontrollably now, I couldn't believe all of this. . .all this time I had misunderstood my whole entire family. . . especially my father.

I forced myself to sit up from the bed and opened my arms to hug him, his eyes widened in shock before a smile brightened his face and he gently held me against him. "It feels good to finally be able to hold my daughter. . .thank you for giving this to me Lucy, you've always been a loving child that I would always be proud of."

Before I knew it apologies were swinging left, right and center between my family and Austin's. I looked around the room searching for one specific person.

My brows scrunched together in confusion. . . Where did Austin go?

Chapter 40 - The End

AUSTIN'S POV:

I gathered my entire pack as well as my entire family to watch, I wanted everyone to be a witness to what I was about to say. Today happened to be the day that Lucy was being discharged from the doctor's office and I planned on telling her everything I had been dying too since the day I'd found out that she was my true mate and not Ariana. It was still hard to wrap my mind around the fact that I'd almost lost her and our baby. Even harder to believe that such a great blessing was given to me by someone I'd hurt so much.

The sound of a vehicle approaching managed to bring me out of my thoughts.

A flash of long black hair was the first thing I saw before my mate's strong intoxicating scent hit me. Her bright blue eyes scanned her surroundings and I somehow knew that she was looking for me. As

soon as she found me her eyes did that thing that I loved so much, I loved that I always brought about such a reaction in her. I loved everything about this woman and for that reason I didn't wait a second more.

I dropped myself onto the ground before her and bowed my head in front of her. The entire crowd had gotten quiet at my actions as everyone waited with held breaths to hear what I was about to say .

"I know what I did to you is unforgivable, it's something I'm willing to spend the rest of my life making up for. I don't deserve you Lucy, I never did but yet you've proven your love and loyalty to me on multiple occasions despite all the pain I've put you through. I couldn't have asked for a more perfect mate, you're everything and more I've ever wished for in my other half. . . I only wish I were a better mate to you in return. I bow before you today in front of everyone as witnesses to me pledging my love and loyalty to you. I promise to love, cherish and worship the ground you walk on for the rest of my life. I don't want your forgiveness, not yet. . . I want to work for your forgiveness, even if it means working for it for the rest of my life. I want to put a smile on your face every God damn day, I want to be your support and strength, I want to be everything you've ever wanted in a partner. I want to be someone you're proud to call your mate, I want to be the man of your dreams. I want to be the perfect father to our baby and make irreplaceable, precious memories with both of you as a family. I want to see the way our baby loves and worships you just like I will be doing for the rest of my life. I want to experience everything with you Lucy, everything couples experience together, I want that with you. You're the only woman for me, the only woman I'll die for and I'm so sorry it took me this long to realize that."

Her silence at my confession prompted me to finally lift my head and gaze at her with tear filled eyes.

"It will haunt me for the rest of my life to know what I did to you, to know that I've brought tears to your beautiful eyes more than once, but please know and believe this when I tell this to you. . . I love you Lucy, I love you with everything in me, I love you more than I've ever loved anyone in this lifetime and I'll continue to love you for the rest of my life if you give me one more chance to do so. Please give me that chance, to prove to you just how much you mean to me. . .to prove to you that you're the only woman for me, the only woman I want . . .the only woman capable of bringing me to my knees." I begged her. I didn't know what to expect, especially since she hadn't responded to anything I'd just said.

"Will you give that chance to me, my precious mate?"

Lucy's eyes brimmed brightly with unshed tears as she gazed down at me. Slowly, at the exact same time her first tear was shed. . . she nodded her head. I felt the love pouring out of her in great waves, I could feel all of her emotions through the mating bond. She was hesitant after all of the pain I'd put her through but at the same time all the love she had for me overpowered everything else and shone brighter than the sun. The happiness she felt fed my very own happiness and I couldn't stop myself as I lifted myself off the ground and took her into my arms, holding her closer than I'd ever held onto anyone before. I knew it would take time for Lucy to fully heal from everything I'd done to her but for now I was just grateful that she was willing to give me this chance. This woman was my everything and soon enough our family will be complete when we welcomed our beautiful baby.

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LUCY'S POV :

It was hours since Austin had confessed his love for me in front of everyone that we knew, I hadn't expected it but I couldn't remember the last time I'd ever felt this happy. I was scared, scared to let him back into my life again as I didn't want to feel the pain like I did before but at the same time, I couldn't

deny the fact that he was under a spell and at least deserved one more chance to prove to me that he did in fact love me. For now, I just wanted to be happy and I was happy as long as I was with him. . .I was happy all now and I couldn't wait for Austin and I to finally start our journey as mates together. We'd already been through so much together and it was time to learn from our experiences and move on. Everything my father had said to me was still somewhere in the back of my mind, but I didn't want to worry about that just yet. . . I wanted time to engross myself in this happiness I was experiencing right now. Everything else could come after.

I looked towards the door as I felt the presence of Austin, something that had grown stronger since the second that we were officially bonded. I kept my eyes there until it opened and he entered. His eyes immediately fell on me, the heat I saw there had me squirming under his hungry gaze. He gently shut the door and walked towards the bed without taking his eyes away from me.

He leaned down onto the bed with his hands pressed on the mattress on both sides of me, trapping me with his stare.

"W-what are you doing?" I asked quietly, trying to keep my composure.

He reached forward to brush a strand of my hair from my face before rubbing his thumb against my cheeks lightly. "Lucy. . .let me worship you tonight. . .please."

I couldn't move, all I could do was stare at Austin in shock. I couldn't even manage to give him a small nod.

Austin picked me up from the bed gently into his arms and carried me into the bathroom with him. He slowly started to undress me, his hands lightly brushing against my skin causing goosebumps everywhere. When I was finally naked before him he took me into his arms once again, placing me under the shower with him. He was staring at me in awe, as if he was in a trance and I was all that he could see. All I could do was watch him as he watched me, he slowly began soaping my entire body and after he was finished, leaned back to watch the water take it all away. When he was contented with his work, he lifted me out of the shower and laid me down onto the bed. . .completely wet.

He lowered himself onto me and began sucking the water off my skin, drying my body with his mouth alone. I m****d under his lips that was doing crazy things to my body. Without knowing it, Austin was igniting a raging fire within me and killing me slowly. . .but what a wonderful way was this to die. When his lips closed over my n****e I couldn't help the soft m**n that escaped my mouth as I began rubbing myself against his hardened d**k. I heard Austin's sudden intake of breath at the contact before he parted my legs and positioned his mouth above my p***y. The moment his tongue reached out and licked my parted lips I thought I'd really die from pleasure tonight. Then he was licking and sucking , taking all of me with each swipe of his tongue. All I could do was grip his hair tightly and hold on for my dear life.

When I thought I could take no more and would finally o****m he pulled away from me as if sensing my need for release.

"Can I make love to you tonight my sweet Lucy?" He asked with passion filled, hungry eyes.

"Please." I begged, unable to take it anymore. After everything, I needed this a lot more than I wanted to admit to myself. I wanted to be as close to Austin as possible, it was the only way to feel whole again. Austin didn't need to be told twice as he ripped his own clothes off, his throbbing hard member springing free. Within seconds he was back on top of me and burying his d**k deep inside of my p***y, pounding into me.

"I love you. . . Oh God I love you." I screamed as Austin clamped his mouth onto his mark on my neck and began nibbling and sucking on it.

Austin stopped devouring my neck for a second to whisper against my ear. "I love you too. . .more than you would ever know."

And with those words I came harder than I've ever done before in my entire life, my release triggering Austin's as he let out a mighty roar burying his seed deep inside of me.

Austin continued to hold me close, neither of us able to move from the intensity of our o****m. . .Oh God, how I loved this man. . .my mate, I didn't want anyone else. He was all I'd ever want.

Apparently, it was only just the beginning for Austin spent the rest of the night making love to me, over and over again.

.....

It was the next day and my brothers as well as my father were ready to go back to the council, they had been away for far too long already. They needed to head back before the council decided to come here themselves and force them back.

We were all by the castle's gates, it was crazy that this was exactly where I'd first met my brothers and now here they were leaving yet again. Things had changed so much since then that it was almost hard to believe that this was my life now, that my life had gotten so much better since then. If I had known the things I knew now back then, I don't think I would have ever believed a word anyone had said to me. I didn't regret any single experience however, those moments helped me to grow and become the woman I am today, it helped to make me stronger in order to fight for the people that mattered to me. . .for the people that I loved. Made me stronger so I could be a worthy enough mother to my baby. Before I came here, I had no one. . .no one that cared for me, no one that would fight to keep me safe and now I was surrounded by people that would give their lives for me. To say that I was blessed would be an understatement.

I looked at the people around me, from Austin to Austin's family, then to mine and back to Austin, the love inside of me was threatening to explode. . .God how I loved them all.

"I wasn't sure if we should mention this to you." Ermanno announced.

By the tone of his voice everyone shut their mouths to let him finish. I could tell that he was hesitant to say anything and by the way all of my brothers stiffened it was surely something none of them were happy about.

"The wedding between Eden and Hunter has been finalized, in fact arrangements are already being made for the engagement ceremony." He finally continued.

Everyone froze, the tension in the air suddenly rose despite being calm just a few minutes ago.

NO!

That couldn't happen, they couldn't do that to my sister. . .couldn't do that to James!

Oh my God. . .James!

I hadn't even realized he had left upon hearing the news.

"I'll go check on James." Maya said walking off.

Austin wrapped his arms around me supportively. "It's going to be okay," he whispered before placing a k**s on my forehead. "I'll do whatever I can to help your sister through this. . .this is my promise to you."

As I buried my head against Austin's chest with his arms wrapped around me protectively as he spoke

to my brothers. . .I could feel the strength within me grow and immediately I knew, I just knew that as long as Austin was by my side, I could face anything. . . as long as we had each other, we would be okay. For I loved Austin and he loved me and that was all that mattered. We would get through this together and we would fight to save those we loved!