

Chapter 31 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

Despite the chivalrous nature of Marco's actions and the warmth that I felt from being caught in his arms, it didn't change how unsettled I felt. For the rest of the night, I barely spoke to him. Retreating back to being the girl I once was. As quiet as a mouse, withdrawn and doubtful that I could trust anyone.

Sure, Marco didn't have to love me. It was only a marriage contract after all. But at least up until yesterday, I was made to believe he began to care about me. I was just... just a little bit sad.

Although I haven't gotten over my sadness from yesterday, I try to hide my emotions and not bring them to work. I walk into work with a robotic disposition and set up at my workstation silently.

I don't feel like talking but despite this, one of my co-workers walks up to me. "Tanya, Lily wants to see you," I politely nod, but a sense of dread erupts in my system. Not again... the only person I could do without seeing today. With a sigh I start off towards her office, each step heavier than the last as the memories of yesterday infringe on my thoughts.

"Morning," Lily says to me, with her usual demure and dignified smile. "Oh, good you're here, my mum asked me to hand you this sheet."

I curiously look at the sheet and find it's the application form for the perfume contest that Vivian mentioned to me.

"Do you plan to attend this competition?" Lily says softly. However, when I want to take the sheet from her, I find she's subconsciously clutching the application form. Her fingers are slightly pale from the force.

"I'm still considering whether to attend." I shift my gaze from Lily's fingers to her eyes.

"I know you have great talent, and my mum has always complimented your work. But if you ask my opinion, then I'd warn you that the competition is fierce, and you haven't been learning from my mother for very long. It might be smarter to attend the competition in the future, when you're better prepared." Lily is still smiling, but I don't know if it's my own constructed illusion, but I feel as if Lily is a little nervous and she doesn't want me to attend the contest.

I nod, taking the application form from her, and indicate that I will consider it carefully.

“Good. Other than that, Tanya, I have a difficult confession to make to you.” Lily’s tone of voice becomes pitiable.

I realize what she’s going to say and rush to look down at the floor, unable to look into her eyes as she speaks.

“I am so sorry Tanya... I really am. But I still love Marco, can you forgive me?”

With great hesitance I raise my head, watching as tears stream down Lily’s face to my surprise. She takes a minute, sniffing into a tissue before continuing. “I saw Marco and apologized to him yesterday. I know he’s your husband and I shouldn’t have seen him, but I really miss him,” she nervously wrings her arm as she continues to speak.

“He’s my fated mate,” Lily continues. “I really, really love him so much that I feel I will die if he’s not by my side at every minute.”

She brushes a strand of tears from her eyes and continues to speak, “When we talked, I told Marco that I wanted to be with him again... but he said no, out of responsibility to you and your marriage.”

I wouldn’t have put it past Marco to decline, not because he loved me, but because Marco was a morally good man. He had chosen to keep his promise to me, over his happiness with Lily. And even so, it isn’t right for me to take that away from him. And by the minute I grow more ashamed for being upset with him for yesterday.

“I need your help, Tanya. You know that Marco and I belong together. Even if you love him, you know what’s the right thing to do... could you please help me convince him to change his mind? Do right by Marco, relieve him of his burden so he can be with his true love, please,” Lily suddenly crosses the distance between us, leaving me unprepared as she clasps her hands on mine in a plea, now so close that I can see the wetness of her cheeks.

Confronted with Lily’s words, I find the situation absurd. My husband’s ex-girlfriend is pleading with me to persuade my husband and help them be together again. Is there anything more dramatic than this?

However, after all my constant struggle, I realize it would also be monstrous of me to not give Marco the choice. Marco deserves to have a choice. Our marriage is indeed an accident, one that entirely relies on Marco’s good nature and faithfulness alone. Maybe it isn’t meant to be.

Finally, I decide in my heart: I should agree to Lily’s request, I should give Marco the right to make a real choice for once. If Marco chooses Lily after their meeting, then I’d let them be happy and leave his life for good. But if Marco chooses me, even with my extremely unlucky life. If the universe for some unexplainable reason decides to give me this noble man, then I would never let him go, I’d cherish him and care for him till the end of my days.

“I’ll help you, Lily. I’ll talk to Marco,” I mutter quietly, watching as her eyes grow wide and she smiles and thanks me. And although my heart aches uncontrollably, I think I made the right choice.

After the conversation with Lily, I shuffle out of the room and back to my workstations to get on with my tasks. All the while I’m acutely aware of the clock on the wall that slowly ticks down to the impending end of my marriage.

Following Lily’s request, I leave work and head straight home to have a talk with Marco. I step through the door and there he is, waiting patiently at the kitchen table, brows lifting as I enter the room. “Good day?” He asks.

I nod and put down my things before I sit at the table. My fingers are clenched tightly, and I just come out with it, “I think you need to meet and have a talk with Lily.”

“Now why on earth would I do that?” he frowns at me with confusion in his tone.

I feel a burst of pain, and then I realize it’s because I’m too nervous that my fingers have pinched hard into my palm. “She really wants to meet with you and have a conversation about some things.”

“What things? Tanya, no. This is absurd, why would I meet with my ex? There’s no reason to.”

“Because, because she’s your fated mate, while I’m only…” I can’t say anymore. What the hell am I doing? I’m helping my love rival to persuade my husband! I must be crazy. The grievance hits me without warning, and I can no longer restrain my sorrow. Tears just fall from my eyes.

“Tanya, is there anything wrong?” Marco stretches his hand to wipe away my tears, but I cover a little and avoid his stroke.

I feel sorry as I notice Marco’s hand frozen in the air, “Just please, could you please meet Lily?”

There’s a moment of silence as Marco’s piercing blue eyes stare at me. Then, he stands up with an obscure expression and says in a deep voice, “Alright, I’ll meet her. Only because you asked. You really want this, yes?”

Nodding, I avoid his gaze, feeling ashamed for treating him this way. But as promised Marco leaves the kitchen, saying he won’t be long and heads out of the house, leaving me alone with my thoughts. Even though I have been mentally preparing all day for this, it still doesn’t make it any easier for my heart to bear. Not long after, I also leave home and decide to go out for a walk, thinking that might help distract me from the anxious thoughts.

I walk on the road when suddenly a hand appears from behind, and a rag smothers my mouth without warning. Fear and shock cascade through me as I twist and buckle, trying to free myself.

But strong arms lock me in place. Slowly I feel myself slipping out of consciousness and even with one final effort, the darkness consumes me.

Chapter 33 Runaway

Chapter 32 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

The chilly temperature is what wakes me, and I peel back my eyelids to the cold and impersonal small room that I'm in. The soreness of my body suggests I've been on the ground for a while, and I try to move my hands but they're uncomfortably restricted as tight rope bounds my ankles and wrists. The slow rhythmic pulse of my heart now escalates in a race, I begin to panic, and I no longer can find the air in my lungs to breathe.

I've been kidnapped.

And I start to fear the worst.

However, before my body goes into hyperventilation, I spot another body to my right. Cathy. And realizing it's my husband's sister calms me enough to crawl over to her. "Cathy. Cathy wake up!"

I shake her with my tethered hands till I detect movement from her and can see that she's beginning to stir. Her eyes blink frantically before she is conscious enough to speak. "Oh god, where are we?"

"Cathy, do you remember seeing who captured you?"

She shakes her head. "No, all I remember was being hit with something from behind, and then I passed out."

Nothing else can be said however as we both jolt with terrible alarm. The door heartlessly slams open with a bam, shuddering against the wall it's bashed against, and in walk two sizable males. Instantly they are both recognizable to me. It's the Alpha that I have witnessed being tossed out of the palace. With him is another male, the one that has been arguing with him the day Marco and I prayed under the Blue Moon Tree. And while before, there was a comical nature to Alpha's yelling and anger, now, the circumstances leave me vulnerable, and incredibly fearful as he glares fiercely at me and Cathy.

“Good, you’re both awake. You’re here because the royal family gave me no choice! I’m Caspian, Alpha of a pack and this is Dylan my Beta,” while the Alpha can pass as a human to an untrained eye, to me, he looks truly wild. Eyes feral, brows and hair untamed, a beautiful form of savagery that lies untouched by the expectation of civilization. And the Alpha’s next declamation reveals why. “My pack lived in peace and serenity for generations. We pride ourselves on being surrounded by nature and our connection to it.”

And like any wild animal, he does not filter articulating his feelings with composure. He talks with loud hand gestures and expressive movements in his facial bones. “But the Royal Family wants to modernize my pack by building a ridiculous dam. Apparently, the economic output of my pack is backward. Ha!” his resentment clearly runs deep, I sense that his dominance and Alpha nature is nothing but pure, unable to submit to the Royal Family’s authority.

“What those pompous wolves don’t understand is that my pack is more eager to live in nature, the industrialization and modernization will completely destroy the beauty we’re surrounded in. And the building of the dam will have unforeseeable consequences for the environment, which will affect the lives of the inhabitants very much.”

Even in his upset, the Alpha sounds very intelligent, and in tune with his pack and what they need. “I’ve raised several objections with the royal family, but they were all dismissed, so I’ve had to resort to a more barbaric strategy. I heard that the prince recently had a girl, so when he realizes I’ve kidnapped his love and his sister, he’ll have to change his mind to free you. Now all you must do is call him. Convince him to change his mind, and then I’ll release you both.”

I cower on the ground as the Alpha moves towards me, forcefully shoving the cell phone in my face. “Now call him!”

Induced fear compels me to senselessly reach for the phone, but I slowly grow conscious as my fingers seize up, unable to press the number keys. I haven’t suddenly lost my motor skills, something far worse. I have only known Marco for such a short period of time, the quickness of our marriage, moving in together, I have never bothered to ask for his number... With this realization, I fumble with my words under the Alpha’s menacing expression. “I- I don’t know his number,” I say timidly.

My words obviously exceed the man’s expectations as he reveals a childlike daze for a moment, even diminishing his ferocity. But the next instant, he stares into my eyes, clearly unconvinced. “How can you not know his number? You’re lying! Aren’t you! Are you that foolish to come up with such a lie? Do you really believe you’ll escape without the prince’s help? Hmm?”

“But it’s true,” I say weakly. “I’m not lying, I really am telling you the truth,” my lips quiver as they advocate for my honesty, and I’m on the verge of tears as the Alpha grows impatient.

“I don’t have time for this nonsense! It’s good you brought the sister Dylan, this one is useless!” he snatches the phone from me and whirls round to Cathy. “You then. You call him!” Cathy also hesitates to reach for the phone, but he doesn’t let up, thrusting the cell into her tied up hands.

Suddenly a terrible amount of pain erupts in my belly. It feels almost as if something sharp is carving its way beneath my skin and piercing certain areas of my stomach. The throbbing is immense, and I cry out as I curl up on the floor. "Please! Please help! It hurts!" this gets the attention of both men who turn to me.

"I'm pregnant. It hurts please help me," I close my eyes tightly as if shutting them will keep out the affliction and clench my clothing to the point that the ends of the fabric are now crumpled and distressed. It's enough that the man at the Alpha's side quickly kneels next to me, placing a hand on my stomach probably listening out for my unborn baby's heartbeat.

"She's telling the truth, she's pregnant," I watch over the man's shoulder and see a flicker of panic cross Caspian's fierce expression.

But he continues to bluff, despite a stutter, "Even, even if she's pregnant, are you sure she's not just messing with us, Dylan?"

"No, the baby could be suffering from all the stress she's in. This could be serious," Dylan glances back at the Alpha, and they exchange something between them that slowly thaws away the aggression in Caspian, and his expression slowly shifts into severe apprehension.

"Oh- oh god. Oh god. We could have hurt the baby!" he paces back and forth in a panic-stricken state, hands pulling at the ends of his hair in hysterics. "Dylan we must go now and grab the doctor! We must help her and the baby!" he then looks at me. "Just hold on, will be as quick as we can. Come on Dylan!"

The two men rush out of the room, and I am once again left alone with Cathy. "You're pregnant?" there is justifiable disbelief in her tone, but nevertheless she comes up beside me. But before she can, I sit up, no longer buckling over from pain as I carefully eye the door to ensure the two men are gone.

"What- Were you acting just then?" Cathy asks, further perplexed by my actions.

"I really am pregnant Cathy, and I was having real stomach cramps at first. But then it stopped, and so I just acted like I was still in pain," I wink gently. "But that's not important now, we need to use this opportunity to escape."

Cathy nods her head in agreement, and I watch her fingernails extend into sharp wolfish claws that she uses to cut the rope that restricts me, and I help her undo the rest. We then start searching for a way to escape. First we try the door, key hole on our end has been sealed, so we can't pick the lock, then we try to undo the hinges, but they have been bolted by heavy-duty metal that neither of our fingers can pry. And finally, we begin kicking it in utter desperation, but the metallic, vault-like door is impenetrable, and obviously is sealed tightly shut.

But we carry on searching for other methods of escape. No windows limits our options but that doesn't stop me and Cathy from pressing our hands against the bricks in the four walls that imprison us. We're hoping there'd be a loose brick somewhere that we can maybe nudge out of

formation to reveal the outside world. But the construction has been solid and well-done and makes our efforts futile. Together we sit on the ground now in exhaustion, and I gaze up at the ceiling to try and stop my tears from obeying gravity.

My brows scrunch in concentration as I notice a ceiling panel that looks out of place, making me quickly stand up to try and get a closer look. “Cathy, there! That might help us get outside,” she looks up too, realizing what I’m talking about.

“Let’s use the tables and chairs to get higher up,” she says. I nod, helping her stack the furniture before climbing up, with very little distance left to reach the skylight I let Cathy climb up on my shoulders so she’s able to reach it and pull herself through.

A tense pause hangs in the air before she mutters disheartened “It’s actually just the third floor,” this makes my heart sink. Just as Cathy’s about to pull me up, the door to the room suddenly opens, revealing Caspian and Dylan’s sullen faces.

Chapter 34 Marco Comes To Meet Lily

Chapter 33 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya’s POV

“Quick! Take my hand Tanya!”

Cathy’s urgent plea pulls my gaze away from the two fearsome men in the doorway, and despite the request for haste and her outstretched hand, I don’t take it. Something within me snaps into place as I suddenly realize the reality of our situation, and what I must do to ensure that our captors don’t win. “Go without me.”

“What? No!”

There is no time to hear out her protests, so I quickly interject. “Cathy the only way to escape from the third floor would be to jump. I have no wolf form. I’d be risking my life trying to jump,” even with the absence of any discernable bump, my hand instinctually places itself where it knows my baby is kept, another life I’m now sworn to protect, and I smile tenderly at the thought. “I won’t risk my baby’s life.”

Of course, Cathy expectantly fumbles to find a resolution to this valid argument. But she tries, nevertheless. “I can carry you! Yes! I can carry you down!”

In me, a fondness grows for Cathy. Even in the face of her disapproval of me marrying her brother, her reluctance to desert me is touching. That she still is a decent person willing to help another in the face of danger.

But even so, my decision has already been made. “No. If you go on your own, you’ll still have a chance of escaping if they chase after you. But if you take me with you, I can’t shift into a wolf, you’ll have to carry me, and I’ll slow you down. Will just end up getting caught again.”

“But-“

“No Cathy, you need to go,” I take her hand. But only to give her trembling fingers a gentle squeeze of hope, depicting my trust in her through a trying smile, and only baring my fearful soul into her eyes. “My unborn baby’s life is in your hands now. Go find my husband. Tell him where I am. Come back for me.”

I watch as my words cast her into silence, and then I witness something I haven’t seen before. Something changes in the way Cathy looks at me. She wears a complicated expression that I can’t understand, she seems on the verge of tears. I’ve never seen such an expression on her face. In the past, she always had a malignant grin that relished in my failure, mocking my low status, or labeling me a gold digger. She’s like...like touched by me.

But there’s not much time left for us. I let my fingers slip from her grasp without warning, finally surrendering to the predators below and mentally submitting to the jaws that seize my mind and body. I let the Alpha and his Beta wrench me down from our handmade ladder to freedom. And the last thing I see of Cathy is the long golden wisps of her hair before I turn to face the wrath of my werewolf captor.

Lily’s POV

I vigorously and rhythmically dab the foundation-soaked make-up sponge against the skin on my neck. Concentrating hard on covering up the ugly faint red line that sits on the curve of my neck. An evident strangulation mark that has me recalling the events of the last couple of hours.

I had been rushing home from work in a hurry, wanting to have as much time as possible to look dashing for Marco for our meeting. The elation was sparkling and fizzing within me like a shaken bottle of gorgeous pink champagne, just waiting to explode in celebration of me and Marco’s reunion. The image of him ran rampantly through my mind, even as I walked with noble grace through the streets of my future kingdom.

I also wanted to be home early because I wanted to take my time getting ready. I deserved some proper pampering for all my hard work. Convincing pathetic Tanya to do as I pleased was an exhausting affair. And so I was looking forward to having a long relaxing soak in the bathtub.

But I had only made it half-way home when massive hands grabbed me, pulling me into a dark and deserted alleyway. Another man came into view trying to help capture me as I fought them, resisting as much as I could. I did hear their mumbling, however. “God, I didn’t realize prince Eric’s girl was so hot-headed. Are you sure she’s Lily?”

I instantly sensed the doubt in their tone. They might want to kidnap me as some form of retaliation towards Eric, but they weren’t entirely sure of my appearance. I struggled hard, finally earning myself a chance to speak. “Are you talking about the first Prince’s fiancé Lily?” I made myself sound scared and confused. “You’ve got the wrong girl. I’m not Lily!”

I saw their skeptical gazes and continued. “Do you think the prince’s fiancé would be walking alone unattended like this? Let me go. I won’t tell anyone I’ve seen you, and I know where the real Lily is!”

The two brawny men stayed silent but nodded. I knew my chance came, pointing to where Tanya was. “She’s just down the road, the third house. She’s got black hair, green eyes, and a petite body. You’ll know when you see her. She has the ring on.” I remember watching them leave, hoping they could really make Tanya disappear from this world, leaving Marco all to me.

Now I stand in front of the mirror, I pull out dazzling white pearls from one of my drawers and clip them so they settle perfectly against my neck. My hair is pulled up into a pretty bun and allows me to showcase my favorite pair of earrings that match my formal attire. With a smile, I grab my clutch and make my way down into one of the palaces sitting rooms where Marco is waiting for me.

“Hi Marco...” I purr.

“What is this about Lily?” I dislike the abruptness to his tone, but I try to brush past it.

“Please, have a seat Marco, do want some tea?”

“Lily, I don’t have the time for this. Let’s get straight to the point. Why did you want to talk to me?”

Before I can say anything else. Cathy bursts into the room, panting heavily from exhaustion. For the time being, I’m more confused rather than irritated. “Cathy? Is everything okay?” I ask.

Marco rushes towards her as she tries to catch her breath. “Tanya- Tanya’s been kidnapped! Marco, I need you! We need to go back and save her!”

“What? How?”

Cathy interjects. “It doesn’t matter. We need to go now! Before they hurt her!”

My frustration grows by the minute, why is he so concerned about Tanya? Why does he care so much? It is irritating to no end that a meeting that was meant to be about me and our love, is now about Tanya again. She ruins everything.

Despite the aggravation going on in my head, I maintain my composure. Before Marco can leave, I grab his hand, softening my eyes, my expression showcasing a sad lost look, trying to induce some form of pity from my fated mate. “Marco please don’t go. It’s not often we get this sort of time together. And it’s really important that I speak to you about certain matters.”

But to my surprise, he snags his arm away from my grasp, as the line of his brow creases in a form of revulsion. “Lily, I only came to meet with you because Tanya insisted that I did. And whatever you have to say, I don’t want to hear it,” his tone is cold and unforgiving. “I came here to make it clear that our relationship was over. I don’t love you anymore Lily,” I maintain a neutral face, but my fingers twitch under his stern gaze. “I am married. So there will be no more unnecessary interaction between you and me from now on. Cathy, let’s go.”

I’m in absolute shock, and completely silent as Marco turns to leave, unable to even react upon seeing Cathy’s gloating grimace in response to my demise. How could he not love me anymore?

I couldn’t be seen so frazzled like this, I quickly head out of the palace and back to my office to try and calm myself. However, even there I can’t escape noisy nobodies; I uncomfortably bump into the cleaning lady as she dusts my room.

“Oh hello dear. I have been meaning to ask, I noticed the large doll in the room, do you want me to place that somewhere?”

“No.” I raise a fake smile at her. “Could you come back later to the cleaning? I’d like to be alone for a little while.”

The cleaner nods and shuffles at the door. Finally by myself, I stare at the massive plus and suddenly throw it across the room to release my pent up rage. I watch as it slams onto the floor, and it’s enough force to push down the button on the doll’s built in voice box, emitting Marco’s voice loud and clear.

It’s the same voice Tanya heard outside my office that day. “I love you, Lily.”

Chapter 35 Marco Comes To Protect Me

Chapter 34 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

"I knew you were lying!"

His voice is immensely hostile, I even hear a growl pierce through his words as he and the Beta drag me away by my arms, unbothered as my lower torso and legs scrape limply across the cold hard ground.

In minutes my back makes hard contact against one of the walls, and I look up at the looming brutes who corner me. "You're all the same!" the Alpha snarls. "Your all just a bunch of conniving rich snakes who don't care about anyone but themselves."

I sit motionless in paralytic fear and despair as they grab my arms, and I flinch as frigid metal imprisoning bracelets snap onto each wrist, nearly pinching my skin.

The clang of wriggly chains encourages me to finally look and see the cuffs that are fastened to my hands, which are then connected by shackles built into the wall my back is pressed against.

I pathetically don't bother to even test their strength, knowing I'm too fragile to make any difference. They're so heavy that they weigh down my arms, and even the cuffs have to be secured as tight as they can be, so they don't slip off my dainty wrists. But I've accepted my fate, I'm stuck here now, with nothing and no one to protect me.

But I still want to defend Marco, and I always feel suspicious of the reason for this kidnapping. "Look, I promise you," I lean towards the Alpha as he tests the sturdiness of my chains, not realizing I'd never be able to escape them. "My husband isn't the type of person to just give out orders so heartlessly. He'd listen to opinions of others, he wouldn't be so cruel," the man doesn't even spare me a glance.

"I don't believe a word you say," I wince as he tugs at the chains one final time, either for good measure or to see me react to the pain from yanking my sore joints. "Just be truthful about this princess, do yourself a favor. I'll release you as soon you're honest with me and give me what I want. All I want is his number," my heartbeat once again escalates, my chest rising and falling as I envision his reaction to my response.

"But- but I don't have it--"

"Liar!" I jolt as his large masculine fist slams the wall inches from my face. Triggering a river of tears to run down my cheeks as I choke on the terror in my heart. "Plea- Please believe me..."

"Stop!" he bashes his fist repeatedly against the cemented white wall. "Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop Lying!" I don't need to look to know he's dented the bricks, creating a fist-size crevice from his Alpha strength. The sound echoes harshly through my ear canals and makes my head start to throb, forcing me to wail out in a plea for him to stop.

I hear the hitch in his breath as his frustration scarily surges. Without warning, claws flash cross my field of view and before I can react, sharp nails press up and against my neck, encasing me still and preventing me from moving my head as his claws threaten to pierce my skin and carve apart my jugular.

My body and mind can't cope, and the world starts to spin. Heat rushes to my head and it makes it feel incredibly heavy. My gut churns uncomfortably as I lose any form of coherent thought. I'm so close to passing out when suddenly the door is barged open with incredible force.

The dizziness means that the outer rim of my vision is blurry as I lay disoriented. But the center of my sight remains in focus, almost clearer by the bright lights of my prison room that shine white on Marco's extraordinary figure.

Sweat covers every inch of him, damp blonde hair falls to his nape in a gorgeous untouched mess. But what's most prevalent to me, and probably to Caspian too, is the fury that cascades from Marco's dominating aura in vicious waves.

"Don't you dare touch her!"

I can't understand how I'm more afraid than the addressed Alpha. Maybe because he has his claws round my neck. But being so close to see his cold unbothered stare, makes me shiver, he doesn't even care to move or follow the command. Only staring blankly at Marco.

"I don't think you're in a position to be making demands."

The sly remark baits my husband forward, but as he moves, the grip on my neck tightens, and the claws prick at my flesh further. I wince in response, lifting my head and neck uncomfortably to try and veer away.

My stiff and nervous movements halt Marco's advances. Caspian clicks his tongue in supremacy. "Now you see, you are in no position to be making demands. She doesn't matter to me, I can end her life in this very moment. I'd choose my next actions wisely..."

Marco has always been gifted in masking his true thoughts, unless he chose to show or tell me how he felt, I could never really discern through the barrier that hid his emotions.

But in this very moment, I finally see a glimpse of his inner world, only for a single second, his eyes highlighting his uncertainty and hesitation, for there is no way to get to me without risking my life.

"Then hurt me instead," my eyes widen upon hearing Marco's words. "It's me you want isn't it, not her."

Caspian clearly debates this offer for a minute, his eyes flickering between me and my husband. It's like he's almost teasing Marco, making him wait as he weighs up the offer as if it's a difficult decision. Finally, he jerks his head in a signal to Dylan. "Tie him up."

The Alpha doesn't remove his hold, but only watches with me as his Beta grabs one of the metal chairs, dragging it bitterly against the flooring so it screeches in protest. When it's positioned in front of the wall opposite me, Marco silently sits in it.

Swift in his movements, freely holding his arms behind the chair backrest so his hands can be chained in place. Throughout the whole process his sapphire eyes stare directly into mine, as if trying to relay a message of comfort that I couldn't hear.

I hate how willingly Marco is behaving. He remains the confident male that I know him to be in his actions, but there's a twang of pain I feel watching his surrender that's evidently because of me.

When Caspian is satisfied with this, he releases his hold, and I feel like I can finally breathe. But the relief is short lived, Caspian steps over to Marco, and without warning, pumpless his fist into Marco's jaw.

"No!" I scream. Scrabbling to pull the chains, even though it's useless.

"Shut up girl!" Caspian does it again, and I watch in horror as Marco's skull snaps sideways in reaction to the force, a reddish hue gradually growing on the place of impact.

Again, and again, and again Caspian bashes his fist into my husband, all parts of him at the mercy of this Alpha. A blow to his nose leads to visible blood dripping lines down to his chin, and the one to his forehead slices a notch into his brow.

My breathing is uncontrollable now, with an irregular heart-wrenching pulse of my chest. I can do nothing, absolutely nothing as Marco lifts his gaze towards me, eyes once again seeping with a message that I have no wolfish ability to discern.

I can't help but cry loudly now, no longer fearful of being heard, my sobbing is erratic as I'm drowning in desperation, I feel totally inept and helpless.

I'm not sure if it is because of Marco's selfless act to take such a beating, or my gut-wrenching cries, but Caspian's Beta intercepts another harmful hit. "Caspian calm down... Caspian. Please, that's enough, you've made your point."

The Alpha's gaze snaps to his inferior, a bloodthirsty look in his wild eyes. "Why should I stop? Not only will this dam affect the lives of my pack, but most importantly, the Blue Moon Tree will be cut down because of it! How can I be calm when they want to so mercilessly destroy such a sacred tree!"

In that singular moment, something dawns on me. I struggle to regain conscious thought and formulate words to cut through the Alpha's rage. "Wait! There's something wrong!"

A silence blesses the air as all three males pause at my outburst, giving me seconds to make my point. “The Blue Moon Tree is very important to Marco! He’d never ever make such a proposal!” I almost scream in my haste.

Again, a sudden hush befalls upon the room, and I’m left uncomfortably restless from it, internally praying that Caspian listens, almost ready to further defend my husband’s case. But before I can say anything else, the Alpha finally speaks.

“Hold on. Your Marco?” He looks at my husband with extensive curiosity. “You’re not Eric?”

Chapter 36 I Can Save The Blue Moon Tree

Chapter 35 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya’s POV

“No, he’s prince Marco, Eric’s brother,” I say immediately, looking almost as confused as the Alpha.

Marco coughs out some of the blood in his throat before adding. “I never drafted a proposal to construct a dam in the Blue Moon Pack territory. I probably wasn’t told about it because the royals knew I’d completely forbid the destruction of the Blue Moon Tree.”

Restless minutes pass, slowly revealing a very different persona from the fierceness Caspian portrayed earlier. The pressure on his brow bone relaxes first, before raising high to his hairline in sincere surprise. His mouth gapes open, and if I’m not so terrified for me and Marco’s life. I would have laughed at Caspian’s expression.

He awkwardly presses his hand against the nape of his neck where I can see sweat beginning to dampen the collar of his shirt. He looks immeasurably uncomfortable with the situation. “Oh well this is embarrassing.” He laughs nervously, pacing the room as he taps his chin, swiveling on the ball of his shoe with each turn.

“Mind undoing our restraints.” Marco sounds so blasé about it that it takes me a minute to register the fact that we are still in cuffs, his tone also takes Caspian a moment before he processes the request, and his body jolts in startling realization.

“Oh goodness! Yes of course! Dylan! What are you waiting around for! Untie them!”

Dylan runs over to me, carefully undoing my chains, his treatment of me a stark difference from a couple of minutes ago. Caspian is undoing Marco's ropes haphazardly, only for my husband to tug his wrist apart with an incredible amount of force, shredding the ties in a clear show that he has only sat there and taken the beating because he wanted to protect me and the baby, he could have easily escaped and attacked. Caspian chuckles awkwardly at this realization, whilst Marco only glares.

"This is just a big misunderstanding you see?" says the Alpha with a playful smile. "I'm sorry for the torture tactics, but you're a Lycan, which thank god for that. Cause that will heal up in no time!" He strokes Marco's shoulder in some form of apology, but my husband slaps his hand away with a formidable look.

Caspian sighs. "I really am sorry, the royal family bullied my pack into giving up control, and I'm not going to just let them destroy our territory for their own gain! Especially when the Blue Moon Tree is so important to us."

Just then, an idea flashes through my mind, now without chains holding me back, I rush to my feet and up to Caspian.

"Maybe you don't have to fight them after all." I suddenly say, grabbing Caspian's attention curiously. "I have a way to save the Blue Moon Tree."

That evening Marco and I return home together. We are sitting quietly in the living room as I work on his wounds. With a warm damp sponge to wipe away the blood coming from the cuts on his face in a gentle motion, trying hard not to hurt him, studying his wounds, noticing the bruising, and feeling guilty for the pain he undertook to protect me.

I can feel Marco's eyes on me, watching me quietly as I dab away any blood. I then take out a bottle of ointment, dipping my clean fingers in it before pressing a generous amount on his wounds. As I do this, I remember that Marco must have come to rescue me halfway through his meeting with Lily.

"I'm really sorry I made you leave your meeting with Lily so you could come and save me," I whisper. I stammer a little to get my next words out, highly hesitant with the thoughts that cross my mind, but finally can't resist asking. "How- how did the meeting go?" I feel sick to my stomach from the nervousness while I wait to hear his answer.

"Weren't you the one who really wanted me to go?" An upward arc on his lips slightly formulates on his beaten-up face. "How come you're so nervous about the outcome?"

"That's... that's because," my cheeks flush red, not knowing how to say. Marco looks at me stammering anxiously, the smile in his eyes becoming more and more obvious.

He is teasing me again! This makes me hot-headed for a second and I can't help blurting out the truth which I intended to keep secret. "I asked you to meet with her because Lily begged me to convince you to."

I watch the confusion showcase itself in his expression. "Tanya, you sound like some major philanthropist." He chuckles. "Do you even hear yourself? My ex-girlfriend asks you to help her get on speaking terms with your husband. And you agree?"

"It's because...!" I look at Marco acting as if nothing has happened, instead it's me who keeps tangling, and a surge of grief springs up in my heart. Once I recall what I've seen outside Lily's office, it's as if I can taste the bitterness on my tongue again. I state with clear hurt in my eyes. "It's because I saw you in Lily's office the other day, kissing her and saying 'I love you'. I thought maybe she's the one you really want, so I thought I should let you guys reconcile."

Marco frowns, prominent brows furrowing, and without warning, his warm hands are pressing against my cheeks, and holding my face so that I have to look at him as he speaks. "But I never went into Lily's office."

My brows narrow in thought. "But when you said, 'I love you' to her, it sounded exactly like you."

I watch him think intensely for a moment before a light bulb goes off in his head. "I gave Lily a doll. And when you push a button, it emits a recording of my voice saying, 'I love you, Lily'. That's what you must've heard... also, when I met with Lily today, I just told her that we will no longer be meeting alone in the future if it isn't necessary. I shouldn't be meeting alone with my ex, especially when I'm married to you."

Upon hearing this, the tension in my body dissipates as I release a calm sigh. I smile as his explanation soothes away my worries. "So, you're not angry anymore?" I can sense the teasing nature of his question as he smiles at me, adding. "If I'm correct, I was sensing a tad bit of jealousy from you Tanya," he says cockily, sounding pleased that his cheeky assumption was correct.

I wrinkle my nose, shaking my head in blatant denial, despite the tiny giggles I couldn't hold back.

Marco's POV

Today is the first round of the perfume competition. I really believe Tanya came up with a brilliant way to save the Blue Moon Tree. Whoever wins the competition gets to sell and market their product extensively, and if Tanya uses the Blue Moon Flower, which is only available in the Blue Moon Pack's territory, it means the pack will have immense economic growth for being the only supplier of the Blue Moon Flower ingredients. So naturally there would be no reason for the royal family to force the construction of the dam or destroy the Blue Moon Tree.

Both Tanya and Lily are competing, and I watch the different rooms as I recall the aspects of the competition. In the first round, each contestant will be in a separate room, and they must create a perfume within the time limit using the utensils and raw materials made available to them in the room.

My eyes drift to tv screens in the main competition venue, showing video footage so that the audience and the judges can watch the contestants' every move. I'm specifically watching Tanya's screen, always impressed by her perfume-making abilities, I admire her talent. A bit of pride warms my chest knowing how capable she is.

However, I start to notice that she's working at a much slower pace than all the other contestants. She almost looks oblivious to the time restriction, working on her concoction step by step without any sense of urgency. She's graceful in the way she works and maneuvers the utensils and instruments in a manner to create her concoction, but she's working too slowly, and there isn't a lot of time.

I start to grow tense for her own sake, unable to do anything but watch as she doesn't pick up speed. I notice that there're fifteen minutes left on the clock, with the first round about to come to an end. A bell rings uniformly in the corner of the competition venue, signaling to the contestants that there are only fifteen minutes left before they must stop working on their perfumes.

This is when I see Tanya's head snap up in realization, as if she hasn't known all along how little time she has left, and I watch as panic flashes in her eyes.

Chapter 37 Perfume Competition

Chapter 36 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

The pipette between my fingers quivers uncontrollably as my arm freezes in the midst of adding oil drops. My thoughts draw back to before the start of the first round, I remember that one of the staff members came up to me, saying that I had two hours to complete my perfume. Hence, I chose to craft a fragrance that required more time to blend and combine, and that fit nicely within the two-hour mark.

Course I now realize that either she was mistaken, or the person had deliberately lied, for in fact I only had one hour. Some inner sense within me considers it was the latter assumption, which was highly strange, for I hadn't even known the staff member, so why would she deliberately sabotage my chances?

None of that matters now however, the bell sounds like a massive gong in my mind as I realize I only have fifteen minutes left to finish my perfume fragrance. And I can't proceed with the original one because I certainly won't be able to finish it in time. My thoughts begin to spiral with considerable doubt.

My weeks upon weeks of preparation, the hours spent crafting and identifying best methods and specific fragrances in my laboratory all gone to waste as I'm left cheated. A sense of disaster overwhelms me at the thought of losing in the first round, when I have put my entire heart and soul into this competition.

It's with this in mind that I suddenly reestablish the reason I'm here. Not for the fame, or the glory, but to save the Blue Moon Tree. It's so important to me and Marco, a place that somehow connects us, and forever remains a prominent reminder of my future child. But most of all, it's the essence of the Blue Moon Pack, and I know I have an obligation to them to save it.

Recalling my purpose suddenly simmers the panic in my system. I don't have time to spare on the notion of fear and embarrassment, I have a responsibility. And with this in mind, my brain starts whizzing of new ideas and alternatives. I skim over my notes and establish quickly what I have to work with and where I can go from there.

My half-completed perfume can still be of use, and I alter it into a different perfume that takes less time to set. I take note of the fragrances I've already used, which sparks a new concept.

I begin to add other oils, deciding that I want to create something summery with hints of childish nostalgia, like afternoons on vast farmlands with fields of apple trees.

I use floral and oriental notes in combination with sandalwood to embody my idea. With 10mins to spare, I add the ethanol and swirl my flask of restored fragrance before placing it over the bunsen burner, whilst praying that all my calculations are correct.

I'm nearly ecstatic as the concoction boils at the right moment. I've got less than five minutes, and while my heart patters erratically, I keep my hands steady. I take the flask off the flame and give it a final swirl and sniff. I smile, highly pleased with the final product. I pour the smooth liquid into a perfume bottle, add the topper, and set it down on my table just as the bell chimes for a final time.

I sigh in relief as I pass the first round of the competition. And after speaking with Marco and some of the judges, I elaborate the interaction with the staff member who faulted me. Because of this, she's punished and dismissed. Although, I'm still slightly uneasy about the whole ordeal, not having ever met her before, it seems strange for her to target only me.

The following days pass in a blur as I complete and positively progress through the rounds. In no time I've successfully entered the final round. There are only two finalists, Lily, and me. There

are no restrictions on the ingredients or utensils permitted in this final round. And we are required to create a perfume related to the theme of “love”, with a three-day allowance.

We have two days to prepare, and then we must show the entire production process step by step in front of the judges and the audience, within a daily time limit. And at first, everything goes splendidly. I have no trouble coming up with a perfume concept surrounding the Blue Moon Flower, since the Blue Moon Tree is also known as the lover’s tree and associated with ancient folklore surrounding love, and courtship.

Therefore, the Blue Moon Flower is the ideal main ingredient to base my perfume on, and it feels only right to have my notes, formulas and calculations written down in the black journal Marco gifted me for Valentine’s Day. It’s almost as if a piece of him is with me in the room as I work tirelessly over the first two days.

I’m very conscious of my time restraints and maintaining a good pace. But I still take my time ensuring the perfection of each additional oil that I add to the mixture, annotating each step as I go to have a well-written notation of every decision I’ve made.

It’s the final day of the competition. And although Marco and Caspian have incredible faith in me and believe that I can win. I recognize that Lily is a very famous perfume designer who has won many perfume competitions, while I am a nobody. With nothing to my name.

There’s a betting system set up for our competition, and I’m not surprised when nearly everyone is betting on Lily. It does make sense, her reputation far exceeds mine, and I understand that no one would want to risk their money on someone like me who comes from a low status life. And no one knows of my true capabilities in perfumery other than Lady Vivian and Marco.

However, I notice Marco’s reaction to everyone betting on Lily, portraying nothing but an eyebrow raise as he watches them chose Lily over me. But to my surprise, in front of everyone, he suddenly walks over to the booth and openly bets on me to win. I therefore can’t help but let a shy smile slip onto my lips from seeing this.

Just then the final round is about to start. In this round, we are allowed to bring our own utensils for our creations, and I excitedly unveil the leather tool kit cover that protects them. But when I reveal my perfumery instruments, my expression falls into utter despair.

My separatory funnel is shattered. It’s what I use to separate the solutions in my mixture. This particular one is immeasurably precious to me, made out of a special type of glass that makes it truly one of a kind. Worse of all, there is no equivalent instrument on site that I could use instead.

The absence of a separating funnel could ultimately destroy my entire creation. Droplets of water edge dangerously to the edge of my optics as I come to terms with accepting failure. And I can’t help but notice the corners of Lily’s mouth slightly curling up as she quietly stands at her station.

Almost as if he could sense my distress, Marco rushes over to one of the judges and asks. “What’s the latest time to submit perfumery equipment for the competition?”

“The judges need at least five minutes to check if the utensil is up to standard. The final round starts in fifteen. So, there’re only ten minutes left for the submission of any utensils,” he says.

I see the unsure faces of people in the audience. Shaking their heads and muttering amongst each other that there just isn’t enough time. The item is so rare, it would be impossible to find it anywhere in the capital. I seem too internally agree with the audience, I slump my shoulders in defeat, believing I am going to lose without even putting up a fight.

Just then Marco comes up to me, his walk depicting purposeful intent. “I will bring that tool for you in time for the competition.”

“But how?”

“Trust me. Remember your Valentine’s Day gift?” he then dashes off. I watch as he shifts into his wolf form and gallops away. My eyes widen as I finally understand what he meant.

Although the now fractured separatory funnel is indeed precious. One such replica does exist. Marco’s gift to me included a wide range of rare and specialized equipment for perfumery, and one such tool is a separating funnel that is of the exact same make as the one broken in front of me.

But none of that would matter if Marco doesn’t get back in time. I nibble on my fingernails in an anxious display, feeling utterly restless as I wait for him to return. I do indeed trust him, with all my heart. But the logical segments of my brain argue that it’s impossible.

I watch in apprehension as time ticks away. The final round is about to start in five minutes, which means my last chance is about to disappear in 10, 9, 8, 7... ...1!

Chapter 38 | Won!

Chapter 37 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya’s POV

I watch the clock on the wall with massive strain on my heart, the seconds ticking down at a pace that can’t be considered slow or fast. Only agonizing, like it’s mocking my slow inch towards

demise. When it lands on one, dread succumbs to my system and I face up to the fact that it's the end of my time in the competition.

But before I'm left to accept failure, Marco bursts through the door with cosmic conviction. His perfectly placed golden blonde locks swaying with the movement of his body as he jogs over to my station.

The moment equates to a scene in a book. Marco as a knight in shining armor, returns from his quest with the only ancient artifact that could save his kingdom. I stare wordlessly into his eyes as I take hold of the utensil that he hands me. Completely in awe of his desire to see me achieve this dream of mine.

Hopefully my expression of pure admiration is enough, as I don't have time to thank him. I must focus now on making my perfume and saving the Blue Moon Tree. The bell rings to signal the start of the final round, and we begin making our individual perfumes according to our specialized designs.

I may have been weak in every other aspect of my wolfish existence. But perfumery is the one certainty that I never doubted myself on. I know what I'm capable of. That, and I also am in love with and immensely passionate about the craft.

As I work. I find myself falling into a certain rhythm of motion as I drip drops of essence oils from pipettes, swirl liquids, distil and funnel certain mixtures. It's almost like a waltz, only the music is in my head, and I am dancing with my finest ingredients and tools to produce my best work.

My focus remains on my own station, but every now and then I notice Lily's movements at the corner of my eye. For she is still just as talented, and I recognize the precision and fluidity in her movements. She showcases perfection, like she's practiced and practiced for days to make her actions look utterly flawless.

Returning my gaze back to my work, I scan over my notes and calculations one final time to ensure I haven't missed anything. Confident, I'm ready to add the last ingredient. Using a sharp needle, I prick the end of my finger, placing it over my concoction and allowing a few drops of blood to plunge into the solution. I give the flask one final swirl before carefully transferring it to a perfume bottle just as the bell signals the end of the final round.

My heart pounds both excitedly and nervously in my chest as the judges come to critique my perfume first. My perfume is encased in a delicate clear glass bottle. The liquid shines through as a shade of sapphire blue, glowing proudly in demonstration of the Blue Moon Flower's beauty.

Because it's the main ingredient, the liquid gives off an iridescent type of shimmer. And the Blue Moon Flower's natural glow gives the perfume a crystal-like illusion that is very beautiful to look at.

After considering its appearance, the judges take turns spraying my perfume onto their skin, and also spray the fragrance into the air around us for good measure. Along with the Blue Moon Flower, I added fragrances that depict the essence of first love. Such as soft floral notes of fresh cut flowers like jasmine and lily, mimicking the typical sensations of butterflies that people get when they first crush on another.

I also added a touch of lavender. This melds well with the colder scents like vanilla and white gardenia, since new love is fresh and alluring, and wakes you with a jolt of passion to chase it blindly. There are also a few aquatic notes combined to match the blueish hue of the Blue Moon Flower, that can be interpreted as the dark depths of the sea, sparkling with magic and mystery.

Finally, I included a subtle hint of woody spices that creates a tiny splash of bitterness that comes through at the end. Representing the understandable worries and insecurities that come with first love and getting to know someone.

The judges take a moment to smell the scent, and I watch apprehensively as they silently judge, before one of them speaks. “This perfume is a meld of different elements, but they all make perfect sense and create a temporary illusion of falling in love.”

I smile in somewhat disbelief, I’m relieved that my perfume matches the theme. I also think back to the fact that when I added a drop of my blood, I was thinking about the romantic memories I had with Marco under the Blue Moon Tree. I can imagine those memories create a special function through my blood, creating an essence of “temporarily experiencing sweet love”.

“I have one more thing to show you,” I say, before turning to one of the staff members. “Please turn off the lights.”

As we’re now surrounded in darkness, one of the judges notices how my perfume sparkles on their skin and the test paper, they then go ahead and spray it into the air. As my perfume diffuses into the surrounding atmosphere, it leaves a trail of dainty twinkling stars that glow fiercely in the dark.

I explain this to judges as they gape in awe. “My inspiration for this bottle of perfume is from my interpretation of love. Like the Blue Moon Flower, love sometimes may appear soft and fragile, or weak in its brightness. But just like the stars, they will always shine for you, even if the light is not as bright as the moon. You might not always see them, but they are always there.”

I bashfully bow as I receive a round of applause from the audience and the judges, before watching them move on to Lily’s perfume. They repeat the actions of spraying the perfume and smelling and analyzing its fragrance, till the same judge that spoke to me, speaks up.

“While the perfume is precious and elegant... it’s emotionally insufficient,” I watch as Lily’s face pales as the judge continues. “It lacks a lot of true emotion that we saw in Tanya’s perfume,” he says shaking his head in disappointment. “Your work this time has regressed immensely in comparison to your previous submissions,” as he says this, I see Lily’s fists clenching in reaction.

Finally, the judges turn to one another away from both of our tables, speaking quietly amongst themselves. I see them all nodding in affirmation before one of them turns the audience and speaks. “We declare Tanya the winner of the perfume competition.”

I stand grounded in shock. I can’t believe it! I won!

I can’t help but notice the mixed set of emotions from the audience. Gasps ignite in their expressions, while others look incredibly upset with the outcome of the competition. I remember the bet that has been going on throughout and I realize nearly everyone has betted on Lily, believing she would win.

A man in the crowd moans as he drags a hand across his face in a deliberately aggravated facepalm of exasperation. Clearly in distress about all the money he’s now lost due to my unexpected win. His friends beside him showcase the same level of upset, completely silenced by the verdict, they stew in both anger and grief.

I also see a woman in and amongst the sea of shocked faces. She gapes at me, then at the judges, then at Lily, and then back at me. Unable to comprehend or fathom this decided outcome. I hear her speak to another woman beside her in disbelief. “But how can this be? I’ve been following Lily’s progress and watching her competitions for so many years now! She’s never lost!” She exclaims, while the woman beside her nods in agreement, muttering under her breath.

“It’s unbelievable, how can she lose to a nobody like Tanya?”

The crowd’s surprise and unsettlement create an awkward atmosphere of muttering and silent curses, but none of them seems to bother me. I won! In earnest elation, I rush down the stage to the one person that does matter. I run into Marco’s arms, giving him a massive hug as I rejoice. When I do this, finally the crowd seems to accept their loses, breaking into massive applause all around me. Buried in Marco’s arms I cherish the moment of glory as they finally cheer for me.

As I hug Marco, I’m able to see over his shoulder, somehow my gaze picks out Caspian from the rest of the crowd, probably because of the way he’s staring at me. His hazel eyes glimmer with a strange form of fascination, they shine with desire as he smiles in awe directly at me. And he doesn’t at any moment seem to look anywhere else but me, unwavering and seeming like he’s lost in thought as he subconsciously claps.

I’m slightly frazzled by the way he’s staring, but I assume it’s in thanks for helping him protect his pack and saving the Blue Moon Tree, so I smile back, and offer a wave. And I can’t help but chuckle as he realizes I’m looking at him. He comically jolts out of his daze, quickly adjusting the faraway look in his eyes as he smiles back and returns my wave, trying to appear more reserved in his actions of praise.

Everything is going just as I hoped, and it’s turning out wonderful. That’s until Lily’s voice rings out in the venue. “Hold on, the winner of the perfume competition can’t be awarded to a copycat.”

Chapter 38 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

Everyone's eyes are on Lily as she comes to the front of the stage, and from the sidelines a professional-looking investigator steps out from the crowd, coming up to stand beside her. He holds a file and carries a bag that he sets on one of the tables, unloading its contents to reveal perfumes that he places down.

"I've done a detailed investigation of Malik's perfume store where Tanya use to work."

My body shudders with uncertainty, standing by Marco as I turn to face Lily whilst she continues addressing the judges and the crowd. "These are perfume samples sold at Malik's store," she hands them out to the judges. "As you'll soon realize, many of these perfumes smell exactly like my winning perfume creations from previous competitions."

The previous silence dispels as the crowd mutters and whispers amongst themselves. The judges each receive a sample, and take a sniff, nodding their heads in agreement, urging her to continue. "I don't know how Tanya got the recipes for the perfumes, but it's clear that she has been secretly copying my work. And because of this, I hope you will reconsider awarding her the win, since a copycat doesn't deserve first place."

Upon voicing her final thoughts, her gaze splits to me, maintaining a cold polished stare, that no one could discern but myself. I know on the inside; Lily is smirking at how well-planned this all is.

In reaction, I step away from Marco to declare my innocence. "But- but I never stole Lily's creations. Those are all my original perfumes!"

Lily's investigator opens his file, handing her pages upon pages of images and notes which she shows the crowd and judges. Particular images showcase me working there, and notes display my employee contract. "Here is real identifiable proof that she was at Malik's store and worked on these perfumes herself. She was copying my work."

From behind me, I hear voices. Some not believing me at all, while others are too shocked to comment. Tears of mine threaten to spill as no one seems to believe me. All the evidence falls in Lily's favor, and I have nothing to show to prove myself not guilty.

It's then I suddenly realize that all the trouble I've been having at the competition, all the mishaps and 'accidents', must've been Lily attempting to sabotage my creations and stop me from winning.

I'm overcome with shock as I recall the familiar scent, I smelled that day at the company's perfume display. I can't fully be sure, but if what my gut is telling me is true... then Lily may have been secretly copying my work all along! But how?

The distressing matter eventually attracts the attention of the royal family who are now involved in the trial of this incident. The massive assembly takes place at the palace, in a large room that replicates that of a courthouse since the royal family is often responsible for carrying out major trials on matters that involve the kingdom.

This must've been something exponential, as so many people are present today. I sit in a booth on my own, extremely unnerved, and scared. Lily sits exactly opposite me on the other end of the room, remaining utterly calm and collected in her mannerisms.

The lesser royals sit on long rows of wooden benches that incase us in an arc. And at the top of the room is a long wooden table, with a chair for each member of the ruling royal family. The King, the Queen, Prince Eric and of course Prince Marco.

Hours pass as there is consistent back and forth on the truth of the matter, and no one can come to a decisive decision on the true answer. Some royals propose I should be stripped of my first-place win in the perfume competition entirely. This sets my heart racing, all my hard work would be futile if Lily somehow proves I'm guilty. Even if I know I'm not.

Marco then stands to speak. "Tanya should at least be given three days to prove her innocence. If after then, Tanya still can't provide evidence, it won't be too late to have another trial," I appreciate Marco's suggestion, hoping I'm granted it.

But not everyone is happy about it, the room erupts into shouts and objections to the proposal while I hunch down, growing smaller and smaller in my chair, wishing I can just disappear from it all. It's then that the King yells out a command, silencing everyone, and says that the proposal will be put to a vote.

Tensions rise as they go round the room, and I watch with wide eyes as Lily, and I are both evenly matched. I still don't think many of the royals care for me, but I assume they maybe feel sorry for me or are unable to ignore the deathly stare Marco would give them.

Finally, all who are left are the two princes. I smile softly at Marco when he raises his hand to vouch for me. But what surprises me is when Eric raises his hand too! I'm not the only one surprised, Lily too is stunned by her fiancé's actions, but quickly hides her emotions behind a facade not to showcase her reaction.

Prince Eric's vote is what guarantees me my chance to find proof within three days. When the trial is dismissed, everyone wanders off to have their own conversations, and I walk up to Eric to thank him.

"Eric, um, thank you. Thank you for giving me a chance to prove my innocence," I lower my head in the presence of the prince, awkwardly standing as I try to express my gratitude.

I've somehow understood the difference between Marco's and Eric's nature. Both are immeasurably confident males; however, Marco's confidence comes in the form of inflicting fear and inducing submission from those around him with his ruthlessness. Eric's is of a different kind, his smile somehow subdues you into trusting him, into feeling comfortable round him, even when you very well know what the Lycan Prince is capable of.

I think of this as he gives me his ever so natural gentlemanly smile. "In all honesty, I want to give you time to prove yourself because I'm also curious to know the truth about this matter. Why settle it now when you could prove us all wrong," he says this with a playful tone to his voice, like the whole ordeal is entertaining to witness. Which I couldn't blame him for, this is indeed a spectacle.

I nod my head in a respectful manner and stand idle as he wishes me luck before being swept away by other nobles interested in conversing with him. I slowly walk to the edge of the room, looking for Marco, when I spot him in a heated argument with Lily. I pull strands of my hair behind my ear as I can't help but overhear the conversation.

"How could you? Even if you don't love me anymore Marco, you should at least be honest and true to your morals. Just because you're loyal to Tanya does not mean you should endorse her lies," I'd never really seen Lily so angry before, it must've really hurt her that Marco voted for me. "You've seen how hard I've worked on my perfumes for years! And now you're ruining my entire career just because of her?"

Marco barely reacts to this, acting unbothered and uncaring to Lily's dramatics. Instead, once she finishes expressing her dismay, he outwardly chuckles with no concern for her rage. "I've been to Malik's perfume store, I've smelled these perfumes in the past Lily," he states. "However, I asked Malik and he told me that Tanya had been a part of her small pack for her entire life. How would she have access to perfumes all the way in the capital? And her learning opportunities were vastly limited too. It just doesn't make any sense of how she'd get a hold of your perfumes."

Just then, Marco's demeanor changes into something much more serious. My husband takes an intimidating step towards Lily, dangerously close as he towers over her with his penetrating icy glare. She can't help but shrink from the mental pressure he exudes as he speaks. "And how does an omega like Tanya, who has no wolf, steal these perfumes from you? Especially when they're not even sold publicly?"

He cocks his head to the right, leaning down to her in a taunt of his power. "Is Tanya copying you? Or is it actually the other way around?"

Lily is obviously flustered by Marco's presence and delivery. But I can't help but be touched by the fact that he believes me.

The next day, Marco and I return to my hometown, the Blackhide Pack. And it feels so strange to return to the place I grew up after all this time. The place hasn't changed, but I have. And I wonder who I would've been if Marco never found me. But besides this, there's an important reason why I'm here, and what I'm after, is possibly the one thing that can protect my career.

For every perfume I created, I wrote a manuscript, detailing the design. Each dated accordingly. They were all safely placed in a room not far from Malik's perfume shop. He had noticed back then how so engrossed and obsessed I was with perfumery. So he offered me a room where I could practice and keep my tools and manuscripts safe.

Marco and I arrive there in no time. And he waits outside whilst I go in to get them. The room itself holds many memories, and is the place I escaped too when my family abuse got too much to bear. Perfumery was my freedom, it is my freedom now more than ever. In a desperate search, I look everywhere, but I'm able to find all my manuscripts except the ones that Lily's accused of me copying.

I think back to who has the keys to my room, and other than Malik, Brandon my former boyfriend, was the only other person I shared this sacred place with. Just then, my heart plummets with dread. I hear a noise of 'click' and turn to face Brandon who stares at me with hunger and desire in his eyes as he holds my manuscripts in his hand.

Chapter 40 Brandon Stole My Designs

Chapter 39 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Brandon's POV

1 hour ago:

God I needed this...

My hand was slung round Alina's dainty little waist, slipping my finger through the belt loop on her jeans. I pulled her tighter against me, hearing her moan as the bottom half of me pressed against her, whilst my lips meshed against hers. But just as she began to undo the buttons of my shirt, my phone blasted its ringtone.

I groaned. I pulled away to lounge back against the couch. She rushed to fix her disheveled hair as I picked up the phone. “What?”

“Don’t tell me what. You owe me a favor.”

I grinned when I heard Lily’s irritated voice over the phone. It had been a while since she contacted me. The last time was when she was furious at the fact that I had let Tanya find a way to leave the Blackhide Pack. Even though I faked being her boyfriend and stole her perfume designs. To Lily it hadn’t been good enough, that, and well, Tanya marrying Prince Marco was a hilarious, but also problematic turnaround of events.

In all honesty, I didn’t really care. I was an Alpha werewolf, and I had Alina. Course, Lily did always offer easy money. “Is the pay good?”

“You’ll take what I give you, on the fact that you don’t mess this up again,” I rolled my eyes as she went on about how I failed the last time.

But eventually I responded. “Fine. What is it?”

“I’ve accused Tanya of copying my perfume designs. I need you to go steal her manuscripts so that she has no way of proving her innocence. Get this done and I’ll pay you good. Brandon, you must do it successfully. She can’t get away with this. I will not have an omega beat me at my own damn game.”

Even though Lily tried to mask her desperation through her snide remarks, I sensed the urgency of the issue. I almost felt a tad sorry for her. “Aw, you poor thing,” I said mockingly, enjoying her annoying huffs that I could hear over the phone. “Don’t worry about it darling. I’ll get those manuscripts. Tanya will never find them.”

“Don’t mess this up,” before I could cheekily respond, Lily hung up the phone, and all I could do was shrug. I kissed Alina one last time, before telling her I’d be back to continue our little session later.

Knowing exactly where Tanya had kept her manuscripts, I headed to the building and into her now abandoned room. In no time, I found the ones I was looking for, and I turned to leave, only to suddenly heard movement from down the hall.

I rushed into one of the dark corners of the room. Standing very still, I watched as suddenly Tanya entered through the doorway. I licked my lips in desperate need as my eyes slipped down her slender figure. When seeing her again, something within me awakened. And after being suppressed for so long, I finally let loose my desires in a sudden wave that overtook me.

Tanya’s POV

At present:

Brandon steps towards me in a slow and deliberate manner, taunting me with a grin. Something in me senses the danger he poses towards me, and something in his expression suggests he isn't interested in chatting.

“Brandon, please... don't.”

Brandon has no intention of listening to me. I'm not given the chance to scream as he lunges at me. He's too quick and slips a piece of tuff fabric into my mouth and ties it behind my head, gagging me and preventing me from making any noises.

My breathing accelerates as I'm fearful for my life. I'm only an omega without a wolf and am no match for Brandon who's an immensely powerful alpha. And so there's nothing I can do but watch the lust that seeps into his hungry gaze that slips down my body. A wolfish grin settles on his expression that invokes terror within me.

I can barely fight off his hands, and before I know it, I feel air breeze over parts of my skin as he suddenly rips open my dress and tears my body free. I'm frozen in terror as his hands run down my body, he's rough with me as he caresses my body savagely in a manner that's both sensual and immoral.

I whimper, wriggling like a terrified lamb fearing slaughter. But Brandon ignores my pleas, he nestles his head into the crook of my neck, kissing and nibbling greedily at my flesh, threateningly to drop his head lower and lower. I feel his hot breath against my sensitive skin, as his breathing comes out in uneven moans of desire, that ignite sparks of discomfort and pain throughout my body.

“You're so weak Tanya,” he says, sounding pleased that he has me to himself. “But I won't deny your beauty,” he says while licking his licks like a predator ready to devour his prey. “You got away from me last time... I think it's only fitting you make up for leaving me alone with my desires and forcing me to suppress my need for you.”

As I struggle to keep Brandon from taking this any further, I hear Marco at the door. Knocking repeatedly and calling out to me, clearly sensing that something is wrong as I've been in the room for a while now.

But my attention is once again pulled away as Brandon becomes rougher with his attempts. His hands gripping me in places they don't belong, I can only yelp in muffled fragments with the rope in my mouth as I feel my skin being pulled and pinched in ways that I know will leave bruising. He presses against me harshly, ensuring there's barely any space between our bodies, leaving little room for me to breathe.

I then hear a deep aggravated snarl come from his throat as my necklace gets in the way, stopping him from kissing the rest of my neck with his lips. Without warning, he snatches it, snapping its chain and flings it across the room in a ravenous display.

But just as he does so, I suddenly feel an overwhelming amount of power surge through me. Almost unconsciously, I channel that energy to protect myself. Slamming my hands against Brandon which violently thrusts him away from me, bashing his back against the wall.

I quickly undo the gag.

“Marco! Help me! Quick!”

Aware the door is locked, my husband kicks it down with unquestionable ease, eyes blazing with readiness to defend me. But before he can attack, Brandon rushes to grab me, throwing me into Marco’s arms as a form of distraction, before fleeing out of the room in a blur.

“No! My manuscripts,” I fumble to stand, desperately wanting to go after him, but also terrified and weak from what I’ve just experienced.

Marco pulls me back, holding me tightly against him. “I- I let him get away. It’s my fault. I let him escape with the proof I need.”

In sadness, I slip away from Marco’s hold, stepping over to pick up my necklace. I place it gently round my neck, once again feeling a strange rush of energy in my body. Yet still unable to identify what’s happening to me.

I don’t question it more as Marco draws my attention back to him. “Your safety is of utmost importance to me Tanya. Don’t worry, I’ll find your manuscripts. I’ll do whatever it takes. I promise.”

The deadline comes upon me quicker than I hoped for. And once again I and Lily face each other in front of everyone as we await trial. My efforts have been a disaster, and now there is no substantial way to prove my innocence to everyone. The manuscripts that Brandon stole are the only possible way of setting me free.

Even though I’m aware of Lily and Brandon’s entanglement that leads to my demise, I lose all sense of hope, and I nervously pick at the skin of my finger in growing anxiousness. I watch as Lily’s smile broadens by the minute, and the judges seem ready to convict me as guilty of stealing Lily’s perfume creations.

However, just when I think it’s all over. Marco suddenly bursts into the courtroom. My eyes grow wide as the crowd instinctually clears a path as my husband storms towards the end of the room. In his hands he carries papers that he slams down hard on the judges’ table, declaring loudly.

“Tanya is the true creator of the perfumes...”

Chapter 41 Then Just Fall In Love With Me

Chapter 40 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

I later find out from Marco that although Brandon had escaped, his trail couldn't escape the nose of a powerful Lycan. Marco had expertly tracked him down using his sharp wolfish sense, and reconnaissance experience to follow Brandon's bodily odors to his position.

Brandon had been on the phone to Lily, confirming he had been able to steal my manuscripts successfully. Of course, Brandon didn't sense the presence of the Lycan Prince, who in swiftness grabbed my manuscripts and bludgeoned him into unconsciousness. Marco tied him up in a remote area of town within the confines of an abandoned house so that Brandon couldn't call Lily to update her on the turn of events.

However, right now, I'm squirming in my seat with both hope and unease as Marco presents the evidence to the inquisitor. The man takes a cold hard look at my papers, silently flipping through the pages as the room holds its silence.

Finally, the inquisitor's voice cuts through the tension and stillness of the courtroom. "Tanya's manuscripts are indeed dated prior to Lily's creations."

A loud rush of hushed voices fills the room, surprise, and dismay articulated in their tones and expressions of bewilderment. The inquisitor ignores the commotion and continues speaking. "I therefore believe that it was actually Lily who copied Tanya's creations, rather than the other way around. Hence, Tanya should be honored with first place in the competition, and Lily should be completely stripped of all her previous championships for her copied creations."

The room now erupts into an explosion of disorder and disarray. I sit completely frozen, reflecting the disbelief expressed by the crowd. I can't fathom that I've not only won the trial, but I've been awarded back my perfumery championship, despite Lily's attempts to dismantle my livelihood.

With her in mind, my gaze flickers towards her. Something unsettles me to see Lily's fists clenched with rage, fingers pinching the depths of her palms as her chest rises and falls erratically. But in all honesty, it seems only fitting that Marco, her fated mate, and now ex, has been able to skillfully dismantle her tower of lies.

I'm so focused on the success of the evening, and the relief I feel for finally being freed from accusation, that I and everyone else in the room, don't notice the slow rise of the full moon. It

now perfectly sits high in the midnight sky, its beaming light glitters through the windows, and casts itself down on my husband, to which I then realize our mistake.

Almost in slow motion, I watch as Marco stumbles in place, swaying uncomfortably as he braces against one of the pillars. He grunts first, his fingers and hands shaking and cramping before a menacing growl cascades from beyond now sharp canine teeth.

Everyone erupts into a panicked frenzy, and they all back away from Marco's immediate surroundings. I instead rush towards him, pushing and shoving through the bodies in absolute haste. Desperate to be at his side.

He's still human... He's still human. There's still time.

Another terrifying roar causes someone to scream, and others to move further away. But I finally reach him and am met with a threatening display. Whilst using the pillar to hold himself, he's pressed his fingernails into the stone, human hands with pointed nails scratching against the stone as he fights with himself. He snaps his head up to me, eyes glowing their unfamiliar shade of burgundy, and he momentarily bares his teeth, not yet recognizing me.

"Marco, it's Tanya. Please. Let me help you."

Just at this critical moment, a flash of light suddenly comes from his pocket, which seems to have eased his pain, and then he looks at me.

My fear subsides as I see the recognition in his eyes, but I wonder what that flash of light is. His heavy bestial breathing filters through his voice, "My pocket. Get it out of my pocket. Now."

I don't question his demand. I try not to hesitate as I inch closer and put my hand into the pocket of his black pants, feeling in the dark. Finally, my fingers wrap round a small vial, which I pull out, revealing the perfume I gave to him for his birthday.

I don't need to ask for what to do next. I unscrew the cap and hold it beneath his nose, trying to stay close and hold it steady as he struggles to fight off his Lycan form through harsh jerks. But eventually, I hear him breathe in the sweet soft aroma of lavender. The clear bottle suddenly flashes with a blinding bright again for all but a second, before fading away to reveal Marco's eyes of oceanic blue.

His breathing loses its guttural undertone by each pace, and slowly he loosens his grip on the pillar, unhooking his fingers from it, making me sigh in utter relief.

I can also hear gasps from the crowd behind us as they too see what I see. Marco recovers his human senses, and the curse's effects somehow vanish even as the full moon still lights the way from up above.

By now, I hear footsteps from behind me, and I slip the bottle into Marco's fingers while I turn to face them. It's King Joseph, despite my frazzled state, innate submission to the Lycan King

compels me to courtesy before him, before stepping aside so the King can tend to Marco as he pleases.

“Marco, going out under the moon will risk the onset of the curse once more. Stay with Tanya in the palace, just for tonight,” the King doesn’t sound like he’s leaving any room for Marco to object, and my husband nods his head, still slightly weak from fighting off the transformation.

“Fine. If it means preventing myself from hurting anyone, but I want to have a room to myself, with a lock. Tanya is to be kept safe and away from me,” they both for once, seem to agree to this. And that night, I’m left with a bed to myself as Marco locks himself away.

The next morning, we decide to stay for breakfast. A gorgeous display is set up on a long and elegant glass table. I situate myself beside Marco, opposite the King, Queen and Eric as we begin to feast on fine delicacies fit for royalty.

“I didn’t shift. Nor did I lose my mind to the Lycan last night. I was completely conscious,” says Marco.

My surprise mirrors that of the King, who looks overjoyed with the prospect that Marco’s curse didn’t return last night. There is no guarantee that Marco’s curse has been cured, but there is definitely unspoken hope in the air around us for what the future can hold.

However, when I look to see Eric’s reaction, I’m unsure of what to make of his expression. He maintains his decency with regards to the news, but somehow, there’s an unreadable emotion in his eyes that I can’t quite discern.

I’m distracted from this thought however as Marco turns to speak to me. “It must’ve been the perfume you gave me. Not only does it help me sleep better, but it also keeps me mentally aware and awake during the full moon.”

His words are all but statements and I can’t help but blush in reaction. Although I’m not entirely confident it has been my perfume that allowed him to stay awake, the fact that I might’ve helped him lifts my spirits.

Course, reality eventually sets in. My love for Marco is growing stronger and stronger by the day, and he treats me with more care and with a dutiful showcase of loyalty and faith. I can’t help but worry that there will come a point when I can no longer hide my desire for him.

I have to acknowledge and remember that our marriage isn’t real. It’s only a contract that legally binds us through law, not through love. I decide I need to go see the Messenger Mage for help again.

Later that evening I make my way to the Moon Goddess Temple, noticing how the streetlights nearby have been repaired. They glow a soft distance yellow, illuminating me and the street below. I can’t help but wonder how come, since it hasn’t been done for years.

Nevertheless, I make my way into the Temple, and into the small room. So use to our regular meetings I begin talking with ease about what's bothering me.

"I'm falling deeply in love with Marco by the day. I'm trying so hard not to, I'm trying so hard to hide it too. But he fills me to the brim with emotion, and I'm so afraid that it's going spill out," I know the Messenger Mage is there, but I assume her silence is her urging me to continue. "It's itching away at me Moon Goddess. I stress every night that I'll fail to hide it from him. I need to stop somehow."

"But why don't you just allow yourself to fall in love with him?" she asks.

I hesitate at first, since the truth is incredibly painful. But I finally explain. "Because Marco told me when this all started, that he could give me everything I needed once we were married. Safety, health, protection, and more. But the only thing he couldn't give me was love..."

Before I can say anymore, I see movement from behind the veil. I'm too stunned to speak as Marco steps out from behind it, eyes holding me still with their hypnotic vibrancy as he speaks.

"And I'll forever regret saying those words."