

Luna Aleksa's Escape Chapter 31

Kingston POV

It was the day of the initiation ceremony and for some reason, Sabre was restless and excited at the same time. He had been pacing in my head all night. Usually he was the strong and silent type so something was definitely going on with him.

I was about to take him for a run, but there was still so much to organize and time wasn't on my side today, so he would just have to wait a bit longer. I would just have to take him for a run later tonight after the ceremony was over.

I could hear my stomach rumbling, so I decided that I needed to have a quick breakfast before I got to work, there was much to do, and not much time to do it in. I walked into the kitchen and was greeted with the warm aroma of freshly brewed coffee. I lifted the jug and poured myself a coffee. Just then, I noticed that I was being watched by a very amused Rose. I must have gotten lost in my thoughts. I couldn't stop thinking about Aleksa and how happy I was that she was joining my pack. I looked at Rose quizzically, "Anything on your mind Rose?" I asked her.

"You look like you're in a good mood. I wonder if it has anything to do with a certain she-wolf joining the pack today?" She asked me with a knowing grin on her face.

I went to reply to her question when I caught the scent of peony blossom and peach nectar. I didn't even need to look up to know that Aleksa had just entered the room. I could scent her anywhere. Nothing awakens my senses like her scent does. Sabre had even started to stir.

When our eyes met we both smiled, recalling those special moments we spent together on the balcony this morning. Watching the sun rise over the pack lands, not to mention that kiss. That earth shattering, mind blowing kiss that was more like an explosion of my senses, I knew it was a mutual feeling, as Aleksa had been so responsive to it. I recalled scenting her arousal. It had taken every fiber of my being to not act on my desire at that moment. I needed to remember to be patient, with Aleksa joining Rocky Mountain, there would be plenty of time for that later, I had hoped.

“Good Morning Kingston,” Aleksa said softly, almost purring, subtly batting her eyelashes.

“King-ton! Asha!” The twins yell and they run towards Asher and I. Liam ran into my legs, jumping up on my feet, while Layla did the same with Asher.

“Good morning, Liam, Layla, who wants a hot chocolate?” I asked them, knowing full well what the answer would be already.

“Meeeee! Meeeee!” They yelled in unison. I placed them in their highchairs and set about making their hot drinks, while Aleksa watched me, with a look on her face that I can’t quite decipher.

The initiation ceremony was underway, and we had initiated both Mason and Kaia into the pack. It was now Aleksa’s turn. I had asked Aleksa to please come up onto the stage, for the initiation rites, as it was time for her to pledge her allegiance to the pack, to me as her alpha, and to become one of the Rocky Mountain pack members. I called out her name and watched her slowly move towards the stage, she looked gorgeous in the dress that I had picked out for her. It was a perfect fit, it had a thigh high split which illustrated her perfectly curvy legs. She looked like a goddess. So radiant. So f*****g perfect.

I walked to the edge of the stage and offered her my hand, to help her up the staircase, she had both Liam and Layla on either side of her. While they weren’t technically being initiated the traditional way today due to their age, they would be honorary pack members until they were old enough to take the rites and officially undertake a blood pact pledge.

I led Aleksa to the center of the stage where my father, the previous alpha, was standing. Kaia walked up to Aleksa, kissed her on her cheek and took the twins’ hands, so they could stand beside her and Asher, while Aleksa was initiated.

I asked Aleksa if she was ready to break her connection and allegiance to the Evergreen pack, and to accept me as her alpha, and in all honesty, at that moment I was a little worried that she might change her mind. I wanted her to accept me as more than just her alpha, I wanted her to accept me as her lover, as her partner, as so much more than that. But I would settle for this, for now.

“Do you, Aleksa Petrov, swear your loyalty and allegiance to the Rocky Mountain pack, thereby renouncing your loyalty and allegiance with the Evergreen pack.” I asked her.

I, Aleksa Petrov, declare my loyalty and allegiance to the Rocky Mountain pack, and formally renounce my loyalty and allegiance to the Evergreen pack.” Aleksa said, proudly, with her head held high, while looking deeply into my eyes.

I then raised the ceremonial dagger in one hand, while holding my other palm out and began to break my skin with it, slicing the palm of my hand first, then Aleksa’s hand next, we then interlocked our hands mixing our blood.

Then an intense and overwhelming sensation consumed me. It was as if I could feel everything, all of Aleksa’s emotions, as well as an overwhelming desire, stronger than I have felt to be with her.

“MATE!” Aleksa’s wolf yelled. I could tell it was her wolf, as her eye color had changed, they had sapphire blue swirls in them, that and there was a tone of possessiveness, of dominance accompanying it, indicating her wolf’s presence.

“MATE!” Sabre growled furiously, in return, temporarily taking control. I had a feeling Aleksa might be my second chance mate. The feeling I would get when she was around, the sweet nectar of her scent and how it invaded my senses. It had taken her joining my pack, and severing her remaining ties to Evergreen and Lachlan, for it to become reciprocal and official.

Sabre was growling, he wanted to mate and mark Aleksa on the spot, he was so eager to mark his territory and claim his mate. At that moment he took over pulling Aleksa into a passionate embrace, asserting his dominance, and grabbing hold of her body, pressing it against his chest, with no intention of letting go.

Although I knew that we would have to be patient. Aleksa’s situation was complicated, especially after what she had experienced at the hands of her ex mate, and given that she had Liam and Layla to consider.

After some time, I gained control back from Sabre, and reluctantly let Aleksa go, pulling her body apart from mine, looking at her trying to get her breath back, and composing herself. Sabre was satisfied with her response to us. I then realized that we were still standing on the stage in front of the entire

pack, and that they had all witnessed this moment. They now knew that Aleksa was to become their Luna. I looked sideways to my friends and family who looked unsurprised, could they have known, were we that obvious, I thought to myself. Nearly everyone is roaring in happiness and acceptance and applause, I let them have the moment, and then I try to silence them so that I could address them.

I went on to explain that Aleksa was my moon goddess given fated mate, that she was my second chance mate, and that I was her second chance mate. I explained that the details of Aleksa's previous mateship were not relevant, and that I had accepted her completely and I would spend the rest of my life trying to make her happy. I went on to add that she would be their Luna, given that she accepted the bond. I looked to Aleksa, who at that moment smiled at me and nodded, indicating that she had accepted the bond.

I couldn't contain my excitement, I grabbed her, smacked my lips aggressively against hers, and started kissing her again fiercely, with an intense hunger surfacing inside me to claim her. I pulled her body further into mine and swung her round in the air. I heard an applause rip through the crowd of pack members in approval. I then declared the ceremony over, and invited everyone to enjoy the festivities. Everyone started moving from the stage area towards the bar area, and the seated area, the music started.

We didn't move. We just stood there looking into each other's eyes. I looked at Aleksa proudly, she was a beautiful and strong woman, who had endured much at the hands of an undeserving partner, it was my mission to show her how she deserved to be treated, to protect her, and her pups, who were now my pups, I would defend them with my life.

As we looked around, I noticed my parents, as well as Mason, Quinn, Asher and Kaia had stuck around. We turned to them and they started to congratulate us one by one. I was glad they had accepted us, I could tell they all cared a great deal for Aleksa, Liam and Layla. Mason and Kaia had assimilated well into the pack also. The twins ran up to us both excitedly, they were too young to understand what had just happened but they seemed happy nonetheless.

As much as I would have loved to have whisked Aleska away to my suite, to have my way with her, I knew there were protocols and traditions to maintain, so we couldn't disappear this early from the ceremony. After dinner, we did

the obligatory meet and greet, Aleksa spent some time with the ladies, and I was dragged off to chat with the boys. I couldn't help but steal glances at Aleksa, she looked so effortlessly beautiful, and Sabre was bugging me to drag her away and start the mating process. I didn't blame him, it was taking every bit of strength to hold myself back. I wanted to do the same, to just give in to my animal instincts. After a while, I couldn't stand it any longer, so I gave her the "let's get out of here" look. I then excused myself from whatever boring conversation that I was part of, as I wasn't actually paying attention, I couldn't concentrate on anything other than Aleksa, then I made my way to her.

I found myself stalking towards her, like a predator would stalk their prey. Then I realized she was doing the same, she had a determined and lustful look on her face. Then a song came on, it seemed like the perfect moment, and the desire to dance with Aleksa took over. I hadn't danced in years, but it just seemed like the right thing to do at this moment. I pulled Aleksa towards me, her head resting on my chest and I led her slowly around the dancefloor. She felt so warm and she fit so perfectly, like she was made to fit against me, perfectly molding into me. I felt myself hardening against her, and I could smell her sweet arousal filling my senses.

Again, Sabre was fighting me for control. I was thankful it was night, and that it was relatively dimly lit where we were dancing. Otherwise, it could have been quite embarrassing. Realizing we were still on the dance floor, I took that moment as my cue to escape with Aleksa. I could see her eyes haze over and I realized that she must be mindlinking someone. I waited for her to finish mindlinking, then asked, "Shall we take this somewhere more private?" I looked at Aleksa, who looked like she was thinking the same thing, she then nodded at me, telling me she had just sorted a sitter for the twins, then indicated that we were free to leave.

I led Aleksa into the alpha suite and slammed the door shut. I could feel Sabre fighting for control again, but I pushed him to the side, and told him he would have to wait for his turn. I could feel an almost magnetic pull to Aleksa. Her arousal was consuming, she looked at me teasingly, I could feel that she wanted this as much as I did.

"Mine!" I growled at her. "Yours!" she replied seductively. I pushed her against the wall, our mouths crashing together in a frenzy, while our hands grazed all over each other's bodies. I led me towards my huge four poster bed, and slowly lowered her body onto the bed. "Kingston, please." she moaned out with urgency. She pulled her dress off, above her head and threw it to the floor, she wasn't wearing a bra, she was such a vixen, I thought to myself, it

made my c**k throb. Her breasts were so hard and ready for me. She still had her white lace panties on, which were see through, and her p***y looked perfect. I would sort those panties out later, I thought to myself. I wanted them dripping wet first. She parted her legs so that I could position myself within her. I started kissing downwards of her neck, and spent some time teasing the spot where I would mark her later. My lips slowly grazed the sensitive area of her neck. I slowly positioned my c**k against her entrance, teasing her p***y with it. I could feel her arousal increase, her lace panties were drenched. "Aleksa, are you ready?" I asked her. "Yes, please, Kingston!" she yelled out breathlessly. Looking at me with so much desire and want. I tugged at her panties and pulled them down aggressively, as she wriggled her hips to help me pull them off.

I started to push my c**k into her wet and warm p***y, slowly thrusting further inside her, then I thrust deeper into her p***y, pushing the entirety of my c**k inside her, burying myself deep within her.

Her sweet p***y juices coated my c**k, turning me on even more, I loved that her body was responding so well to me. She let out breathy moans of agreeance, as I continued to pepper kisses up and down her neck. As I started to increase my pace, thrusting faster inside her, I felt a feeling of ecstasy. s*x had never felt like this for me ever, it was so sensual, and it felt like we were at one with each other.

Aleksa wrapped her legs around me and gripped her hands against my arse pushing me deeper into her. I sat up and she pulled her onto my lap. She began to move her body in a rocking motion, grinding her p***y deeper into me. Her deliciously perky and full breasts were perched in front of my face, I started licking one b****t, putting it in my mouth, then s*****g it. She tasted so good. I greedily grabbed her other b****t, flicking it and pulling her small pink n****e. I could feel her body responding to it, so I knew she was enjoying me playing with and teasing her breasts.

She flicked her head back and moaned. She was riding my c**k, grinding up and down, her movements increasing in speed and urgency, as she worked her way up to her o****m. I grazed that sweet spot on her neck and I sank my canines in. I felt the bond snap into place, and I could feel we were finally at one with each other.

She was gripping her soft hands down on my shoulders, using them to move harder and faster, bouncing up and down on my c**k, I could feel she was about to explode. Her p***y clenched around my c**k, I could feel it tightening.

I then felt her warm p***y juices releasing all over my c**k, coating it generously with her c*m. I licked and sealed my mark on her neck. Looking at it smugly. I looked into her eyes, grinning with satisfaction. "Mine!" I growled. Enjoying that I had just brought her to a place of complete bliss. "Yours!" she moaned back, breathlessly.

She then looked at my neck, and I could see sapphire blue swirls flash in her eyes. She started to lick and kiss the spot on my neck that I assumed she intended to mark. She looked at me curiously, as if to ask if she could mark me, and I enthusiastically nodded in agreement. She continued to grind her p***y over my c**k. She sunk her canines into my neck, and I felt a wave of pleasure between us. At that moment I lost control and succumbed to my o****m. My c**k started to thrust deeper and faster inside of her sweet p***y pulsating as I furiously emptied my seed into her wet p***y.

I held her in my arms tightly, for a few moments, then we collapsed into each other, lying back on the bed looking into each other's eyes blissfully, our breathing was shallow and rapid, as we were slowly coming down off our highs. I pulled her into my arms possessively, and we just lay there naked for a while. I watched Aleksa drift off to sleep, while I looked at her smugly, feeling more content than I ever had in my life, and feeling fiercely protective over my mate, my everything, my queen.

Aleksa POV

I had been on cloud nine since the initiation ceremony yesterday. Kingston had woken up early this morning, he had some pack matters to attend to with Asher, so he had left me to sleep in. Although I wasn't sleeping, I was just lying there blissfully rehashing the events of the past twenty four hours. I couldn't believe that I had been blessed with a second chance mate. It all seemed too good to be true.

After rejecting Lachlan I was certain that would be it for me. It goes against our nature to reject our fated mates, but in all fairness, my bond with Lachlan had started to weaken almost as quickly as it had begun. When he had first marked me I was so proud I wore my mark with pride. Everything was all so new to me. I was new to being a werewolf and learning what mates were, and what marking meant. I felt so special that I "belonged to someone." Someone that was designated to me specifically from the Moon Goddess herself. In the early days of our relationship Lachlan had insisted on me wearing clothes that showed my mark. He wanted everyone to know that I belonged to him. And I thought it was so sweet, so protective. But then over time I noticed that my

mark had started to slowly fade. I remember being worried, so I had questioned it with the pack doctor and she had told me that it was quite common for some discoloration to occur, and that Lachlan and I had just needed to spend more time together and the mark would strengthen over time. Although over time, it only seemed to get worse, and fade further. I had always blamed myself, thinking that I had done something wrong, or that I wasn't doing enough. I know now that I hadn't done anything wrong, it was Lachlan that had been sabotaging our bond.

When I left Evergreen, I hadn't formally severed my ties with the pack, so I was still tied to Lachlan and to Evergreen, so the remnants of my mark had remained on my neck. It wasn't until yesterday when I formally severed my ties with Evergreen, as well as severing my remaining ties to Lachlan, and pledged my allegiance with Rocky Mountain and Kingston, that my mark had finally left my neck.

I was surprised because I had thought that Lachlan would have had to accept my rejection in order for my mark to disappear. I hadn't noticed it initially, it was Kingston that mentioned it to me while inspecting my neck for where he would place his mark. Now I have Kingston's mark in place, and I couldn't be happier, or more proud of it.

It's a sapphire blue crescent moon, with two wolves under it, and with what looks to be a crown, with a purple hue to it. It's so very different from the mark that Lachlan had given me. Kingston has a matching mark on his neck.

Although I have only known Kingston a short time I feel as though I have known him forever. There is just something about him. It's so different from what I had with Lachlan. Kingston is so patient, and so concerned with the welfare of others, and doing the best for his pack as well as other packs that he comes into contact with. He's very caring and thoughtful. And he believes that being Alpha it is his duty to serve his people, not the other way around, which seems to be the common theme with a lot of alphas. And you can see it in his pack members, everyone seems really happy and proud here in Rocky Mountain. There isn't the oppression and fear that most packs seem to thrive on.

Last night amongst our lovemaking Kingston and I discussed our plans for our future. Kingston was asking me what things I am passionate about, he asked me about my duties as Luna at Evergreen, and asked me to think about projects or initiatives I might like to take on.

During our talks we spoke about my Luna ceremony. I really didn't want a big fuss but Kingston wouldn't hear of it. He wanted to make it a big event. Although with the upcoming Annual Royal Alpha Summit there wasn't a lot of time to organize an extravagant event. Although Rocky Mountain had a previous Luna, Kingston said that they would be very excited they would have one again. He wanted to invite all the neighboring packs, as well as his extended family and friends from all over the country.

The more he spoke of it the more nervous I got. I was scared that I wouldn't be accepted, that I wouldn't measure up to the previous Luna. From what I had heard about her she was an outstanding Luna, who did a lot for the pack, even playing a huge role in peacekeeping and helping to form alliances with other packs.

You could tell the pack was still recovering from her loss, even though a considerable amount of time had passed. I know I shouldn't compare myself to her. We are all different and we bring different qualities to our roles. I just needed some time to adjust, to meet and get to know other pack members. I am interrupted from my feelings of self doubt when there is a knock at my door. It is a maid who is bringing me breakfast in bed, courtesy of Kingston she tells me. There's a sweet note attached and a bunch of pink peonies in a small vase. Aww. How did I get so lucky I thought to myself. I looked at the breakfast tray and realized that there is too much food here for just one person, so I asked the young girl who had delivered the food to me to please take a seat and help me eat it, but she politely declined, smiles, bowed her head, and made her way out of my room.

I walked towards the window and I could see the warriors training on the field in front of the packhouse. I spotted Kingston and my heart swelled with pride. My stomach begins to growl again, so I turned to the desk and I took a few mouthfuls of the muesli and fruit. I ate just enough to sustain myself and then I walked into the bathroom to have a quick shower. Then I would make my way downstairs to collect Liam and Layla from Kaia. I would have to think of something nice to do to thank her for last night, I thought to myself as I climbed into the shower and felt the warm water against my body.

After my shower I had dressed and made my way down to Kaia, she was in the breakfast room wiping Liam and Layla's faces post breakfast, they were very messy eaters. We had a brief chat before she had to leave for training. I gathered the twins and decided it would be a nice day to explore the pack

grounds some more. It was so pretty here, there were so many nooks and crannies, little playgrounds and gardens that we were yet to explore, Rose had told me about them, when I had helped her serve breakfast one day.

I carried them down the stairs and then put them onto the footpath, which was on the side of the front entrance. We started walking towards the rose gardens. On our way there we passed quite a few pack members. They would say “Good morning, Luna ” to me, and bow, as we crossed paths. They all seemed very polite. And they seemed curious. Which was fair enough, considering they knew almost nothing about me. I would need to change that and get to know them all, in time. After some time in the rose gardens we walked towards a bushy area. I could see a rustic and weathered old swing set there, there was only one infant swing, but I figured Liam and Layla could take turns. As I started pushing Layla, I noticed Liam had started wandering. I saw him walking off towards the thick bush area. I pulled Layla up off the swing, and pulled her against my chest, then I made a dash for the path leading into the bush. I had only taken my eye off Liam for three seconds, he had moved so quickly. I could see him and as I approached him, I grabbed his arm to turn him towards me. Liam? He stood there with his mouth wide open. There was a small fountain in the middle of this bush area, it was beautiful, like a hidden garden amongst the bush. There was even a small bench to sit on, although it was grossly overgrown with weeds and wildflowers. I walked over to the bench and pushed some of the overgrown wildflowers to the side, I motioned for Liam and Layla to come join me. They two looked pretty taken back by the untamed beauty of this hidden spot. As I was taking the scenery in, I could see a small pond in the distance, I placed the twins on the ground and they took one of my hands each, “Shall we look at the pond, see if there are any fish?” I say to them. They nod their heads excitedly and proceed to the pond in the distance, as we approach the pond we are stopped in my tracks, as Kingston’s voice yells out through the mind link, “Rogues! We are under attack!” “Aleksa, where are you?” He yelled frantically.

Meanwhile back in Evergreen...

Lachlan POV

“Ah, yes, that’s it, s**k it harder, faster!” I ordered Eva as I yanked her hair hard and pushed her further into my c**k. “Ahhhhhhhhhh,” I yelled as I emptied my load onto her breasts, with my eyes closed, visualizing Aleska on her knees in front of me, instead of Eva. I had always thought of Aleksa right before I was about to c*m. It didn’t matter who I was f*****g. I always pictured her face.

“Lachlan! Please! I’m not finished. Let me just…” Eva pleaded, trying to throw herself at me again. But I had my fun. I had emptied my c*m all over her large and plentiful breasts. Now she needed to get out of here and go clean herself up. She looked like a mess. She reeked of desperation, and nothing turned me off more.

“Get out now!” I yelled at her, throwing a wooden chair against the wall watching it shatter all over the floor. “And get someone to come clean up this mess!” I yelled at her as she picked up her clothes and scurried out.

I’m so sick of her s**t. It was fun at the beginning, and all that sneaking around behind Aleksa’s back was a high too, but now Eva’s just driving me crazy. She’s so needy. It’s pathetic. She keeps on banging on about being Luna. As if that is ever gonna happen. Sure I may have told her she would be many times, but come on I would have said anything to get into her pants. Even that’s not worth it now.

And it’s not like Eva is special, I have slept with hundreds of she-wolves over the years, all of them as unremarkable as the next. They are here to please me sexually and that’s it. I’m not looking for a mate – I already have one. I just needed to find her. And then, when I do find her I will punish her relentlessly- for leaving me, and for taking my pups, especially my heir. I’ll need to remind her who’s boss. I imagine it will take some time to break her in. But in time, she would learn to be the good obedient mate she once was. She just needed reminding that she belonged to me.

Aleska was always a little stubborn. Even when I first met her, I recall she fought the bond initially, but then I won her over with my charm. How naive she was. Aleksa really was the perfect mate. Obedient. Well mannered. Eager to please. I didn’t mean for her to find out about the other she-wolves. I had hoped to introduce them into our relationship naturally over time. Make her think it was her idea. I don’t know why she got all bent out of shape. I mean there’s plenty of me to go around. She would still be Luna. They would just be my bits on the side. I was the alpha. And I was entitled to take what I wanted. It was after all my birthright.

Just thinking about Aleksa had made my c**k hard again. We had been searching for her for weeks now, and we had found no real trace of her, our last detected scent of her was at the pack training grounds. We haven’t been able to scent her anywhere else. This leads me to believe she must have had help covering her scent up.

It's not like she has any family to help her, or friends even. I kept her pretty isolated here. I didn't even let her have breakfast with the pack most of the time. I indulged her in her need to work in the human town, they were of no threat to me. I preferred to keep her isolated and all to myself.

After she escaped, I had wolves watching her workplace, nothing suspicious had happened there. According to my sources when she handed her letter of resignation in, she left work on sick leave, that was the last they saw of her. I even planted someone there at the realtors as they had to advertise Aleksa's job, and she's found no evidence of anyone helping her.

My so-called Gamma Caleb and his interfering mate Kali had disappeared South, we had tracked them a few human towns over, and then lost visuals on them from there. I had reached out to Kali's previous pack, but they aren't giving out any information either, they claim they had no knowledge of any of this, but I don't trust them. I'm just biding my time. I have wolves watching the pack, and the first chance we get we will grab one of her family members, then we will make them talk. I can be very convincing when I want to be. I thought as I chuckled deviously to myself.

As for those rogues, well no one seems to know anything about them. They only arrived in the dungeons a little while before I tossed Aleksa in there. We don't know their names, or even where they came from. Not that I care about them. Sure if I happen to find them I will rip them to shreds after I t*****e them that is.

I still don't understand what Aleksa thinking, running away with rogues, she's still so oblivious to our world. She still needed to learn that certain people are worth associating with, others are just here for service, and some, well some just needed to be put out of their misery, and rogues definitely fell into that category.

I walked over to my desk and looked at a family photo of myself, Aleksa, Liam, and Layla. I looked at the picture and I thought about the good times we had. The thrills I had while corrupting her, and having my wicked way with her. She was so innocent and pure when I met her. It was all too easy, convincing her that I was her knight in shining armor, her one true love. She believed everything I fed her – hook, line, and sinker.

Sure it's not to say that I didn't have feelings for her. She had a certain charm about her. She was kind and nurturing, especially with the pups. I wouldn't have anyone else raising my pups. And she made my wolf Cyrus happy. The

pack liked her. She was always helping people. And she had a stubborn nature about her, which I enjoyed provoking.

I realized it wouldn't have been her doing, the escape, she's too weak to come up with a plan like that, it would have been those rogues that she was in the dungeons with. They would have poisoned her mind against me. And they would pay for that if I ever came across them again.

I would have to punish her for the stress she has caused me. And she would lose her freedom when she returned with my pups. I would need to make an example of her. And I knew exactly how I would do that. I thought to myself a cunning smirk forming on my face.

Just thinking about it was turning me on. I pulled my c**k out of my pants and started to relieve myself, closing my eyes. I imagined how I would discipline Aleksa when I finally caught up with her.

A little while later, there was a knock on my door. It was my Beta Sam. He sure looked like s**t. He was very pale and unkempt. He had dark circles under his eyes and looked low in mood. He had lost a lot of muscle mass over the past months and was looking like a shadow of his former self.

"Alpha, a telegram arrived for you. It has a royal seal on it." Beta Sam declared to me.

I nodded to Sam. "Well pass it over then, I don't have all day," I growled. I don't have time for theatrics. I'm feeling agitated and so is Cyrus, we need to go for a run.

"Blah, Blah, Blah – Annual Royal Alpha Summit... Rocky Mountain Pack... Colorado." "s**t, I forgot this was coming up. Hmm. Actually. This might be a good chance for me to reach out to other packs, see if anyone has seen my mate or my pups!" I said out loud while considering the possibility in my head. This would be perfect. Almost every alpha from around the country would be there, Someone must have seen or heard something, I thought to myself.

"Sam, RSVP for me. And get this Kingston on the line. I wanna talk to him. While you do that. Send him an email link of Aleksa, the twins, Caleb and Kali, and the Rogues photos, and post them nationwide. Someone somewhere has seen them!" I say slamming my fist down on the desk.

Sam let out the breath he was holding and reluctantly nodded his head. "Yes, Alpha." He said. Gawd he's depressing. I really need to think about replacing him soon. He's really let things slip lately. I realized he's having problems with Eva, but get it together for f***s sake. Hmmm. Who would I even make my Beta? Everyone around here is so incompetent. Hmmm, I'll have a think about that on my run.

Sam had transferred the phone call to me and I spoke to Alpha dickwad aka Kingston. He asked me some questions about pack alliances and asked if there were any grievances between Evergreen and other packs, in preparation for the Summit. I gave him the rundown. Obviously, there were some grievances, you don't get to be this powerful a pack from hosting tea parties. I told him what he wanted to hear, and told him I would play nice, out of respect to the Alpha King.

Then I moved the conversation on to what I actually wanted to talk about Aleksa and my pups. As I was explaining the situation to him, that my mate and pups were kidnapped by rogues, he kept asking questions, he was irritating me. It was like he didn't believe what I was telling him. The nerve of this guy, who did he think he was, just because he was the Alpha King's pet didn't mean he could take a tone with me. Wait until I see him face to face then we will see how arrogant he is. He will cower just like the rest of them do.

Sam didn't get the photos to him fast enough, so he told me he would take a look at them and distribute some around his local area when he received them. I bet he doesn't. I bet he was just saying that so he could end the conversation. The prick even hung up on me. The nerve! I was livid.

I shifted into Cyrus in my office and ripped through the packhouse in a fury, headed for the forest. I needed some stress relief. I mind-linked some omegas and told them to be ready for me in my suite for when I got back from my run.

It had been a few weeks since I learned of the Royal Alpha Summit, and I was preparing the pack for my absence. I had asked my father to step in and run the pack with the assistance of Sam and my mother, while I was gone. I couldn't trust Sam to do it by himself. The old Sam I knew could have. But he was too much of a wreck these days. I would be replacing him when I got back from the Summit. He was no longer of any use to me. I would be

banishing him and his w***e of a mate, Eva. She was constantly bugging me these days and walking around like she owned the place. No matter how often I reminded her she wasn't my luna and would never be. I would be glad to be rid of both of them. I would make one of my head warriors my Beta for now. It would be better than nothing.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and just like any other day at Evergreen. I had my usual routine of training in the morning, followed by some stress relief in my suite with some needy omegas who were willing to please, followed by lunch with Cade and Caitlin, an afternoon trip to the local whorehouse, and now I had a meeting with a neighboring pack. We might have a lead on Aleksa's whereabouts so I couldn't miss this meeting. They had better not be wasting my time, I thought to myself.

As I was about to jump in my SUV I felt a searing pain rip throughout my body. I felt my connection to Aleksa was being completely severed. It had already been weakened, probably due to my healthy s****l appetite, and her pitiful attempt at a rejection weeks ago, but I was still somewhat connected to her until today that is. My head was throbbing, my chest was heaving, my heart felt like it had been pierced, and the pain crashed through my body. I dropped to the ground clutching my chest breathlessly. NOOOOOOOO! I growled savagely.

Pack wolves were standing around looking at me in shock and disbelief. I just sat there kneeling on the ground, experiencing the most severe pain I've ever experienced in my life. "That b***h!" I yelled, panting.

I couldn't stand it any longer, I doubled over in agony. My body was overwhelmed and struggling to cope with such searing intense pain. I was feeling the pain of rejection and the severing of our bond. My last thoughts before I began to pass out, were that Aleksa would pay dearly for this.

Aleska POV

Shivers traveled up my spine as I realized that my pups and I were in the bushes at the far end of the pack and that there was an active rogue attack taking place. I realized that I didn't actually know my way around this pack well enough to find someplace safe to hide. I had a bad feeling that we wouldn't make it back to the packhouse in time. My gut instinct was telling me that we were in trouble right now. I mind-linked Kingston, "We are in the bush just past the rosegardens. I have Liam and Layla with me!" I call out, panic seeping through in my voice through the mind-link. "Start making your way

towards the packhouse, I'm on my way, get our pups to safety," Kingston commanded me via the mind-link.

I grabbed Liam and Layla protectively, pulling them in towards me, almost crushing them into my waist. I took a look around at our surroundings, trying to gauge the safest route to take back to the packhouse. My mind was racing and I felt panic set in. I needed to get the pups to safety, I thought to myself. I pulled Liam and Layla up on either side of my hips and I started walking as quietly yet as fast as I could. I managed to make my way out of the bush area and I couldn't see any signs of the rogues as of yet, so I continued to make haste back to the packhouse. I was almost at the rose gardens when I caught a whiff of a scent. An unmistakable and unforgiving scent that made my heart stop and sent goosebumps all over my body, as well as making me want to vomit. Rogues!

As I turned to look behind me, I saw three mangey-looking rogues slowly stalking towards me, with pure unadulterated hate on their faces. "Amber!" I screamed internally. "Amber, please we need to shift. Now!" I frantically pleaded with my wolf. Amber had been more present lately, but we hadn't shifted yet, not for a long time. I knew it was expecting a lot thinking that we would just be able to shift, but our pups' lives were on the line. "I've got this! It's gonna hurt though!" Amber forewarned me. I quickly placed the twins behind me and instructed them to step back. I felt my bones cracking and rearranging themselves, my fur rapidly sprouting all over my body. The transition was excruciating but it was quick. However, before I was fully shifted, a reddish-brown rogue wolf ripped into my left shoulder, and it had taken a chunk of skin off with it. I let out a loud whimper and fell to my side. I could feel blood hemorrhaging from my wounds. Amber pushed through and completed our shift but we were weak now from the pain and the blood loss, even in our wolf form, because we hadn't shifted in so long, and now due to the penetrating wounds. I wouldn't be able to heal quickly enough. I couldn't look back at my pups because the rogues were circling me, snarling at me, and getting ready to attack me from all sides. I could hear my pups crying in horror though. And I felt absolutely terrified that I might not be able to protect them from harm. I was prepared to die trying though.

"Kingston, Please!!" That was all I was able to get out as I made a last-ditch effort to call for help. I didn't have time to say much else. I held my head up high and braced myself for the fight of my life. I could hear Liam and Layla crying and yelling "Mommy!" from behind me. My poor babies, I thought to myself. I told them to "Run! And hide!" "Now!" and I did my best to keep the rogue's attention on me.

I wouldn't plead, as I knew there was no point. I could feel their auras. I knew what their intentions were. But I wasn't going down without putting up a hell of a fight. The honey-colored rogue with the white tinges on its face charged at me, I gave him the idea that I was going to move to my right but at the last minute, I moved to my left. However, at that moment the brown and white striped rogue pummeled into me from behind, ripping its teeth into my left upper thigh and knocking me forward onto the ground. I let out a whimper of pain, as I picked myself up. I hadn't seen that coming. I was feeling a bit faint and felt as though I'd had the wind knocked out of me, but I quickly got back up on my feet. The rogues were all circling me and raring to go. They started to charge toward me, I realized that they were just toying with me before. Although I could feel they wouldn't be this time. I took a deep breath and focused my energy and mind on hope. Hope – that I could survive this. Hope – that I could protect my pups. At that moment, I felt a surge of energy within myself. A surge of power. It was as if electricity was flowing through my veins. It felt like my eyes were glowing. I braced myself for the impact of the rogues barreling toward me, but I felt nothing but strength and raw power. I then felt myself shift back to my human form. I should have been scared because I couldn't fight in human form, but I wasn't. I felt strong. I felt confident.

I raised my head upwards and I felt what I would describe as an electrical surge, and focused my energy on the rogues. I opened my eyes and to my shock, I saw that the three rogues that were charging toward me only seconds ago, were on the ground, and they appeared to be unconscious. I could see their limbs shaking uncontrollably. It was as if they had received an electric shock. I looked around and there was no one else around. I was in a state of disbelief. I was not sure what had just happened but I was thankful for whatever miracle had just occurred. I could feel tingles all over my body. It felt as though I was consumed by an electrical forcefield. And then it was gone, as fast as it had consumed me. I felt normal again.

With the rogue wolves out for the count, I called out to my babies telling them it was safe to come out. They come out from behind a tree running towards me crying. At that moment I heard twigs snap around me and held my breath. Fearing that more rogues have arrived and I have just moved my pups out of their hiding place, putting them in harm's way. I gasped. Then I felt a wave of awareness sweep over me, and I realized the approaching wolves were friendly. They were part of our pack.

"It's our mate – Aleksa," Amber told me internally. I was relieved to see Sabre walking toward us. Sabre pounced towards me moving his head to his side to look at the rogues that were on the ground unconscious. He glanced at them

then back to me, shaking his head in disbelief. Sabre then growled loudly. He rushed toward me and started licking my wounds, to help accelerate the healing process, since there were healing abilities in the saliva of a true mate. Sabre then shifted to his human form and Kingston grabbed Liam and Layla towards him and checks them for injuries. When he was satisfied they were okay, he embraced them in a strong hug and kissed their foreheads. He then released them when he noticed I was feeling faint, and pulled me into his arms, holding me at my waist and legs pulling me into his chest. Overwhelmed at the events that had transpired, and feeling weak from my injuries, I felt myself give in to sleep.

I awoke in the pack hospital once again, this time I was aware of my surroundings immediately, as the smell of antiseptic and cleaning products hit my nose. I could also scent Kingston, even before I opened my eyes. I scanned the room, and it was just Kingston in the room with me. "Liam and Layla?" I asked in a state of panic, fearful that something might have happened to them. "Where are they? Are they ok?" I asked worriedly. "They are fine. There's not a scratch on them. They are with Kaia. How are you feeling?" Kingston asked me with concern. "I'm fine. I just wanna go home. And see my babies." I told him, hoping he would let me get my way. "How long have I been here?" I asked him, as it suddenly dawned on me I had no idea how much time had passed. "It's been about twenty-four hours, you healed pretty quickly. The doctor was unsure why you didn't wake up earlier," Kingston told me with concern in his voice.

"I think I have an idea," I told him. Recalling the feeling that engulfed me when I was fighting the rogues. "Something happened to me out there. I can't really explain it. But something helped me fight off the rogues." I told Kingston, who looked at me knowingly. I started to wonder why he wasn't as surprised as I was. It's as if he knew something that I didn't know. "You don't seem surprised?" I said to Kingston.

"I'm not Aleksa. There is something that I was meant to tell you a while ago, but then I got distracted and had forgotten to mention it to you." Kingston told me. "I think I better tell you now though," Kingston said, with a cautious look on his face.

"After the first rogue attack, before you joined the pack, you weren't healing and you were unconscious for several days, the medical team was unsure of what was keeping you from waking and we were worried about your wolf's

absence, so we had to think outside the box. I asked a Healer to come to see you. A Healer from a nearby pack came in and spent some time with you. Afterward, she told us (The Doctor and Myself) that you were not an ordinary wolf. She said that you were special, but she refused to elaborate any further. She wanted to speak with you first when you had recovered. It looks like now might be a good time to ask her to come back in to see you.” Kingston exclaimed.

I sat there staring at Kingston. A part of me was mad at him for not telling me this earlier, but mostly I was also a little shocked and overwhelmed by everything. I was not sure what had actually happened with the rogues, but I didn't think there was anything special about me. To be honest I felt a little substandard if anything. I had missed out on so much of the werewolf world, as I had lived as a human most of my life. I didn't know what to make of this news.

I took a moment to think about what Kingston had just said, then replied to Kingston “I think that is a good idea. I would like to speak with the Healer. Please.” Then I looked at the clock on the wall and asked, “Do you think I could be discharged? I really feel much better now, and I really just want to get home to my pups.” I said, with a sweet and hopeful smile on my face, hoping that will help me get my way.

“I'll have a chat with the Doctor,” Kingston said as he got up from his seat, and started to walk out of the room. I shuffled to the side of my bed and moved my feet so that they were hanging over the side of the bed. I pulled my gown down to take a peek at the wound on my shoulder, then moved it upwards to check the wound on my thigh. There was nothing there. No dressings. No scars. As if I had never been attacked. I pulled my gown back down and I pushed my body upwards off the bed, to stand up. I felt good. I didn't feel any pain from where my wounds once were, or aches from being in bed so long. I felt energized. I walked towards the bathroom to tidy myself up.

After I had been to the bathroom and refreshed myself, I walked back into the room to find that Kingston was back. “You look great. How are you feeling?” Kingston asked me looking surprised that I was moving so effortlessly I would imagine. “I feel better than I have in a long time,” I told him with a big smile on my face. And I meant every word. “So, can I be discharged? I'll take it easy I promise.” I said pouting hopefully to my mate. “The Doc said you could, but you have to take it easy, and you have to come back in tomorrow for a check-up.” He told me sternly. “No problem. Uh. I don't have any clothes to change into.” I said to him, biting down on my lip. “I'll have Asher bring some over,”

Kingston informed me, his eyes hazed over and I could see that he was mind-linking.

In no time at all, Asher had arrived with my clothes and I was signing out of the hospital. I had been given my discharge papers from the Doctor, and we were about to walk out the door when I was approached by a tall dark hooded figure. The figure lifted up the hood of their gown, her wavy raven-colored hair fell forward, and I was met by the most intriguing pair of emerald-colored eyes. This must be the healer that Kingston was telling me about, I thought to myself. I could sense her aura was powerful, but in a positive way, not in a dark magic kind of way. "Aleska, we need to speak dear." She said with a sense of urgency in her voice.

Aleksa POV

I looked up at the woman in front of me and I could sense that what she had to tell me was important. Even though I was anxious and desperately wanted to see my pups, and hold them in my arms. I knew I had to hear her out, and find out what she meant when she told Kingston that I wasn't an ordinary wolf.

I looked at Kingston who looked unphased by the appearance of the Healer. I on the other hand was a little nervous about what I was about to find out. Kingston led us into a room in the hospital that was used for family conferences, and we took a seat at the conference table.

I started biting my nails, I know it's a filthy habit, but it's just something that I do when I'm anxious. The healer went on to tell me that her name was Xanthe, and she had been meaning to speak with me for some time now. She also told me that she foresaw my arrival here at Rocky Mountain and she had seen what happened at Evergreen, but that everything happened for a reason and led me to where I was right now.

"How could you know I would come here? How could you be expecting me?" I bit down on my lip, furrowing my brows.

"I didn't even know that I was coming here. I looked at a map and randomly chose Colorado. If I hadn't found out about Lachlan and Eva, I never would have come here. So how could you possibly know?" I said a little breathless and a little taken back by the Xanthe's words.

"I have been watching you since you were born. Who do you think left you in the basket outside that church, on that very night, at that very time, just as the

Petrovs were leaving church service?” Xanthe questioned me, with a smile on her face.

“You left me there? You’re not my mother though. I feel no connection to you.” I told her, with a skeptical tone in my voice.

“You are right, I am not your mother. But I knew your mother very well. And your father.” Xanthe told me.

“Are they, are they alive? Did something happen to them?” I asked her hesitantly, not sure that I really wanted to know the answer.

“Your Father died protecting you and your mother. You see, you are a gifted wolf, as was your mother Kristina. You come from a lineage of gifted wolves, on your mother’s side.” Xanthe informed me.

I stared at her in disbelief. “Gifted wolves? I barely function as an average werewolf. I can’t fight. I know very little about being a werewolf. How could I be a gifted wolf? I think you have the wrong person.” I exclaimed, shaking my head in disbelief.

“I can assure you, Aleksa, you are gifted. Tell me has anything strange happened recently, anything you can’t explain, like a newfound power perhaps? Have you ever felt something was going to happen before it did, or, have you ever had a “feeling about someone’s intention or character” without knowing anything about them?” Xanthe asked me.

“Well, I guess, the other day, there was something. When I was being attacked by rogues, I felt a surge go through me, and I could have sworn my eyes were glowing. I still don’t quite understand what happened. One moment the rogues were charging for me, the next they were out cold like they had been electrocuted.” I blurted out to Xanthe. “And I have always had “feelings” about people, I figured I was just good at reading people. Like I could tell by their aura what their intentions were.” I told her. Starting to wonder if what she is telling me might actually be true.

“Aleksa, your birth parents’ names were Aleksander and Kristina. You were named after your father. Your parents loved you very much. Your father fought to his last breath trying to protect you from those who wanted to harm you. Your mother sacrificed herself, also, for you. They entrusted you in my care. But I knew you would never be truly safe as long as you were with me. So I did what I felt was best for you. I started observing the humans, to find a

couple who didn't have children but would love you as their own, and when I found the Petrovs, I knew you would be safe, and that you would be loved, so I manifested it so that they would find you, fall in love with you and adopt you as their own." Xanthe told me, shedding a tear from her eyes.

I was stunned. I sat there open-mouthed, and I had no words. I just stared at Xanthe, dumbfounded and trying to digest what I had just been told. I felt sad that my birth parents had lost their lives trying to protect me. All these years I just figured that they didn't want me. And now I was told that I am some gifted wolf. This is all too much. I needed some air, I thought to myself.

"I, uh, I need some air. Do you mind? Could we finish this talk later? I'm feeling tired and overwhelmed, and I just wanna see Liam and Layla right now." I said rhetorically to Xanthe and Kingston. I quietly sniffed, with tears threatening to erupt from my eyes.

"I think this has been a lot for Aleksa to take in. It might be a good idea to pause the conversation here, for now, Xanthe." Kingston suggested.

"Very well. But we're not finished, Aleksa – there is more I have to tell you, I realize you are overwhelmed right now, but we will need to speak again, very soon. How about tomorrow afternoon? Will that be enough time for you to think about what I have told you today?" Xanthe asked me.

"Yes. Tomorrow afternoon will be fine. I'm sorry. I appreciate you coming here and speaking with me. It's, just, a lot to take in." I told Xanthe, trying to hold myself together. I felt like I need a shower and a cry. Just to get it all out. I gave her a half-smile and got up from my seat and walked towards the door. I heard Kingston thanking her for her time, and bidding her farewell. But I just keep walking. I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to hug my babies. That would make everything better.

A good night's sleep made the world of difference. I felt so much better today. I had time to reconcile things in my head, and I was ready to hear what else Xanthe has to tell me. I would apologize for my behavior yesterday. I wasn't nearly as polite or grateful as I should have been towards Xanthe. Now that I've had time to think I have so many questions, about my birth parents, my lineage, my gifts, and more importantly I want to know who was after me and my mother, and why exactly.

I would ask all these questions in just a few hours. For now, I had a brunch date planned with Quinn and Kaia, we had so much to catch up on. I wanted to hear all about what they had been up to, Quinn and her plans with Mason, Kaia with her training not to mention how things were progressing with a certain dashing Beta. It would be nice to just unwind with some girl talk and forget about my own complicated life for a moment.

Liam and Layla were still fast asleep, they had a late night. So I thought I would sneak downstairs to grab a coffee and then make my way back upstairs to wake Liam and Layla for daycare.

“Good Morning Aleksa, or shall I say Luna?” Mason mocked me, with a grin on his face, which soon turned serious. “We need to talk, Where is Kingston?” Mason asked me with a sense of urgency emanating from him.

“Is everything ok Mason?” I said suddenly worried by the grave expression on his face.

“I have some news but I would prefer to tell you and the Alpha at the same time.” Mason declared.

“Sure. I will mind-link him now. I was just about to make a coffee, would you like one? And, will the kitchen be an appropriate place to discuss this, or does it require more privacy?” I asked Mason.

“I think we should move this somewhere private,” Mason said discretely.

As we walked into the kitchen, Kingston was already there, sitting down drinking coffee, and looking at his laptop. Billie Eilish’s song “Happier than ever” was playing”, Gawd I loved that song I thought to myself. Kingston was looking quite relaxed. I really hoped that this wasn’t bad news.

“Good Morning my love,” Kingston said as he pulled me into him and kissed me passionately on the lips. I could taste the fresh blend of coffee that he was drinking was still on his lips mixed with a hint of chocolate, he tasted so good. I reluctantly pulled my lips from his, feeling a flush creep over my cheeks, I was still not used to this affection that he showered me with. Thank you Moon Goddess for pairing me with this man, he really was perfection, I thought silently to myself.

“Good Morning,” I said to Kingston with a beaming smile on my face, feeling smitten.

“So what is it that you wanted to speak about Mason?” Kingston asked. “Shall we take this into my office perhaps?” Kingston asked, to which Mason nodded and replied, “I think that would be a good idea, Alpha.”

“Oh, I’ve left Liam and Layla upstairs, I was just sneaking down for coffee. I didn’t expect anyone else to be up. They are still sleeping.” I told both Kingston and Mason.

“Aleksa, if you don’t mind I’ll mind-link Quinn, she was on her way here anyway. I’m sure she would be happy to watch and tend to Liam and Layla while we talk in the office?” Mason asked me.

“That would be amazing! Thank you Mason!” I said feeling relief wash over me. I watched his eyes haze over indicating he was in a mind-link.

I quickly poured a coffee for myself and for Mason, and we made our way to Kingston’s office.

“Thank you, Luna,” Mason said as he accepted his coffee from me.

“Please, just Aleksa, Mason you are like family to me, please don’t call me Luna” I insisted to Mason who just chuckled.

“So, Mason, what was it that you wanted to talk about?” Kingston asked, sitting back on his leather chair in front of his rich mahogany desk, which was for a change completely clear, a far cry from the messy cluttered desk only a few days ago.

“Well Alpha, Caleb (Aleksa’s previous Gamma) contacted me the other day. He had news about Lachlan. Apparently, although Evergreen’s trackers couldn’t scent us, they have managed to obtain visuals of us at the airport, and they have tracked us as far as Iowa. Sources have suggested that Lachlan has redirected and increased his search party. But there’s more.” Mason pauses, then continues.

“Apparently, there is a bounty out on you, Aleksa.” He says directing his eyes to me specifically.

“There is a huge reward for whoever can find you and your pups and bring them back to Lachlan unharmed. According to Caleb, they are distributing our visuals nationwide. It appears that we are gonna need a contingency plan.” Mason told us with concern etched all over his face.

Aleksa POV

A wave of apprehension overtook me after learning of Lachlan's attempts at finding us. Confirming that he was actively searching for us, and how much closer he was getting made me feel nauseous. I felt like I was going to be sick. My stomach was churning at the thought of him finding us. It wasn't myself that I was worried about, it was Liam and Layla.

I would never let him take my pups from me. I would never go back to Evergreen with him. I had loved that pack like family. I was so broken when I realized that they had all known what was happening all along. I still felt so betrayed by them all. With the exception of Caleb and Kali of course. Caleb was under an alpha command, I know now that he couldn't physically tell me. And they had both risked so much to help us all escape from Evergreen. And for that, I would be eternally grateful.

I had hoped that Lachlan would just go about his business with Eva and forget about us. Actually, I take that back as I remember that Eva is Sam's mate. Poor Sam. I wish I had let him know what I had discovered before I escaped. I had been so caught up I hadn't even considered that he would still be suffering at the hands of Lachlan and Eva.

I would need to discuss this with Kingston. I'm sure he could help me think of something. Some way we could ease his suffering. How Eva could hurt someone as sweet as Sam I'll never know. He deserved so much better. I needed to make that right somehow. And I would. I just wasn't sure how.

I was interrupted from my thoughts when Kingston placed his hands on mine and I felt tingles and the calm of our mate bond.

As Mason looked at me with grave concern on his face I had no words. I didn't want Kingston to know how terrified I was right now. He already had so much on with the Royal Alpha Summit that was fast approaching.

This was such bad timing. We were just starting to settle here at Rocky Mountain. The pack members were all so welcoming and accepting. Mason and Kaia were settled and had roles within the pack hierarchy. Liam and Layla were settled at daycare and thriving. I was about to officially become Luna. I couldn't expect the pack to fight for me. They hardly knew me. It was only a matter of time before Lachlan found us – especially if he was distributing our images.

“Aleksa, I can feel your fear through our bond. I know you are nervous – but you don’t need to be. I will protect you and our pups. I realize Lachlan is their biological father, but I also have a bond with Liam and Layla and I will protect them both with my life. I will not let him take you or take them. You are Luna of this pack. We will all protect you with our lives.” Kingston declared to me looking into my eyes and cupping my face with his strong and calloused hands.

“I would never expect anyone to risk their life for me. Kingston, they don’t deserve this. They hardly know me. I can’t put this on the pack.” I told him trying to fight the tears that were starting to well up in my eyes.

“Aleksa, you are safe. You always will be safe. And whatever you are thinking right now – stop it. You will not run. You are not putting anyone out. Rocky Mountain has waited for you for a long time. You make the pack stronger just by being here. The fact that you want to protect the pack shows how amazing you are. We will figure this out.” Kingston reassured me, pulling me into his chest for comfort. This action alone gives me a sense of security and calms my nerves somewhat.

“Alpha, if I may suggest something?” Mason interjected.

“What if you sent an announcement out to the media and to all of the packs. Informing them of Rocky Mountain’s new Luna, and your true mate. That would let Lachlan know that Aleksa had found her second chance mate and had been claimed by another alpha. It will help to draw some attention to this. The council will be watching no doubt. It will be much harder for him to make a move, or do anything underhanded if he is being closely watched.” Mason suggested.

Kingston took a moment to consider the idea. “It could work. It would definitely be the more diplomatic approach and it would put the spotlight on it for a bit. It would make it more challenging for Lachlan to act on any urges he may have.”

I took a breath and tried to imagine what Lachlan’s reaction to such an announcement might be. I was interrupted from my thoughts when I notice both Kingston and Mason looking at me as if they were waiting for my response.

“Sorry. I kinda zoned out then. Did you say something?” I asked them both simultaneously.

“I asked you how you felt about us putting out an announcement? Perhaps a follow up to that might be a phone call or a video conference if required.” Kingston added.

“Uh, yeah let’s give it a go I guess,” I said, still feeling unsure about it all, and still feeling a bit distracted thinking about Sam.

“He might be willing to let me go, but I worry about Liam and Layla, he’s biologically their father, he does have a claim to them. But I absolutely refuse to give them up to him. I will not let him take them!” I said exasperatedly, feeling my heart racing in my chest, and feeling my anxiety surge through me.

“Aleksa, we will work something out. I promise you. No one will take Liam and Layla from you. You are their mother. And an amazing one at that.” Kingston declared to me, and I found a sense of calm in his words.

“Aleksa – Luna, we have all come so far. We will not let anything happen to you or your pups. We are a family. And family protects one another.” Mason declared. He looked at me with determination and sincerity.

I looked into Mason’s eyes and I felt tears start to fall from my eyes. I felt so blessed and so lucky to have made strong bonds with people that I now call my family. I felt such a sense of belonging.

My stomach growled loudly, snapping me out of my train of thought. I felt a warm blush creep over my face, of embarrassment. Kingston and Mason chuckled. “Perhaps we should have some breakfast?” Kingston suggested.

“Sounds like a good idea. I’ll mind-link Quinn to bring Liam and Layla down to join us.” Mason replied to Kingston.

“Come, my love, let’s get some food into your stomach. We have a big day ahead of us.” Kingston remarked to me.

“Mason, thank you, for everything. I am so lucky to have you in my life. You are like the brother I never had.” I tell him, as I launched at him for a hug. Mason embraced me for a hug also, however, at that moment Kingston growled at our closeness, and Mason and I both looked back at him.

“Sorry guys, Sabre gets a little overprotective of his mate” Kingston replied chuckling.

Mason then added, "That's understandable Alpha."

"Aleksa, I feel the same way about you. Ever since we met in the dungeons of Evergreen I've felt this overwhelming urge to protect you. You are also like a little sister to me."

My heart instantly swelled at Mason's words.

"I sure am a lucky girl. I have some really special people in my life. And I feel so grateful for you all." I said to Mason, while I locked hands with Kingston getting ready to leave the room.

"See you at breakfast!" I called out to Mason, as Kingston lead me out the door.

It was approaching midday, and in light of the news that we had learned of earlier this morning, I had decided to cancel my brunch date with Quinn and Kaia. I ended up explaining the situation to them since it directly involved them both anyway. They pretty much repeated what Mason had told me, about us all being family, and having each other's backs. Again my heart swelled with love, I had always wanted sisters, and now that dream had come true. I loved them both with all my heart. Sometimes when you meet people you just instantly click, and that's exactly what happened when I met Kaia and Quinn.

They both offered to watch Liam and Layla for me while I met the Healer. This was a relief for me because I didn't know what to expect from our meeting today. I was nervous yet excited, and I was curious to learn more. It all felt very surreal.

I was on my way to meet Xanthe and to learn more about my birth parents and my lineage. It was a gorgeous sunny day and it was so warm. Too warm to be sitting inside even though there is air conditioning. I thought it might be nice to chat outside, so we are on our way to a gazebo that was located near the rosegardens.

It really was a sight to behold, the roses were in full bloom and they smelt amazing. There was a crawling red rose bush covering the sides of the gazebo, and it looked so magical. Kingston must have asked someone to bring a table and chairs prior to our meeting because the set in front of us didn't look like it was supposed to be there. It looked brand new rather than

the weathered set you would expect to see outside. There was a large jug of water and some glasses in the centre of the table.

We took a seat, and moments later Xanthe appeared before us.

“Hello Aleksa, I trust you are well-rested and ready to hear what I have to say?” Xanthe looked at me with a small smile on her face.

“Hello Xanthe, yes, please let me apologise for my behaviour yesterday, I was rude. I am not usually that way towards others. I was just dealing with a lot, and everything kinda overwhelmed me.” I said pausing to take a breath. Xanthe just watched me and waited patiently as if she knew I wasn’t finished.

“I think I just needed a good night’s sleep and to spend some time with Liam and Layla. Thank you so much for coming back to speak with me. It means the world to me. I have so many questions!” I said, ready to unleash my questions on Xanthe.

”No need to apologize. How about you hear what I have to say. Then we can have question time afterwards.” Xanthe said rhetorically.

“That sounds fair,” I said. Although I was a little disappointed that I would have to wait. Chill Aleksa, I thought to myself. Yesterday I didn’t want to hear any of this, and today I want to bombard her with questions. I swear I am all over the place at the moment. I looked up at Xanthe who was ready to speak.

“Let’s start at the beginning then shall we.” Xanthe begun.

Xanthe POV

“I’m not going to beat around the bush. I’m going to tell you this straight. So brace yourself.” I started to tell Aleksa, deciding that what I had to tell her would be overwhelming so I may as well keep to the point.

“Many millennia ago, the moon goddess blessed a lineage of wolves with special protective and healing powers, their role was to help heal and protect vulnerable wolves, they were known as the crescent moon wolves.”

“Crescent moon wolves carried a unique marking, which consisted of a sapphire blue crescent moon with two wolves under it, and a crown with a purple hue to it. Unfortunately, crescent moon wolves were constantly hunted and exploited, many living their lives in captivity, many dying after being

drained of their powers and healing abilities. There were many powerful wolves who wished to harness their special abilities. I realize this all sounds unbelievable to you right now. Especially since you were led to believe you were human for the first eighteen years of your life. But I can assure you that it is all true.”

“Aleksa, your mother was a crescent moon wolf with special abilities and healing powers. She had left her pack when she met your father. You see Aleksa, your Grandfather was the Alpha of Moon Valley Pack. He was aware of Kristina’s abilities from a very young age and knew that she was a gifted wolf, as her mother was also one, and it was passed down by females in the family.”

“Back then, an alpha female taking the role of Alpha alone was unheard of, so they needed her to be mated and marked so that there would be a male alpha running the pack, thus maintaining their reputation and bloodline.”

“They (her parents) had planned to marry her off to the Alpha heir of a neighboring pack, in a bid to merge the two packs as they had no male heir so that their son would take the role of Alpha, and Kristina would be his Luna.”

“The alpha heir of the neighboring pack was an unkind, arrogant, and evil wolf, and rumor had it that he had planned to use Kristina for her gifts to heal his mistress, who suffered from some rare disease for which there was no known cure. The Alpha’s Heir was in love with his mistress and wanted to take her as his luna, but his parents had denied him.”

“And, Kristina had no intention of being mated to or being marked by him. Not long before the agreement was made, Kristina had met her fated mate in a chance meeting, your father. He was from another pack, and he was a warrior. When Kristina told her parents this news, they were not accepting of this, they felt that he had nothing to offer them, and being that they were in so much debt at the time, they refused to acknowledge her fated mate.”

“You see, I had met your mother back at her birth pack – Moon Valley. I would occasionally consult at the pack hospital. I had met your mother on a few occasions as she would volunteer at the hospital regularly. We had an instant connection. I met your father, Aleksander, a few times also. Actually, Kristina had only met him a few times before they ran off together. I met your father because your mother needed help leaving the packhouse to visit him. I was usually her cover story as she was constantly followed by her father’s guards.

We would tell them that she was volunteering at the hospital, she would sneak out the back, and meet Aleksander just outside the pack boundary.”

“Worried that Kristina might defy them, and mess up their plans, her parents fast-tracked the agreement. The night before Kristina was supposed to leave for the neighboring pack, Aleksander with the help of some of his fellow warriors created a distraction and managed to help Kristina escape. That was the last she saw of her parents and her pack. They were on the run for months putting as much distance between them as they could.”

“Kristina’s parents never stopped looking for her. Their debts got higher, and they were on the brink of losing their pack when a Hunter came to them and made them a proposition. He would bankroll the pack but they wanted Kristina’s firstborn daughter in return. Somehow they were aware of her crescent moon wolf lineage. Kristina’s father was desperate to retain his title and his pack so he reluctantly agreed to the hunter’s proposition.”

“After some time the hunter had managed to find her, and surely enough, Kristina and Aleksander had mated and had a baby girl -that was you Aleksa. They came for you, time and time again. Aleksander and Kristina were so determined to keep you safe and hidden that they veered away from packs and pack life, and opted for life in the human world.”

“However, one day they were caught unprepared, and that is the day Aleksander died trying to protect you.”

“Kristina was on her own then, she was heartbroken but determined to protect you with her life. She moved from town to town and worked menial jobs in order to support you, over the course of a few months she managed to do this well until they came again one night. They came in the still of the night, Kristina managed to hide you in the ceiling. She fought hard and managed to take them all out, however, she was critically injured and died from blood loss that night.”

“When Kristina didn’t show up to work the next day I had a feeling something had gone horribly wrong. I left work at midday and when I arrived at the flat I was horrified at the scene that awaited me. It was like a scene from a horror movie, with bodies, and blood everywhere.”

“I found Kristina on the floor in front of her bedroom, the door was shut behind her, she was protecting you trying to keep them from finding you. I checked for a pulse but I already knew Kristina was gone, she was so cold and I

couldn't sense her energy. I will never forget that terrifying feeling that struck me when I realized that you were unaccounted for. I searched frantically. Then I focussed my mind and found you fast asleep in the ceiling, warm, and unscathed, although a little dehydrated and hungry when you finally woke."

"I had decided it was best that we left that town as soon as possible. I bent down and kissed sweet Kristina on her forehead, and that's when I saw the locket. She wore it everywhere and treasured it with her heart. I knew I should grab it so that you always had something of your mother's with you."

"I took you home with me, and then I decided it was time to move on. I needed to get you somewhere safe, as there was a high chance that they would still be looking for you."

"We traveled for a few weeks, and then I realized that this was no life for a little pup. I realized that I couldn't give you what you needed. I managed to find a job and somewhere for us to stay in a small town a few states over, it was a lovely quiet Christian community. I had gotten a job as a cleaner at a local church and would often overhear conversations between people. One day I heard an older couple talking about how they wished they had been blessed with a child that they could shower with love. I watched them for a few more weeks, did some background checks, and then I decided they were the perfect couple to raise you and love you."

"Often they ran the community soup kitchen at the church and they were often the last to leave, so I wrapped you up in a little Moses basket and left you with a note at the door. I rang the bell then ran into the bushes and waited and watched."

"I saw the amazement and concern and love in their eyes as they fussed over you. I saw the police arrive. I watched in the background over the next few months and I watched them take you in and eventually adopt you as their own. I then went on my way. I would check in every now and then to ensure they were taking good care of you and to watch you grow. I was so proud of the beautiful person you had become."

"I was there when you met Lachlan and I knew what was coming but I couldn't interfere. I just watched on the sidelines, waiting for the time to come when you would need me."

“When you had made your way here to Rocky Mountain and I had heard that Kingston was requesting a Healer, I knew it was the right time for me to make an appearance in your life.”

“So Aleksa that is the story of your parents and what happened to them, that is also the story of how you came to be adopted and live in a human town. Now you know you are a Crescent Moon Wolf, there is still so much I have to tell you, you will need to learn to properly harness your powers and your gifts, and in time you will.”

“I knew one day you would need to know everything, and I needed to be able to explain it to you. You might ask why I did not tell you earlier that you were a werewolf. I planned to trust me. I was planning to come to you and reveal myself to you just before your eighteenth birthday and to be there with you when you shifted for the first time. I couldn’t let you go through it alone.”

“However, my past had caught up with me. You see I too was on the run. Probably part of the reason Kristina and I understood each other so well. We were in similar situations. I was detained against my will, and it was a few years before I could escape. I am so sorry my child. I am sorry that I had let you down, and that I had left Kristina down. But I am here now and I will answer any questions you have to the best of my ability.”

I looked up at Aleksa and I could sense a sadness within her. She was not looking back at me, she had her head down and was quietly sniffing and wiping back her tears. I looked to Kingston who looked astonished as if he was still processing what I’d just said.

Silence enveloped us and I waited patiently for Aleksa’s response and her impending questions. I also hoped that she would forgive me for my failures.

Aleksa POV

I sat there listening to Xanthe tell me about my birth parents – Aleksander and Kristina. I felt something I didn’t expect to feel. I felt an overwhelming sense of determination. A desire to do better, to be better, to be stronger, and to fight harder. I didn’t want my parent’s death to have been in vain. They had sacrificed so much for me. And now it was my turn to do the same for my children.

I would be damned if I was going to let something happen to my precious pups, especially Layla. If what Xanthe is saying is correct, then Layla is also a crescent moon wolf. That means she is in danger.

I felt a sense of fear and panic engulf me, all I wanted to do is to run to my precious Liam and Layla and hold them tight. But I needed to finish this conversation. There were still questions to be answered. I needed to be strong and know what we are up against.

A flurry of emotions was consuming me right now. There was a determination to make my birth parents proud. Fear that my children, especially Layla, were in danger, not just from the threat of being taken back to Evergreen and separated from me, but that there were wolves out there who may know of her existence and wish to harm and exploit her. Sadness – that I was the reason my parents died. If it weren't for me they may not have been caught off guard and might still be here today. I was also concerned that this will all be too much for Kingston and the pack. And finally, anger, at the people that had hunted my parents and me and in the process robbed me of the life I was supposed to have, the one where my biological parents never died, where I was raised with my birth pack.

Just breathe Aleksa I told myself, as I felt Kingston's arms wrap around me for comfort. He must have sensed my emotional hurricane through our mate bond. I looked up at him and he has a soft smile on his face, I can feel that he is concerned about me.

I nodded at him and told him through the mind-link that I'd be ok. And thanked him for being here for me.

I looked back at Xanthe and I said "There are so many questions I want to ask you, especially about what being a Crescent Moon wolf means. But I feel the first question I need to ask is this – where are my Grandparents? Are they still alive, and if so where?"

My rationale for this is that I need to know how much of a threat they were, as they are the reason that both my parents are dead. They were ruthless, they cared not for the mate bond, not for their own blood, and their greed and ambition were clearly their priorities. I wanted to know where they were and if there was any chance that they could know of my existence and of Liam and Layla's. Although in all honesty, I hoped there were gone. I had no intention of ever meeting such cruel people, in my mind, there were already dead.

“Aleksa, I wish I could answer this question without a doubt but I can’t. Your grandmother passed not long after Kristina was murdered. My contacts told me she took her own life out of heartbreak and regret. Apparently, she never wanted any of this for her daughter, and she was a subservient Luna and did what her mate had commanded her to do. While she didn’t agree with his actions, she also didn’t take a stand against them either. As for your grandfather, when the agreement with the neighboring pack fell through and Kristina left, there was no heir to take over. After the Luna passed, your grandfather’s wolf became feral and started to lose his grasp on reality, the pack began to suffer, and at this time the neighboring pack invaded the Moon Valley and took over control.

There was an alpha challenge, and your grandfather was grievously wounded, but it is unknown as to whether he actually died, as a rogue attack occurred while the challenge was taking place, and chaos ensued, it was at this time he disappeared, and his body was never found, although it is assumed he died but it is not certain. The wounds he sustained in the challenge coupled with losing his mate would be enough to end any wolf. I don’t think he is a threat to you Aleska, or to your pups.” Xanthe told me looking absolute in her answer.

“And, the Hunter, did you ever find out his identity? Who was the person that made the agreement with my Grandfather for my mother’s firstborn daughter?” I asked Xanthe, wanting to get an idea of the players that were involved here, and who we were up against.

“No, I’m afraid not. I tried to keep a low profile. I had to keep you safe. I used some of my contacts to find out about your grandparents, but I was unable to find anything about the Hunter. I didn’t want people to know I was asking questions.” Xanthe told me apologetically.

“Hmnm, ok, fair enough, thank you Xanthe for everything, you have done for me. I do appreciate it. It sounds like I owe you my life. I’m not sure how I can ever repay you, but I will surely try.” I told Xanthe, feeling a great deal of respect for the woman sitting in front of me right now.

“If you don’t mind, I do have some more questions?” I ask Xanthe.

“That is fine Aleksa, I have no place else to be right now. Fire away.” Xanthe said sweetly.

“You said that my mother died fighting to protect me. But I don’t understand. If she was also a Crescent Moon wolf, why did she die? Why didn’t she use her

powers?" I questioned Xanthe. As that is one part of this story that I can't seem to get my head around.

"I wondered when you were gonna ask me that question. The wolves that showed up that night didn't appear to have any scents. And when I arrived on the scene I detected the faintest hint of magic, of dark magic Aleksa. I fear that a witch who practices dark magic was involved. I can't say for certain, but I imagine that there was a barrier or forcefield that your mother's powers couldn't penetrate. I've wracked my brain throughout the years trying to understand what happened there, that's all I have come up with that makes any real sense." Xanthe told me bowing her head down. I got the impression she was unhappy that she hadn't been able to uncover more.

"Dark magic? So she stood no chance then? Outnumbered by wolves and facing off against a dark witch." I said anger searing through me, I feel my whole body starting to shake, and I could feel my eyes glowing.

"Aleksa, honey, try to calm down, just breathe," Kingston said as he tried to calm me down, his touch alone was enough to soothe my soul.

"Aleksa, I can help you. Just knowing that there was a dark witch involved gives us more of an advantage. We can prepare better. I'm sorry I know this is all a lot. I know it's horrible. I hate that this all happened and I couldn't do anything to help. We have a chance here though, to prevent history from repeating." Xanthe soothingly tells me while placing her hands on my hands.

"Tell me of my father's death. I need to know – everything." I expressed to Xanthe. I needed to know as much as I could about the events that had transpired all those years ago.

"Aleksander was a warrior from a pack a state over from Moon Valley. They met by chance really. Kristina would every once in a while sneak out with her friends into one of the nearby human towns for a bit of dancing and fun. One night she bumped into Aleksander while leaving the club, they knew they were mates right away, and instantly connected. They would meet every chance they got, as Kristina set about introducing him to her father. Aleksander wasn't able to mark and mate with Kristina straight away with her being the alpha's daughter, so he had to be patient and undergo formalities, however, the alpha was opposed to their mateship."

"You see, Aleksander was an elite warrior for the Dark Moon pack, he was revered among his squad, and everyone that met Aleksander took an instant

liking to him. He was very popular with the she-wolves but was determined to wait for his mate, which he did. Your mother – Kristina was the same, she was holding out for her mate too. They were so in love. It was a perfect match.”

“You wanted to ask how your father died. He was a fierce fighter, but he was outnumbered the night that they first came for you, however, he was holding his own just fine. but the rogues that attacked him stabbed him in the back multiple times with a silver blade laced with wolfsbane. He wasn’t able to heal and ultimately died of blood loss and wolfsbane poisoning. I’m sorry Aleksa, he was so courageous right to the very end. He managed to take them all out with him. When they had first attacked, he had already told Kristina to take you and run, which she did reluctantly. No one anticipated a silver blade and wolfsbane, they fought dirty.” Xanthe explained. “Your mother never forgave herself for that. No matter how much I would tell her that she did the right thing, she followed Aleksander’s orders and got you to safety. Kristina was heartbroken but found the strength to go on for you. She was most likely able to do this because she was a Crescent Moon wolf.”

” She knew she would meet Aleksander again one day, and she wanted to make him proud by protecting you.”

Salty tears were slowly escaping my eyes as Xanthe recounted the events leading up to my father’s death. I had so much love and respect and regret in my heart right now for the parents I had once thought hadn’t wanted me.

I wiped away my tears, took a sip from the glass of water in front of me, and took a few breaths.

“What more can you tell me about my wolf? You said I am a Crescent Moon wolf. How can I find more information about myself, about my powers and abilities? I need to know how to use them properly, and how to control them. Everything that has happened so far happened randomly. I have no clue of what I am doing.” I confessed to Xanthe.

“There is not a lot of information about the Crescent Moon wolves. Aside from Kristina, I had not heard of a Crescent Moon wolf until then. Kristina learned to harness her powers to a point, but even she didn’t know a lot about her powers, and she never had a chance to master them. And with all that was going on we didn’t speak much of them.” Xanthe replied.

“The best way for us to learn more about your wolf would be to speak with an elder. I have some contacts we can utilize, but we need to be careful as to

who we trust with this. Can you give me a few days? Give me some time to reach out to a few of my contacts. I feel they will be able to point us in the right direction?" Xanthe asked me.

"Of course. Maybe we should end this meeting here. I need to get back to Liam and Layla, and I'm sure Kingston has plenty of pack business to attend to. Xanthe, thank you for your time. I appreciate everything you have told me. I really do appreciate you coming here." I thanked Xanthe.

"Aleksa, Kingston has my details, and you can contact me anytime. I want to be here for you." Xanthe said warmly as she got up from her seat.

"Can I just say how much you look like your mother? You really are the spitting image of her." Xanthe told me. That made my heart swell with pride. Kingston and I stood up from our seats.

"Uh, Xanthe, do you have any photos of my parents? I've never met them or even seen a picture of them. I don't even know what they look like, and I would like to." I asked Xanthe, as my lips started to quiver, I was fighting to prevent my emotions from consuming me once again.

"I actually do. I'm sorry Aleksa, I wasn't thinking. Of course, you would want a photo of them. I believe I have one or two. I could bring them with me when I come back in a few days if you like." Xanthe asked me.

"That would be amazing – thank you! Well, we will get going and we look forward to hearing from you in few days, all going well. Goodbye Xanthe!" I said as I walked over to Xanthe embracing her in a hug, she smelt like wild jasmine, the hug felt strangely familiar, as did her scent. I walked over to Kingston, and we locked hands and walked off through the gardens. I lay my head against his shoulder and we walked together, our bodies molding into one another's. I could feel the warmth from the bond. I looked up at Kingston's face while we were walking, he looked down at me and kissed me on the forehead. "I love you so much," I said to Kingston.

"I love you too, Aleksa," Kingston said back. And we kept walking towards the packhouse to see our pups on this warm sunny day, the blue sky was dotted with fluffy white clouds, there was a gentle breeze passing us, I could hear the birds chirping in the background, bees buzzing over the wildflowers that littered the sides of the path we walked on, and a faint sound of children playing with frisbees on the grass in front of the packhouse.

There was so much going through my mind right now, but it could all wait a few hours. This mama needed some time with her pups.

Aleksa POV

It's been two weeks since we spoke with Xanthe, and strangely we haven't heard back from her yet. We assume she has been busy or hasn't yet found anything further out about crescent moon wolves. It's been very busy here at the packhouse lately.

Everyone is getting prepared for the Royal Alpha Summit which will be taking place over the next week. We've had the caterers in to organize the meals for the week-long event. Quinn has been helping me with this as I am still new to all of this. Back at Evergreen we never had an event even remotely resembling this. It's all a learning curve for me.

We decided against the media release about Kingston and I's mateship. The pack knew most importantly, but the rest of the world could wait a little bit longer.

After speaking with Xanthe and learning what we did about my lineage, about the Crescent Moon wolves being hunted, about my grandparents, and the Hunter that was potentially looking for me and Layla, we decided that it was best to keep things under wraps for now. We would wait for the summit and deal with things as they happened. Meaning that we would be dealing with the Lachlan situation as it arose.

I really hoped that Lachlan wouldn't attend the Royal Alpha Summit. He had never attended one previously so with a little bit of luck he wouldn't attend this one. Although, in saying that we weren't leaving it to luck. Kingston and Asher were working on a plan for what would happen if he did attend and how we would approach that situation without placing a damper on the celebrations or any disrespect to the alpha king himself.

Kingston was determined that this would be the best summit he had organized yet. We had all the accommodation organized, housekeeping was paying attention to detail to ensure that everything was perfect for our guests, and we had guides and point of contact organized for each pack.

We had entertainment organized for each night of the summit. The conference room had been extended and prepared to seat all attending alphas comfortably. Maintenance had outdone themselves, as the pack landscaping

looked immaculate. The pack members were all excited and ready to host the attending packs. Unmated wolves were excited at the possibility of meeting their mates at the summit. The pack was a hive of excitement and anticipation.

While I was putting on a brave face, my anxiety was at an all-time high. I was trying to distract myself and not overanalyze everything because I knew Kingston would feel it through our bond, but I just couldn't. I was scared of what would happen if Lachlan attended. So much so that I had made plans to have Kingston's parents Chase and Cordelia take Liam and Layla away to a cabin in a nearby state for the week of the summit. I needed to know that they were safe especially if I was to see Lachlan face to face. Also, I would constantly be on edge worrying about whether or not they were safe if they were to be here while the Summit was taking place.

Although I would worry regardless, I would worry less knowing that they were in the capable hands of Chase and Cordelia. We had gotten to know each other a lot more over the past few weeks. They were very welcoming and genuinely happy for us both. They knew of my past with Lachlan and Evergreen, and accepted me with open arms.

Chase was still very fit and also very intimidating when you first met him, he was an older more distinguished version of Kingston, and Cordelia was sophisticated and elegant, she looked like an older version of Quinn, she was very nurturing and absolutely loved being around children, she doted on Liam and Layla as if they were her own pups. They would be leaving two days before the summit started, which I was happy with, as it gave us that little bit more time to plan, and sort our backup plan, as well as our back up to the backup plan.

Kingston had been very busy, but he had a very capable team working with him, he was at this point just checking that everything was organized and ready to go. Initially, he had played a bigger role in preparing the summit, but in light of the rogue attacks, Xanthe telling us of mine and Layla's lineage and preparing for the probable fallout with Lachlan, he had decided to delegate.

Quinn and Mason had been busy renovating their cottage, and it was almost ready, they were just putting the finishing touches on it. They were so happy stuck in their own little love bubble. Kingston had been giving Mason more and more responsibility within the pack leadership and Mason was handling it all so well. He seemed very comfortable and settled here. I was so happy for my friend. He deserved happiness.

Kaia was still heavily involved with the warrior squad and practically trained all day every day. She was still spending a lot of time with Asher, they had even been on their first date. They were taking things slowly but you could feel the s****l tension in the air whenever those two were around each other.

Liam and Layla were settled and fitted in so well with the pack, everyone had been so welcoming towards them. It's crazy to think that in a few months they would be celebrating their third birthdays. I hadn't planned anything yet for that but I plan to once the summit is over, and everything is sorted out in regards to Lachlan, I will start planning for it then.

I was on my way to Kingston's office to bring him some lunch as he tended to skip meals often when he was hyperfocused and immersed in pack business. Liam and Layla were at daycare so I was just doing errands today and helping with the final preparations. As I walked down the hallway I heard raised voices coming from Kingston's office.

The voices stopped. I assumed they could scent me considering I was standing just outside the office. "Come in Aleksa" Kingston called out.

I walked in to see Kingston leaning back in his chair, Asher was sitting on the chair in front of Lachlan's desk. "Good afternoon Asher, good afternoon My Love," I said as I walked up to Kingston, placing his lunch on his desk in front of him and kissing him on his forehead.

"Did I walk in on something?" I ask sheepishly.

Asher shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

"Just tell her Asher," Kingston says to Asher sighing.

"Well Aleksa, I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it would appear that news of Lachlan's bounty has traveled, your images have been posted all over the town. It's only a matter of time before someone contacts Lachlan, and he knows where you are." Asher tells me, releasing the breath he was holding in.

My heart starts racing rapidly and I feel a shiver ripple throughout my body. My eyes begin to tear up. Then I close my eyes and focus my energy. I will not let this fear consume me. I take a few deep breaths and try to control my emotions.

Kingston goes to pull me into him and sit me on his lap, while I would usually feel comfort and protection in this action, right now I want to stand. I need to stand. I will not cower and let fear take over whenever a curveball is thrown at me. I am to be Luna of this pack Although I love that Kingston wants to protect me, I am done with being a passive subservient Luna like I was when I was at Evergreen. I need to learn to protect myself, my pups, and my pack properly. Kingston growls at my actions and looks at me questionably.

“Okay, so, we need a plan! We can’t leave anything to chance, we really need to be a few steps ahead of Lachlan at all times!” I declare to them both.

Asher looks at me incredulously, usually, I would be an emotional wreck right now, and would act before thinking. But I was done with being that girl. Kingston looks at me with a proud look on his face. I can feel through the bond that he approves of this side of me.

“Well Luna, I have taken them all down, but we have to work on the premise that they have already been seen by most people.”

“For example, the people that knew you from working at the tavern, people who may be walked past you in the street, or saw you in a shop. We will speak with all pack members, I can’t imagine we would have any problems there. But the humans and any rogues we will have no control over.” Asher replied.

“I have just called all pack members to the training grounds in fifteen minutes, we will discuss this issue with them immediately. Aleksa we will need to tell them about your past, about Lachlan, and about Evergreen. What are your thoughts on this?” Kingston asks me.

“I agree. The pack needs to know the truth. It is better that they know now before they decide whether or not they will accept me as their Luna officially.” I said.

Kingston growled. “They have already accepted you. You are their Luna.” He declared.

I put my hands on his cheek and pulled him in for a quick kiss to calm his wolf.

“Looks like we will be speaking with Lachlan sooner than we expected,” Kingston says to Asher, their eyes meeting each other knowingly in agreeance.

“I will have two elite warriors assigned to Liam and Layla twenty-four hours a day, I will also assign two elite warriors to the Luna if you agree Alpha?” Asher asked Kingston.

“Sounds good. We will need to tighten pack security and double the patrols. I will have to speak with our neighboring packs to advise them of the situation and ensure our bases are covered should we need additional backup.” Kingston tells Asher.

“Everything will be ok Aleksa, you are safe, Liam and Layla are safe. Your pack will protect you.” Kingston reassures me.

“I know we will be. I refuse to let Lachlan control our lives. I am done with running and done with being afraid. That being said, I need a little help with something Asher. If you have some free time later this afternoon?” I ask him hopefully.

“Of course Luna, although I must say I am rather curious,” Asher remarks to me. Kingston is looking at me, raising an eyebrow.

“Relax, I just need a little training, some basic but effective defensive moves, I need to be able to fight if necessary,” I tell them both.

Kingston mind-links me “This more dominant side of you is turning me right now on my love!”

“Uh guys, I’m still here,” Asher says, looking uncomfortable.

Kingston and I both chuckle, “Sorry man” Kingston says to Asher.

I feel the heat creep over my cheeks, I know that I am blushing right now.

A few minutes later, there is a knock on the door. “Mason, please come in,” Kingston calls out.

Mason walks in, “Alpha, Luna, Beta Asher,” He says as he nodded his head respectfully. “What can I do for you?” He asks.

“Well Mason, we have a problem. Those images you warned us of, well they have been posted all over town. We have to assume that Lachlan already knows where Aleksa and the twins are, so we have a problem.”

“I asked you to come here today in the hopes that you would consider being Liam and Layla’s protection detail for now, until this is all resolved. I would also assign two of our elite warriors to the twins, but I think it would be reassuring for Aleksa to have someone she trusts looking out for the twins, and less stressful for them to have a familiar face around them.” Kingston asks Mason.

Mason answers straight away as if he didn’t even have to consider the request. “Absolutely Alpha, I would be honored to.” He said, winking at me, which made me smile, lessening my nerves a little.

Kingston got up out of his seat and everyone else stood and made their way out of the office. It was time to address the pack and tell them of my life before coming to Rocky Mountain. It was time to tell them of the threat to the pack. Although it wasn’t the time to tell them of my lineage and that I was a Crescent Moon wolf as I still didn’t really know what that meant myself.

I had just hoped that they would still accept the twins and I once they knew the truth about my past before coming to Rocky Mountain.

Aleksa POV

It’s been a few days since we had “the talk” with our pack. It actually went really well. Everyone was a bit quiet initially. I could hear gasps and whispers, but I kept talking, telling my story, and before long, I could sense that the pack understood what I was saying and why I had to leave my previous pack. I explained what happened with Lachlan and Eva, and how I ended up in the pack dungeons. Then I explained how I had to leave with my pups, and mentioned my friends, Mason and Kaia, who helped facilitate that escape. Everyone just stood and listened to what I had to say. Kingston took over and explained to the pack about the bounty placed on me, as well as explaining that what Lachlan had told people about Mason and Kaia was untrue, that they were helping me, not kidnapping me, and to not pay attention to the lies they might hear. He reassured the pack that he had done his due diligence before we came to join Rocky Mountain,

Since then, everyone has been even friendlier, which I didn’t think was possible, because they were already so welcoming. I feel lighter not having to hide my past, like a weight has been shifted from my shoulders. I feel relieved to know that the pack accepts me as their Luna, because I love Kingston and the pack, and I feel like we have made this place our home. I don’t even want

to imagine what might have happened if the pack hadn't accepted me and my pups.

Due to the news of the bounty, and mine and my pups faces being plastered everywhere, as well as Mason and Kaia's, pack security and patrols have doubled and the place is like Fort Knox around here, which is making things a little harder for the deliveries and preparations needed for the summit, but as Kingston reiterates, it's better to be safe than sorry.

I know I need to face Lachlan once and for all. And every day I feel more and more ready for it, I just want to get it over with, so we can all live our lives without having this hanging over our heads.

Asher has been taking the time out to train me twice a day. We meet at dawn and dusk. He is mostly teaching me defense. He's keeping it short and sweet for now, teaching me how I can use my size to my advantage, as well as teaching me moves that are easy to execute and are highly effective.

Tomorrow, Chase and Cordelia will be taking Liam and Layla away to a lake house in Idaho. Mason and Quinn will be accompanying them, as well as several elite warriors. I know my pups are in safe hands. I am sad that we will be separated, but I know it's only temporary. I feel confident knowing that they will be further away from Lachlan's clutches.

We are spending the day at the packhouse today. I want to make the most of my time with my pups before their trip away. I have told them they will be going away with their grandparents and they don't seem phased. I guess they are too young to really understand. But at least they have fun with Chase and Cordelia, Mason and Quinn, and they are familiar faces for them, which should help alleviate any stress or anxiety that they may feel from being away from their Mama.

I won't see Kingston until tonight as he has back-to-back meetings with some of the Alpha's from nearby packs all day, they will be busily preparing for the summit as well as Lachlan's probable arrival. I have organized a special lunch to be delivered to the conference room for them today. I know what those Alpha's are like when they are busy talking about business they often won't eat, so at least they can eat while they work. I know I will feel better knowing that they are being fed.

I hear a knock at the door and I get up from the floor where I am playing blocks with the twins to open it. I was surprised to see Kaia at the door.

“Aleksa, I wondered if you and the twins would like some company. I heard that they were leaving tomorrow and I needed to get my cuddle quota in before they leave” Kaia says enthusiastically, opening her arms up for Liam and Layla.

“Aun-ty Kaia! Aun-ty Kaia!” they yelled, barrelling towards her with open arms.

“My pups!” She replies, pulling them into her arms, and snuggling them.

“Perhaps we could go to the kitchen and get some snacks to have a picnic on the front lawn?” I suggested to everyone.

“Yay!” the twins shouted in unison.

“Sounds good to me!” Kaia says cheerfully.

I grab my go-bag for the twins, they each take Kaia’s hand, and we walk out the door, kitchen bound for snacks.

Ready to enjoy the rest of the day together creating fun memories.

It’s the day before the summit, which means my pups are about to embark on their first holiday without their Mama this morning, and I am feeling a little anxious. I woke up super early today. I had the twins’ suitcases packed last night and had taken them to the front door, ready to be loaded into Chase’s SUV this morning.

I have already had two coffees and I’m considering my third one already. I’ve just been sitting here watching Liam and Layla sleep for the past few hours. Just thinking about how fast they are growing and wondering where the time has gone. It seems like only yesterday they were in my womb. Now they aren’t far off their third birthdays.

We have all been through so much over the past six months or so. But I wouldn’t change a thing because it has got us to this point. To Rocky Mountain, to Kingston, to our beautiful friends who have become our family. To this kind and caring and protective pack. We are all so blessed.

I am disrupted from my thought process by a sleepy Liam, “Mama?” He questions me.

“Good Morning Liam, yes it’s Mama, how did you sleep?” I asked my big boy.

“Good.” He says to me,

“Mama?” He asked me.

“Yes, Liam?” I said, trying to hold back my chuckle at how cute my little boy looked half asleep and trying to communicate with me.

“Pancakes?” Liam asks.

“Yes Liam, you can have pancakes this morning, let’s get you changed while we wait for your sister to wake up, shall we?” I said to Liam.

“I’m awake!” Layla called out.

I laughed out loud. Layla never missed an opportunity to have pancakes.

“Of course, my princess, let’s get you dressed too, and head down to the kitchen,” I say to my pups.

They both smile and start clapping with glee.

After breakfast, I got Liam and Layla cleaned up and we made our way back downstairs to the main entrance of the pack house. Kingston and Mason help strap the twins into their car seats and I give them big cuddles and kisses goodbye. I then say thank you to everyone and wish them all a safe trip.

I waved continuously with a big smile on my face, holding back the tears until Liam and Layla were out of sight. I feel tears flooding my eyes, and I try to contain myself in front of everyone. I end up laughing at myself and overcome with emotion. I wipe my eyes and take a few breaths trying to settle myself down. Kingston pulls me into his chest and tries to console me.

“It’s for the best, Aleksa, they will be safe with my parents, and with Mason and Quinn, I promise,” Kingston tells me.

“I know, I don’t doubt that, Kingston. I’m just sad, it’s my first time away from the twins, well, with the exception of my time in the dungeons.” I replied.

Kingston growled at my mentioning the dungeons. Well, it was probably more Sabre growling in all honesty.

I wiped my eyes one last time and took a big breath and exhaled. It's time to pull myself together. I am doing this for my pups. I need to focus on the summit, on confronting Lachlan, and ensuring he is no longer a threat to me or the twins.

Kingston looks at me proudly, as if he knows exactly what I am thinking. Asher clears his throat.

"Alpha, Luna." He starts.

"Border patrol has told me that some of the Alpha's have already started to arrive for the Summit," Asher tells us.

I had a shocked expression on my face, "But the Summit doesn't start until tomorrow?" I replied to them both, suddenly wondering if we were actually ready. Although if they are already here, we will just have to be ready.

"It's okay, my love, it's not unusual for some packs to arrive a little early. We have already anticipated this. Let's quickly refresh ourselves, then come back down to greet our guests Aleksa." Kingston gestures for me to follow him.

"OK, sure, good idea," I said in reply to him, feeling a bit dazed, but following his lead. We left Asher at the main entrance, waiting to greet the guests and direct them once they arrived, as well as stalling for time as we made our way back.

The first pack to arrive was from North Dakota. Alpha Logan and his Luna Louise looked to be in their late thirties, their Gamma Joel, who I imagine was of a similar age and accompanying them, were four elite warriors. Their Beta was at home leading the pack in their absence. They were a lovely pack, very friendly. After some small talk, Asher accompanied them to the cottage they would be residing in for the entirety of the summit. We had suggested they get settled and meet us back at the packhouse for lunch if they wish to. Which they happily accepted.

As we were about to leave to head back into the packhouse, another pack was arriving, so we decided to wait at the main entrance for them, as Asher was busy with the North Dakota pack.

Three SUVs drove up to the entrance. A burly man, probably in his early twenties, ran up to the door of the SUV and opened it for his Alpha, a very tall and muscular man who looked to be in his late twenties. He then opened the door on the other side and a gorgeous woman with red hair and green eyes walked out. She had a shy smile on her face, she joined hands with her mate and they walked up to us.

After introducing ourselves to them, we learned that they were from Nebraska, Wyatt, and Willow Robinson. They seemed like a nice couple, they seemed happy to be here, and I had a really good feeling about Willow specifically, there was something about her. I look forward to getting to know her better over the next week.

Kai arrived at the entrance, he promptly introduced himself to Wyatt and Willow and offered to take them to their cottage so that they could get settled in. They also agreed to meet us at the packhouse for lunch.

Kingston and I took this as a chance for us to spend a little time together while welcoming our guests. It was looking like the summit might be starting a bit earlier this year, so Kingston sent out a mass mind-link to the pack, informing them of the guests that had already arrived, and reminding them to make sure they all felt welcome.

As we walked inside the packhouse, I told Kingston that I needed a quick word with Rose. I said I would be quick if he could just wait for me. I made my way to the kitchen, leaving Kingston to check his emails on his smartphone in the lobby.

I needed to let Rose know our guests had started arriving and that we would be making a special lunch today for our guests. I wanted to give her a heads up numbers-wise but to also potentially prepare for even more guests, as we were not sure who else might arrive early and we didn't want anyone going hungry.

Rose was excited to hear that our guests were arriving and she got to work organizing food. I asked Rose if she would like some help, but she just started shoo-ing me out of the kitchen. So I took the hint and made my way to Kingston.

“My love, you still haven’t told me what you and Asher have decided to do about Lachlan? What’s this grand plan? I don’t mean to pressure you, but I would really like to know what the plan is, considering it will involve me.” I told him, pouting and looking into his eyes.

“How about we get through this afternoon, and then tonight after dinner, I will call a meeting with Asher and some of our elite warriors, then we can all talk about it then and there. Does that sound fair?” Kingston asked me. Although it was more of a statement than a question if you ask me.

“I guess I can wait,” I said, feeling unimpressed that he seemed to be stalling me.

“So uh, if we have some free time now, would you like a massage?” Kingston says with a cheeky grin on his face.

“How about we get through this afternoon, have dinner, and then after the meeting we can spend some quality time together. Does that sound fair?” I said smugly to Kingston, trying to stifle my laugh.

“I see what you did there. Touche.” Kingston says, trying to suppress his laughter.

“It’s ok. Come to think of it I should really go over everything one last time, and check in with security.” Kingston says matter of factly.

“Ah, yes, and I will touch base with the planning team for the festivities, to ensure everything is on schedule,” I said to Kingston, leaning on him to kiss him on the cheek.

“I love you!” I said to Kingston as I looked into his eyes sincerely.

“I love you too!” He replied back to me. And we go our separate ways.

As I was walking down the hallway, I realized I had left my phone in the kitchen, so I turned back and headed toward the kitchen. As I walked through the door, I saw that Rose and some of the kitchen staff were busy preparing lunch. I could hear a commotion outside, so I quickly grabbed my phone and made my way outside.

As I opened the door and walked down the steps of the packhouse following the raised voices, I saw some of our pack members preparing to direct our

guests. One of them has a checklist, and the other is trying to communicate with the driver of the first SUV. A total of two SUVs have arrived at the main entrance of the packhouse. I am surprised there are no ranked wolves down here to greet them, so I quickly mind-linked Kingston telling him we have more guests arriving. Then I started to confidently stride toward the SUV. I've got this thought to myself, it's just meet and greet, how hard can it be.

I then see a tall and muscular man in a fitted black suit step out of the first SUV and as he turns towards me I gasp, stopping in my tracks.

"Aleksa? Well, this is a pleasant surprise."

Luna Aleksa's Escape Chapter 32

Aleksa POV

I had been on cloud nine since the initiation ceremony yesterday. Kingston had woken up early this morning, he had some pack matters to attend to with Asher, so he had left me to sleep in. Although I wasn't sleeping, I was just lying there blissfully rehashing the events of the past twenty four hours. I couldn't believe that I had been blessed with a second chance mate. It all seemed too good to be true.

After rejecting Lachlan I was certain that would be it for me. It goes against our nature to reject our fated mates, but in all fairness, my bond with Lachlan had started to weaken almost as quickly as it had begun. When he had first marked me I was so proud I wore my mark with pride. Everything was all so new to me. I was new to being a werewolf and learning what mates were, and what marking meant. I felt so special that I "belonged to someone." Someone that was designated to me specifically from the Moon Goddess herself. In the early days of our relationship Lachlan had insisted on me wearing clothes that showed my mark. He wanted everyone to know that I belonged to him. And I thought it was so sweet, so protective. But then over time I noticed that my mark had started to slowly fade. I remember being worried, so I had questioned it with the pack doctor and she had told me that it was quite common for some discoloration to occur, and that Lachlan and I had just needed to spend more time together and the mark would strengthen over time. Although over time, it only seemed to get worse, and fade further. I had always blamed myself, thinking that I had done something wrong, or that I wasn't doing enough. I know now that I hadn't done anything wrong, it was Lachlan that had been sabotaging our bond.

When I left Evergreen, I hadn't formally severed my ties with the pack, so I was still tied to Lachlan and to Evergreen, so the remnants of my mark had remained on my neck. It wasn't until yesterday when I formally severed my ties with Evergreen, as well as severing my remaining ties to Lachlan, and pledged my allegiance with Rocky Mountain and Kingston, that my mark had finally left my neck.

I was surprised because I had thought that Lachlan would have had to accept my rejection in order for my mark to disappear. I hadn't noticed it initially, it was Kingston that mentioned it to me while inspecting my neck for where he would place his mark. Now I have Kingston's mark in place, and I couldn't be happier, or more proud of it.

It's a sapphire blue crescent moon, with two wolves under it, and with what looks to be a crown, with a purple hue to it. It's so very different from the mark that Lachlan had given me. Kingston has a matching mark on his neck.

Although I have only known Kingston a short time I feel as though I have known him forever. There is just something about him. It's so different from what I had with Lachlan. Kingston is so patient, and so concerned with the welfare of others, and doing the best for his pack as well as other packs that he comes into contact with. He's very caring and thoughtful. And he believes that being Alpha it is his duty to serve his people, not the other way around, which seems to be the common theme with a lot of alphas. And you can see it in his pack members, everyone seems really happy and proud here in Rocky Mountain. There isn't the oppression and fear that most packs seem to thrive on.

Last night amongst our lovemaking Kingston and I discussed our plans for our future. Kingston was asking me what things I am passionate about, he asked me about my duties as Luna at Evergreen, and asked me to think about projects or initiatives I might like to take on.

During our talks we spoke about my Luna ceremony. I really didn't want a big fuss but Kingston wouldn't hear of it. He wanted to make it a big event. Although with the upcoming Annual Royal Alpha Summit there wasn't a lot of time to organize an extravagant event. Although Rocky Mountain had a previous Luna, Kingston said that they would be very excited they would have one again. He wanted to invite all the neighboring packs, as well as his extended family and friends from all over the country.

The more he spoke of it the more nervous I got. I was scared that I wouldn't be accepted, that I wouldn't measure up to the previous Luna. From what I had heard about her she was an outstanding Luna, who did a lot for the pack, even playing a huge role in peacekeeping and helping to form alliances with other packs.

You could tell the pack was still recovering from her loss, even though a considerable amount of time had passed. I know I shouldn't compare myself to her. We are all different and we bring different qualities to our roles. I just needed some time to adjust, to meet and get to know other pack members. I am interrupted from my feelings of self doubt when there is a knock at my door. It is a maid who is bringing me breakfast in bed, courtesy of Kingston she tells me. There's a sweet note attached and a bunch of pink peonies in a small vase. Aww. How did I get so lucky I thought to myself. I looked at the breakfast tray and realized that there is too much food here for just one person, so I asked the young girl who had delivered the food to me to please take a seat and help me eat it, but she politely declined, smiles, bowed her head, and made her way out of my room.

I walked towards the window and I could see the warriors training on the field in front of the packhouse. I spotted Kingston and my heart swelled with pride. My stomach begins to growl again, so I turned to the desk and I took a few mouthfuls of the muesli and fruit. I ate just enough to sustain myself and then I walked into the bathroom to have a quick shower. Then I would make my way downstairs to collect Liam and Layla from Kaia. I would have to think of something nice to do to thank her for last night, I thought to myself as I climbed into the shower and felt the warm water against my body.

After my shower I had dressed and made my way down to Kaia, she was in the breakfast room wiping Liam and Layla's faces post breakfast, they were very messy eaters. We had a brief chat before she had to leave for training. I gathered the twins and decided it would be a nice day to explore the pack grounds some more. It was so pretty here, there were so many nooks and crannies, little playgrounds and gardens that we were yet to explore, Rose had told me about them, when I had helped her serve breakfast one day.

I carried them down the stairs and then put them onto the footpath, which was on the side of the front entrance. We started walking towards the rose gardens. On our way there we passed quite a few pack members. They would say "Good morning, Luna" to me, and bow, as we crossed paths. They all

seemed very polite. And they seemed curious. Which was fair enough, considering they knew almost nothing about me. I would need to change that and get to know them all, in time. After some time in the rose gardens we walked towards a bushy area. I could see a rustic and weathered old swing set there, there was only one infant swing, but I figured Liam and Layla could take turns. As I started pushing Layla, I noticed Liam had started wandering. I saw him walking off towards the thick bush area. I pulled Layla up off the swing, and pulled her against my chest, then I made a dash for the path leading into the bush. I had only taken my eye off Liam for three seconds, he had moved so quickly. I could see him and as I approached him, I grabbed his arm to turn him towards me. Liam? He stood there with his mouth wide open. There was a small fountain in the middle of this bush area, it was beautiful, like a hidden garden amongst the bush. There was even a small bench to sit on, although it was grossly overgrown with weeds and wildflowers. I walked over to the bench and pushed some of the overgrown wildflowers to the side, I motioned for Liam and Layla to come join me. They two looked pretty taken back by the untamed beauty of this hidden spot. As I was taking the scenery in, I could see a small pond in the distance, I placed the twins on the ground and they took one of my hands each, "Shall we look at the pond, see if there are any fish?" I say to them. They nod their heads excitedly and proceed to the pond in the distance, as we approach the pond we are stopped in my tracks, as Kingston's voice yells out through the mind link, "Rogues! We are under attack!" "Aleksa, where are you?" He yelled frantically.

Meanwhile back in Evergreen...

Lachlan POV

"Ah, yes, that's it, s**k it harder, faster!" I ordered Eva as I yanked her hair hard and pushed her further into my c**k. "Ahhhhhhhhh," I yelled as I emptied my load onto her breasts, with my eyes closed, visualizing Aleska on her knees in front of me, instead of Eva. I had always thought of Aleksa right before I was about to c*m. It didn't matter who I was f*****g. I always pictured her face.

"Lachlan! Please! I'm not finished. Let me just..." Eva pleaded, trying to throw herself at me again. But I had my fun. I had emptied my c*m all over her large and plentiful breasts. Now she needed to get out of here and go clean herself up. She looked like a mess. She reeked of desperation, and nothing turned me off more.

“Get out now!” I yelled at her, throwing a wooden chair against the wall watching it shatter all over the floor. “And get someone to come clean up this mess!” I yelled at her as she picked up her clothes and scurried out.

I’m so sick of her s**t. It was fun at the beginning, and all that sneaking around behind Aleksa’s back was a high too, but now Eva’s just driving me crazy. She’s so needy. It’s pathetic. She keeps on banging on about being Luna. As if that is ever gonna happen. Sure I may have told her she would be many times, but come on I would have said anything to get into her pants. Even that’s not worth it now.

And it’s not like Eva is special, I have slept with hundreds of she-wolves over the years, all of them as unremarkable as the next. They are here to please me sexually and that’s it. I’m not looking for a mate – I already have one. I just needed to find her. And then, when I do find her I will punish her relentlessly- for leaving me, and for taking my pups, especially my heir. I’ll need to remind her who’s boss. I imagine it will take some time to break her in. But in time, she would learn to be the good obedient mate she once was. She just needed reminding that she belonged to me.

Aleska was always a little stubborn. Even when I first met her, I recall she fought the bond initially, but then I won her over with my charm. How naive she was. Aleksa really was the perfect mate. Obedient. Well mannered. Eager to please. I didn’t mean for her to find out about the other she-wolves. I had hoped to introduce them into our relationship naturally over time. Make her think it was her idea. I don’t know why she got all bent out of shape. I mean there’s plenty of me to go around. She would still be Luna. They would just be my bits on the side. I was the alpha. And I was entitled to take what I wanted. It was after all my birthright.

Just thinking about Aleksa had made my c**k hard again. We had been searching for her for weeks now, and we had found no real trace of her, our last detected scent of her was at the pack training grounds. We haven’t been able to scent her anywhere else. This leads me to believe she must have had help covering her scent up.

It’s not like she has any family to help her, or friends even. I kept her pretty isolated here. I didn’t even let her have breakfast with the pack most of the time. I indulged her in her need to work in the human town, they were of no threat to me. I preferred to keep her isolated and all to myself.

After she escaped, I had wolves watching her workplace, nothing suspicious had happened there. According to my sources when she handed her letter of resignation in, she left work on sick leave, that was the last they saw of her. I even planted someone there at the realtors as they had to advertise Aleksa's job, and she's found no evidence of anyone helping her.

My so-called Gamma Caleb and his interfering mate Kali had disappeared South, we had tracked them a few human towns over, and then lost visuals on them from there. I had reached out to Kali's previous pack, but they aren't giving out any information either, they claim they had no knowledge of any of this, but I don't trust them. I'm just biding my time. I have wolves watching the pack, and the first chance we get we will grab one of her family members, then we will make them talk. I can be very convincing when I want to be. I thought as I chuckled deviously to myself.

As for those rogues, well no one seems to know anything about them. They only arrived in the dungeons a little while before I tossed Aleksa in there. We don't know their names, or even where they came from. Not that I care about them. Sure if I happen to find them I will rip them to shreds after I t*****e them that is.

I still don't understand what Aleksa thinking, running away with rogues, she's still so oblivious to our world. She still needed to learn that certain people are worth associating with, others are just here for service, and some, well some just needed to be put out of their misery, and rogues definitely fell into that category.

I walked over to my desk and looked at a family photo of myself, Aleksa, Liam, and Layla. I looked at the picture and I thought about the good times we had. The thrills I had while corrupting her, and having my wicked way with her. She was so innocent and pure when I met her. It was all too easy, convincing her that I was her knight in shining armor, her one true love. She believed everything I fed her – hook, line, and sinker.

Sure it's not to say that I didn't have feelings for her. She had a certain charm about her. She was kind and nurturing, especially with the pups. I wouldn't have anyone else raising my pups. And she made my wolf Cyrus happy. The pack liked her. She was always helping people. And she had a stubborn nature about her, which I enjoyed provoking.

I realized it wouldn't have been her doing, the escape, she's too weak to come up with a plan like that, it would have been those rogues that she was in the

dungeons with. They would have poisoned her mind against me. And they would pay for that if I ever came across them again.

I would have to punish her for the stress she has caused me. And she would lose her freedom when she returned with my pups. I would need to make an example of her. And I knew exactly how I would do that. I thought to myself a cunning smirk forming on my face.

Just thinking about it was turning me on. I pulled my c**k out of my pants and started to relieve myself, closing my eyes. I imagined how I would discipline Aleksa when I finally caught up with her.

A little while later, there was a knock on my door. It was my Beta Sam. He sure looked like s**t. He was very pale and unkempt. He had dark circles under his eyes and looked low in mood. He had lost a lot of muscle mass over the past months and was looking like a shadow of his former self.

“Alpha, a telegram arrived for you. It has a royal seal on it.” Beta Sam declared to me.

I nodded to Sam. “Well pass it over then, I don’t have all day,” I growled. I don’t have time for theatrics. I’m feeling agitated and so is Cyrus, we need to go for a run.

“Blah, Blah, Blah – Annual Royal Alpha Summit... Rocky Mountain Pack... Colorado.” “s**t, I forgot this was coming up. Hmmm. Actually. This might be a good chance for me to reach out to other packs, see if anyone has seen my mate or my pups!” I said out loud while considering the possibility in my head. This would be perfect. Almost every alpha from around the country would be there, Someone must have seen or heard something, I thought to myself.

“Sam, RSVP for me. And get this Kingston on the line. I wanna talk to him. While you do that. Send him an email link of Aleksa, the twins, Caleb and Kali, and the Rogues photos, and post them nationwide. Someone somewhere has seen them!” I say slamming my fist down on the desk.

Sam let out the breath he was holding and reluctantly nodded his head. “Yes, Alpha.” He said. Gawd he’s depressing. I really need to think about replacing him soon. He’s really let things slip lately. I realized he’s having problems with Eva, but get it together for f***s sake. Hmmm. Who would I even make my

Beta? Everyone around here is so incompetent. Hmmm, I'll have a think about that on my run.

Sam had transferred the phone call to me and I spoke to Alpha dickwad aka Kingston. He asked me some questions about pack alliances and asked if there were any grievances between Evergreen and other packs, in preparation for the Summit. I gave him the rundown. Obviously, there were some grievances, you don't get to be this powerful a pack from hosting tea parties. I told him what he wanted to hear, and told him I would play nice, out of respect to the Alpha King.

Then I moved the conversation on to what I actually wanted to talk about Aleksa and my pups. As I was explaining the situation to him, that my mate and pups were kidnapped by rogues, he kept asking questions, he was irritating me. It was like he didn't believe what I was telling him. The nerve of this guy, who did he think he was, just because he was the Alpha King's pet didn't mean he could take a tone with me. Wait until I see him face to face then we will see how arrogant he is. He will cower just like the rest of them do.

Sam didn't get the photos to him fast enough, so he told me he would take a look at them and distribute some around his local area when he received them. I bet he doesn't. I bet he was just saying that so he could end the conversation. The prick even hung up on me. The nerve! I was livid.

I shifted into Cyrus in my office and ripped through the packhouse in a fury, headed for the forest. I needed some stress relief. I mind-linked some omegas and told them to be ready for me in my suite for when I got back from my run.

It had been a few weeks since I learned of the Royal Alpha Summit, and I was preparing the pack for my absence. I had asked my father to step in and run the pack with the assistance of Sam and my mother, while I was gone. I couldn't trust Sam to do it by himself. The old Sam I knew could have. But he was too much of a wreck these days. I would be replacing him when I got back from the Summit. He was no longer of any use to me. I would be banishing him and his w***e of a mate, Eva. She was constantly bugging me these days and walking around like she owned the place. No matter how often I reminded her she wasn't my luna and would never be. I would be glad to be

rid of both of them. I would make one of my head warriors my Beta for now. It would be better than nothing.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and just like any other day at Evergreen. I had my usual routine of training in the morning, followed by some stress relief in my suite with some needy omegas who were willing to please, followed by lunch with Cade and Caitlin, an afternoon trip to the local whorehouse, and now I had a meeting with a neighboring pack. We might have a lead on Aleksa's whereabouts so I couldn't miss this meeting. They had better not be wasting my time, I thought to myself.

As I was about to jump in my SUV I felt a searing pain rip throughout my body. I felt my connection to Aleksa was being completely severed. It had already been weakened, probably due to my healthy s****l appetite, and her pitiful attempt at a rejection weeks ago, but I was still somewhat connected to her until today that is. My head was throbbing, my chest was heaving, my heart felt like it had been pierced, and the pain crashed through my body. I dropped to the ground clutching my chest breathlessly. NOOOOOOOOO! I growled savagely.

Pack wolves were standing around looking at me in shock and disbelief. I just sat there kneeling on the ground, experiencing the most severe pain I've ever experienced in my life. "That b***h!" I yelled, panting.

I couldn't stand it any longer, I doubled over in agony. My body was overwhelmed and struggling to cope with such searing intense pain. I was feeling the pain of rejection and the severing of our bond. My last thoughts before I began to pass out, were that Aleksa would pay dearly for this.

Aleska POV

Shivers traveled up my spine as I realized that my pups and I were in the bushes at the far end of the pack and that there was an active rogue attack taking place. I realized that I didn't actually know my way around this pack well enough to find someplace safe to hide. I had a bad feeling that we wouldn't make it back to the packhouse in time. My gut instinct was telling me that we were in trouble right now. I mind-linked Kingston, "We are in the bush just past the rosegardens. I have Liam and Layla with me!" I call out, panic seeping through in my voice through the mind-link. "Start making your way towards the packhouse, I'm on my way, get our pups to safety," Kingston commanded me via the mind-link.

I grabbed Liam and Layla protectively, pulling them in towards me, almost crushing them into my waist. I took a look around at our surroundings, trying to gauge the safest route to take back to the packhouse. My mind was racing and I felt panic set in. I needed to get the pups to safety, I thought to myself. I pulled Liam and Layla up on either side of my hips and I started walking as quietly yet as fast as I could. I managed to make my way out of the bush area and I couldn't see any signs of the rogues as of yet, so I continued to make haste back to the packhouse. I was almost at the rose gardens when I caught a whiff of a scent. An unmistakable and unforgiving scent that made my heart stop and sent goosebumps all over my body, as well as making me want to vomit. Rogues!

As I turned to look behind me, I saw three mangey-looking rogues slowly stalking towards me, with pure unadulterated hate on their faces. "Amber!" I screamed internally. "Amber, please we need to shift. Now!" I frantically pleaded with my wolf. Amber had been more present lately, but we hadn't shifted yet, not for a long time. I knew it was expecting a lot thinking that we would just be able to shift, but our pups' lives were on the line. "I've got this! It's gonna hurt though!" Amber forewarned me. I quickly placed the twins behind me and instructed them to step back. I felt my bones cracking and rearranging themselves, my fur rapidly sprouting all over my body. The transition was excruciating but it was quick. However, before I was fully shifted, a reddish-brown rogue wolf ripped into my left shoulder, and it had taken a chunk of skin off with it. I let out a loud whimper and fell to my side. I could feel blood hemorrhaging from my wounds. Amber pushed through and completed our shift but we were weak now from the pain and the blood loss, even in our wolf form, because we hadn't shifted in so long, and now due to the penetrating wounds. I wouldn't be able to heal quickly enough. I couldn't look back at my pups because the rogues were circling me, snarling at me, and getting ready to attack me from all sides. I could hear my pups crying in horror though. And I felt absolutely terrified that I might not be able to protect them from harm. I was prepared to die trying though.

"Kingston, Please!!" That was all I was able to get out as I made a last-ditch effort to call for help. I didn't have time to say much else. I held my head up high and braced myself for the fight of my life. I could hear Liam and Layla crying and yelling "Mommy!" from behind me. My poor babies, I thought to myself. I told them to "Run! And hide!" "Now!" and I did my best to keep the rogue's attention on me.

I wouldn't plead, as I knew there was no point. I could feel their auras. I knew what their intentions were. But I wasn't going down without putting up a hell of

a fight. The honey-colored rogue with the white tinges on its face charged at me, I gave him the idea that I was going to move to my right but at the last minute, I moved to my left. However, at that moment the brown and white striped rogue pummeled into me from behind, ripping its teeth into my left upper thigh and knocking me forward onto the ground. I let out a whimper of pain, as I picked myself up. I hadn't seen that coming. I was feeling a bit faint and felt as though I'd had the wind knocked out of me, but I quickly got back up on my feet. The rogues were all circling me and raring to go. They started to charge toward me, I realized that they were just toying with me before. Although I could feel they wouldn't be this time. I took a deep breath and focused my energy and mind on hope. Hope – that I could survive this. Hope – that I could protect my pups. At that moment, I felt a surge of energy within myself. A surge of power. It was as if electricity was flowing through my veins. It felt like my eyes were glowing. I braced myself for the impact of the rogues barreling toward me, but I felt nothing but strength and raw power. I then felt myself shift back to my human form. I should have been scared because I couldn't fight in human form, but I wasn't. I felt strong. I felt confident.

I raised my head upwards and I felt what I would describe as an electrical surge, and focused my energy on the rogues. I opened my eyes and to my shock, I saw that the three rogues that were charging toward me only seconds ago, were on the ground, and they appeared to be unconscious. I could see their limbs shaking uncontrollably. It was as if they had received an electric shock. I looked around and there was no one else around. I was in a state of disbelief. I was not sure what had just happened but I was thankful for whatever miracle had just occurred. I could feel tingles all over my body. It felt as though I was consumed by an electrical forcefield. And then it was gone, as fast as it had consumed me. I felt normal again.

With the rogue wolves out for the count, I called out to my babies telling them it was safe to come out. They come out from behind a tree running towards me crying. At that moment I heard twigs snap around me and held my breath. Fearing that more rogues have arrived and I have just moved my pups out of their hiding place, putting them in harm's way. I gasped. Then I felt a wave of awareness sweep over me, and I realized the approaching wolves were friendly. They were part of our pack.

"It's our mate – Aleksa," Amber told me internally. I was relieved to see Sabre walking toward us. Sabre pounced towards me moving his head to his side to look at the rogues that were on the ground unconscious. He glanced at them then back to me, shaking his head in disbelief. Sabre then growled loudly. He rushed toward me and started licking my wounds, to help accelerate the

healing process, since there were healing abilities in the saliva of a true mate. Sabre then shifted to his human form and Kingston grabbed Liam and Layla towards him and checks them for injuries. When he was satisfied they were okay, he embraced them in a strong hug and kissed their foreheads. He then released them when he noticed I was feeling faint, and pulled me into his arms, holding me at my waist and legs pulling me into his chest. Overwhelmed at the events that had transpired, and feeling weak from my injuries, I felt myself give in to sleep.

I awoke in the pack hospital once again, this time I was aware of my surroundings immediately, as the smell of antiseptic and cleaning products hit my nose. I could also scent Kingston, even before I opened my eyes. I scanned the room, and it was just Kingston in the room with me. "Liam and Layla?" I asked in a state of panic, fearful that something might have happened to them. "Where are they? Are they ok?" I asked worriedly. "They are fine. There's not a scratch on them. They are with Kaia. How are you feeling?" Kingston asked me with concern. "I'm fine. I just wanna go home. And see my babies." I told him, hoping he would let me get my way. "How long have I been here?" I asked him, as it suddenly dawned on me I had no idea how much time had passed. "It's been about twenty-four hours, you healed pretty quickly. The doctor was unsure why you didn't wake up earlier," Kingston told me with concern in his voice.

"I think I have an idea," I told him. Recalling the feeling that engulfed me when I was fighting the rogues. "Something happened to me out there. I can't really explain it. But something helped me fight off the rogues." I told Kingston, who looked at me knowingly. I started to wonder why he wasn't as surprised as I was. It's as if he knew something that I didn't know. "You don't seem surprised?" I said to Kingston.

"I'm not Aleksa. There is something that I was meant to tell you a while ago, but then I got distracted and had forgotten to mention it to you." Kingston told me. "I think I better tell you now though," Kingston said, with a cautious look on his face.

"After the first rogue attack, before you joined the pack, you weren't healing and you were unconscious for several days, the medical team was unsure of what was keeping you from waking and we were worried about your wolf's absence, so we had to think outside the box. I asked a Healer to come to see you. A Healer from a nearby pack came in and spent some time with you.

Afterward, she told us (The Doctor and Myself) that you were not an ordinary wolf. She said that you were special, but she refused to elaborate any further. She wanted to speak with you first when you had recovered. It looks like now might be a good time to ask her to come back in to see you.” Kingston exclaimed.

I sat there staring at Kingston. A part of me was mad at him for not telling me this earlier, but mostly I was also a little shocked and overwhelmed by everything. I was not sure what had actually happened with the rogues, but I didn't think there was anything special about me. To be honest I felt a little substandard if anything. I had missed out on so much of the werewolf world, as I had lived as a human most of my life. I didn't know what to make of this news.

I took a moment to think about what Kingston had just said, then replied to Kingston “I think that is a good idea. I would like to speak with the Healer. Please.” Then I looked at the clock on the wall and asked, “Do you think I could be discharged? I really feel much better now, and I really just want to get home to my pups.” I said, with a sweet and hopeful smile on my face, hoping that will help me get my way.

“I'll have a chat with the Doctor,” Kingston said as he got up from his seat, and started to walk out of the room. I shuffled to the side of my bed and moved my feet so that they were hanging over the side of the bed. I pulled my gown down to take a peek at the wound on my shoulder, then moved it upwards to check the wound on my thigh. There was nothing there. No dressings. No scars. As if I had never been attacked. I pulled my gown back down and I pushed my body upwards off the bed, to stand up. I felt good. I didn't feel any pain from where my wounds once were, or aches from being in bed so long. I felt energized. I walked towards the bathroom to tidy myself up.

After I had been to the bathroom and refreshed myself, I walked back into the room to find that Kingston was back. “You look great. How are you feeling?” Kingston asked me looking surprised that I was moving so effortlessly I would imagine. “I feel better than I have in a long time,” I told him with a big smile on my face. And I meant every word. “So, can I be discharged? I'll take it easy I promise.” I said pouting hopefully to my mate. “The Doc said you could, but you have to take it easy, and you have to come back in tomorrow for a check-up.” He told me sternly. “No problem. Uh. I don't have any clothes to change into.” I said to him, biting down on my lip. “I'll have Asher bring some over,” Kingston informed me, his eyes hazed over and I could see that he was mind-linking.

In no time at all, Asher had arrived with my clothes and I was signing out of the hospital. I had been given my discharge papers from the Doctor, and we were about to walk out the door when I was approached by a tall dark hooded figure. The figure lifted up the hood of their gown, her wavy raven-colored hair fell forward, and I was met by the most intriguing pair of emerald-colored eyes. This must be the healer that Kingston was telling me about, I thought to myself. I could sense her aura was powerful, but in a positive way, not in a dark magic kind of way. "Aleska, we need to speak dear." She said with a sense of urgency in her voice.

Aleksa POV

I looked up at the woman in front of me and I could sense that what she had to tell me was important. Even though I was anxious and desperately wanted to see my pups, and hold them in my arms. I knew I had to hear her out, and find out what she meant when she told Kingston that I wasn't an ordinary wolf.

I looked at Kingston who looked unphased by the appearance of the Healer. I on the other hand was a little nervous about what I was about to find out. Kingston led us into a room in the hospital that was used for family conferences, and we took a seat at the conference table.

I started biting my nails, I know it's a filthy habit, but it's just something that I do when I'm anxious. The healer went on to tell me that her name was Xanthe, and she had been meaning to speak with me for some time now. She also told me that she foresaw my arrival here at Rocky Mountain and she had seen what happened at Evergreen, but that everything happened for a reason and led me to where I was right now.

"How could you know I would come here? How could you be expecting me?" I bit down on my lip, furrowing my brows.

"I didn't even know that I was coming here. I looked at a map and randomly chose Colorado. If I hadn't found out about Lachlan and Eva, I never would have come here. So how could you possibly know?" I said a little breathless and a little taken back by the Xanthe's words.

"I have been watching you since you were born. Who do you think left you in the basket outside that church, on that very night, at that very time, just as the Petrovs were leaving church service?" Xanthe questioned me, with a smile on her face.

“You left me there? You’re not my mother though. I feel no connection to you.” I told her, with a skeptical tone in my voice.

“You are right, I am not your mother. But I knew your mother very well. And your father.” Xanthe told me.

“Are they, are they alive? Did something happen to them?” I asked her hesitantly, not sure that I really wanted to know the answer.

“Your Father died protecting you and your mother. You see, you are a gifted wolf, as was your mother Kristina. You come from a lineage of gifted wolves, on your mother’s side.” Xanthe informed me.

I stared at her in disbelief. “Gifted wolves? I barely function as an average werewolf. I can’t fight. I know very little about being a werewolf. How could I be a gifted wolf? I think you have the wrong person.” I exclaimed, shaking my head in disbelief.

“I can assure you, Aleksa, you are gifted. Tell me has anything strange happened recently, anything you can’t explain, like a newfound power perhaps? Have you ever felt something was going to happen before it did, or, have you ever had a “feeling about someone’s intention or character” without knowing anything about them?” Xanthe asked me.

“Well, I guess, the other day, there was something. When I was being attacked by rogues, I felt a surge go through me, and I could have sworn my eyes were glowing. I still don’t quite understand what happened. One moment the rogues were charging for me, the next they were out cold like they had been electrocuted.” I blurted out to Xanthe. “And I have always had “feelings” about people, I figured I was just good at reading people. Like I could tell by their aura what their intentions were.” I told her. Starting to wonder if what she is telling me might actually be true.

“Aleksa, your birth parents’ names were Aleksander and Kristina. You were named after your father. Your parents loved you very much. Your father fought to his last breath trying to protect you from those who wanted to harm you. Your mother sacrificed herself, also, for you. They entrusted you in my care. But I knew you would never be truly safe as long as you were with me. So I did what I felt was best for you. I started observing the humans, to find a couple who didn’t have children but would love you as their own, and when I found the Petrovs, I knew you would be safe, and that you would be loved, so

I manifested it so that they would find you, fall in love with you and adopt you as their own.” Xanthe told me, shedding a tear from her eyes.

I was stunned. I sat there open-mouthed, and I had no words. I just stared at Xanthe, dumbfounded and trying to digest what I had just been told. I felt sad that my birth parents had lost their lives trying to protect me. All these years I just figured that they didn’t want me. And now I was told that I am some gifted wolf. This is all too much. I needed some air, I thought to myself.

“I, uh, I need some air. Do you mind? Could we finish this talk later? I’m feeling tired and overwhelmed, and I just wanna see Liam and Layla right now.” I said rhetorically to Xanthe and Kingston. I quietly sniffed, with tears threatening to erupt from my eyes.

“I think this has been a lot for Aleksa to take in. It might be a good idea to pause the conversation here, for now, Xanthe.” Kingston suggested.

“Very well. But we’re not finished, Aleksa – there is more I have to tell you, I realize you are overwhelmed right now, but we will need to speak again, very soon. How about tomorrow afternoon? Will that be enough time for you to think about what I have told you today?” Xanthe asked me.

“Yes. Tomorrow afternoon will be fine. I’m sorry. I appreciate you coming here and speaking with me. It’s, just, a lot to take in.” I told Xanthe, trying to hold myself together. I felt like I need a shower and a cry. Just to get it all out. I gave her a half-smile and got up from my seat and walked towards the door. I heard Kingston thanking her for her time, and bidding her farewell. But I just keep walking. I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to hug my babies. That would make everything better.

A good night’s sleep made the world of difference. I felt so much better today. I had time to reconcile things in my head, and I was ready to hear what else Xanthe has to tell me. I would apologize for my behavior yesterday. I wasn’t nearly as polite or grateful as I should have been towards Xanthe. Now that I’ve had time to think I have so many questions, about my birth parents, my lineage, my gifts, and more importantly I want to know who was after me and my mother, and why exactly.

I would ask all these questions in just a few hours. For now, I had a brunch date planned with Quinn and Kaia, we had so much to catch up on. I wanted

to hear all about what they had been up to, Quinn and her plans with Mason, Kaia with her training not to mention how things were progressing with a certain dashing Beta. It would be nice to just unwind with some girl talk and forget about my own complicated life for a moment.

Liam and Layla were still fast asleep, they had a late night. So I thought I would sneak downstairs to grab a coffee and then make my way back upstairs to wake Liam and Layla for daycare.

“Good Morning Aleksa, or shall I say Luna?” Mason mocked me, with a grin on his face, which soon turned serious. “We need to talk, Where is Kingston?” Mason asked me with a sense of urgency emanating from him.

“Is everything ok Mason?” I said suddenly worried by the grave expression on his face.

“I have some news but I would prefer to tell you and the Alpha at the same time.” Mason declared.

“Sure. I will mind-link him now. I was just about to make a coffee, would you like one? And, will the kitchen be an appropriate place to discuss this, or does it require more privacy?” I asked Mason.

“I think we should move this somewhere private,” Mason said discretely.

As we walked into the kitchen, Kingston was already there, sitting down drinking coffee, and looking at his laptop. Billie Eilish’s song “Happier than ever” was playing”, Gawd I loved that song I thought to myself. Kingston was looking quite relaxed. I really hoped that this wasn’t bad news.

“Good Morning my love,” Kingston said as he pulled me into him and kissed me passionately on the lips. I could taste the fresh blend of coffee that he was drinking was still on his lips mixed with a hint of chocolate, he tasted so good. I reluctantly pulled my lips from his, feeling a flush creep over my cheeks, I was still not used to this affection that he showered me with. Thank you Moon Goddess for pairing me with this man, he really was perfection, I thought silently to myself.

“Good Morning,” I said to Kingston with a beaming smile on my face, feeling smitten.

“So what is it that you wanted to speak about Mason?” Kingston asked. “Shall we take this into my office perhaps?” Kingston asked, to which Mason nodded and replied, “I think that would be a good idea, Alpha.”

“Oh, I’ve left Liam and Layla upstairs, I was just sneaking down for coffee. I didn’t expect anyone else to be up. They are still sleeping.” I told both Kingston and Mason.

“Aleksa, if you don’t mind I’ll mind-link Quinn, she was on her way here anyway. I’m sure she would be happy to watch and tend to Liam and Layla while we talk in the office?” Mason asked me.

“That would be amazing! Thank you Mason!” I said feeling relief wash over me. I watched his eyes haze over indicating he was in a mind-link.

I quickly poured a coffee for myself and for Mason, and we made our way to Kingston’s office.

“Thank you, Luna,” Mason said as he accepted his coffee from me.

“Please, just Aleksa, Mason you are like family to me, please don’t call me Luna” I insisted to Mason who just chuckled.

“So, Mason, what was it that you wanted to talk about?” Kingston asked, sitting back on his leather chair in front of his rich mahogany desk, which was for a change completely clear, a far cry from the messy cluttered desk only a few days ago.

“Well Alpha, Caleb (Aleksa’s previous Gamma) contacted me the other day. He had news about Lachlan. Apparently, although Evergreen’s trackers couldn’t scent us, they have managed to obtain visuals of us at the airport, and they have tracked us as far as Iowa. Sources have suggested that Lachlan has redirected and increased his search party. But there’s more.” Mason pauses, then continues.

“Apparently, there is a bounty out on you, Aleksa.” He says directing his eyes to me specifically.

“There is a huge reward for whoever can find you and your pups and bring them back to Lachlan unharmed. According to Caleb, they are distributing our visuals nationwide. It appears that we are gonna need a contingency plan.” Mason told us with concern etched all over his face.

Aleksa POV

A wave of apprehension overtook me after learning of Lachlan's attempts at finding us. Confirming that he was actively searching for us, and how much closer he was getting made me feel nauseous. I felt like I was going to be sick. My stomach was churning at the thought of him finding us. It wasn't myself that I was worried about, it was Liam and Layla.

I would never let him take my pups from me. I would never go back to Evergreen with him. I had loved that pack like family. I was so broken when I realized that they had all known what was happening all along. I still felt so betrayed by them all. With the exception of Caleb and Kali of course. Caleb was under an alpha command, I know now that he couldn't physically tell me. And they had both risked so much to help us all escape from Evergreen. And for that, I would be eternally grateful.

I had hoped that Lachlan would just go about his business with Eva and forget about us. Actually, I take that back as I remember that Eva is Sam's mate. Poor Sam. I wish I had let him know what I had discovered before I escaped. I had been so caught up I hadn't even considered that he would still be suffering at the hands of Lachlan and Eva.

I would need to discuss this with Kingston. I'm sure he could help me think of something. Some way we could ease his suffering. How Eva could hurt someone as sweet as Sam I'll never know. He deserved so much better. I needed to make that right somehow. And I would. I just wasn't sure how.

I was interrupted from my thoughts when Kingston placed his hands on mine and I felt tingles and the calm of our mate bond.

As Mason looked at me with grave concern on his face I had no words. I didn't want Kingston to know how terrified I was right now. He already had so much on with the Royal Alpha Summit that was fast approaching.

This was such bad timing. We were just starting to settle here at Rocky Mountain. The pack members were all so welcoming and accepting. Mason and Kaia were settled and had roles within the pack hierarchy. Liam and Layla were settled at daycare and thriving. I was about to officially become Luna. I couldn't expect the pack to fight for me. They hardly knew me. It was only a matter of time before Lachlan found us – especially if he was distributing our images.

“Aleksa, I can feel your fear through our bond. I know you are nervous – but you don’t need to be. I will protect you and our pups. I realize Lachlan is their biological father, but I also have a bond with Liam and Layla and I will protect them both with my life. I will not let him take you or take them. You are Luna of this pack. We will all protect you with our lives.” Kingston declared to me looking into my eyes and cupping my face with his strong and calloused hands.

“I would never expect anyone to risk their life for me. Kingston, they don’t deserve this. They hardly know me. I can’t put this on the pack.” I told him trying to fight the tears that were starting to well up in my eyes.

“Aleksa, you are safe. You always will be safe. And whatever you are thinking right now – stop it. You will not run. You are not putting anyone out. Rocky Mountain has waited for you for a long time. You make the pack stronger just by being here. The fact that you want to protect the pack shows how amazing you are. We will figure this out.” Kingston reassured me, pulling me into his chest for comfort. This action alone gives me a sense of security and calms my nerves somewhat.

“Alpha, if I may suggest something?” Mason interjected.

“What if you sent an announcement out to the media and to all of the packs. Informing them of Rocky Mountain’s new Luna, and your true mate. That would let Lachlan know that Aleksa had found her second chance mate and had been claimed by another alpha. It will help to draw some attention to this. The council will be watching no doubt. It will be much harder for him to make a move, or do anything underhanded if he is being closely watched.” Mason suggested.

Kingston took a moment to consider the idea. “It could work. It would definitely be the more diplomatic approach and it would put the spotlight on it for a bit. It would make it more challenging for Lachlan to act on any urges he may have.”

I took a breath and tried to imagine what Lachlan’s reaction to such an announcement might be. I was interrupted from my thoughts when I notice both Kingston and Mason looking at me as if they were waiting for my response.

“Sorry. I kinda zoned out then. Did you say something?” I asked them both simultaneously.

“I asked you how you felt about us putting out an announcement? Perhaps a follow up to that might be a phone call or a video conference if required.” Kingston added.

“Uh, yeah let’s give it a go I guess,” I said, still feeling unsure about it all, and still feeling a bit distracted thinking about Sam.

“He might be willing to let me go, but I worry about Liam and Layla, he’s biologically their father, he does have a claim to them. But I absolutely refuse to give them up to him. I will not let him take them!” I said exasperatedly, feeling my heart racing in my chest, and feeling my anxiety surge through me.

“Aleksa, we will work something out. I promise you. No one will take Liam and Layla from you. You are their mother. And an amazing one at that.” Kingston declared to me, and I found a sense of calm in his words.

“Aleksa – Luna, we have all come so far. We will not let anything happen to you or your pups. We are a family. And family protects one another.” Mason declared. He looked at me with determination and sincerity.

I looked into Mason’s eyes and I felt tears start to fall from my eyes. I felt so blessed and so lucky to have made strong bonds with people that I now call my family. I felt such a sense of belonging.

My stomach growled loudly, snapping me out of my train of thought. I felt a warm blush creep over my face, of embarrassment. Kingston and Mason chuckled. “Perhaps we should have some breakfast?” Kingston suggested.

“Sounds like a good idea. I’ll mind-link Quinn to bring Liam and Layla down to join us.” Mason replied to Kingston.

“Come, my love, let’s get some food into your stomach. We have a big day ahead of us.” Kingston remarked to me.

“Mason, thank you, for everything. I am so lucky to have you in my life. You are like the brother I never had.” I tell him, as I launched at him for a hug. Mason embraced me for a hug also, however, at that moment Kingston growled at our closeness, and Mason and I both looked back at him.

“Sorry guys, Sabre gets a little overprotective of his mate” Kingston replied chuckling.

Mason then added, "That's understandable Alpha."

"Aleksa, I feel the same way about you. Ever since we met in the dungeons of Evergreen I've felt this overwhelming urge to protect you. You are also like a little sister to me."

My heart instantly swelled at Mason's words.

"I sure am a lucky girl. I have some really special people in my life. And I feel so grateful for you all." I said to Mason, while I locked hands with Kingston getting ready to leave the room.

"See you at breakfast!" I called out to Mason, as Kingston lead me out the door.

It was approaching midday, and in light of the news that we had learned of earlier this morning, I had decided to cancel my brunch date with Quinn and Kaia. I ended up explaining the situation to them since it directly involved them both anyway. They pretty much repeated what Mason had told me, about us all being family, and having each other's backs. Again my heart swelled with love, I had always wanted sisters, and now that dream had come true. I loved them both with all my heart. Sometimes when you meet people you just instantly click, and that's exactly what happened when I met Kaia and Quinn.

They both offered to watch Liam and Layla for me while I met the Healer. This was a relief for me because I didn't know what to expect from our meeting today. I was nervous yet excited, and I was curious to learn more. It all felt very surreal.

I was on my way to meet Xanthe and to learn more about my birth parents and my lineage. It was a gorgeous sunny day and it was so warm. Too warm to be sitting inside even though there is air conditioning. I thought it might be nice to chat outside, so we are on our way to a gazebo that was located near the rosegardens.

It really was a sight to behold, the roses were in full bloom and they smelt amazing. There was a crawling red rose bush covering the sides of the gazebo, and it looked so magical. Kingston must have asked someone to bring a table and chairs prior to our meeting because the set in front of us didn't look like it was supposed to be there. It looked brand new rather than

the weathered set you would expect to see outside. There was a large jug of water and some glasses in the centre of the table.

We took a seat, and moments later Xanthe appeared before us.

“Hello Aleksa, I trust you are well-rested and ready to hear what I have to say?” Xanthe looked at me with a small smile on her face.

“Hello Xanthe, yes, please let me apologise for my behaviour yesterday, I was rude. I am not usually that way towards others. I was just dealing with a lot, and everything kinda overwhelmed me.” I said pausing to take a breath. Xanthe just watched me and waited patiently as if she knew I wasn’t finished.

“I think I just needed a good night’s sleep and to spend some time with Liam and Layla. Thank you so much for coming back to speak with me. It means the world to me. I have so many questions!” I said, ready to unleash my questions on Xanthe.

”No need to apologize. How about you hear what I have to say. Then we can have question time afterwards.” Xanthe said rhetorically.

“That sounds fair,” I said. Although I was a little disappointed that I would have to wait. Chill Aleksa, I thought to myself. Yesterday I didn’t want to hear any of this, and today I want to bombard her with questions. I swear I am all over the place at the moment. I looked up at Xanthe who was ready to speak.

“Let’s start at the beginning then shall we.” Xanthe begun.

Xanthe POV

“I’m not going to beat around the bush. I’m going to tell you this straight. So brace yourself.” I started to tell Aleksa, deciding that what I had to tell her would be overwhelming so I may as well keep to the point.

“Many millennia ago, the moon goddess blessed a lineage of wolves with special protective and healing powers, their role was to help heal and protect vulnerable wolves, they were known as the crescent moon wolves.”

“Crescent moon wolves carried a unique marking, which consisted of a sapphire blue crescent moon with two wolves under it, and a crown with a purple hue to it. Unfortunately, crescent moon wolves were constantly hunted and exploited, many living their lives in captivity, many dying after being

drained of their powers and healing abilities. There were many powerful wolves who wished to harness their special abilities. I realize this all sounds unbelievable to you right now. Especially since you were led to believe you were human for the first eighteen years of your life. But I can assure you that it is all true.”

“Aleksa, your mother was a crescent moon wolf with special abilities and healing powers. She had left her pack when she met your father. You see Aleksa, your Grandfather was the Alpha of Moon Valley Pack. He was aware of Kristina’s abilities from a very young age and knew that she was a gifted wolf, as her mother was also one, and it was passed down by females in the family.”

“Back then, an alpha female taking the role of Alpha alone was unheard of, so they needed her to be mated and marked so that there would be a male alpha running the pack, thus maintaining their reputation and bloodline.”

“They (her parents) had planned to marry her off to the Alpha heir of a neighboring pack, in a bid to merge the two packs as they had no male heir so that their son would take the role of Alpha, and Kristina would be his Luna.”

“The alpha heir of the neighboring pack was an unkind, arrogant, and evil wolf, and rumor had it that he had planned to use Kristina for her gifts to heal his mistress, who suffered from some rare disease for which there was no known cure. The Alpha’s Heir was in love with his mistress and wanted to take her as his luna, but his parents had denied him.”

“And, Kristina had no intention of being mated to or being marked by him. Not long before the agreement was made, Kristina had met her fated mate in a chance meeting, your father. He was from another pack, and he was a warrior. When Kristina told her parents this news, they were not accepting of this, they felt that he had nothing to offer them, and being that they were in so much debt at the time, they refused to acknowledge her fated mate.”

“You see, I had met your mother back at her birth pack – Moon Valley. I would occasionally consult at the pack hospital. I had met your mother on a few occasions as she would volunteer at the hospital regularly. We had an instant connection. I met your father, Aleksander, a few times also. Actually, Kristina had only met him a few times before they ran off together. I met your father because your mother needed help leaving the packhouse to visit him. I was usually her cover story as she was constantly followed by her father’s guards.

We would tell them that she was volunteering at the hospital, she would sneak out the back, and meet Aleksander just outside the pack boundary.”

“Worried that Kristina might defy them, and mess up their plans, her parents fast-tracked the agreement. The night before Kristina was supposed to leave for the neighboring pack, Aleksander with the help of some of his fellow warriors created a distraction and managed to help Kristina escape. That was the last she saw of her parents and her pack. They were on the run for months putting as much distance between them as they could.”

“Kristina’s parents never stopped looking for her. Their debts got higher, and they were on the brink of losing their pack when a Hunter came to them and made them a proposition. He would bankroll the pack but they wanted Kristina’s firstborn daughter in return. Somehow they were aware of her crescent moon wolf lineage. Kristina’s father was desperate to retain his title and his pack so he reluctantly agreed to the hunter’s proposition.”

“After some time the hunter had managed to find her, and surely enough, Kristina and Aleksander had mated and had a baby girl -that was you Aleksa. They came for you, time and time again. Aleksander and Kristina were so determined to keep you safe and hidden that they veered away from packs and pack life, and opted for life in the human world.”

“However, one day they were caught unprepared, and that is the day Aleksander died trying to protect you.”

“Kristina was on her own then, she was heartbroken but determined to protect you with her life. She moved from town to town and worked menial jobs in order to support you, over the course of a few months she managed to do this well until they came again one night. They came in the still of the night, Kristina managed to hide you in the ceiling. She fought hard and managed to take them all out, however, she was critically injured and died from blood loss that night.”

“When Kristina didn’t show up to work the next day I had a feeling something had gone horribly wrong. I left work at midday and when I arrived at the flat I was horrified at the scene that awaited me. It was like a scene from a horror movie, with bodies, and blood everywhere.”

“I found Kristina on the floor in front of her bedroom, the door was shut behind her, she was protecting you trying to keep them from finding you. I checked for a pulse but I already knew Kristina was gone, she was so cold and I

couldn't sense her energy. I will never forget that terrifying feeling that struck me when I realized that you were unaccounted for. I searched frantically. Then I focussed my mind and found you fast asleep in the ceiling, warm, and unscathed, although a little dehydrated and hungry when you finally woke."

"I had decided it was best that we left that town as soon as possible. I bent down and kissed sweet Kristina on her forehead, and that's when I saw the locket. She wore it everywhere and treasured it with her heart. I knew I should grab it so that you always had something of your mother's with you."

"I took you home with me, and then I decided it was time to move on. I needed to get you somewhere safe, as there was a high chance that they would still be looking for you."

"We traveled for a few weeks, and then I realized that this was no life for a little pup. I realized that I couldn't give you what you needed. I managed to find a job and somewhere for us to stay in a small town a few states over, it was a lovely quiet Christian community. I had gotten a job as a cleaner at a local church and would often overhear conversations between people. One day I heard an older couple talking about how they wished they had been blessed with a child that they could shower with love. I watched them for a few more weeks, did some background checks, and then I decided they were the perfect couple to raise you and love you."

"Often they ran the community soup kitchen at the church and they were often the last to leave, so I wrapped you up in a little Moses basket and left you with a note at the door. I rang the bell then ran into the bushes and waited and watched."

"I saw the amazement and concern and love in their eyes as they fussed over you. I saw the police arrive. I watched in the background over the next few months and I watched them take you in and eventually adopt you as their own. I then went on my way. I would check in every now and then to ensure they were taking good care of you and to watch you grow. I was so proud of the beautiful person you had become."

"I was there when you met Lachlan and I knew what was coming but I couldn't interfere. I just watched on the sidelines, waiting for the time to come when you would need me."

“When you had made your way here to Rocky Mountain and I had heard that Kingston was requesting a Healer, I knew it was the right time for me to make an appearance in your life.”

“So Aleksa that is the story of your parents and what happened to them, that is also the story of how you came to be adopted and live in a human town. Now you know you are a Crescent Moon Wolf, there is still so much I have to tell you, you will need to learn to properly harness your powers and your gifts, and in time you will.”

“I knew one day you would need to know everything, and I needed to be able to explain it to you. You might ask why I did not tell you earlier that you were a werewolf. I planned to trust me. I was planning to come to you and reveal myself to you just before your eighteenth birthday and to be there with you when you shifted for the first time. I couldn’t let you go through it alone.”

“However, my past had caught up with me. You see I too was on the run. Probably part of the reason Kristina and I understood each other so well. We were in similar situations. I was detained against my will, and it was a few years before I could escape. I am so sorry my child. I am sorry that I had let you down, and that I had left Kristina down. But I am here now and I will answer any questions you have to the best of my ability.”

I looked up at Aleksa and I could sense a sadness within her. She was not looking back at me, she had her head down and was quietly sniffing and wiping back her tears. I looked to Kingston who looked astonished as if he was still processing what I’d just said.

Silence enveloped us and I waited patiently for Aleksa’s response and her impending questions. I also hoped that she would forgive me for my failures.

Aleksa POV

I sat there listening to Xanthe tell me about my birth parents – Aleksander and Kristina. I felt something I didn’t expect to feel. I felt an overwhelming sense of determination. A desire to do better, to be better, to be stronger, and to fight harder. I didn’t want my parent’s death to have been in vain. They had sacrificed so much for me. And now it was my turn to do the same for my children.

I would be damned if I was going to let something happen to my precious pups, especially Layla. If what Xanthe is saying is correct, then Layla is also a crescent moon wolf. That means she is in danger.

I felt a sense of fear and panic engulf me, all I wanted to do is to run to my precious Liam and Layla and hold them tight. But I needed to finish this conversation. There were still questions to be answered. I needed to be strong and know what we are up against.

A flurry of emotions was consuming me right now. There was a determination to make my birth parents proud. Fear that my children, especially Layla, were in danger, not just from the threat of being taken back to Evergreen and separated from me, but that there were wolves out there who may know of her existence and wish to harm and exploit her. Sadness – that I was the reason my parents died. If it weren't for me they may not have been caught off guard and might still be here today. I was also concerned that this will all be too much for Kingston and the pack. And finally, anger, at the people that had hunted my parents and me and in the process robbed me of the life I was supposed to have, the one where my biological parents never died, where I was raised with my birth pack.

Just breathe Aleksa I told myself, as I felt Kingston's arms wrap around me for comfort. He must have sensed my emotional hurricane through our mate bond. I looked up at him and he has a soft smile on his face, I can feel that he is concerned about me.

I nodded at him and told him through the mind-link that I'd be ok. And thanked him for being here for me.

I looked back at Xanthe and I said "There are so many questions I want to ask you, especially about what being a Crescent Moon wolf means. But I feel the first question I need to ask is this – where are my Grandparents? Are they still alive, and if so where?"

My rationale for this is that I need to know how much of a threat they were, as they are the reason that both my parents are dead. They were ruthless, they cared not for the mate bond, not for their own blood, and their greed and ambition were clearly their priorities. I wanted to know where they were and if there was any chance that they could know of my existence and of Liam and Layla's. Although in all honesty, I hoped there were gone. I had no intention of ever meeting such cruel people, in my mind, there were already dead.

“Aleksa, I wish I could answer this question without a doubt but I can’t. Your grandmother passed not long after Kristina was murdered. My contacts told me she took her own life out of heartbreak and regret. Apparently, she never wanted any of this for her daughter, and she was a subservient Luna and did what her mate had commanded her to do. While she didn’t agree with his actions, she also didn’t take a stand against them either. As for your grandfather, when the agreement with the neighboring pack fell through and Kristina left, there was no heir to take over. After the Luna passed, your grandfather’s wolf became feral and started to lose his grasp on reality, the pack began to suffer, and at this time the neighboring pack invaded the Moon Valley and took over control.

There was an alpha challenge, and your grandfather was grievously wounded, but it is unknown as to whether he actually died, as a rogue attack occurred while the challenge was taking place, and chaos ensued, it was at this time he disappeared, and his body was never found, although it is assumed he died but it is not certain. The wounds he sustained in the challenge coupled with losing his mate would be enough to end any wolf. I don’t think he is a threat to you Aleska, or to your pups.” Xanthe told me looking absolute in her answer.

“And, the Hunter, did you ever find out his identity? Who was the person that made the agreement with my Grandfather for my mother’s firstborn daughter?” I asked Xanthe, wanting to get an idea of the players that were involved here, and who we were up against.

“No, I’m afraid not. I tried to keep a low profile. I had to keep you safe. I used some of my contacts to find out about your grandparents, but I was unable to find anything about the Hunter. I didn’t want people to know I was asking questions.” Xanthe told me apologetically.

“Hmmn, ok, fair enough, thank you Xanthe for everything, you have done for me. I do appreciate it. It sounds like I owe you my life. I’m not sure how I can ever repay you, but I will surely try.” I told Xanthe, feeling a great deal of respect for the woman sitting in front of me right now.

“If you don’t mind, I do have some more questions?” I ask Xanthe.

“That is fine Aleksa, I have no place else to be right now. Fire away.” Xanthe said sweetly.

“You said that my mother died fighting to protect me. But I don’t understand. If she was also a Crescent Moon wolf, why did she die? Why didn’t she use her

powers?" I questioned Xanthe. As that is one part of this story that I can't seem to get my head around.

"I wondered when you were gonna ask me that question. The wolves that showed up that night didn't appear to have any scents. And when I arrived on the scene I detected the faintest hint of magic, of dark magic Aleksa. I fear that a witch who practices dark magic was involved. I can't say for certain, but I imagine that there was a barrier or forcefield that your mother's powers couldn't penetrate. I've wracked my brain throughout the years trying to understand what happened there, that's all I have come up with that makes any real sense." Xanthe told me bowing her head down. I got the impression she was unhappy that she hadn't been able to uncover more.

"Dark magic? So she stood no chance then? Outnumbered by wolves and facing off against a dark witch." I said anger searing through me, I feel my whole body starting to shake, and I could feel my eyes glowing.

"Aleksa, honey, try to calm down, just breathe," Kingston said as he tried to calm me down, his touch alone was enough to soothe my soul.

"Aleksa, I can help you. Just knowing that there was a dark witch involved gives us more of an advantage. We can prepare better. I'm sorry I know this is all a lot. I know it's horrible. I hate that this all happened and I couldn't do anything to help. We have a chance here though, to prevent history from repeating." Xanthe soothingly tells me while placing her hands on my hands.

"Tell me of my father's death. I need to know – everything." I expressed to Xanthe. I needed to know as much as I could about the events that had transpired all those years ago.

"Aleksander was a warrior from a pack a state over from Moon Valley. They met by chance really. Kristina would every once in a while sneak out with her friends into one of the nearby human towns for a bit of dancing and fun. One night she bumped into Aleksander while leaving the club, they knew they were mates right away, and instantly connected. They would meet every chance they got, as Kristina set about introducing him to her father. Aleksander wasn't able to mark and mate with Kristina straight away with her being the alpha's daughter, so he had to be patient and undergo formalities, however, the alpha was opposed to their mateship."

"You see, Aleksander was an elite warrior for the Dark Moon pack, he was revered among his squad, and everyone that met Aleksander took an instant

liking to him. He was very popular with the she-wolves but was determined to wait for his mate, which he did. Your mother – Kristina was the same, she was holding out for her mate too. They were so in love. It was a perfect match.”

“You wanted to ask how your father died. He was a fierce fighter, but he was outnumbered the night that they first came for you, however, he was holding his own just fine. but the rogues that attacked him stabbed him in the back multiple times with a silver blade laced with wolfsbane. He wasn’t able to heal and ultimately died of blood loss and wolfsbane poisoning. I’m sorry Aleksa, he was so courageous right to the very end. He managed to take them all out with him. When they had first attacked, he had already told Kristina to take you and run, which she did reluctantly. No one anticipated a silver blade and wolfsbane, they fought dirty.” Xanthe explained. “Your mother never forgave herself for that. No matter how much I would tell her that she did the right thing, she followed Aleksander’s orders and got you to safety. Kristina was heartbroken but found the strength to go on for you. She was most likely able to do this because she was a Crescent Moon wolf.”

” She knew she would meet Aleksander again one day, and she wanted to make him proud by protecting you.”

Salty tears were slowly escaping my eyes as Xanthe recounted the events leading up to my father’s death. I had so much love and respect and regret in my heart right now for the parents I had once thought hadn’t wanted me.

I wiped away my tears, took a sip from the glass of water in front of me, and took a few breaths.

“What more can you tell me about my wolf? You said I am a Crescent Moon wolf. How can I find more information about myself, about my powers and abilities? I need to know how to use them properly, and how to control them. Everything that has happened so far happened randomly. I have no clue of what I am doing.” I confessed to Xanthe.

“There is not a lot of information about the Crescent Moon wolves. Aside from Kristina, I had not heard of a Crescent Moon wolf until then. Kristina learned to harness her powers to a point, but even she didn’t know a lot about her powers, and she never had a chance to master them. And with all that was going on we didn’t speak much of them.” Xanthe replied.

“The best way for us to learn more about your wolf would be to speak with an elder. I have some contacts we can utilize, but we need to be careful as to

who we trust with this. Can you give me a few days? Give me some time to reach out to a few of my contacts. I feel they will be able to point us in the right direction?" Xanthe asked me.

"Of course. Maybe we should end this meeting here. I need to get back to Liam and Layla, and I'm sure Kingston has plenty of pack business to attend to. Xanthe, thank you for your time. I appreciate everything you have told me. I really do appreciate you coming here." I thanked Xanthe.

"Aleksa, Kingston has my details, and you can contact me anytime. I want to be here for you." Xanthe said warmly as she got up from her seat.

"Can I just say how much you look like your mother? You really are the spitting image of her." Xanthe told me. That made my heart swell with pride. Kingston and I stood up from our seats.

"Uh, Xanthe, do you have any photos of my parents? I've never met them or even seen a picture of them. I don't even know what they look like, and I would like to." I asked Xanthe, as my lips started to quiver, I was fighting to prevent my emotions from consuming me once again.

"I actually do. I'm sorry Aleksa, I wasn't thinking. Of course, you would want a photo of them. I believe I have one or two. I could bring them with me when I come back in a few days if you like." Xanthe asked me.

"That would be amazing – thank you! Well, we will get going and we look forward to hearing from you in few days, all going well. Goodbye Xanthe!" I said as I walked over to Xanthe embracing her in a hug, she smelt like wild jasmine, the hug felt strangely familiar, as did her scent. I walked over to Kingston, and we locked hands and walked off through the gardens. I lay my head against his shoulder and we walked together, our bodies molding into one another's. I could feel the warmth from the bond. I looked up at Kingston's face while we were walking, he looked down at me and kissed me on the forehead. "I love you so much," I said to Kingston.

"I love you too, Aleksa," Kingston said back. And we kept walking towards the packhouse to see our pups on this warm sunny day, the blue sky was dotted with fluffy white clouds, there was a gentle breeze passing us, I could hear the birds chirping in the background, bees buzzing over the wildflowers that littered the sides of the path we walked on, and a faint sound of children playing with frisbees on the grass in front of the packhouse.

There was so much going through my mind right now, but it could all wait a few hours. This mama needed some time with her pups.

Aleksa POV

It's been two weeks since we spoke with Xanthe, and strangely we haven't heard back from her yet. We assume she has been busy or hasn't yet found anything further out about crescent moon wolves. It's been very busy here at the packhouse lately.

Everyone is getting prepared for the Royal Alpha Summit which will be taking place over the next week. We've had the caterers in to organize the meals for the week-long event. Quinn has been helping me with this as I am still new to all of this. Back at Evergreen we never had an event even remotely resembling this. It's all a learning curve for me.

We decided against the media release about Kingston and I's mateship. The pack knew most importantly, but the rest of the world could wait a little bit longer.

After speaking with Xanthe and learning what we did about my lineage, about the Crescent Moon wolves being hunted, about my grandparents, and the Hunter that was potentially looking for me and Layla, we decided that it was best to keep things under wraps for now. We would wait for the summit and deal with things as they happened. Meaning that we would be dealing with the Lachlan situation as it arose.

I really hoped that Lachlan wouldn't attend the Royal Alpha Summit. He had never attended one previously so with a little bit of luck he wouldn't attend this one. Although, in saying that we weren't leaving it to luck. Kingston and Asher were working on a plan for what would happen if he did attend and how we would approach that situation without placing a damper on the celebrations or any disrespect to the alpha king himself.

Kingston was determined that this would be the best summit he had organized yet. We had all the accommodation organized, housekeeping was paying attention to detail to ensure that everything was perfect for our guests, and we had guides and point of contact organized for each pack.

We had entertainment organized for each night of the summit. The conference room had been extended and prepared to seat all attending alphas comfortably. Maintenance had outdone themselves, as the pack landscaping

looked immaculate. The pack members were all excited and ready to host the attending packs. Unmated wolves were excited at the possibility of meeting their mates at the summit. The pack was a hive of excitement and anticipation.

While I was putting on a brave face, my anxiety was at an all-time high. I was trying to distract myself and not overanalyze everything because I knew Kingston would feel it through our bond, but I just couldn't. I was scared of what would happen if Lachlan attended. So much so that I had made plans to have Kingston's parents Chase and Cordelia take Liam and Layla away to a cabin in a nearby state for the week of the summit. I needed to know that they were safe especially if I was to see Lachlan face to face. Also, I would constantly be on edge worrying about whether or not they were safe if they were to be here while the Summit was taking place.

Although I would worry regardless, I would worry less knowing that they were in the capable hands of Chase and Cordelia. We had gotten to know each other a lot more over the past few weeks. They were very welcoming and genuinely happy for us both. They knew of my past with Lachlan and Evergreen, and accepted me with open arms.

Chase was still very fit and also very intimidating when you first met him, he was an older more distinguished version of Kingston, and Cordelia was sophisticated and elegant, she looked like an older version of Quinn, she was very nurturing and absolutely loved being around children, she doted on Liam and Layla as if they were her own pups. They would be leaving two days before the summit started, which I was happy with, as it gave us that little bit more time to plan, and sort our backup plan, as well as our back up to the backup plan.

Kingston had been very busy, but he had a very capable team working with him, he was at this point just checking that everything was organized and ready to go. Initially, he had played a bigger role in preparing the summit, but in light of the rogue attacks, Xanthe telling us of mine and Layla's lineage and preparing for the probable fallout with Lachlan, he had decided to delegate.

Quinn and Mason had been busy renovating their cottage, and it was almost ready, they were just putting the finishing touches on it. They were so happy stuck in their own little love bubble. Kingston had been giving Mason more and more responsibility within the pack leadership and Mason was handling it all so well. He seemed very comfortable and settled here. I was so happy for my friend. He deserved happiness.

Kaia was still heavily involved with the warrior squad and practically trained all day every day. She was still spending a lot of time with Asher, they had even been on their first date. They were taking things slowly but you could feel the s****l tension in the air whenever those two were around each other.

Liam and Layla were settled and fitted in so well with the pack, everyone had been so welcoming towards them. It's crazy to think that in a few months they would be celebrating their third birthdays. I hadn't planned anything yet for that but I plan to once the summit is over, and everything is sorted out in regards to Lachlan, I will start planning for it then.

I was on my way to Kingston's office to bring him some lunch as he tended to skip meals often when he was hyperfocused and immersed in pack business. Liam and Layla were at daycare so I was just doing errands today and helping with the final preparations. As I walked down the hallway I heard raised voices coming from Kingston's office.

The voices stopped. I assumed they could scent me considering I was standing just outside the office. "Come in Aleksa" Kingston called out.

I walked in to see Kingston leaning back in his chair, Asher was sitting on the chair in front of Lachlan's desk. "Good afternoon Asher, good afternoon My Love," I said as I walked up to Kingston, placing his lunch on his desk in front of him and kissing him on his forehead.

"Did I walk in on something?" I ask sheepishly.

Asher shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

"Just tell her Asher," Kingston says to Asher sighing.

"Well Aleksa, I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it would appear that news of Lachlan's bounty has traveled, your images have been posted all over the town. It's only a matter of time before someone contacts Lachlan, and he knows where you are." Asher tells me, releasing the breath he was holding in.

My heart starts racing rapidly and I feel a shiver ripple throughout my body. My eyes begin to tear up. Then I close my eyes and focus my energy. I will not let this fear consume me. I take a few deep breaths and try to control my emotions.

Kingston goes to pull me into him and sit me on his lap, while I would usually feel comfort and protection in this action, right now I want to stand. I need to stand. I will not cower and let fear take over whenever a curveball is thrown at me. I am to be Luna of this pack Although I love that Kingston wants to protect me, I am done with being a passive subservient Luna like I was when I was at Evergreen. I need to learn to protect myself, my pups, and my pack properly. Kingston growls at my actions and looks at me questionably.

“Okay, so, we need a plan! We can’t leave anything to chance, we really need to be a few steps ahead of Lachlan at all times!” I declare to them both.

Asher looks at me incredulously, usually, I would be an emotional wreck right now, and would act before thinking. But I was done with being that girl. Kingston looks at me with a proud look on his face. I can feel through the bond that he approves of this side of me.

“Well Luna, I have taken them all down, but we have to work on the premise that they have already been seen by most people.”

“For example, the people that knew you from working at the tavern, people who may be walked past you in the street, or saw you in a shop. We will speak with all pack members, I can’t imagine we would have any problems there. But the humans and any rogues we will have no control over.” Asher replied.

“I have just called all pack members to the training grounds in fifteen minutes, we will discuss this issue with them immediately. Aleksa we will need to tell them about your past, about Lachlan, and about Evergreen. What are your thoughts on this?” Kingston asks me.

“I agree. The pack needs to know the truth. It is better that they know now before they decide whether or not they will accept me as their Luna officially.” I said.

Kingston growled. “They have already accepted you. You are their Luna.” He declared.

I put my hands on his cheek and pulled him in for a quick kiss to calm his wolf.

“Looks like we will be speaking with Lachlan sooner than we expected,” Kingston says to Asher, their eyes meeting each other knowingly in agreeance.

“I will have two elite warriors assigned to Liam and Layla twenty-four hours a day, I will also assign two elite warriors to the Luna if you agree Alpha?” Asher asked Kingston.

“Sounds good. We will need to tighten pack security and double the patrols. I will have to speak with our neighboring packs to advise them of the situation and ensure our bases are covered should we need additional backup.” Kingston tells Asher.

“Everything will be ok Aleksa, you are safe, Liam and Layla are safe. Your pack will protect you.” Kingston reassures me.

“I know we will be. I refuse to let Lachlan control our lives. I am done with running and done with being afraid. That being said, I need a little help with something Asher. If you have some free time later this afternoon?” I ask him hopefully.

“Of course Luna, although I must say I am rather curious,” Asher remarks to me. Kingston is looking at me, raising an eyebrow.

“Relax, I just need a little training, some basic but effective defensive moves, I need to be able to fight if necessary,” I tell them both.

Kingston mind-links me “This more dominant side of you is turning me right now on my love!”

“Uh guys, I’m still here,” Asher says, looking uncomfortable.

Kingston and I both chuckle, “Sorry man” Kingston says to Asher.

I feel the heat creep over my cheeks, I know that I am blushing right now.

A few minutes later, there is a knock on the door. “Mason, please come in,” Kingston calls out.

Mason walks in, “Alpha, Luna, Beta Asher,” He says as he nodded his head respectfully. “What can I do for you?” He asks.

“Well Mason, we have a problem. Those images you warned us of, well they have been posted all over town. We have to assume that Lachlan already knows where Aleksa and the twins are, so we have a problem.”

“I asked you to come here today in the hopes that you would consider being Liam and Layla’s protection detail for now, until this is all resolved. I would also assign two of our elite warriors to the twins, but I think it would be reassuring for Aleksa to have someone she trusts looking out for the twins, and less stressful for them to have a familiar face around them.” Kingston asks Mason.

Mason answers straight away as if he didn’t even have to consider the request. “Absolutely Alpha, I would be honored to.” He said, winking at me, which made me smile, lessening my nerves a little.

Kingston got up out of his seat and everyone else stood and made their way out of the office. It was time to address the pack and tell them of my life before coming to Rocky Mountain. It was time to tell them of the threat to the pack. Although it wasn’t the time to tell them of my lineage and that I was a Crescent Moon wolf as I still didn’t really know what that meant myself.

I had just hoped that they would still accept the twins and I once they knew the truth about my past before coming to Rocky Mountain.

Aleksa POV

It’s been a few days since we had “the talk” with our pack. It actually went really well. Everyone was a bit quiet initially. I could hear gasps and whispers, but I kept talking, telling my story, and before long, I could sense that the pack understood what I was saying and why I had to leave my previous pack. I explained what happened with Lachlan and Eva, and how I ended up in the pack dungeons. Then I explained how I had to leave with my pups, and mentioned my friends, Mason and Kaia, who helped facilitate that escape. Everyone just stood and listened to what I had to say. Kingston took over and explained to the pack about the bounty placed on me, as well as explaining that what Lachlan had told people about Mason and Kaia was untrue, that they were helping me, not kidnapping me, and to not pay attention to the lies they might hear. He reassured the pack that he had done his due diligence before we came to join Rocky Mountain,

Since then, everyone has been even friendlier, which I didn’t think was possible, because they were already so welcoming. I feel lighter not having to hide my past, like a weight has been shifted from my shoulders. I feel relieved to know that the pack accepts me as their Luna, because I love Kingston and the pack, and I feel like we have made this place our home. I don’t even want

to imagine what might have happened if the pack hadn't accepted me and my pups.

Due to the news of the bounty, and mine and my pups faces being plastered everywhere, as well as Mason and Kaia's, pack security and patrols have doubled and the place is like Fort Knox around here, which is making things a little harder for the deliveries and preparations needed for the summit, but as Kingston reiterates, it's better to be safe than sorry.

I know I need to face Lachlan once and for all. And every day I feel more and more ready for it, I just want to get it over with, so we can all live our lives without having this hanging over our heads.

Asher has been taking the time out to train me twice a day. We meet at dawn and dusk. He is mostly teaching me defense. He's keeping it short and sweet for now, teaching me how I can use my size to my advantage, as well as teaching me moves that are easy to execute and are highly effective.

Tomorrow, Chase and Cordelia will be taking Liam and Layla away to a lake house in Idaho. Mason and Quinn will be accompanying them, as well as several elite warriors. I know my pups are in safe hands. I am sad that we will be separated, but I know it's only temporary. I feel confident knowing that they will be further away from Lachlan's clutches.

We are spending the day at the packhouse today. I want to make the most of my time with my pups before their trip away. I have told them they will be going away with their grandparents and they don't seem phased. I guess they are too young to really understand. But at least they have fun with Chase and Cordelia, Mason and Quinn, and they are familiar faces for them, which should help alleviate any stress or anxiety that they may feel from being away from their Mama.

I won't see Kingston until tonight as he has back-to-back meetings with some of the Alpha's from nearby packs all day, they will be busily preparing for the summit as well as Lachlan's probable arrival. I have organized a special lunch to be delivered to the conference room for them today. I know what those Alpha's are like when they are busy talking about business they often won't eat, so at least they can eat while they work. I know I will feel better knowing that they are being fed.

I hear a knock at the door and I get up from the floor where I am playing blocks with the twins to open it. I was surprised to see Kaia at the door.

“Aleksa, I wondered if you and the twins would like some company. I heard that they were leaving tomorrow and I needed to get my cuddle quota in before they leave” Kaia says enthusiastically, opening her arms up for Liam and Layla.

“Aun-ty Kaia! Aun-ty Kaia!” they yelled, barrelling towards her with open arms.

“My pups!” She replies, pulling them into her arms, and snuggling them.

“Perhaps we could go to the kitchen and get some snacks to have a picnic on the front lawn?” I suggested to everyone.

“Yay!” the twins shouted in unison.

“Sounds good to me!” Kaia says cheerfully.

I grab my go-bag for the twins, they each take Kaia’s hand, and we walk out the door, kitchen bound for snacks.

Ready to enjoy the rest of the day together creating fun memories.

It’s the day before the summit, which means my pups are about to embark on their first holiday without their Mama this morning, and I am feeling a little anxious. I woke up super early today. I had the twins’ suitcases packed last night and had taken them to the front door, ready to be loaded into Chase’s SUV this morning.

I have already had two coffees and I’m considering my third one already. I’ve just been sitting here watching Liam and Layla sleep for the past few hours. Just thinking about how fast they are growing and wondering where the time has gone. It seems like only yesterday they were in my womb. Now they aren’t far off their third birthdays.

We have all been through so much over the past six months or so. But I wouldn’t change a thing because it has got us to this point. To Rocky Mountain, to Kingston, to our beautiful friends who have become our family. To this kind and caring and protective pack. We are all so blessed.

I am disrupted from my thought process by a sleepy Liam, “Mama?” He questions me.

“Good Morning Liam, yes it’s Mama, how did you sleep?” I asked my big boy.

“Good.” He says to me,

“Mama?” He asked me.

“Yes, Liam?” I said, trying to hold back my chuckle at how cute my little boy looked half asleep and trying to communicate with me.

“Pancakes?” Liam asks.

“Yes Liam, you can have pancakes this morning, let’s get you changed while we wait for your sister to wake up, shall we?” I said to Liam.

“I’m awake!” Layla called out.

I laughed out loud. Layla never missed an opportunity to have pancakes.

“Of course, my princess, let’s get you dressed too, and head down to the kitchen,” I say to my pups.

They both smile and start clapping with glee.

After breakfast, I got Liam and Layla cleaned up and we made our way back downstairs to the main entrance of the pack house. Kingston and Mason help strap the twins into their car seats and I give them big cuddles and kisses goodbye. I then say thank you to everyone and wish them all a safe trip.

I waved continuously with a big smile on my face, holding back the tears until Liam and Layla were out of sight. I feel tears flooding my eyes, and I try to contain myself in front of everyone. I end up laughing at myself and overcome with emotion. I wipe my eyes and take a few breaths trying to settle myself down. Kingston pulls me into his chest and tries to console me.

“It’s for the best, Aleksa, they will be safe with my parents, and with Mason and Quinn, I promise,” Kingston tells me.

“I know, I don’t doubt that, Kingston. I’m just sad, it’s my first time away from the twins, well, with the exception of my time in the dungeons.” I replied.

Kingston growled at my mentioning the dungeons. Well, it was probably more Sabre growling in all honesty.

I wiped my eyes one last time and took a big breath and exhaled. It's time to pull myself together. I am doing this for my pups. I need to focus on the summit, on confronting Lachlan, and ensuring he is no longer a threat to me or the twins.

Kingston looks at me proudly, as if he knows exactly what I am thinking. Asher clears his throat.

"Alpha, Luna." He starts.

"Border patrol has told me that some of the Alpha's have already started to arrive for the Summit," Asher tells us.

I had a shocked expression on my face, "But the Summit doesn't start until tomorrow?" I replied to them both, suddenly wondering if we were actually ready. Although if they are already here, we will just have to be ready.

"It's okay, my love, it's not unusual for some packs to arrive a little early. We have already anticipated this. Let's quickly refresh ourselves, then come back down to greet our guests Aleksa." Kingston gestures for me to follow him.

"OK, sure, good idea," I said in reply to him, feeling a bit dazed, but following his lead. We left Asher at the main entrance, waiting to greet the guests and direct them once they arrived, as well as stalling for time as we made our way back.

The first pack to arrive was from North Dakota. Alpha Logan and his Luna Louise looked to be in their late thirties, their Gamma Joel, who I imagine was of a similar age and accompanying them, were four elite warriors. Their Beta was at home leading the pack in their absence. They were a lovely pack, very friendly. After some small talk, Asher accompanied them to the cottage they would be residing in for the entirety of the summit. We had suggested they get settled and meet us back at the packhouse for lunch if they wish to. Which they happily accepted.

As we were about to leave to head back into the packhouse, another pack was arriving, so we decided to wait at the main entrance for them, as Asher was busy with the North Dakota pack.

Three SUVs drove up to the entrance. A burly man, probably in his early twenties, ran up to the door of the SUV and opened it for his Alpha, a very tall and muscular man who looked to be in his late twenties. He then opened the door on the other side and a gorgeous woman with red hair and green eyes walked out. She had a shy smile on her face, she joined hands with her mate and they walked up to us.

After introducing ourselves to them, we learned that they were from Nebraska, Wyatt, and Willow Robinson. They seemed like a nice couple, they seemed happy to be here, and I had a really good feeling about Willow specifically, there was something about her. I look forward to getting to know her better over the next week.

Kai arrived at the entrance, he promptly introduced himself to Wyatt and Willow and offered to take them to their cottage so that they could get settled in. They also agreed to meet us at the packhouse for lunch.

Kingston and I took this as a chance for us to spend a little time together while welcoming our guests. It was looking like the summit might be starting a bit earlier this year, so Kingston sent out a mass mind-link to the pack, informing them of the guests that had already arrived, and reminding them to make sure they all felt welcome.

As we walked inside the packhouse, I told Kingston that I needed a quick word with Rose. I said I would be quick if he could just wait for me. I made my way to the kitchen, leaving Kingston to check his emails on his smartphone in the lobby.

I needed to let Rose know our guests had started arriving and that we would be making a special lunch today for our guests. I wanted to give her a heads up numbers-wise but to also potentially prepare for even more guests, as we were not sure who else might arrive early and we didn't want anyone going hungry.

Rose was excited to hear that our guests were arriving and she got to work organizing food. I asked Rose if she would like some help, but she just started shoo-ing me out of the kitchen. So I took the hint and made my way to Kingston.

“My love, you still haven’t told me what you and Asher have decided to do about Lachlan? What’s this grand plan? I don’t mean to pressure you, but I would really like to know what the plan is, considering it will involve me.” I told him, pouting and looking into his eyes.

“How about we get through this afternoon, and then tonight after dinner, I will call a meeting with Asher and some of our elite warriors, then we can all talk about it then and there. Does that sound fair?” Kingston asked me. Although it was more of a statement than a question if you ask me.

“I guess I can wait,” I said, feeling unimpressed that he seemed to be stalling me.

“So uh, if we have some free time now, would you like a massage?” Kingston says with a cheeky grin on his face.

“How about we get through this afternoon, have dinner, and then after the meeting we can spend some quality time together. Does that sound fair?” I said smugly to Kingston, trying to stifle my laugh.

“I see what you did there. Touche.” Kingston says, trying to suppress his laughter.

“It’s ok. Come to think of it I should really go over everything one last time, and check in with security.” Kingston says matter of factly.

“Ah, yes, and I will touch base with the planning team for the festivities, to ensure everything is on schedule,” I said to Kingston, leaning on him to kiss him on the cheek.

“I love you!” I said to Kingston as I looked into his eyes sincerely.

“I love you too!” He replied back to me. And we go our separate ways.

As I was walking down the hallway, I realized I had left my phone in the kitchen, so I turned back and headed toward the kitchen. As I walked through the door, I saw that Rose and some of the kitchen staff were busy preparing lunch. I could hear a commotion outside, so I quickly grabbed my phone and made my way outside.

As I opened the door and walked down the steps of the packhouse following the raised voices, I saw some of our pack members preparing to direct our

guests. One of them has a checklist, and the other is trying to communicate with the driver of the first SUV. A total of two SUVs have arrived at the main entrance of the packhouse. I am surprised there are no ranked wolves down here to greet them, so I quickly mind-linked Kingston telling him we have more guests arriving. Then I started to confidently stride toward the SUV. I've got this thought to myself, it's just meet and greet, how hard can it be.

I then see a tall and muscular man in a fitted black suit step out of the first SUV and as he turns towards me I gasp, stopping in my tracks.

"Aleksa? Well, this is a pleasant surprise."

Luna Aleksa's Escape Chapter 33

Meanwhile back in Evergreen...

Lachlan POV

"Ah, yes, that's it, s**k it harder, faster!" I ordered Eva as I yanked her hair hard and pushed her further into my c**k. "Ahhhhhhhhh," I yelled as I emptied my load onto her breasts, with my eyes closed, visualizing Aleska on her knees in front of me, instead of Eva. I had always thought of Aleksa right before I was about to c*m. It didn't matter who I was f*****g. I always pictured her face.

"Lachlan! Please! I'm not finished. Let me just..." Eva pleaded, trying to throw herself at me again. But I had my fun. I had emptied my c*m all over her large and plentiful breasts. Now she needed to get out of here and go clean herself up. She looked like a mess. She reeked of desperation, and nothing turned me off more.

"Get out now!" I yelled at her, throwing a wooden chair against the wall watching it shatter all over the floor. "And get someone to come clean up this mess!" I yelled at her as she picked up her clothes and scurried out.

I'm so sick of her s**t. It was fun at the beginning, and all that sneaking around behind Aleksa's back was a high too, but now Eva's just driving me crazy. She's so needy. It's pathetic. She keeps on banging on about being Luna. As if that is ever gonna happen. Sure I may have told her she would be many times, but come on I would have said anything to get into her pants. Even that's not worth it now.

And it's not like Eva is special, I have slept with hundreds of she-wolves over the years, all of them as unremarkable as the next. They are here to please me sexually and that's it. I'm not looking for a mate – I already have one. I just needed to find her. And then, when I do find her I will punish her relentlessly for leaving me, and for taking my pups, especially my heir. I'll need to remind her who's boss. I imagine it will take some time to break her in. But in time, she would learn to be the good obedient mate she once was. She just needed reminding that she belonged to me.

Aleska was always a little stubborn. Even when I first met her, I recall she fought the bond initially, but then I won her over with my charm. How naive she was. Aleksa really was the perfect mate. Obedient. Well mannered. Eager to please. I didn't mean for her to find out about the other she-wolves. I had hoped to introduce them into our relationship naturally over time. Make her think it was her idea. I don't know why she got all bent out of shape. I mean there's plenty of me to go around. She would still be Luna. They would just be my bits on the side. I was the alpha. And I was entitled to take what I wanted. It was after all my birthright.

Just thinking about Aleksa had made my c**k hard again. We had been searching for her for weeks now, and we had found no real trace of her, our last detected scent of her was at the pack training grounds. We haven't been able to scent her anywhere else. This leads me to believe she must have had help covering her scent up.

It's not like she has any family to help her, or friends even. I kept her pretty isolated here. I didn't even let her have breakfast with the pack most of the time. I indulged her in her need to work in the human town, they were of no threat to me. I preferred to keep her isolated and all to myself.

After she escaped, I had wolves watching her workplace, nothing suspicious had happened there. According to my sources when she handed her letter of resignation in, she left work on sick leave, that was the last they saw of her. I even planted someone there at the realtors as they had to advertise Aleksa's job, and she's found no evidence of anyone helping her.

My so-called Gamma Caleb and his interfering mate Kali had disappeared South, we had tracked them a few human towns over, and then lost visuals on them from there. I had reached out to Kali's previous pack, but they aren't giving out any information either, they claim they had no knowledge of any of this, but I don't trust them. I'm just biding my time. I have wolves watching the pack, and the first chance we get we will grab one of her family members,

then we will make them talk. I can be very convincing when I want to be. I thought as I chuckled deviously to myself.

As for those rogues, well no one seems to know anything about them. They only arrived in the dungeons a little while before I tossed Aleksa in there. We don't know their names, or even where they came from. Not that I care about them. Sure if I happen to find them I will rip them to shreds after I t*****e them that is.

I still don't understand what Aleksa thinking, running away with rogues, she's still so oblivious to our world. She still needed to learn that certain people are worth associating with, others are just here for service, and some, well some just needed to be put out of their misery, and rogues definitely fell into that category.

I walked over to my desk and looked at a family photo of myself, Aleksa, Liam, and Layla. I looked at the picture and I thought about the good times we had. The thrills I had while corrupting her, and having my wicked way with her. She was so innocent and pure when I met her. It was all too easy, convincing her that I was her knight in shining armor, her one true love. She believed everything I fed her – hook, line, and sinker.

Sure it's not to say that I didn't have feelings for her. She had a certain charm about her. She was kind and nurturing, especially with the pups. I wouldn't have anyone else raising my pups. And she made my wolf Cyrus happy. The pack liked her. She was always helping people. And she had a stubborn nature about her, which I enjoyed provoking.

I realized it wouldn't have been her doing, the escape, she's too weak to come up with a plan like that, it would have been those rogues that she was in the dungeons with. They would have poisoned her mind against me. And they would pay for that if I ever came across them again.

I would have to punish her for the stress she has caused me. And she would lose her freedom when she returned with my pups. I would need to make an example of her. And I knew exactly how I would do that. I thought to myself a cunning smirk forming on my face.

Just thinking about it was turning me on. I pulled my c**k out of my pants and started to relieve myself, closing my eyes. I imagined how I would discipline Aleksa when I finally caught up with her.

A little while later, there was a knock on my door. It was my Beta Sam. He sure looked like s**t. He was very pale and unkempt. He had dark circles under his eyes and looked low in mood. He had lost a lot of muscle mass over the past months and was looking like a shadow of his former self.

“Alpha, a telegram arrived for you. It has a royal seal on it.” Beta Sam declared to me.

I nodded to Sam. “Well pass it over then, I don’t have all day,” I growled. I don’t have time for theatrics. I’m feeling agitated and so is Cyrus, we need to go for a run.

“Blah, Blah, Blah – Annual Royal Alpha Summit... Rocky Mountain Pack... Colorado.” “s**t, I forgot this was coming up. Hmmm. Actually. This might be a good chance for me to reach out to other packs, see if anyone has seen my mate or my pups!” I said out loud while considering the possibility in my head. This would be perfect. Almost every alpha from around the country would be there, Someone must have seen or heard something, I thought to myself.

“Sam, RSVP for me. And get this Kingston on the line. I wanna talk to him. While you do that. Send him an email link of Aleksa, the twins, Caleb and Kali, and the Rogues photos, and post them nationwide. Someone somewhere has seen them!” I say slamming my fist down on the desk.

Sam let out the breath he was holding and reluctantly nodded his head. “Yes, Alpha.” He said. Gawd he’s depressing. I really need to think about replacing him soon. He’s really let things slip lately. I realized he’s having problems with Eva, but get it together for f***s sake. Hmmm. Who would I even make my Beta? Everyone around here is so incompetent. Hmmm, I’ll have a think about that on my run.

Sam had transferred the phone call to me and I spoke to Alpha dickwad aka Kingston. He asked me some questions about pack alliances and asked if there were any grievances between Evergreen and other packs, in preparation for the Summit. I gave him the rundown. Obviously, there were some grievances, you don’t get to be this powerful a pack from hosting tea parties. I told him what he wanted to hear, and told him I would play nice, out of respect to the Alpha King.

Then I moved the conversation on to what I actually wanted to talk about Aleksa and my pups. As I was explaining the situation to him, that my mate and pups were kidnapped by rogues, he kept asking questions, he was irritating me. It was like he didn't believe what I was telling him. The nerve of this guy, who did he think he was, just because he was the Alpha King's pet didn't mean he could take a tone with me. Wait until I see him face to face then we will see how arrogant he is. He will cower just like the rest of them do.

Sam didn't get the photos to him fast enough, so he told me he would take a look at them and distribute some around his local area when he received them. I bet he doesn't. I bet he was just saying that so he could end the conversation. The prick even hung up on me. The nerve! I was livid.

I shifted into Cyrus in my office and ripped through the packhouse in a fury, headed for the forest. I needed some stress relief. I mind-linked some omegas and told them to be ready for me in my suite for when I got back from my run.

It had been a few weeks since I learned of the Royal Alpha Summit, and I was preparing the pack for my absence. I had asked my father to step in and run the pack with the assistance of Sam and my mother, while I was gone. I couldn't trust Sam to do it by himself. The old Sam I knew could have. But he was too much of a wreck these days. I would be replacing him when I got back from the Summit. He was no longer of any use to me. I would be banishing him and his w***e of a mate, Eva. She was constantly bugging me these days and walking around like she owned the place. No matter how often I reminded her she wasn't my luna and would never be. I would be glad to be rid of both of them. I would make one of my head warriors my Beta for now. It would be better than nothing.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and just like any other day at Evergreen. I had my usual routine of training in the morning, followed by some stress relief in my suite with some needy omegas who were willing to please, followed by lunch with Cade and Caitlin, an afternoon trip to the local whorehouse, and now I had a meeting with a neighboring pack. We might have a lead on Aleksa's whereabouts so I couldn't miss this meeting. They had better not be wasting my time, I thought to myself.

As I was about to jump in my SUV I felt a searing pain rip throughout my body. I felt my connection to Aleksa was being completely severed. It had already been weakened, probably due to my healthy s****l appetite, and her pitiful

attempt at a rejection weeks ago, but I was still somewhat connected to her until today that is. My head was throbbing, my chest was heaving, my heart felt like it had been pierced, and the pain crashed through my body. I dropped to the ground clutching my chest breathlessly. NOOOOOOOOO! I growled savagely.

Pack wolves were standing around looking at me in shock and disbelief. I just sat there kneeling on the ground, experiencing the most severe pain I've ever experienced in my life. "That b***h!" I yelled, panting.

I couldn't stand it any longer, I doubled over in agony. My body was overwhelmed and struggling to cope with such searing intense pain. I was feeling the pain of rejection and the severing of our bond. My last thoughts before I began to pass out, were that Aleksa would pay dearly for this.

Aleska POV

Shivers traveled up my spine as I realized that my pups and I were in the bushes at the far end of the pack and that there was an active rogue attack taking place. I realized that I didn't actually know my way around this pack well enough to find someplace safe to hide. I had a bad feeling that we wouldn't make it back to the packhouse in time. My gut instinct was telling me that we were in trouble right now. I mind-linked Kingston, "We are in the bush just past the rosegardens. I have Liam and Layla with me!" I call out, panic seeping through in my voice through the mind-link. "Start making your way towards the packhouse, I'm on my way, get our pups to safety," Kingston commanded me via the mind-link.

I grabbed Liam and Layla protectively, pulling them in towards me, almost crushing them into my waist. I took a look around at our surroundings, trying to gauge the safest route to take back to the packhouse. My mind was racing and I felt panic set in. I needed to get the pups to safety, I thought to myself. I pulled Liam and Layla up on either side of my hips and I started walking as quietly yet as fast as I could. I managed to make my way out of the bush area and I couldn't see any signs of the rogues as of yet, so I continued to make haste back to the packhouse. I was almost at the rose gardens when I caught a whiff of a scent. An unmistakable and unforgiving scent that made my heart stop and sent goosebumps all over my body, as well as making me want to vomit. Rogues!

As I turned to look behind me, I saw three mangey-looking rogues slowly stalking towards me, with pure unadulterated hate on their faces. "Amber!" I

screamed internally. “Amber, please we need to shift. Now!” I frantically pleaded with my wolf. Amber had been more present lately, but we hadn’t shifted yet, not for a long time. I knew it was expecting a lot thinking that we would just be able to shift, but our pups’ lives were on the line. “I’ve got this! It’s gonna hurt though!” Amber forewarned me. I quickly placed the twins behind me and instructed them to step back. I felt my bones cracking and rearranging themselves, my fur rapidly sprouting all over my body. The transition was excruciating but it was quick. However, before I was fully shifted, a reddish-brown rogue wolf ripped into my left shoulder, and it had taken a chunk of skin off with it. I let out a loud whimper and fell to my side. I could feel blood hemorrhaging from my wounds. Amber pushed through and completed our shift but we were weak now from the pain and the blood loss, even in our wolf form, because we hadn’t shifted in so long, and now due to the penetrating wounds. I wouldn’t be able to heal quickly enough. I couldn’t look back at my pups because the rogues were circling me, snarling at me, and getting ready to attack me from all sides. I could hear my pups crying in horror though. And I felt absolutely terrified that I might not be able to protect them from harm. I was prepared to die trying though.

“Kingston, Please!!” That was all I was able to get out as I made a last-ditch effort to call for help. I didn’t have time to say much else. I held my head up high and braced myself for the fight of my life. I could hear Liam and Layla crying and yelling “Mommy!” from behind me. My poor babies, I thought to myself. I told them to “Run! And hide!” “Now!” and I did my best to keep the rogue’s attention on me.

I wouldn’t plead, as I knew there was no point. I could feel their auras. I knew what their intentions were. But I wasn’t going down without putting up a hell of a fight. The honey-colored rogue with the white tinges on its face charged at me, I gave him the idea that I was going to move to my right but at the last minute, I moved to my left. However, at that moment the brown and white striped rogue pummeled into me from behind, ripping its teeth into my left upper thigh and knocking me forward onto the ground. I let out a whimper of pain, as I picked myself up. I hadn’t seen that coming. I was feeling a bit faint and felt as though I’d had the wind knocked out of me, but I quickly got back up on my feet. The rogues were all circling me and raring to go. They started to charge toward me, I realized that they were just toying with me before. Although I could feel they wouldn’t be this time. I took a deep breath and focused my energy and mind on hope. Hope – that I could survive this. Hope – that I could protect my pups. At that moment, I felt a surge of energy within myself. A surge of power. It was as if electricity was flowing through my veins.

It felt like my eyes were glowing. I braced myself for the impact of the rogues barreling toward me, but I felt nothing but strength and raw power. I then felt myself shift back to my human form. I should have been scared because I couldn't fight in human form, but I wasn't. I felt strong. I felt confident.

I raised my head upwards and I felt what I would describe as an electrical surge, and focused my energy on the rogues. I opened my eyes and to my shock, I saw that the three rogues that were charging toward me only seconds ago, were on the ground, and they appeared to be unconscious. I could see their limbs shaking uncontrollably. It was as if they had received an electric shock. I looked around and there was no one else around. I was in a state of disbelief. I was not sure what had just happened but I was thankful for whatever miracle had just occurred. I could feel tingles all over my body. It felt as though I was consumed by an electrical forcefield. And then it was gone, as fast as it had consumed me. I felt normal again.

With the rogue wolves out for the count, I called out to my babies telling them it was safe to come out. They come out from behind a tree running towards me crying. At that moment I heard twigs snap around me and held my breath. Fearing that more rogues have arrived and I have just moved my pups out of their hiding place, putting them in harm's way. I gasped. Then I felt a wave of awareness sweep over me, and I realized the approaching wolves were friendly. They were part of our pack.

"It's our mate – Aleksa," Amber told me internally. I was relieved to see Sabre walking toward us. Sabre pounced towards me moving his head to his side to look at the rogues that were on the ground unconscious. He glanced at them then back to me, shaking his head in disbelief. Sabre then growled loudly. He rushed toward me and started licking my wounds, to help accelerate the healing process, since there were healing abilities in the saliva of a true mate. Sabre then shifted to his human form and Kingston grabbed Liam and Layla towards him and checks them for injuries. When he was satisfied they were okay, he embraced them in a strong hug and kissed their foreheads. He then released them when he noticed I was feeling faint, and pulled me into his arms, holding me at my waist and legs pulling me into his chest. Overwhelmed at the events that had transpired, and feeling weak from my injuries, I felt myself give in to sleep.

I awoke in the pack hospital once again, this time I was aware of my surroundings immediately, as the smell of antiseptic and cleaning products hit

my nose. I could also scent Kingston, even before I opened my eyes. I scanned the room, and it was just Kingston in the room with me. "Liam and Layla?" I asked in a state of panic, fearful that something might have happened to them. "Where are they? Are they ok?" I asked worriedly. "They are fine. There's not a scratch on them. They are with Kaia. How are you feeling?" Kingston asked me with concern. "I'm fine. I just wanna go home. And see my babies." I told him, hoping he would let me get my way. "How long have I been here?" I asked him, as it suddenly dawned on me I had no idea how much time had passed. "It's been about twenty-four hours, you healed pretty quickly. The doctor was unsure why you didn't wake up earlier," Kingston told me with concern in his voice.

"I think I have an idea," I told him. Recalling the feeling that engulfed me when I was fighting the rogues. "Something happened to me out there. I can't really explain it. But something helped me fight off the rogues." I told Kingston, who looked at me knowingly. I started to wonder why he wasn't as surprised as I was. It's as if he knew something that I didn't know. "You don't seem surprised?" I said to Kingston.

"I'm not Aleksa. There is something that I was meant to tell you a while ago, but then I got distracted and had forgotten to mention it to you." Kingston told me. "I think I better tell you now though," Kingston said, with a cautious look on his face.

"After the first rogue attack, before you joined the pack, you weren't healing and you were unconscious for several days, the medical team was unsure of what was keeping you from waking and we were worried about your wolf's absence, so we had to think outside the box. I asked a Healer to come to see you. A Healer from a nearby pack came in and spent some time with you. Afterward, she told us (The Doctor and Myself) that you were not an ordinary wolf. She said that you were special, but she refused to elaborate any further. She wanted to speak with you first when you had recovered. It looks like now might be a good time to ask her to come back in to see you." Kingston exclaimed.

I sat there staring at Kingston. A part of me was mad at him for not telling me this earlier, but mostly I was also a little shocked and overwhelmed by everything. I was not sure what had actually happened with the rogues, but I didn't think there was anything special about me. To be honest I felt a little substandard if anything. I had missed out on so much of the werewolf world, as I had lived as a human most of my life. I didn't know what to make of this news.

I took a moment to think about what Kingston had just said, then replied to Kingston “I think that is a good idea. I would like to speak with the Healer. Please.” Then I looked at the clock on the wall and asked, “Do you think I could be discharged? I really feel much better now, and I really just want to get home to my pups.” I said, with a sweet and hopeful smile on my face, hoping that will help me get my way.

“I’ll have a chat with the Doctor,” Kingston said as he got up from his seat, and started to walk out of the room. I shuffled to the side of my bed and moved my feet so that they were hanging over the side of the bed. I pulled my gown down to take a peek at the wound on my shoulder, then moved it upwards to check the wound on my thigh. There was nothing there. No dressings. No scars. As if I had never been attacked. I pulled my gown back down and I pushed my body upwards off the bed, to stand up. I felt good. I didn’t feel any pain from where my wounds once were, or aches from being in bed so long. I felt energized. I walked towards the bathroom to tidy myself up.

After I had been to the bathroom and refreshed myself, I walked back into the room to find that Kingston was back. “You look great. How are you feeling?” Kingston asked me looking surprised that I was moving so effortlessly I would imagine. “I feel better than I have in a long time,” I told him with a big smile on my face. And I meant every word. “So, can I be discharged? I’ll take it easy I promise.” I said pouting hopefully to my mate. “The Doc said you could, but you have to take it easy, and you have to come back in tomorrow for a check-up.” He told me sternly. “No problem. Uh. I don’t have any clothes to change into.” I said to him, biting down on my lip. “I’ll have Asher bring some over,” Kingston informed me, his eyes hazed over and I could see that he was mind-linking.

In no time at all, Asher had arrived with my clothes and I was signing out of the hospital. I had been given my discharge papers from the Doctor, and we were about to walk out the door when I was approached by a tall dark hooded figure. The figure lifted up the hood of their gown, her wavy raven-colored hair fell forward, and I was met by the most intriguing pair of emerald-colored eyes. This must be the healer that Kingston was telling me about, I thought to myself. I could sense her aura was powerful, but in a positive way, not in a dark magic kind of way. “Aleska, we need to speak dear.” She said with a sense of urgency in her voice.

Aleksa POV

I looked up at the woman in front of me and I could sense that what she had to tell me was important. Even though I was anxious and desperately wanted to see my pups, and hold them in my arms. I knew I had to hear her out, and find out what she meant when she told Kingston that I wasn't an ordinary wolf.

I looked at Kingston who looked unphased by the appearance of the Healer. I on the other hand was a little nervous about what I was about to find out. Kingston led us into a room in the hospital that was used for family conferences, and we took a seat at the conference table.

I started biting my nails, I know it's a filthy habit, but it's just something that I do when I'm anxious. The healer went on to tell me that her name was Xanthe, and she had been meaning to speak with me for some time now. She also told me that she foresaw my arrival here at Rocky Mountain and she had seen what happened at Evergreen, but that everything happened for a reason and led me to where I was right now.

"How could you know I would come here? How could you be expecting me?" I bit down on my lip, furrowing my brows.

"I didn't even know that I was coming here. I looked at a map and randomly chose Colorado. If I hadn't found out about Lachlan and Eva, I never would have come here. So how could you possibly know?" I said a little breathless and a little taken back by the Xanthe's words.

"I have been watching you since you were born. Who do you think left you in the basket outside that church, on that very night, at that very time, just as the Petrovs were leaving church service?" Xanthe questioned me, with a smile on her face.

"You left me there? You're not my mother though. I feel no connection to you." I told her, with a skeptical tone in my voice.

"You are right, I am not your mother. But I knew your mother very well. And your father." Xanthe told me.

"Are they, are they alive? Did something happen to them?" I asked her hesitantly, not sure that I really wanted to know the answer.

"Your Father died protecting you and your mother. You see, you are a gifted wolf, as was your mother Kristina. You come from a lineage of gifted wolves, on your mother's side." Xanthe informed me.

I stared at her in disbelief. “Gifted wolves? I barely function as an average werewolf. I can’t fight. I know very little about being a werewolf. How could I be a gifted wolf? I think you have the wrong person.” I exclaimed, shaking my head in disbelief.

“I can assure you, Aleksa, you are gifted. Tell me has anything strange happened recently, anything you can’t explain, like a newfound power perhaps? Have you ever felt something was going to happen before it did, or, have you ever had a “feeling about someone’s intention or character” without knowing anything about them?” Xanthe asked me.

“Well, I guess, the other day, there was something. When I was being attacked by rogues, I felt a surge go through me, and I could have sworn my eyes were glowing. I still don’t quite understand what happened. One moment the rogues were charging for me, the next they were out cold like they had been electrocuted.” I blurted out to Xanthe. “And I have always had “feelings” about people, I figured I was just good at reading people. Like I could tell by their aura what their intentions were.” I told her. Starting to wonder if what she is telling me might actually be true.

“Aleksa, your birth parents’ names were Aleksander and Kristina. You were named after your father. Your parents loved you very much. Your father fought to his last breath trying to protect you from those who wanted to harm you. Your mother sacrificed herself, also, for you. They entrusted you in my care. But I knew you would never be truly safe as long as you were with me. So I did what I felt was best for you. I started observing the humans, to find a couple who didn’t have children but would love you as their own, and when I found the Petrovs, I knew you would be safe, and that you would be loved, so I manifested it so that they would find you, fall in love with you and adopt you as their own.” Xanthe told me, shedding a tear from her eyes.

I was stunned. I sat there open-mouthed, and I had no words. I just stared at Xanthe, dumbfounded and trying to digest what I had just been told. I felt sad that my birth parents had lost their lives trying to protect me. All these years I just figured that they didn’t want me. And now I was told that I am some gifted wolf. This is all too much. I needed some air, I thought to myself.

“I, uh, I need some air. Do you mind? Could we finish this talk later? I’m feeling tired and overwhelmed, and I just wanna see Liam and Layla right now.” I said rhetorically to Xanthe and Kingston. I quietly sniffed, with tears threatening to erupt from my eyes.

“I think this has been a lot for Aleksa to take in. It might be a good idea to pause the conversation here, for now, Xanthe.” Kingston suggested.

“Very well. But we’re not finished, Aleksa – there is more I have to tell you, I realize you are overwhelmed right now, but we will need to speak again, very soon. How about tomorrow afternoon? Will that be enough time for you to think about what I have told you today?” Xanthe asked me.

“Yes. Tomorrow afternoon will be fine. I’m sorry. I appreciate you coming here and speaking with me. It’s, just, a lot to take in.” I told Xanthe, trying to hold myself together. I felt like I need a shower and a cry. Just to get it all out. I gave her a half-smile and got up from my seat and walked towards the door. I heard Kingston thanking her for her time, and bidding her farewell. But I just keep walking. I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to hug my babies. That would make everything better.

A good night’s sleep made the world of difference. I felt so much better today. I had time to reconcile things in my head, and I was ready to hear what else Xanthe has to tell me. I would apologize for my behavior yesterday. I wasn’t nearly as polite or grateful as I should have been towards Xanthe. Now that I’ve had time to think I have so many questions, about my birth parents, my lineage, my gifts, and more importantly I want to know who was after me and my mother, and why exactly.

I would ask all these questions in just a few hours. For now, I had a brunch date planned with Quinn and Kaia, we had so much to catch up on. I wanted to hear all about what they had been up to, Quinn and her plans with Mason, Kaia with her training not to mention how things were progressing with a certain dashing Beta. It would be nice to just unwind with some girl talk and forget about my own complicated life for a moment.

Liam and Layla were still fast asleep, they had a late night. So I thought I would sneak downstairs to grab a coffee and then make my way back upstairs to wake Liam and Layla for daycare.

“Good Morning Aleksa, or shall I say Luna?” Mason mocked me, with a grin on his face, which soon turned serious. “We need to talk, Where is Kingston?” Mason asked me with a sense of urgency emanating from him.

“Is everything ok Mason?” I said suddenly worried by the grave expression on his face.

“I have some news but I would prefer to tell you and the Alpha at the same time.” Mason declared.

“Sure. I will mind-link him now. I was just about to make a coffee, would you like one? And, will the kitchen be an appropriate place to discuss this, or does it require more privacy?” I asked Mason.

“I think we should move this somewhere private,” Mason said discretely.

As we walked into the kitchen, Kingston was already there, sitting down drinking coffee, and looking at his laptop. Billie Eilish’s song “Happier than ever” was playing”, Gawd I loved that song I thought to myself. Kingston was looking quite relaxed. I really hoped that this wasn’t bad news.

“Good Morning my love,” Kingston said as he pulled me into him and kissed me passionately on the lips. I could taste the fresh blend of coffee that he was drinking was still on his lips mixed with a hint of chocolate, he tasted so good. I reluctantly pulled my lips from his, feeling a flush creep over my cheeks, I was still not used to this affection that he showered me with. Thank you Moon Goddess for pairing me with this man, he really was perfection, I thought silently to myself.

“Good Morning,” I said to Kingston with a beaming smile on my face, feeling smitten.

“So what is it that you wanted to speak about Mason?” Kingston asked. “Shall we take this into my office perhaps?” Kingston asked, to which Mason nodded and replied, “I think that would be a good idea, Alpha.”

“Oh, I’ve left Liam and Layla upstairs, I was just sneaking down for coffee. I didn’t expect anyone else to be up. They are still sleeping.” I told both Kingston and Mason.

“Aleksa, if you don’t mind I’ll mind-link Quinn, she was on her way here anyway. I’m sure she would be happy to watch and tend to Liam and Layla while we talk in the office?” Mason asked me.

“That would be amazing! Thank you Mason!” I said feeling relief wash over me. I watched his eyes haze over indicating he was in a mind-link.

I quickly poured a coffee for myself and for Mason, and we made our way to Kingston's office.

"Thank you, Luna," Mason said as he accepted his coffee from me.

"Please, just Aleksa, Mason you are like family to me, please don't call me Luna" I insisted to Mason who just chuckled.

"So, Mason, what was it that you wanted to talk about?" Kingston asked, sitting back on his leather chair in front of his rich mahogany desk, which was for a change completely clear, a far cry from the messy cluttered desk only a few days ago.

"Well Alpha, Caleb (Aleksa's previous Gamma) contacted me the other day. He had news about Lachlan. Apparently, although Evergreen's trackers couldn't scent us, they have managed to obtain visuals of us at the airport, and they have tracked us as far as Iowa. Sources have suggested that Lachlan has redirected and increased his search party. But there's more." Mason pauses, then continues.

"Apparently, there is a bounty out on you, Aleksa." He says directing his eyes to me specifically.

"There is a huge reward for whoever can find you and your pups and bring them back to Lachlan unharmed. According to Caleb, they are distributing our visuals nationwide. It appears that we are gonna need a contingency plan." Mason told us with concern etched all over his face.

Aleksa POV

A wave of apprehension overtook me after learning of Lachlan's attempts at finding us. Confirming that he was actively searching for us, and how much closer he was getting made me feel nauseous. I felt like I was going to be sick. My stomach was churning at the thought of him finding us. It wasn't myself that I was worried about, it was Liam and Layla.

I would never let him take my pups from me. I would never go back to Evergreen with him. I had loved that pack like family. I was so broken when I realized that they had all known what was happening all along. I still felt so betrayed by them all. With the exception of Caleb and Kali of course. Caleb was under an alpha command, I know now that he couldn't physically tell me.

And they had both risked so much to help us all escape from Evergreen. And for that, I would be eternally grateful.

I had hoped that Lachlan would just go about his business with Eva and forget about us. Actually, I take that back as I remember that Eva is Sam's mate. Poor Sam. I wish I had let him know what I had discovered before I escaped. I had been so caught up I hadn't even considered that he would still be suffering at the hands of Lachlan and Eva.

I would need to discuss this with Kingston. I'm sure he could help me think of something. Some way we could ease his suffering. How Eva could hurt someone as sweet as Sam I'll never know. He deserved so much better. I needed to make that right somehow. And I would. I just wasn't sure how.

I was interrupted from my thoughts when Kingston placed his hands on mine and I felt tingles and the calm of our mate bond.

As Mason looked at me with grave concern on his face I had no words. I didn't want Kingston to know how terrified I was right now. He already had so much on with the Royal Alpha Summit that was fast approaching.

This was such bad timing. We were just starting to settle here at Rocky Mountain. The pack members were all so welcoming and accepting. Mason and Kaia were settled and had roles within the pack hierarchy. Liam and Layla were settled at daycare and thriving. I was about to officially become Luna. I couldn't expect the pack to fight for me. They hardly knew me. It was only a matter of time before Lachlan found us – especially if he was distributing our images.

"Aleksa, I can feel your fear through our bond. I know you are nervous – but you don't need to be. I will protect you and our pups. I realize Lachlan is their biological father, but I also have a bond with Liam and Layla and I will protect them both with my life. I will not let him take you or take them. You are Luna of this pack. We will all protect you with our lives." Kingston declared to me looking into my eyes and cupping my face with his strong and calloused hands.

"I would never expect anyone to risk their life for me. Kingston, they don't deserve this. They hardly know me. I can't put this on the pack." I told him trying to fight the tears that were starting to well up in my eyes.

“Aleska, you are safe. You always will be safe. And whatever you are thinking right now – stop it. You will not run. You are not putting anyone out. Rocky Mountain has waited for you for a long time. You make the pack stronger just by being here. The fact that you want to protect the pack shows how amazing you are. We will figure this out.” Kingston reassured me, pulling me into his chest for comfort. This action alone gives me a sense of security and calms my nerves somewhat.

“Alpha, if I may suggest something?” Mason interjected.

“What if you sent an announcement out to the media and to all of the packs. Informing them of Rocky Mountain’s new Luna, and your true mate. That would let Lachlan know that Aleksa had found her second chance mate and had been claimed by another alpha. It will help to draw some attention to this. The council will be watching no doubt. It will be much harder for him to make a move, or do anything underhanded if he is being closely watched.” Mason suggested.

Kingston took a moment to consider the idea. “It could work. It would definitely be the more diplomatic approach and it would put the spotlight on it for a bit. It would make it more challenging for Lachlan to act on any urges he may have.”

I took a breath and tried to imagine what Lachlan’s reaction to such an announcement might be. I was interrupted from my thoughts when I notice both Kingston and Mason looking at me as if they were waiting for my response.

“Sorry. I kinda zoned out then. Did you say something?” I asked them both simultaneously.

“I asked you how you felt about us putting out an announcement? Perhaps a follow up to that might be a phone call or a video conference if required.” Kingston added.

“Uh, yeah let’s give it a go I guess,” I said, still feeling unsure about it all, and still feeling a bit distracted thinking about Sam.

“He might be willing to let me go, but I worry about Liam and Layla, he’s biologically their father, he does have a claim to them. But I absolutely refuse to give them up to him. I will not let him take them!” I said exasperatedly, feeling my heart racing in my chest, and feeling my anxiety surge through me.

“Aleksa, we will work something out. I promise you. No one will take Liam and Layla from you. You are their mother. And an amazing one at that.” Kingston declared to me, and I found a sense of calm in his words.

“Aleksa – Luna, we have all come so far. We will not let anything happen to you or your pups. We are a family. And family protects one another.” Mason declared. He looked at me with determination and sincerity.

I looked into Mason’s eyes and I felt tears start to fall from my eyes. I felt so blessed and so lucky to have made strong bonds with people that I now call my family. I felt such a sense of belonging.

My stomach growled loudly, snapping me out of my train of thought. I felt a warm blush creep over my face, of embarrassment. Kingston and Mason chuckled. “Perhaps we should have some breakfast?” Kingston suggested.

“Sounds like a good idea. I’ll mind-link Quinn to bring Liam and Layla down to join us.” Mason replied to Kingston.

“Come, my love, let’s get some food into your stomach. We have a big day ahead of us.” Kingston remarked to me.

“Mason, thank you, for everything. I am so lucky to have you in my life. You are like the brother I never had.” I tell him, as I launched at him for a hug. Mason embraced me for a hug also, however, at that moment Kingston growled at our closeness, and Mason and I both looked back at him.

“Sorry guys, Sabre gets a little overprotective of his mate” Kingston replied chuckling.

Mason then added, “That’s understandable Alpha.”

“Aleksa, I feel the same way about you. Ever since we met in the dungeons of Evergreen I’ve felt this overwhelming urge to protect you. You are also like a little sister to me.”

My heart instantly swelled at Mason’s words.

“I sure am a lucky girl. I have some really special people in my life. And I feel so grateful for you all.” I said to Mason, while I locked hands with Kingston getting ready to leave the room.

“See you at breakfast!” I called out to Mason, as Kingston lead me out the door.

It was approaching midday, and in light of the news that we had learned of earlier this morning, I had decided to cancel my brunch date with Quinn and Kaia. I ended up explaining the situation to them since it directly involved them both anyway. They pretty much repeated what Mason had told me, about us all being family, and having each other’s backs. Again my heart swelled with love, I had always wanted sisters, and now that dream had come true. I loved them both with all my heart. Sometimes when you meet people you just instantly click, and that’s exactly what happened when I met Kaia and Quinn.

They both offered to watch Liam and Layla for me while I met the Healer. This was a relief for me because I didn’t know what to expect from our meeting today. I was nervous yet excited, and I was curious to learn more. It all felt very surreal.

I was on my way to meet Xanthe and to learn more about my birth parents and my lineage. It was a gorgeous sunny day and it was so warm. Too warm to be sitting inside even though there is air conditioning. I thought it might be nice to chat outside, so we are on our way to a gazebo that was located near the rosegardens.

It really was a sight to behold, the roses were in full bloom and they smelt amazing. There was a crawling red rose bush covering the sides of the gazebo, and it looked so magical. Kingston must have asked someone to bring a table and chairs prior to our meeting because the set in front of us didn’t look like it was supposed to be there. It looked brand new rather than the weathered set you would expect to see outside. There was a large jug of water and some glasses in the centre of the table.

We took a seat, and moments later Xanthe appeared before us.

“Hello Aleksa, I trust you are well-rested and ready to hear what I have to say?” Xanthe looked at me with a small smile on her face.

“Hello Xanthe, yes, please let me apologise for my behaviour yesterday, I was rude. I am not usually that way towards others. I was just dealing with a lot, and everything kinda overwhelmed me.” I said pausing to take a breath. Xanthe just watched me and waited patiently as if she knew I wasn’t finished.

"I think I just needed a good night's sleep and to spend some time with Liam and Layla. Thank you so much for coming back to speak with me. It means the world to me. I have so many questions!" I said, ready to unleash my questions on Xanthe.

"No need to apologize. How about you hear what I have to say. Then we can have question time afterwards." Xanthe said rhetorically.

"That sounds fair," I said. Although I was a little disappointed that I would have to wait. Chill Aleksa, I thought to myself. Yesterday I didn't want to hear any of this, and today I want to bombard her with questions. I swear I am all over the place at the moment. I looked up at Xanthe who was ready to speak.

"Let's start at the beginning then shall we." Xanthe begun.

Xanthe POV

"I'm not going to beat around the bush. I'm going to tell you this straight. So brace yourself." I started to tell Aleksa, deciding that what I had to tell her would be overwhelming so I may as well keep to the point.

"Many millennia ago, the moon goddess blessed a lineage of wolves with special protective and healing powers, their role was to help heal and protect vulnerable wolves, they were known as the crescent moon wolves."

"Crescent moon wolves carried a unique marking, which consisted of a sapphire blue crescent moon with two wolves under it, and a crown with a purple hue to it. Unfortunately, crescent moon wolves were constantly hunted and exploited, many living their lives in captivity, many dying after being drained of their powers and healing abilities. There were many powerful wolves who wished to harness their special abilities. I realize this all sounds unbelievable to you right now. Especially since you were led to believe you were human for the first eighteen years of your life. But I can assure you that it is all true."

"Aleksa, your mother was a crescent moon wolf with special abilities and healing powers. She had left her pack when she met your father. You see Aleksa, your Grandfather was the Alpha of Moon Valley Pack. He was aware of Kristina's abilities from a very young age and knew that she was a gifted wolf, as her mother was also one, and it was passed down by females in the family."

“Back then, an alpha female taking the role of Alpha alone was unheard of, so they needed her to be mated and marked so that there would be a male alpha running the pack, thus maintaining their reputation and bloodline.”

“They (her parents) had planned to marry her off to the Alpha heir of a neighboring pack, in a bid to merge the two packs as they had no male heir so that their son would take the role of Alpha, and Kristina would be his Luna.”

“The alpha heir of the neighboring pack was an unkind, arrogant, and evil wolf, and rumor had it that he had planned to use Kristina for her gifts to heal his mistress, who suffered from some rare disease for which there was no known cure. The Alpha’s Heir was in love with his mistress and wanted to take her as his luna, but his parents had denied him.”

“And, Kristina had no intention of being mated to or being marked by him. Not long before the agreement was made, Kristina had met her fated mate in a chance meeting, your father. He was from another pack, and he was a warrior. When Kristina told her parents this news, they were not accepting of this, they felt that he had nothing to offer them, and being that they were in so much debt at the time, they refused to acknowledge her fated mate.”

“You see, I had met your mother back at her birth pack – Moon Valley. I would occasionally consult at the pack hospital. I had met your mother on a few occasions as she would volunteer at the hospital regularly. We had an instant connection. I met your father, Aleksander, a few times also. Actually, Kristina had only met him a few times before they ran off together. I met your father because your mother needed help leaving the packhouse to visit him. I was usually her cover story as she was constantly followed by her father’s guards. We would tell them that she was volunteering at the hospital, she would sneak out the back, and meet Aleksander just outside the pack boundary.”

“Worried that Kristina might defy them, and mess up their plans, her parents fast-tracked the agreement. The night before Kristina was supposed to leave for the neighboring pack, Aleksander with the help of some of his fellow warriors created a distraction and managed to help Kristina escape. That was the last she saw of her parents and her pack. They were on the run for months putting as much distance between them as they could.”

“Kristina’s parents never stopped looking for her. Their debts got higher, and they were on the brink of losing their pack when a Hunter came to them and made them a proposition. He would bankroll the pack but they wanted Kristina’s firstborn daughter in return. Somehow they were aware of her

crescent moon wolf lineage. Kristina's father was desperate to retain his title and his pack so he reluctantly agreed to the hunter's proposition."

"After some time the hunter had managed to find her, and surely enough, Kristina and Aleksander had mated and had a baby girl -that was you Aleksa. They came for you, time and time again. Aleksander and Kristina were so determined to keep you safe and hidden that they veered away from packs and pack life, and opted for life in the human world."

"However, one day they were caught unprepared, and that is the day Aleksander died trying to protect you."

"Kristina was on her own then, she was heartbroken but determined to protect you with her life. She moved from town to town and worked menial jobs in order to support you, over the course of a few months she managed to do this well until they came again one night. They came in the still of the night, Kristina managed to hide you in the ceiling. She fought hard and managed to take them all out, however, she was critically injured and died from blood loss that night."

"When Kristina didn't show up to work the next day I had a feeling something had gone horribly wrong. I left work at midday and when I arrived at the flat I was horrified at the scene that awaited me. It was like a scene from a horror movie, with bodies, and blood everywhere."

"I found Kristina on the floor in front of her bedroom, the door was shut behind her, she was protecting you trying to keep them from finding you. I checked for a pulse but I already knew Kristina was gone, she was so cold and I couldn't sense her energy. I will never forget that terrifying feeling that struck me when I realized that you were unaccounted for. I searched frantically. Then I focussed my mind and found you fast asleep in the ceiling, warm, and unscathed, although a little dehydrated and hungry when you finally woke."

"I had decided it was best that we left that town as soon as possible. I bent down and kissed sweet Kristina on her forehead, and that's when I saw the locket. She wore it everywhere and treasured it with her heart. I knew I should grab it so that you always had something of your mother's with you."

"I took you home with me, and then I decided it was time to move on. I needed to get you somewhere safe, as there was a high chance that they would still be looking for you."

“We traveled for a few weeks, and then I realized that this was no life for a little pup. I realized that I couldn’t give you what you needed. I managed to find a job and somewhere for us to stay in a small town a few states over, it was a lovely quiet Christian community. I had gotten a job as a cleaner at a local church and would often overhear conversations between people. One day I heard an older couple talking about how they wished they had been blessed with a child that they could shower with love. I watched them for a few more weeks, did some background checks, and then I decided they were the perfect couple to raise you and love you.”

“Often they ran the community soup kitchen at the church and they were often the last to leave, so I wrapped you up in a little Moses basket and left you with a note at the door. I rang the bell then ran into the bushes and waited and watched.”

“I saw the amazement and concern and love in their eyes as they fussed over you. I saw the police arrive. I watched in the background over the next few months and I watched them take you in and eventually adopt you as their own. I then went on my way. I would check in every now and then to ensure they were taking good care of you and to watch you grow. I was so proud of the beautiful person you had become.”

“I was there when you met Lachlan and I knew what was coming but I couldn’t interfere. I just watched on the sidelines, waiting for the time to come when you would need me.”

“When you had made your way here to Rocky Mountain and I had heard that Kingston was requesting a Healer, I knew it was the right time for me to make an appearance in your life.”

“So Aleksa that is the story of your parents and what happened to them, that is also the story of how you came to be adopted and live in a human town. Now you know you are a Crescent Moon Wolf, there is still so much I have to tell you, you will need to learn to properly harness your powers and your gifts, and in time you will.”

“I knew one day you would need to know everything, and I needed to be able to explain it to you. You might ask why I did not tell you earlier that you were a werewolf. I planned to trust me. I was planning to come to you and reveal myself to you just before your eighteenth birthday and to be there with you when you shifted for the first time. I couldn’t let you go through it alone.”

“However, my past had caught up with me. You see I too was on the run. Probably part of the reason Kristina and I understood each other so well. We were in similar situations. I was detained against my will, and it was a few years before I could escape. I am so sorry my child. I am sorry that I had let you down, and that I had left Kristina down. But I am here now and I will answer any questions you have to the best of my ability.”

I looked up at Aleksa and I could sense a sadness within her. She was not looking back at me, she had her head down and was quietly sniffing and wiping back her tears. I looked to Kingston who looked astonished as if he was still processing what I'd just said.

Silence enveloped us and I waited patiently for Aleksa's response and her impending questions. I also hoped that she would forgive me for my failures.

Aleksa POV

I sat there listening to Xanthe tell me about my birth parents – Aleksander and Kristina. I felt something I didn't expect to feel. I felt an overwhelming sense of determination. A desire to do better, to be better, to be stronger, and to fight harder. I didn't want my parent's death to have been in vain. They had sacrificed so much for me. And now it was my turn to do the same for my children.

I would be damned if I was going to let something happen to my precious pups, especially Layla. If what Xanthe is saying is correct, then Layla is also a crescent moon wolf. That means she is in danger.

I felt a sense of fear and panic engulf me, all I wanted to do is to run to my precious Liam and Layla and hold them tight. But I needed to finish this conversation. There were still questions to be answered. I needed to be strong and know what we are up against.

A flurry of emotions was consuming me right now. There was a determination to make my birth parents proud. Fear that my children, especially Layla, were in danger, not just from the threat of being taken back to Evergreen and separated from me, but that there were wolves out there who may know of her existence and wish to harm and exploit her. Sadness – that I was the reason my parents died. If it weren't for me they may not have been caught off guard and might still be here today. I was also concerned that this will all be too much for Kingston and the pack. And finally, anger, at the people that had hunted my parents and me and in the process robbed me of the life I was

supposed to have, the one where my biological parents never died, where I was raised with my birth pack.

Just breathe Aleksa I told myself, as I felt Kingston's arms wrap around me for comfort. He must have sensed my emotional hurricane through our mate bond. I looked up at him and he has a soft smile on his face, I can feel that he is concerned about me.

I nodded at him and told him through the mind-link that I'd be ok. And thanked him for being here for me.

I looked back at Xanthe and I said "There are so many questions I want to ask you, especially about what being a Crescent Moon wolf means. But I feel the first question I need to ask is this – where are my Grandparents? Are they still alive, and if so where?"

My rationale for this is that I need to know how much of a threat they were, as they are the reason that both my parents are dead. They were ruthless, they cared not for the mate bond, not for their own blood, and their greed and ambition were clearly their priorities. I wanted to know where they were and if there was any chance that they could know of my existence and of Liam and Layla's. Although in all honesty, I hoped there were gone. I had no intention of ever meeting such cruel people, in my mind, there were already dead.

"Aleksa, I wish I could answer this question without a doubt but I can't. Your grandmother passed not long after Kristina was murdered. My contacts told me she took her own life out of heartbreak and regret. Apparently, she never wanted any of this for her daughter, and she was a subservient Luna and did what her mate had commanded her to do. While she didn't agree with his actions, she also didn't take a stand against them either. As for your grandfather, when the agreement with the neighboring pack fell through and Kristina left, there was no heir to take over. After the Luna passed, your grandfather's wolf became feral and started to lose his grasp on reality, the pack began to suffer, and at this time the neighboring pack invaded the Moon Valley and took over control.

There was an alpha challenge, and your grandfather was grievously wounded, but it is unknown as to whether he actually died, as a rogue attack occurred while the challenge was taking place, and chaos ensued, it was at this time he disappeared, and his body was never found, although it is assumed he died but it is not certain. The wounds he sustained in the challenge coupled with

losing his mate would be enough to end any wolf. I don't think he is a threat to you Aleska, or to your pups." Xanthe told me looking absolute in her answer.

"And, the Hunter, did you ever find out his identity? Who was the person that made the agreement with my Grandfather for my mother's firstborn daughter?" I asked Xanthe, wanting to get an idea of the players that were involved here, and who we were up against.

"No, I'm afraid not. I tried to keep a low profile. I had to keep you safe. I used some of my contacts to find out about your grandparents, but I was unable to find anything about the Hunter. I didn't want people to know I was asking questions." Xanthe told me apologetically.

"Hmmn, ok, fair enough, thank you Xanthe for everything, you have done for me. I do appreciate it. It sounds like I owe you my life. I'm not sure how I can ever repay you, but I will surely try." I told Xanthe, feeling a great deal of respect for the woman sitting in front of me right now.

"If you don't mind, I do have some more questions?" I ask Xanthe.

"That is fine Aleksa, I have no place else to be right now. Fire away." Xanthe said sweetly.

"You said that my mother died fighting to protect me. But I don't understand. If she was also a Crescent Moon wolf, why did she die? Why didn't she use her powers?" I questioned Xanthe. As that is one part of this story that I can't seem to get my head around.

"I wondered when you were gonna ask me that question. The wolves that showed up that night didn't appear to have any scents. And when I arrived on the scene I detected the faintest hint of magic, of dark magic Aleksa. I fear that a witch who practices dark magic was involved. I can't say for certain, but I imagine that there was a barrier or forcefield that your mother's powers couldn't penetrate. I've wracked my brain throughout the years trying to understand what happened there, that's all I have come up with that makes any real sense." Xanthe told me bowing her head down. I got the impression she was unhappy that she hadn't been able to uncover more.

"Dark magic? So she stood no chance then? Outnumbered by wolves and facing off against a dark witch." I said anger searing through me, I feel my whole body starting to shake, and I could feel my eyes glowing.

“Aleksa, honey, try to calm down, just breathe,” Kingston said as he tried to calm me down, his touch alone was enough to soothe my soul.

“Aleksa, I can help you. Just knowing that there was a dark witch involved gives us more of an advantage. We can prepare better. I’m sorry I know this is all a lot. I know it’s horrible. I hate that this all happened and I couldn’t do anything to help. We have a chance here though, to prevent history from repeating.” Xanthe soothingly tells me while placing her hands on my hands.

“Tell me of my father’s death. I need to know – everything.” I expressed to Xanthe. I needed to know as much as I could about the events that had transpired all those years ago.

“Aleksander was a warrior from a pack a state over from Moon Valley. They met by chance really. Kristina would every once in a while sneak out with her friends into one of the nearby human towns for a bit of dancing and fun. One night she bumped into Aleksander while leaving the club, they knew they were mates right away, and instantly connected. They would meet every chance they got, as Kristina set about introducing him to her father. Aleksander wasn’t able to mark and mate with Kristina straight away with her being the alpha’s daughter, so he had to be patient and undergo formalities, however, the alpha was opposed to their mateship.”

“You see, Aleksander was an elite warrior for the Dark Moon pack, he was revered among his squad, and everyone that met Aleksander took an instant liking to him. He was very popular with the she-wolves but was determined to wait for his mate, which he did. Your mother – Kristina was the same, she was holding out for her mate too. They were so in love. It was a perfect match.”

“You wanted to ask how your father died. He was a fierce fighter, but he was outnumbered the night that they first came for you, however, he was holding his own just fine. but the rogues that attacked him stabbed him in the back multiple times with a silver blade laced with wolfsbane. He wasn’t able to heal and ultimately died of blood loss and wolfsbane poisoning. I’m sorry Aleksa, he was so courageous right to the very end. He managed to take them all out with him. When they had first attacked, he had already told Kristina to take you and run, which she did reluctantly. No one anticipated a silver blade and wolfsbane, they fought dirty.” Xanthe explained. “Your mother never forgave herself for that. No matter how much I would tell her that she did the right thing, she followed Aleksander’s orders and got you to safety. Kristina was heartbroken but found the strength to go on for you. She was most likely able to do this because she was a Crescent Moon wolf.”

” She knew she would meet Aleksander again one day, and she wanted to make him proud by protecting you.”

Salty tears were slowly escaping my eyes as Xanthe recounted the events leading up to my father’s death. I had so much love and respect and regret in my heart right now for the parents I had once thought hadn’t wanted me.

I wiped away my tears, took a sip from the glass of water in front of me, and took a few breaths.

“What more can you tell me about my wolf? You said I am a Crescent Moon wolf. How can I find more information about myself, about my powers and abilities? I need to know how to use them properly, and how to control them. Everything that has happened so far happened randomly. I have no clue of what I am doing.” I confessed to Xanthe.

“There is not a lot of information about the Crescent Moon wolves. Aside from Kristina, I had not heard of a Crescent Moon wolf until then. Kristina learned to harness her powers to a point, but even she didn’t know a lot about her powers, and she never had a chance to master them. And with all that was going on we didn’t speak much of them.” Xanthe replied.

“The best way for us to learn more about your wolf would be to speak with an elder. I have some contacts we can utilize, but we need to be careful as to who we trust with this. Can you give me a few days? Give me some time to reach out to a few of my contacts. I feel they will be able to point us in the right direction?” Xanthe asked me.

“Of course. Maybe we should end this meeting here. I need to get back to Liam and Layla, and I’m sure Kingston has plenty of pack business to attend to. Xanthe, thank you for your time. I appreciate everything you have told me. I really do appreciate you coming here.” I thanked Xanthe.

“Aleksa, Kingston has my details, and you can contact me anytime. I want to be here for you.” Xanthe said warmly as she got up from her seat.

“Can I just say how much you look like your mother? You really are the spitting image of her.” Xanthe told me. That made my heart swell with pride. Kingston and I stood up from our seats.

“Uh, Xanthe, do you have any photos of my parents? I’ve never met them or even seen a picture of them. I don’t even know what they look like, and I

would like to.” I asked Xanthe, as my lips started to quiver, I was fighting to prevent my emotions from consuming me once again.

“I actually do. I’m sorry Aleksa, I wasn’t thinking. Of course, you would want a photo of them. I believe I have one or two. I could bring them with me when I come back in a few days if you like.” Xanthe asked me.

“That would be amazing – thank you! Well, we will get going and we look forward to hearing from you in few days, all going well. Goodbye Xanthe!” I said as I walked over to Xanthe embracing her in a hug, she smelt like wild jasmine, the hug felt strangely familiar, as did her scent. I walked over to Kingston, and we locked hands and walked off through the gardens. I lay my head against his shoulder and we walked together, our bodies molding into one another’s. I could feel the warmth from the bond. I looked up at Kingston’s face while we were walking, he looked down at me and kissed me on the forehead. “I love you so much,” I said to Kingston.

“I love you too, Aleksa,” Kingston said back. And we kept walking towards the packhouse to see our pups on this warm sunny day, the blue sky was dotted with fluffy white clouds, there was a gentle breeze passing us, I could hear the birds chirping in the background, bees buzzing over the wildflowers that littered the sides of the path we walked on, and a faint sound of children playing with frisbees on the grass in front of the packhouse.

There was so much going through my mind right now, but it could all wait a few hours. This mama needed some time with her pups.

Aleksa POV

It’s been two weeks since we spoke with Xanthe, and strangely we haven’t heard back from her yet. We assume she has been busy or hasn’t yet found anything further out about crescent moon wolves. It’s been very busy here at the packhouse lately.

Everyone is getting prepared for the Royal Alpha Summit which will be taking place over the next week. We’ve had the caterers in to organize the meals for the week-long event. Quinn has been helping me with this as I am still new to all of this. Back at Evergreen we never had an event even remotely resembling this. It’s all a learning curve for me.

We decided against the media release about Kingston and I's mateship. The pack knew most importantly, but the rest of the world could wait a little bit longer.

After speaking with Xanthe and learning what we did about my lineage, about the Crescent Moon wolves being hunted, about my grandparents, and the Hunter that was potentially looking for me and Layla, we decided that it was best to keep things under wraps for now. We would wait for the summit and deal with things as they happened. Meaning that we would be dealing with the Lachlan situation as it arose.

I really hoped that Lachlan wouldn't attend the Royal Alpha Summit. He had never attended one previously so with a little bit of luck he wouldn't attend this one. Although, in saying that we weren't leaving it to luck. Kingston and Asher were working on a plan for what would happen if he did attend and how we would approach that situation without placing a damper on the celebrations or any disrespect to the alpha king himself.

Kingston was determined that this would be the best summit he had organized yet. We had all the accommodation organized, housekeeping was paying attention to detail to ensure that everything was perfect for our guests, and we had guides and point of contact organized for each pack.

We had entertainment organized for each night of the summit. The conference room had been extended and prepared to seat all attending alphas comfortably. Maintenance had outdone themselves, as the pack landscaping looked immaculate. The pack members were all excited and ready to host the attending packs. Unmated wolves were excited at the possibility of meeting their mates at the summit. The pack was a hive of excitement and anticipation.

While I was putting on a brave face, my anxiety was at an all-time high. I was trying to distract myself and not overanalyze everything because I knew Kingston would feel it through our bond, but I just couldn't. I was scared of what would happen if Lachlan attended. So much so that I had made plans to have Kingston's parents Chase and Cordelia take Liam and Layla away to a cabin in a nearby state for the week of the summit. I needed to know that they were safe especially if I was to see Lachlan face to face. Also, I would constantly be on edge worrying about whether or not they were safe if they were to be here while the Summit was taking place.

Although I would worry regardless, I would worry less knowing that they were in the capable hands of Chase and Cordelia. We had gotten to know each other a lot more over the past few weeks. They were very welcoming and genuinely happy for us both. They knew of my past with Lachlan and Evergreen, and accepted me with open arms.

Chase was still very fit and also very intimidating when you first met him, he was an older more distinguished version of Kingston, and Cordelia was sophisticated and elegant, she looked like an older version of Quinn, she was very nurturing and absolutely loved being around children, she doted on Liam and Layla as if they were her own pups. They would be leaving two days before the summit started, which I was happy with, as it gave us that little bit more time to plan, and sort our backup plan, as well as our back up to the backup plan.

Kingston had been very busy, but he had a very capable team working with him, he was at this point just checking that everything was organized and ready to go. Initially, he had played a bigger role in preparing the summit, but in light of the rogue attacks, Xanthe telling us of mine and Layla's lineage and preparing for the probable fallout with Lachlan, he had decided to delegate.

Quinn and Mason had been busy renovating their cottage, and it was almost ready, they were just putting the finishing touches on it. They were so happy stuck in their own little love bubble. Kingston had been giving Mason more and more responsibility within the pack leadership and Mason was handling it all so well. He seemed very comfortable and settled here. I was so happy for my friend. He deserved happiness.

Kaia was still heavily involved with the warrior squad and practically trained all day every day. She was still spending a lot of time with Asher, they had even been on their first date. They were taking things slowly but you could feel the s****l tension in the air whenever those two were around each other.

Liam and Layla were settled and fitted in so well with the pack, everyone had been so welcoming towards them. It's crazy to think that in a few months they would be celebrating their third birthdays. I hadn't planned anything yet for that but I plan to once the summit is over, and everything is sorted out in regards to Lachlan, I will start planning for it then.

I was on my way to Kingston's office to bring him some lunch as he tended to skip meals often when he was hyperfocused and immersed in pack business. Liam and Layla were at daycare so I was just doing errands today and helping

with the final preparations. As I walked down the hallway I heard raised voices coming from Kingston's office.

The voices stopped. I assumed they could scent me considering I was standing just outside the office. "Come in Aleksa" Kingston called out.

I walked in to see Kingston leaning back in his chair, Asher was sitting on the chair in front of Lachlan's desk. "Good afternoon Asher, good afternoon My Love," I said as I walked up to Kingston, placing his lunch on his desk in front of him and kissing him on his forehead.

"Did I walk in on something?" I ask sheepishly.

Asher shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

"Just tell her Asher," Kingston says to Asher sighing.

"Well Aleksa, I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it would appear that news of Lachlan's bounty has traveled, your images have been posted all over the town. It's only a matter of time before someone contacts Lachlan, and he knows where you are." Asher tells me, releasing the breath he was holding in.

My heart starts racing rapidly and I feel a shiver ripple throughout my body. My eyes begin to tear up. Then I close my eyes and focus my energy. I will not let this fear consume me. I take a few deep breaths and try to control my emotions.

Kingston goes to pull me into him and sit me on his lap, while I would usually feel comfort and protection in this action, right now I want to stand. I need to stand. I will not cower and let fear take over whenever a curveball is thrown at me. I am to be Luna of this pack Although I love that Kingston wants to protect me, I am done with being a passive subservient Luna like I was when I was at Evergreen. I need to learn to protect myself, my pups, and my pack properly. Kingston growls at my actions and looks at me questionably.

"Okay, so, we need a plan! We can't leave anything to chance, we really need to be a few steps ahead of Lachlan at all times!" I declare to them both.

Asher looks at me incredulously, usually, I would be an emotional wreck right now, and would act before thinking. But I was done with being that girl.

Kingston looks at me with a proud look on his face. I can feel through the bond that he approves of this side of me.

“Well Luna, I have taken them all down, but we have to work on the premise that they have already been seen by most people.”

“For example, the people that knew you from working at the tavern, people who may be walked past you in the street, or saw you in a shop. We will speak with all pack members, I can’t imagine we would have any problems there. But the humans and any rogues we will have no control over.” Asher replied.

“I have just called all pack members to the training grounds in fifteen minutes, we will discuss this issue with them immediately. Aleksa we will need to tell them about your past, about Lachlan, and about Evergreen. What are your thoughts on this?” Kingston asks me.

“I agree. The pack needs to know the truth. It is better that they know now before they decide whether or not they will accept me as their Luna officially.” I said.

Kingston growled. “They have already accepted you. You are their Luna.” He declared.

I put my hands on his cheek and pulled him in for a quick kiss to calm his wolf.

“Looks like we will be speaking with Lachlan sooner than we expected,” Kingston says to Asher, their eyes meeting each other knowingly in agreeance.

“I will have two elite warriors assigned to Liam and Layla twenty-four hours a day, I will also assign two elite warriors to the Luna if you agree Alpha?” Asher asked Kingston.

“Sounds good. We will need to tighten pack security and double the patrols. I will have to speak with our neighboring packs to advise them of the situation and ensure our bases are covered should we need additional backup.” Kingston tells Asher.

“Everything will be ok Aleksa, you are safe, Liam and Layla are safe. Your pack will protect you.” Kingston reassures me.

"I know we will be. I refuse to let Lachlan control our lives. I am done with running and done with being afraid. That being said, I need a little help with something Asher. If you have some free time later this afternoon?" I ask him hopefully.

"Of course Luna, although I must say I am rather curious," Asher remarks to me. Kingston is looking at me, raising an eyebrow.

"Relax, I just need a little training, some basic but effective defensive moves, I need to be able to fight if necessary," I tell them both.

Kingston mind-links me "This more dominant side of you is turning me right now on my love!"

"Uh guys, I'm still here," Asher says, looking uncomfortable.

Kingston and I both chuckle, "Sorry man" Kingston says to Asher.

I feel the heat creep over my cheeks, I know that I am blushing right now.

A few minutes later, there is a knock on the door. "Mason, please come in," Kingston calls out.

Mason walks in, "Alpha, Luna, Beta Asher," He says as he nodded his head respectfully. "What can I do for you?" He asks.

"Well Mason, we have a problem. Those images you warned us of, well they have been posted all over town. We have to assume that Lachlan already knows where Aleksa and the twins are, so we have a problem."

"I asked you to come here today in the hopes that you would consider being Liam and Layla's protection detail for now, until this is all resolved. I would also assign to of our elite warriors to the twins, but I think it would be reassuring for Aleksa to have someone she trusts looking out for the twins, and less stressful for them to have a familiar face around them." Kingston asks Mason.

Mason answers straight away as if he didn't even have to consider the request. "Absolutely Alpha, I would be honored to." He said, winking at me, which made me smile, lessening my nerves a little.

Kingston got up out of his seat and everyone else stood and made their way out of the office. It was time to address the pack and tell them of my life before coming to Rocky Mountain. It was time to tell them of the threat to the pack. Although it wasn't the time to tell them of my lineage and that I was a Crescent Moon wolf as I still didn't really know what that meant myself.

I had just hoped that they would still accept the twins and I once they knew the truth about my past before coming to Rocky Mountain.

Aleksa POV

It's been a few days since we had "the talk" with our pack. It actually went really well. Everyone was a bit quiet initially. I could hear gasps and whispers, but I kept talking, telling my story, and before long, I could sense that the pack understood what I was saying and why I had to leave my previous pack. I explained what happened with Lachlan and Eva, and how I ended up in the pack dungeons. Then I explained how I had to leave with my pups, and mentioned my friends, Mason and Kaia, who helped facilitate that escape. Everyone just stood and listened to what I had to say. Kingston took over and explained to the pack about the bounty placed on me, as well as explaining that what Lachlan had told people about Mason and Kaia was untrue, that they were helping me, not k*****g me, and to not pay attention to the lies they might hear. He reassured the pack that he had done his due diligence before we came to join Rocky Mountain,

Since then, everyone has been even friendlier, which I didn't think was possible, because they were already so welcoming. I feel lighter not having to hide my past, like a weight has been shifted from my shoulders. I feel relieved to know that the pack accepts me as their Luna, because I love Kingston and the pack, and I feel like we have made this place our home. I don't even want to imagine what might have happened if the pack hadn't accepted me and my pups.

Due to the news of the bounty, and mine and my pups faces being plastered everywhere, as well as Mason and Kaia's, pack security and patrols have doubled and the place is like Fort Knox around here, which is making things a little harder for the deliveries and preparations needed for the summit, but as Kingston reiterates, it's better to be safe than sorry.

I know I need to face Lachlan once and for all. And every day I feel more and more ready for it, I just want to get it over with, so we can all live our lives without having this hanging over our heads.

Asher has been taking the time out to train me twice a day. We meet at dawn and dusk. He is mostly teaching me defense. He's keeping it short and sweet for now, teaching me how I can use my size to my advantage, as well as teaching me moves that are easy to execute and are highly effective.

Tomorrow, Chase and Cordelia will be taking Liam and Layla away to a lake house in Idaho. Mason and Quinn will be accompanying them, as well as several elite warriors. I know my pups are in safe hands. I am sad that we will be separated, but I know it's only temporary. I feel confident knowing that they will be further away from Lachlan's clutches.

We are spending the day at the packhouse today. I want to make the most of my time with my pups before their trip away. I have told them they will be going away with their grandparents and they don't seem phased. I guess they are too young to really understand. But at least they have fun with Chase and Cordelia, Mason and Quinn, and they are familiar faces for them, which should help alleviate any stress or anxiety that they may feel from being away from their Mama.

I won't see Kingston until tonight as he has back-to-back meetings with some of the Alpha's from nearby packs all day, they will be busily preparing for the summit as well as Lachlan's probable arrival. I have organized a special lunch to be delivered to the conference room for them today. I know what those Alpha's are like when they are busy talking about business they often won't eat, so at least they can eat while they work. I know I will feel better knowing that they are being fed.

I hear a knock at the door and I get up from the floor where I am playing blocks with the twins to open it. I was surprised to see Kaia at the door. "Aleksa, I wondered if you and the twins would like some company. I heard that they were leaving tomorrow and I needed to get my cuddle quota in before they leave" Kaia says enthusiastically, opening her arms up for Liam and Layla.

"Aun-ty Kaia! Aun-ty Kaia!" they yelled, barrelling towards her with open arms.

"My pups!" She replies, pulling them into her arms, and snuggling them.

"Perhaps we could go to the kitchen and get some snacks to have a picnic on the front lawn?" I suggested to everyone.

"Yay!" the twins shouted in unison.

“Sounds good to me!” Kaia says cheerfully.

I grab my go-bag for the twins, they each take Kaia’s hand, and we walk out the door, kitchen bound for snacks.

Ready to enjoy the rest of the day together creating fun memories.

It’s the day before the summit, which means my pups are about to embark on their first holiday without their Mama this morning, and I am feeling a little anxious. I woke up super early today. I had the twins’ suitcases packed last night and had taken them to the front door, ready to be loaded into Chase’s SUV this morning.

I have already had two coffees and I’m considering my third one already. I’ve just been sitting here watching Liam and Layla sleep for the past few hours. Just thinking about how fast they are growing and wondering where the time has gone. It seems like only yesterday they were in my womb. Now they aren’t far off their third birthdays.

We have all been through so much over the past six months or so. But I wouldn’t change a thing because it has got us to this point. To Rocky Mountain, to Kingston, to our beautiful friends who have become our family. To this kind and caring and protective pack. We are all so blessed.

I am disrupted from my thought process by a sleepy Liam, “Mama?” He questions me.

“Good Morning Liam, yes it’s Mama, how did you sleep?” I asked my big boy.

“Good.” He says to me,

“Mama?” He asked me.

“Yes, Liam?” I said, trying to hold back my chuckle at how cute my little boy looked half asleep and trying to communicate with me.

“Pancakes?” Liam asks.

“Yes Liam, you can have pancakes this morning, let’s get you changed while we wait for your sister to wake up, shall we?” I said to Liam.

“I’m awake!” Layla called out.

I laughed out loud. Layla never missed an opportunity to have pancakes.

“Of course, my princess, let’s get you dressed too, and head down to the kitchen,” I say to my pups.

They both smile and start clapping with glee.

After breakfast, I got Liam and Layla cleaned up and we made our way back downstairs to the main entrance of the pack house. Kingston and Mason help strap the twins into their car seats and I give them big cuddles and kisses goodbye. I then say thank you to everyone and wish them all a safe trip.

I waved continuously with a big smile on my face, holding back the tears until Liam and Layla were out of sight. I feel tears flooding my eyes, and I try to contain myself in front of everyone. I end up laughing at myself and overcome with emotion. I wipe my eyes and take a few breaths trying to settle myself down. Kingston pulls me into his chest and tries to console me.

“It’s for the best, Aleksa, they will be safe with my parents, and with Mason and Quinn, I promise,” Kingston tells me.

“I know, I don’t doubt that, Kingston. I’m just sad, it’s my first time away from the twins, well, with the exception of my time in the dungeons.” I replied.

Kingston growled at my mentioning the dungeons. Well, it was probably more Sabre growling in all honesty.

I wiped my eyes one last time and took a big breath and exhaled. It’s time to pull myself together. I am doing this for my pups. I need to focus on the summit, on confronting Lachlan, and ensuring he is no longer a threat to me or the twins.

Kingston looks at me proudly, as if he knows exactly what I am thinking. Asher clears his throat.

“Alpha, Luna.” He starts.

“Border patrol has told me that some of the Alpha’s have already started to arrive for the Summit,” Asher tells us.

I had a shocked expression on my face, “But the Summit doesn’t start until tomorrow?” I replied to them both, suddenly wondering if we were actually ready. Although if they are already here, we will just have to be ready.

“It’s okay, my love, it’s not unusual for some packs to arrive a little early. We have already anticipated this. Let’s quickly refresh ourselves, then come back down to greet our guests Aleksa.” Kingston gestures for me to follow him.

“ OK, sure, good idea,” I said in reply to him, feeling a bit dazed, but following his lead. We left Asher at the main entrance, waiting to greet the guests and direct them once they arrived, as well as stalling for time as we made our way back.

The first pack to arrive was from North Dakota. Alpha Logan and his Luna Louise looked to be in their late thirties, their Gamma Joel, who I imagine was of a similar age and accompanying them, were four elite warriors. Their Beta was at home leading the pack in their absence. They were a lovely pack, very friendly. After some small talk, Asher accompanied them to the cottage they would be residing in for the entirety of the summit. We had suggested they get settled and meet us back at the packhouse for lunch if they wish to. Which they happily accepted.

As we were about to leave to head back into the packhouse, another pack was arriving, so we decided to wait at the main entrance for them, as Asher was busy with the North Dakota pack.

Three SUVs drove up to the entrance. A burly man, probably in his early twenties, ran up to the door of the SUV and opened it for his Alpha, a very tall and muscular man who looked to be in his late twenties. He then opened the door on the other side and a gorgeous woman with red hair and green eyes walked out. She had a shy smile on her face, she joined hands with her mate and they walked up to us.

After introducing ourselves to them, we learned that they were from Nebraska, Wyatt, and Willow Robinson. They seemed like a nice couple, they seemed happy to be here, and I had a really good feeling about Willow specifically, there was something about her. I look forward to getting to know her better over the next week.

Kai arrived at the entrance, he promptly introduced himself to Wyatt and Willow and offered to take them to their cottage so that they could get settled in. They also agreed to meet us at the packhouse for lunch.

Kingston and I took this as a chance for us to spend a little time together while welcoming our guests. It was looking like the summit might be starting a bit earlier this year, so Kingston sent out a mass mind-link to the pack, informing them of the guests that had already arrived, and reminding them to make sure they all felt welcome.

As we walked inside the packhouse, I told Kingston that I needed a quick word with Rose. I said I would be quick if he could just wait for me. I made my way to the kitchen, leaving Kingston to check his emails on his smartphone in the lobby.

I needed to let Rose know our guests had started arriving and that we would be making a special lunch today for our guests. I wanted to give her a heads up numbers-wise but to also potentially prepare for even more guests, as we were not sure who else might arrive early and we didn't want anyone going hungry.

Rose was excited to hear that our guests were arriving and she got to work organizing food. I asked Rose if she would like some help, but she just started shoo-ing me out of the kitchen. So I took the hint and made my way to Kingston.

"My love, you still haven't told me what you and Asher have decided to do about Lachlan? What's this grand plan? I don't mean to pressure you, but I would really like to know what the plan is, considering it will involve me." I told him, pouting and looking into his eyes.

"How about we get through this afternoon, and then tonight after dinner, I will call a meeting with Asher and some of our elite warriors, then we can all talk about it then and there. Does that sound fair?" Kingston asked me. Although it was more of a statement than a question if you ask me.

"I guess I can wait," I said, feeling unimpressed that he seemed to be stalling me.

"So uh, if we have some free time now, would you like a massage?" Kingston says with a cheeky grin on his face.

“How about we get through this afternoon, have dinner, and then after the meeting we can spend some quality time together. Does that sound fair?” I said smugly to Kingston, trying to stifle my laugh.

“I see what you did there. Touche.” Kingston says, trying to suppress his laughter.

“It’s ok. Come to think of it I should really go over everything one last time, and check in with security.” Kingston says matter of factly.

“Ah, yes, and I will touch base with the planning team for the festivities, to ensure everything is on schedule,” I said to Kingston, leaning on him to kiss him on the cheek.

“I love you!” I said to Kingston as I looked into his eyes sincerely.

“I love you too!” He replied back to me. And we go our separate ways.

As I was walking down the hallway, I realized I had left my phone in the kitchen, so I turned back and headed toward the kitchen. As I walked through the door, I saw that Rose and some of the kitchen staff were busy preparing lunch. I could hear a commotion outside, so I quickly grabbed my phone and made my way outside.

As I opened the door and walked down the steps of the packhouse following the raised voices, I saw some of our pack members preparing to direct our guests. One of them has a checklist, and the other is trying to communicate with the driver of the first SUV. A total of two SUVs have arrived at the main entrance of the packhouse. I am surprised there are no ranked wolves down here to greet them, so I quickly mind-linked Kingston telling him we have more guests arriving. Then I started to confidently stride toward the SUV. I’ve got this thought to myself, it’s just meet and greet, how hard can it be.

I then see a tall and muscular man in a fitted black suit step out of the first SUV and as he turns towards me I gasp, stopping in my tracks.

“Aleksa? Well, this is a pleasant surprise.”

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 34

Aleska POV

Shivers traveled up my spine as I realized that my pups and I were in the bushes at the far end of the pack and that there was an active rogue attack taking place. I realized that I didn't actually know my way around this pack well enough to find someplace safe to hide. I had a bad feeling that we wouldn't make it back to the packhouse in time. My gut instinct was telling me that we were in trouble right now. I mind-linked Kingston, "We are in the bush just past the rosegardens. I have Liam and Layla with me!" I call out, panic seeping through in my voice through the mind-link. "Start making your way towards the packhouse, I'm on my way, get our pups to safety," Kingston commanded me via the mind-link.

I grabbed Liam and Layla protectively, pulling them in towards me, almost crushing them into my waist. I took a look around at our surroundings, trying to gauge the safest route to take back to the packhouse. My mind was racing and I felt panic set in. I needed to get the pups to safety, I thought to myself. I pulled Liam and Layla up on either side of my hips and I started walking as quietly yet as fast as I could. I managed to make my way out of the bush area and I couldn't see any signs of the rogues as of yet, so I continued to make haste back to the packhouse. I was almost at the rose gardens when I caught a whiff of a scent. An unmistakable and unforgiving scent that made my heart stop and sent goosebumps all over my body, as well as making me want to vomit. Rogues!

As I turned to look behind me, I saw three mangey-looking rogues slowly stalking towards me, with pure unadulterated hate on their faces. "Amber!" I screamed internally. "Amber, please we need to shift. Now!" I frantically pleaded with my wolf. Amber had been more present lately, but we hadn't shifted yet, not for a long time. I knew it was expecting a lot thinking that we would just be able to shift, but our pups' lives were on the line. "I've got this! It's gonna hurt though!" Amber forewarned me. I quickly placed the twins behind me and instructed them to step back. I felt my bones cracking and rearranging themselves, my fur rapidly sprouting all over my body. The transition was excruciating but it was quick. However, before I was fully shifted, a reddish-brown rogue wolf ripped into my left shoulder, and it had taken a chunk of skin off with it. I let out a loud whimper and fell to my side. I could feel blood hemorrhaging from my wounds. Amber pushed through and completed our shift but we were weak now from the pain and the blood loss, even in our wolf form, because we hadn't shifted in so long, and now due to the penetrating wounds. I wouldn't be able to heal quickly enough. I couldn't look back at my pups because the rogues were circling me, snarling at me, and getting ready to attack me from all sides. I could hear my pups crying in

horror though. And I felt absolutely terrified that I might not be able to protect them from harm. I was prepared to die trying though.

“Kingston, Please!!” That was all I was able to get out as I made a last-ditch effort to call for help. I didn’t have time to say much else. I held my head up high and braced myself for the fight of my life. I could hear Liam and Layla crying and yelling “Mommy!” from behind me. My poor babies, I thought to myself. I told them to “Run! And hide!” “Now!” and I did my best to keep the rogue’s attention on me.

I wouldn’t plead, as I knew there was no point. I could feel their auras. I knew what their intentions were. But I wasn’t going down without putting up a hell of a fight. The honey-colored rogue with the white tinges on its face charged at me, I gave him the idea that I was going to move to my right but at the last minute, I moved to my left. However, at that moment the brown and white striped rogue pummeled into me from behind, ripping its teeth into my left upper thigh and knocking me forward onto the ground. I let out a whimper of pain, as I picked myself up. I hadn’t seen that coming. I was feeling a bit faint and felt as though I’d had the wind knocked out of me, but I quickly got back up on my feet. The rogues were all circling me and raring to go. They started to charge toward me, I realized that they were just toying with me before. Although I could feel they wouldn’t be this time. I took a deep breath and focused my energy and mind on hope. Hope – that I could survive this. Hope – that I could protect my pups. At that moment, I felt a surge of energy within myself. A surge of power. It was as if electricity was flowing through my veins. It felt like my eyes were glowing. I braced myself for the impact of the rogues barreling toward me, but I felt nothing but strength and raw power. I then felt myself shift back to my human form. I should have been scared because I couldn’t fight in human form, but I wasn’t. I felt strong. I felt confident.

I raised my head upwards and I felt what I would describe as an electrical surge, and focused my energy on the rogues. I opened my eyes and to my shock, I saw that the three rogues that were charging toward me only seconds ago, were on the ground, and they appeared to be unconscious. I could see their limbs shaking uncontrollably. It was as if they had received an electric shock. I looked around and there was no one else around. I was in a state of disbelief. I was not sure what had just happened but I was thankful for whatever miracle had just occurred. I could feel tingles all over my body. It felt as though I was consumed by an electrical forcefield. And then it was gone, as fast as it had consumed me. I felt normal again.

With the rogue wolves out for the count, I called out to my babies telling them it was safe to come out. They come out from behind a tree running towards me crying. At that moment I heard twigs snap around me and held my breath. Fearing that more rogues have arrived and I have just moved my pups out of their hiding place, putting them in harm's way. I gasped. Then I felt a wave of awareness sweep over me, and I realized the approaching wolves were friendly. They were part of our pack.

"It's our mate – Aleksa," Amber told me internally. I was relieved to see Sabre walking toward us. Sabre pounced towards me moving his head to his side to look at the rogues that were on the ground unconscious. He glanced at them then back to me, shaking his head in disbelief. Sabre then growled loudly. He rushed toward me and started licking my wounds, to help accelerate the healing process, since there were healing abilities in the saliva of a true mate. Sabre then shifted to his human form and Kingston grabbed Liam and Layla towards him and checks them for injuries. When he was satisfied they were okay, he embraced them in a strong hug and kissed their foreheads. He then released them when he noticed I was feeling faint, and pulled me into his arms, holding me at my waist and legs pulling me into his chest. Overwhelmed at the events that had transpired, and feeling weak from my injuries, I felt myself give in to sleep.

I awoke in the pack hospital once again, this time I was aware of my surroundings immediately, as the smell of antiseptic and cleaning products hit my nose. I could also scent Kingston, even before I opened my eyes. I scanned the room, and it was just Kingston in the room with me. "Liam and Layla?" I asked in a state of panic, fearful that something might have happened to them. "Where are they? Are they ok?" I asked worriedly. "They are fine. There's not a scratch on them. They are with Kaia. How are you feeling?" Kingston asked me with concern. "I'm fine. I just wanna go home. And see my babies." I told him, hoping he would let me get my way. "How long have I been here?" I asked him, as it suddenly dawned on me I had no idea how much time had passed. "It's been about twenty-four hours, you healed pretty quickly. The doctor was unsure why you didn't wake up earlier," Kingston told me with concern in his voice.

"I think I have an idea," I told him. Recalling the feeling that engulfed me when I was fighting the rogues. "Something happened to me out there. I can't really explain it. But something helped me fight off the rogues." I told Kingston, who looked at me knowingly. I started to wonder why he wasn't as surprised as I

was. It's as if he knew something that I didn't know. "You don't seem surprised?" I said to Kingston.

"I'm not Aleksa. There is something that I was meant to tell you a while ago, but then I got distracted and had forgotten to mention it to you." Kingston told me. "I think I better tell you now though," Kingston said, with a cautious look on his face.

"After the first rogue attack, before you joined the pack, you weren't healing and you were unconscious for several days, the medical team was unsure of what was keeping you from waking and we were worried about your wolf's absence, so we had to think outside the box. I asked a Healer to come to see you. A Healer from a nearby pack came in and spent some time with you. Afterward, she told us (The Doctor and Myself) that you were not an ordinary wolf. She said that you were special, but she refused to elaborate any further. She wanted to speak with you first when you had recovered. It looks like now might be a good time to ask her to come back in to see you." Kingston exclaimed.

I sat there staring at Kingston. A part of me was mad at him for not telling me this earlier, but mostly I was also a little shocked and overwhelmed by everything. I was not sure what had actually happened with the rogues, but I didn't think there was anything special about me. To be honest I felt a little substandard if anything. I had missed out on so much of the werewolf world, as I had lived as a human most of my life. I didn't know what to make of this news.

I took a moment to think about what Kingston had just said, then replied to Kingston "I think that is a good idea. I would like to speak with the Healer. Please." Then I looked at the clock on the wall and asked, "Do you think I could be discharged? I really feel much better now, and I really just want to get home to my pups." I said, with a sweet and hopeful smile on my face, hoping that will help me get my way.

"I'll have a chat with the Doctor," Kingston said as he got up from his seat, and started to walk out of the room. I shuffled to the side of my bed and moved my feet so that they were hanging over the side of the bed. I pulled my gown down to take a peek at the wound on my shoulder, then moved it upwards to check the wound on my thigh. There was nothing there. No dressings. No scars. As if I had never been attacked. I pulled my gown back down and I pushed my body upwards off the bed, to stand up. I felt good. I didn't feel any

pain from where my wounds once were, or aches from being in bed so long. I felt energized. I walked towards the bathroom to tidy myself up.

After I had been to the bathroom and refreshed myself, I walked back into the room to find that Kingston was back. "You look great. How are you feeling?" Kingston asked me looking surprised that I was moving so effortlessly I would imagine. "I feel better than I have in a long time," I told him with a big smile on my face. And I meant every word. "So, can I be discharged? I'll take it easy I promise." I said pouting hopefully to my mate. "The Doc said you could, but you have to take it easy, and you have to come back in tomorrow for a check-up." He told me sternly. "No problem. Uh. I don't have any clothes to change into." I said to him, biting down on my lip. "I'll have Asher bring some over," Kingston informed me, his eyes hazed over and I could see that he was mind-linking.

In no time at all, Asher had arrived with my clothes and I was signing out of the hospital. I had been given my discharge papers from the Doctor, and we were about to walk out the door when I was approached by a tall dark hooded figure. The figure lifted up the hood of their gown, her wavy raven-colored hair fell forward, and I was met by the most intriguing pair of emerald-colored eyes. This must be the healer that Kingston was telling me about, I thought to myself. I could sense her aura was powerful, but in a positive way, not in a dark magic kind of way. "Aleska, we need to speak dear." She said with a sense of urgency in her voice.

Aleksa POV

I looked up at the woman in front of me and I could sense that what she had to tell me was important. Even though I was anxious and desperately wanted to see my pups, and hold them in my arms. I knew I had to hear her out, and find out what she meant when she told Kingston that I wasn't an ordinary wolf.

I looked at Kingston who looked unphased by the appearance of the Healer. I on the other hand was a little nervous about what I was about to find out. Kingston led us into a room in the hospital that was used for family conferences, and we took a seat at the conference table.

I started biting my nails, I know it's a filthy habit, but it's just something that I do when I'm anxious. The healer went on to tell me that her name was Xanthe, and she had been meaning to speak with me for some time now. She also told me that she foresaw my arrival here at Rocky Mountain and she had

seen what happened at Evergreen, but that everything happened for a reason and led me to where I was right now.

“How could you know I would come here? How could you be expecting me?” I bit down on my lip, furrowing my brows.

“I didn’t even know that I was coming here. I looked at a map and randomly chose Colorado. If I hadn’t found out about Lachlan and Eva, I never would have come here. So how could you possibly know?” I said a little breathless and a little taken back by the Xanthe’s words.

“I have been watching you since you were born. Who do you think left you in the basket outside that church, on that very night, at that very time, just as the Petrovs were leaving church service?” Xanthe questioned me, with a smile on her face.

“You left me there? You’re not my mother though. I feel no connection to you.” I told her, with a skeptical tone in my voice.

“You are right, I am not your mother. But I knew your mother very well. And your father.” Xanthe told me.

“Are they, are they alive? Did something happen to them?” I asked her hesitantly, not sure that I really wanted to know the answer.

“Your Father died protecting you and your mother. You see, you are a gifted wolf, as was your mother Kristina. You come from a lineage of gifted wolves, on your mother’s side.” Xanthe informed me.

I stared at her in disbelief. “Gifted wolves? I barely function as an average werewolf. I can’t fight. I know very little about being a werewolf. How could I be a gifted wolf? I think you have the wrong person.” I exclaimed, shaking my head in disbelief.

“I can assure you, Aleksa, you are gifted. Tell me has anything strange happened recently, anything you can’t explain, like a newfound power perhaps? Have you ever felt something was going to happen before it did, or, have you ever had a “feeling about someone’s intention or character” without knowing anything about them?” Xanthe asked me.

“Well, I guess, the other day, there was something. When I was being attacked by rogues, I felt a surge go through me, and I could have sworn my

eyes were glowing. I still don't quite understand what happened. One moment the rogues were charging for me, the next they were out cold like they had been electrocuted." I blurted out to Xanthe. "And I have always had "feelings" about people, I figured I was just good at reading people. Like I could tell by their aura what their intentions were." I told her. Starting to wonder if what she is telling me might actually be true.

"Aleksa, your birth parents' names were Aleksander and Kristina. You were named after your father. Your parents loved you very much. Your father fought to his last breath trying to protect you from those who wanted to harm you. Your mother sacrificed herself, also, for you. They entrusted you in my care. But I knew you would never be truly safe as long as you were with me. So I did what I felt was best for you. I started observing the humans, to find a couple who didn't have children but would love you as their own, and when I found the Petrovs, I knew you would be safe, and that you would be loved, so I manifested it so that they would find you, fall in love with you and adopt you as their own." Xanthe told me, shedding a tear from her eyes.

I was stunned. I sat there open-mouthed, and I had no words. I just stared at Xanthe, dumbfounded and trying to digest what I had just been told. I felt sad that my birth parents had lost their lives trying to protect me. All these years I just figured that they didn't want me. And now I was told that I am some gifted wolf. This is all too much. I needed some air, I thought to myself.

"I, uh, I need some air. Do you mind? Could we finish this talk later? I'm feeling tired and overwhelmed, and I just wanna see Liam and Layla right now." I said rhetorically to Xanthe and Kingston. I quietly sniffed, with tears threatening to erupt from my eyes.

"I think this has been a lot for Aleksa to take in. It might be a good idea to pause the conversation here, for now, Xanthe." Kingston suggested.

"Very well. But we're not finished, Aleksa – there is more I have to tell you, I realize you are overwhelmed right now, but we will need to speak again, very soon. How about tomorrow afternoon? Will that be enough time for you to think about what I have told you today?" Xanthe asked me.

"Yes. Tomorrow afternoon will be fine. I'm sorry. I appreciate you coming here and speaking with me. It's, just, a lot to take in." I told Xanthe, trying to hold myself together. I felt like I need a shower and a cry. Just to get it all out. I gave her a half-smile and got up from my seat and walked towards the door. I heard Kingston thanking her for her time, and bidding her farewell. But I just

keep walking. I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to hug my babies. That would make everything better.

A good night's sleep made the world of difference. I felt so much better today. I had time to reconcile things in my head, and I was ready to hear what else Xanthe has to tell me. I would apologize for my behavior yesterday. I wasn't nearly as polite or grateful as I should have been towards Xanthe. Now that I've had time to think I have so many questions, about my birth parents, my lineage, my gifts, and more importantly I want to know who was after me and my mother, and why exactly.

I would ask all these questions in just a few hours. For now, I had a brunch date planned with Quinn and Kaia, we had so much to catch up on. I wanted to hear all about what they had been up to, Quinn and her plans with Mason, Kaia with her training not to mention how things were progressing with a certain dashing Beta. It would be nice to just unwind with some girl talk and forget about my own complicated life for a moment.

Liam and Layla were still fast asleep, they had a late night. So I thought I would sneak downstairs to grab a coffee and then make my way back upstairs to wake Liam and Layla for daycare.

"Good Morning Aleksa, or shall I say Luna?" Mason mocked me, with a grin on his face, which soon turned serious. "We need to talk, Where is Kingston?" Mason asked me with a sense of urgency emanating from him.

"Is everything ok Mason?" I said suddenly worried by the grave expression on his face.

"I have some news but I would prefer to tell you and the Alpha at the same time." Mason declared.

"Sure. I will mind-link him now. I was just about to make a coffee, would you like one? And, will the kitchen be an appropriate place to discuss this, or does it require more privacy?" I asked Mason.

"I think we should move this somewhere private," Mason said discretely.

As we walked into the kitchen, Kingston was already there, sitting down drinking coffee, and looking at his laptop. Billie Eilish's song "Happier than

ever” was playing”, Gawd I loved that song I thought to myself. Kingston was looking quite relaxed. I really hoped that this wasn’t bad news.

“Good Morning my love,” Kingston said as he pulled me into him and kissed me passionately on the lips. I could taste the fresh blend of coffee that he was drinking was still on his lips mixed with a hint of chocolate, he tasted so good. I reluctantly pulled my lips from his, feeling a flush creep over my cheeks, I was still not used to this affection that he showered me with. Thank you Moon Goddess for pairing me with this man, he really was perfection, I thought silently to myself.

“Good Morning,” I said to Kingston with a beaming smile on my face, feeling smitten.

“So what is it that you wanted to speak about Mason?” Kingston asked. “Shall we take this into my office perhaps?” Kingston asked, to which Mason nodded and replied, “I think that would be a good idea, Alpha.”

“Oh, I’ve left Liam and Layla upstairs, I was just sneaking down for coffee. I didn’t expect anyone else to be up. They are still sleeping.” I told both Kingston and Mason.

“Aleksa, if you don’t mind I’ll mind-link Quinn, she was on her way here anyway. I’m sure she would be happy to watch and tend to Liam and Layla while we talk in the office?” Mason asked me.

“That would be amazing! Thank you Mason!” I said feeling relief wash over me. I watched his eyes haze over indicating he was in a mind-link.

I quickly poured a coffee for myself and for Mason, and we made our way to Kingston’s office.

“Thank you, Luna,” Mason said as he accepted his coffee from me.

“Please, just Aleksa, Mason you are like family to me, please don’t call me Luna” I insisted to Mason who just chuckled.

“So, Mason, what was it that you wanted to talk about?” Kingston asked, sitting back on his leather chair in front of his rich mahogany desk, which was for a change completely clear, a far cry from the messy cluttered desk only a few days ago.

“Well Alpha, Caleb (Aleksa’s previous Gamma) contacted me the other day. He had news about Lachlan. Apparently, although Evergreen’s trackers couldn’t scent us, they have managed to obtain visuals of us at the airport, and they have tracked us as far as Iowa. Sources have suggested that Lachlan has redirected and increased his search party. But there’s more.” Mason pauses, then continues.

“Apparently, there is a bounty out on you, Aleksa.” He says directing his eyes to me specifically.

“There is a huge reward for whoever can find you and your pups and bring them back to Lachlan unharmed. According to Caleb, they are distributing our visuals nationwide. It appears that we are gonna need a contingency plan.” Mason told us with concern etched all over his face.

Aleksa POV

A wave of apprehension overtook me after learning of Lachlan’s attempts at finding us. Confirming that he was actively searching for us, and how much closer he was getting made me feel nauseous. I felt like I was going to be sick. My stomach was churning at the thought of him finding us. It wasn’t myself that I was worried about, it was Liam and Layla.

I would never let him take my pups from me. I would never go back to Evergreen with him. I had loved that pack like family. I was so broken when I realized that they had all known what was happening all along. I still felt so betrayed by them all. With the exception of Caleb and Kali of course. Caleb was under an alpha command, I know now that he couldn’t physically tell me. And they had both risked so much to help us all escape from Evergreen. And for that, I would be eternally grateful.

I had hoped that Lachlan would just go about his business with Eva and forget about us. Actually, I take that back as I remember that Eva is Sam’s mate. Poor Sam. I wish I had let him know what I had discovered before I escaped. I had been so caught up I hadn’t even considered that he would still be suffering at the hands of Lachlan and Eva.

I would need to discuss this with Kingston. I’m sure he could help me think of something. Some way we could ease his suffering. How Eva could hurt someone as sweet as Sam I’ll never know. He deserved so much better. I needed to make that right somehow. And I would. I just wasn’t sure how.

I was interrupted from my thoughts when Kingston placed his hands on mine and I felt tingles and the calm of our mate bond.

As Mason looked at me with grave concern on his face I had no words. I didn't want Kingston to know how terrified I was right now. He already had so much on with the Royal Alpha Summit that was fast approaching.

This was such bad timing. We were just starting to settle here at Rocky Mountain. The pack members were all so welcoming and accepting. Mason and Kaia were settled and had roles within the pack hierarchy. Liam and Layla were settled at daycare and thriving. I was about to officially become Luna. I couldn't expect the pack to fight for me. They hardly knew me. It was only a matter of time before Lachlan found us – especially if he was distributing our images.

“Aleksa, I can feel your fear through our bond. I know you are nervous – but you don't need to be. I will protect you and our pups. I realize Lachlan is their biological father, but I also have a bond with Liam and Layla and I will protect them both with my life. I will not let him take you or take them. You are Luna of this pack. We will all protect you with our lives.” Kingston declared to me looking into my eyes and cupping my face with his strong and calloused hands.

“I would never expect anyone to risk their life for me. Kingston, they don't deserve this. They hardly know me. I can't put this on the pack.” I told him trying to fight the tears that were starting to well up in my eyes.

“Aleksa, you are safe. You always will be safe. And whatever you are thinking right now – stop it. You will not run. You are not putting anyone out. Rocky Mountain has waited for you for a long time. You make the pack stronger just by being here. The fact that you want to protect the pack shows how amazing you are. We will figure this out.” Kingston reassured me, pulling me into his chest for comfort. This action alone gives me a sense of security and calms my nerves somewhat.

“Alpha, if I may suggest something?” Mason interjected.

“What if you sent an announcement out to the media and to all of the packs. Informing them of Rocky Mountain's new Luna, and your true mate. That would let Lachlan know that Aleksa had found her second chance mate and had been claimed by another alpha. It will help to draw some attention to this. The council will be watching no doubt. It will be much harder for him to make a

move, or do anything underhanded if he is being closely watched.” Mason suggested.

Kingston took a moment to consider the idea. “It could work. It would definitely be the more diplomatic approach and it would put the spotlight on it for a bit. It would make it more challenging for Lachlan to act on any urges he may have.”

I took a breath and tried to imagine what Lachlan’s reaction to such an announcement might be. I was interrupted from my thoughts when I notice both Kingston and Mason looking at me as if they were waiting for my response.

“Sorry. I kinda zoned out then. Did you say something?” I asked them both simultaneously.

“I asked you how you felt about us putting out an announcement? Perhaps a follow up to that might be a phone call or a video conference if required.” Kingston added.

“Uh, yeah let’s give it a go I guess,” I said, still feeling unsure about it all, and still feeling a bit distracted thinking about Sam.

“He might be willing to let me go, but I worry about Liam and Layla, he’s biologically their father, he does have a claim to them. But I absolutely refuse to give them up to him. I will not let him take them!” I said exasperatedly, feeling my heart racing in my chest, and feeling my anxiety surge through me.

“Aleksa, we will work something out. I promise you. No one will take Liam and Layla from you. You are their mother. And an amazing one at that.” Kingston declared to me, and I found a sense of calm in his words.

“Aleksa – Luna, we have all come so far. We will not let anything happen to you or your pups. We are a family. And family protects one another.” Mason declared. He looked at me with determination and sincerity.

I looked into Mason’s eyes and I felt tears start to fall from my eyes. I felt so blessed and so lucky to have made strong bonds with people that I now call my family. I felt such a sense of belonging.

My stomach growled loudly, snapping me out of my train of thought. I felt a warm blush creep over my face, of embarrassment. Kingston and Mason chuckled. “Perhaps we should have some breakfast?” Kingston suggested.

“Sounds like a good idea. I’ll mind-link Quinn to bring Liam and Layla down to join us.” Mason replied to Kingston.

“Come, my love, let’s get some food into your stomach. We have a big day ahead of us.” Kingston remarked to me.

“Mason, thank you, for everything. I am so lucky to have you in my life. You are like the brother I never had.” I tell him, as I launched at him for a hug. Mason embraced me for a hug also, however, at that moment Kingston growled at our closeness, and Mason and I both looked back at him.

“Sorry guys, Sabre gets a little overprotective of his mate” Kingston replied chuckling.

Mason then added, “That’s understandable Alpha.”

“Aleksa, I feel the same way about you. Ever since we met in the dungeons of Evergreen I’ve felt this overwhelming urge to protect you. You are also like a little sister to me.”

My heart instantly swelled at Mason’s words.

“I sure am a lucky girl. I have some really special people in my life. And I feel so grateful for you all.” I said to Mason, while I locked hands with Kingston getting ready to leave the room.

“See you at breakfast!” I called out to Mason, as Kingston lead me out the door.

It was approaching midday, and in light of the news that we had learned of earlier this morning, I had decided to cancel my brunch date with Quinn and Kaia. I ended up explaining the situation to them since it directly involved them both anyway. They pretty much repeated what Mason had told me, about us all being family, and having each other’s backs. Again my heart swelled with love, I had always wanted sisters, and now that dream had come true. I loved them both with all my heart. Sometimes when you meet people you just instantly click, and that’s exactly what happened when I met Kaia and Quinn.

They both offered to watch Liam and Layla for me while I met the Healer. This was a relief for me because I didn’t know what to expect from our meeting

today. I was nervous yet excited, and I was curious to learn more. It all felt very surreal.

I was on my way to meet Xanthe and to learn more about my birth parents and my lineage. It was a gorgeous sunny day and it was so warm. Too warm to be sitting inside even though there is air conditioning. I thought it might be nice to chat outside, so we are on our way to a gazebo that was located near the rosegardens.

It really was a sight to behold, the roses were in full bloom and they smelt amazing. There was a crawling red rose bush covering the sides of the gazebo, and it looked so magical. Kingston must have asked someone to bring a table and chairs prior to our meeting because the set in front of us didn't look like it was supposed to be there. It looked brand new rather than the weathered set you would expect to see outside. There was a large jug of water and some glasses in the centre of the table.

We took a seat, and moments later Xanthe appeared before us.

"Hello Aleksa, I trust you are well-rested and ready to hear what I have to say?" Xanthe looked at me with a small smile on her face.

"Hello Xanthe, yes, please let me apologise for my behaviour yesterday, I was rude. I am not usually that way towards others. I was just dealing with a lot, and everything kinda overwhelmed me." I said pausing to take a breath. Xanthe just watched me and waited patiently as if she knew I wasn't finished.

"I think I just needed a good night's sleep and to spend some time with Liam and Layla. Thank you so much for coming back to speak with me. It means the world to me. I have so many questions!" I said, ready to unleash my questions on Xanthe.

"No need to apologize. How about you hear what I have to say. Then we can have question time afterwards." Xanthe said rhetorically.

"That sounds fair," I said. Although I was a little disappointed that I would have to wait. Chill Aleksa, I thought to myself. Yesterday I didn't want to hear any of this, and today I want to bombard her with questions. I swear I am all over the place at the moment. I looked up at Xanthe who was ready to speak.

"Let's start at the beginning then shall we." Xanthe begun.

Xanthe POV

“I’m not going to beat around the bush. I’m going to tell you this straight. So brace yourself.” I started to tell Aleksa, deciding that what I had to tell her would be overwhelming so I may as well keep to the point.

“Many millennia ago, the moon goddess blessed a lineage of wolves with special protective and healing powers, their role was to help heal and protect vulnerable wolves, they were known as the crescent moon wolves.”

“Crescent moon wolves carried a unique marking, which consisted of a sapphire blue crescent moon with two wolves under it, and a crown with a purple hue to it. Unfortunately, crescent moon wolves were constantly hunted and exploited, many living their lives in captivity, many dying after being drained of their powers and healing abilities. There were many powerful wolves who wished to harness their special abilities. I realize this all sounds unbelievable to you right now. Especially since you were led to believe you were human for the first eighteen years of your life. But I can assure you that it is all true.”

“Aleksa, your mother was a crescent moon wolf with special abilities and healing powers. She had left her pack when she met your father. You see Aleksa, your Grandfather was the Alpha of Moon Valley Pack. He was aware of Kristina’s abilities from a very young age and knew that she was a gifted wolf, as her mother was also one, and it was passed down by females in the family.”

“Back then, an alpha female taking the role of Alpha alone was unheard of, so they needed her to be mated and marked so that there would be a male alpha running the pack, thus maintaining their reputation and bloodline.”

“They (her parents) had planned to marry her off to the Alpha heir of a neighboring pack, in a bid to merge the two packs as they had no male heir so that their son would take the role of Alpha, and Kristina would be his Luna.”

“The alpha heir of the neighboring pack was an unkind, arrogant, and evil wolf, and rumor had it that he had planned to use Kristina for her gifts to heal his mistress, who suffered from some rare disease for which there was no known cure. The Alpha’s Heir was in love with his mistress and wanted to take her as his luna, but his parents had denied him.”

“And, Kristina had no intention of being mated to or being marked by him. Not long before the agreement was made, Kristina had met her fated mate in a chance meeting, your father. He was from another pack, and he was a warrior. When Kristina told her parents this news, they were not accepting of this, they felt that he had nothing to offer them, and being that they were in so much debt at the time, they refused to acknowledge her fated mate.”

“You see, I had met your mother back at her birth pack – Moon Valley. I would occasionally consult at the pack hospital. I had met your mother on a few occasions as she would volunteer at the hospital regularly. We had an instant connection. I met your father, Aleksander, a few times also. Actually, Kristina had only met him a few times before they ran off together. I met your father because your mother needed help leaving the packhouse to visit him. I was usually her cover story as she was constantly followed by her father’s guards. We would tell them that she was volunteering at the hospital, she would sneak out the back, and meet Aleksander just outside the pack boundary.”

“Worried that Kristina might defy them, and mess up their plans, her parents fast-tracked the agreement. The night before Kristina was supposed to leave for the neighboring pack, Aleksander with the help of some of his fellow warriors created a distraction and managed to help Kristina escape. That was the last she saw of her parents and her pack. They were on the run for months putting as much distance between them as they could.”

“Kristina’s parents never stopped looking for her. Their debts got higher, and they were on the brink of losing their pack when a Hunter came to them and made them a proposition. He would bankroll the pack but they wanted Kristina’s firstborn daughter in return. Somehow they were aware of her crescent moon wolf lineage. Kristina’s father was desperate to retain his title and his pack so he reluctantly agreed to the hunter’s proposition.”

“After some time the hunter had managed to find her, and surely enough, Kristina and Aleksander had mated and had a baby girl -that was you Aleksa. They came for you, time and time again. Aleksander and Kristina were so determined to keep you safe and hidden that they veered away from packs and pack life, and opted for life in the human world.”

“However, one day they were caught unprepared, and that is the day Aleksander died trying to protect you.”

“Kristina was on her own then, she was heartbroken but determined to protect you with her life. She moved from town to town and worked menial jobs in

order to support you, over the course of a few months she managed to do this well until they came again one night. They came in the still of the night, Kristina managed to hide you in the ceiling. She fought hard and managed to take them all out, however, she was critically injured and died from blood loss that night.”

“When Kristina didn’t show up to work the next day I had a feeling something had gone horribly wrong. I left work at midday and when I arrived at the flat I was horrified at the scene that awaited me. It was like a scene from a horror movie, with bodies, and blood everywhere.”

“I found Kristina on the floor in front of her bedroom, the door was shut behind her, she was protecting you trying to keep them from finding you. I checked for a pulse but I already knew Kristina was gone, she was so cold and I couldn’t sense her energy. I will never forget that terrifying feeling that struck me when I realized that you were unaccounted for. I searched frantically. Then I focussed my mind and found you fast asleep in the ceiling, warm, and unscathed, although a little dehydrated and hungry when you finally woke.”

“I had decided it was best that we left that town as soon as possible. I bent down and kissed sweet Kristina on her forehead, and that’s when I saw the locket. She wore it everywhere and treasured it with her heart. I knew I should grab it so that you always had something of your mother’s with you.”

“I took you home with me, and then I decided it was time to move on. I needed to get you somewhere safe, as there was a high chance that they would still be looking for you.”

“We traveled for a few weeks, and then I realized that this was no life for a little pup. I realized that I couldn’t give you what you needed. I managed to find a job and somewhere for us to stay in a small town a few states over, it was a lovely quiet Christian community. I had gotten a job as a cleaner at a local church and would often overhear conversations between people. One day I heard an older couple talking about how they wished they had been blessed with a child that they could shower with love. I watched them for a few more weeks, did some background checks, and then I decided they were the perfect couple to raise you and love you.”

“Often they ran the community soup kitchen at the church and they were often the last to leave, so I wrapped you up in a little Moses basket and left you with a note at the door. I rang the bell then ran into the bushes and waited and watched.”

“I saw the amazement and concern and love in their eyes as they fussed over you. I saw the police arrive. I watched in the background over the next few months and I watched them take you in and eventually adopt you as their own. I then went on my way. I would check in every now and then to ensure they were taking good care of you and to watch you grow. I was so proud of the beautiful person you had become.”

“I was there when you met Lachlan and I knew what was coming but I couldn't interfere. I just watched on the sidelines, waiting for the time to come when you would need me.”

“When you had made your way here to Rocky Mountain and I had heard that Kingston was requesting a Healer, I knew it was the right time for me to make an appearance in your life.”

“So Aleksa that is the story of your parents and what happened to them, that is also the story of how you came to be adopted and live in a human town. Now you know you are a Crescent Moon Wolf, there is still so much I have to tell you, you will need to learn to properly harness your powers and your gifts, and in time you will.”

“I knew one day you would need to know everything, and I needed to be able to explain it to you. You might ask why I did not tell you earlier that you were a werewolf. I planned to trust me. I was planning to come to you and reveal myself to you just before your eighteenth birthday and to be there with you when you shifted for the first time. I couldn't let you go through it alone.”

“However, my past had caught up with me. You see I too was on the run. Probably part of the reason Kristina and I understood each other so well. We were in similar situations. I was detained against my will, and it was a few years before I could escape. I am so sorry my child. I am sorry that I had let you down, and that I had left Kristina down. But I am here now and I will answer any questions you have to the best of my ability.”

I looked up at Aleksa and I could sense a sadness within her. She was not looking back at me, she had her head down and was quietly sniffing and wiping back her tears. I looked to Kingston who looked astonished as if he was still processing what I'd just said.

Silence enveloped us and I waited patiently for Aleksa's response and her impending questions. I also hoped that she would forgive me for my failures.

Aleksa POV

I sat there listening to Xanthe tell me about my birth parents – Aleksander and Kristina. I felt something I didn't expect to feel. I felt an overwhelming sense of determination. A desire to do better, to be better, to be stronger, and to fight harder. I didn't want my parent's death to have been in vain. They had sacrificed so much for me. And now it was my turn to do the same for my children.

I would be damned if I was going to let something happen to my precious pups, especially Layla. If what Xanthe is saying is correct, then Layla is also a crescent moon wolf. That means she is in danger.

I felt a sense of fear and panic engulf me, all I wanted to do is to run to my precious Liam and Layla and hold them tight. But I needed to finish this conversation. There were still questions to be answered. I needed to be strong and know what we are up against.

A flurry of emotions was consuming me right now. There was a determination to make my birth parents proud. Fear that my children, especially Layla, were in danger, not just from the threat of being taken back to Evergreen and separated from me, but that there were wolves out there who may know of her existence and wish to harm and exploit her. Sadness – that I was the reason my parents died. If it weren't for me they may not have been caught off guard and might still be here today. I was also concerned that this will all be too much for Kingston and the pack. And finally, anger, at the people that had hunted my parents and me and in the process robbed me of the life I was supposed to have, the one where my biological parents never died, where I was raised with my birth pack.

Just breathe Aleksa I told myself, as I felt Kingston's arms wrap around me for comfort. He must have sensed my emotional hurricane through our mate bond. I looked up at him and he has a soft smile on his face, I can feel that he is concerned about me.

I nodded at him and told him through the mind-link that I'd be ok. And thanked him for being here for me.

I looked back at Xanthe and I said "There are so many questions I want to ask you, especially about what being a Crescent Moon wolf means. But I feel the first question I need to ask is this – where are my Grandparents? Are they still alive, and if so where?"

My rationale for this is that I need to know how much of a threat they were, as they are the reason that both my parents are dead. They were ruthless, they cared not for the mate bond, not for their own blood, and their greed and ambition were clearly their priorities. I wanted to know where they were and if there was any chance that they could know of my existence and of Liam and Layla's. Although in all honesty, I hoped there were gone. I had no intention of ever meeting such cruel people, in my mind, there were already dead.

"Aleksa, I wish I could answer this question without a doubt but I can't. Your grandmother passed not long after Kristina was murdered. My contacts told me she took her own life out of heartbreak and regret. Apparently, she never wanted any of this for her daughter, and she was a subservient Luna and did what her mate had commanded her to do. While she didn't agree with his actions, she also didn't take a stand against them either. As for your grandfather, when the agreement with the neighboring pack fell through and Kristina left, there was no heir to take over. After the Luna passed, your grandfather's wolf became feral and started to lose his grasp on reality, the pack began to suffer, and at this time the neighboring pack invaded the Moon Valley and took over control.

There was an alpha challenge, and your grandfather was grievously wounded, but it is unknown as to whether he actually died, as a rogue attack occurred while the challenge was taking place, and chaos ensued, it was at this time he disappeared, and his body was never found, although it is assumed he died but it is not certain. The wounds he sustained in the challenge coupled with losing his mate would be enough to end any wolf. I don't think he is a threat to you Aleska, or to your pups." Xanthe told me looking absolute in her answer.

"And, the Hunter, did you ever find out his identity? Who was the person that made the agreement with my Grandfather for my mother's firstborn daughter?" I asked Xanthe, wanting to get an idea of the players that were involved here, and who we were up against.

"No, I'm afraid not. I tried to keep a low profile. I had to keep you safe. I used some of my contacts to find out about your grandparents, but I was unable to find anything about the Hunter. I didn't want people to know I was asking questions." Xanthe told me apologetically.

"Hmnm, ok, fair enough, thank you Xanthe for everything, you have done for me. I do appreciate it. It sounds like I owe you my life. I'm not sure how I can ever repay you, but I will surely try." I told Xanthe, feeling a great deal of respect for the woman sitting in front of me right now.

“If you don’t mind, I do have some more questions?” I ask Xanthe.

“That is fine Aleksa, I have no place else to be right now. Fire away.” Xanthe said sweetly.

“You said that my mother died fighting to protect me. But I don’t understand. If she was also a Crescent Moon wolf, why did she die? Why didn’t she use her powers?” I questioned Xanthe. As that is one part of this story that I can’t seem to get my head around.

“I wondered when you were gonna ask me that question. The wolves that showed up that night didn’t appear to have any scents. And when I arrived on the scene I detected the faintest hint of magic, of dark magic Aleksa. I fear that a witch who practices dark magic was involved. I can’t say for certain, but I imagine that there was a barrier or forcefield that your mother’s powers couldn’t penetrate. I’ve wracked my brain throughout the years trying to understand what happened there, that’s all I have come up with that makes any real sense.” Xanthe told me bowing her head down. I got the impression she was unhappy that she hadn’t been able to uncover more.

“Dark magic? So she stood no chance then? Outnumbered by wolves and facing off against a dark witch.” I said anger searing through me, I feel my whole body starting to shake, and I could feel my eyes glowing.

“Aleksa, honey, try to calm down, just breathe,” Kingston said as he tried to calm me down, his touch alone was enough to soothe my soul.

“Aleksa, I can help you. Just knowing that there was a dark witch involved gives us more of an advantage. We can prepare better. I’m sorry I know this is all a lot. I know it’s horrible. I hate that this all happened and I couldn’t do anything to help. We have a chance here though, to prevent history from repeating.” Xanthe soothingly tells me while placing her hands on my hands.

“Tell me of my father’s death. I need to know – everything.” I expressed to Xanthe. I needed to know as much as I could about the events that had transpired all those years ago.

“Aleksander was a warrior from a pack a state over from Moon Valley. They met by chance really. Kristina would every once in a while sneak out with her friends into one of the nearby human towns for a bit of dancing and fun. One night she bumped into Aleksander while leaving the club, they knew they were mates right away, and instantly connected. They would meet every chance

they got, as Kristina set about introducing him to her father. Aleksander wasn't able to mark and mate with Kristina straight away with her being the alpha's daughter, so he had to be patient and undergo formalities, however, the alpha was opposed to their mateship."

"You see, Aleksander was an elite warrior for the Dark Moon pack, he was revered among his squad, and everyone that met Aleksander took an instant liking to him. He was very popular with the she-wolves but was determined to wait for his mate, which he did. Your mother – Kristina was the same, she was holding out for her mate too. They were so in love. It was a perfect match."

"You wanted to ask how your father died. He was a fierce fighter, but he was outnumbered the night that they first came for you, however, he was holding his own just fine. but the rogues that attacked him stabbed him in the back multiple times with a silver blade laced with wolfsbane. He wasn't able to heal and ultimately died of blood loss and wolfsbane poisoning. I'm sorry Aleksa, he was so courageous right to the very end. He managed to take them all out with him. When they had first attacked, he had already told Kristina to take you and run, which she did reluctantly. No one anticipated a silver blade and wolfsbane, they fought dirty." Xanthe explained. "Your mother never forgave herself for that. No matter how much I would tell her that she did the right thing, she followed Aleksander's orders and got you to safety. Kristina was heartbroken but found the strength to go on for you. She was most likely able to do this because she was a Crescent Moon wolf."

"She knew she would meet Aleksander again one day, and she wanted to make him proud by protecting you."

Salty tears were slowly escaping my eyes as Xanthe recounted the events leading up to my father's death. I had so much love and respect and regret in my heart right now for the parents I had once thought hadn't wanted me.

I wiped away my tears, took a sip from the glass of water in front of me, and took a few breaths.

"What more can you tell me about my wolf? You said I am a Crescent Moon wolf. How can I find more information about myself, about my powers and abilities? I need to know how to use them properly, and how to control them. Everything that has happened so far happened randomly. I have no clue of what I am doing." I confessed to Xanthe.

“There is not a lot of information about the Crescent Moon wolves. Aside from Kristina, I had not heard of a Crescent Moon wolf until then. Kristina learned to harness her powers to a point, but even she didn’t know a lot about her powers, and she never had a chance to master them. And with all that was going on we didn’t speak much of them.” Xanthe replied.

“The best way for us to learn more about your wolf would be to speak with an elder. I have some contacts we can utilize, but we need to be careful as to who we trust with this. Can you give me a few days? Give me some time to reach out to a few of my contacts. I feel they will be able to point us in the right direction?” Xanthe asked me.

“Of course. Maybe we should end this meeting here. I need to get back to Liam and Layla, and I’m sure Kingston has plenty of pack business to attend to. Xanthe, thank you for your time. I appreciate everything you have told me. I really do appreciate you coming here.” I thanked Xanthe.

“Aleksa, Kingston has my details, and you can contact me anytime. I want to be here for you.” Xanthe said warmly as she got up from her seat.

“Can I just say how much you look like your mother? You really are the spitting image of her.” Xanthe told me. That made my heart swell with pride. Kingston and I stood up from our seats.

“Uh, Xanthe, do you have any photos of my parents? I’ve never met them or even seen a picture of them. I don’t even know what they look like, and I would like to.” I asked Xanthe, as my lips started to quiver, I was fighting to prevent my emotions from consuming me once again.

“I actually do. I’m sorry Aleksa, I wasn’t thinking. Of course, you would want a photo of them. I believe I have one or two. I could bring them with me when I come back in a few days if you like.” Xanthe asked me.

“That would be amazing – thank you! Well, we will get going and we look forward to hearing from you in few days, all going well. Goodbye Xanthe!” I said as I walked over to Xanthe embracing her in a hug, she smelt like wild jasmine, the hug felt strangely familiar, as did her scent. I walked over to Kingston, and we locked hands and walked off through the gardens. I lay my head against his shoulder and we walked together, our bodies molding into one another’s. I could feel the warmth from the bond. I looked up at Kingston’s face while we were walking, he looked down at me and kissed me on the forehead. “I love you so much,” I said to Kingston.

"I love you too, Aleksa," Kingston said back. And we kept walking towards the packhouse to see our pups on this warm sunny day, the blue sky was dotted with fluffy white clouds, there was a gentle breeze passing us, I could hear the birds chirping in the background, bees buzzing over the wildflowers that littered the sides of the path we walked on, and a faint sound of children playing with frisbees on the grass in front of the packhouse.

There was so much going through my mind right now, but it could all wait a few hours. This mama needed some time with her pups.

Aleksa POV

It's been two weeks since we spoke with Xanthe, and strangely we haven't heard back from her yet. We assume she has been busy or hasn't yet found anything further out about crescent moon wolves. It's been very busy here at the packhouse lately.

Everyone is getting prepared for the Royal Alpha Summit which will be taking place over the next week. We've had the caterers in to organize the meals for the week-long event. Quinn has been helping me with this as I am still new to all of this. Back at Evergreen we never had an event even remotely resembling this. It's all a learning curve for me.

We decided against the media release about Kingston and I's mateship. The pack knew most importantly, but the rest of the world could wait a little bit longer.

After speaking with Xanthe and learning what we did about my lineage, about the Crescent Moon wolves being hunted, about my grandparents, and the Hunter that was potentially looking for me and Layla, we decided that it was best to keep things under wraps for now. We would wait for the summit and deal with things as they happened. Meaning that we would be dealing with the Lachlan situation as it arose.

I really hoped that Lachlan wouldn't attend the Royal Alpha Summit. He had never attended one previously so with a little bit of luck he wouldn't attend this one. Although, in saying that we weren't leaving it to luck. Kingston and Asher were working on a plan for what would happen if he did attend and how we would approach that situation without placing a damper on the celebrations or any disrespect to the alpha king himself.

Kingston was determined that this would be the best summit he had organized yet. We had all the accommodation organized, housekeeping was paying attention to detail to ensure that everything was perfect for our guests, and we had guides and point of contact organized for each pack.

We had entertainment organized for each night of the summit. The conference room had been extended and prepared to seat all attending alphas comfortably. Maintenance had outdone themselves, as the pack landscaping looked immaculate. The pack members were all excited and ready to host the attending packs. Unmated wolves were excited at the possibility of meeting their mates at the summit. The pack was a hive of excitement and anticipation.

While I was putting on a brave face, my anxiety was at an all-time high. I was trying to distract myself and not overanalyze everything because I knew Kingston would feel it through our bond, but I just couldn't. I was scared of what would happen if Lachlan attended. So much so that I had made plans to have Kingston's parents Chase and Cordelia take Liam and Layla away to a cabin in a nearby state for the week of the summit. I needed to know that they were safe especially if I was to see Lachlan face to face. Also, I would constantly be on edge worrying about whether or not they were safe if they were to be here while the Summit was taking place.

Although I would worry regardless, I would worry less knowing that they were in the capable hands of Chase and Cordelia. We had gotten to know each other a lot more over the past few weeks. They were very welcoming and genuinely happy for us both. They knew of my past with Lachlan and Evergreen, and accepted me with open arms.

Chase was still very fit and also very intimidating when you first met him, he was an older more distinguished version of Kingston, and Cordelia was sophisticated and elegant, she looked like an older version of Quinn, she was very nurturing and absolutely loved being around children, she doted on Liam and Layla as if they were her own pups. They would be leaving two days before the summit started, which I was happy with, as it gave us that little bit more time to plan, and sort our backup plan, as well as our back up to the backup plan.

Kingston had been very busy, but he had a very capable team working with him, he was at this point just checking that everything was organized and ready to go. Initially, he had played a bigger role in preparing the summit, but

in light of the rogue attacks, Xanthe telling us of mine and Layla's lineage and preparing for the probable fallout with Lachlan, he had decided to delegate.

Quinn and Mason had been busy renovating their cottage, and it was almost ready, they were just putting the finishing touches on it. They were so happy stuck in their own little love bubble. Kingston had been giving Mason more and more responsibility within the pack leadership and Mason was handling it all so well. He seemed very comfortable and settled here. I was so happy for my friend. He deserved happiness.

Kaia was still heavily involved with the warrior squad and practically trained all day every day. She was still spending a lot of time with Asher, they had even been on their first date. They were taking things slowly but you could feel the s****l tension in the air whenever those two were around each other.

Liam and Layla were settled and fitted in so well with the pack, everyone had been so welcoming towards them. It's crazy to think that in a few months they would be celebrating their third birthdays. I hadn't planned anything yet for that but I plan to once the summit is over, and everything is sorted out in regards to Lachlan, I will start planning for it then.

I was on my way to Kingston's office to bring him some lunch as he tended to skip meals often when he was hyperfocused and immersed in pack business. Liam and Layla were at daycare so I was just doing errands today and helping with the final preparations. As I walked down the hallway I heard raised voices coming from Kingston's office.

The voices stopped. I assumed they could scent me considering I was standing just outside the office. "Come in Aleksa" Kingston called out.

I walked in to see Kingston leaning back in his chair, Asher was sitting on the chair in front of Lachlan's desk. "Good afternoon Asher, good afternoon My Love," I said as I walked up to Kingston, placing his lunch on his desk in front of him and kissing him on his forehead.

"Did I walk in on something?" I ask sheepishly.

Asher shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

"Just tell her Asher," Kingston says to Asher sighing.

“Well Aleksa, I’m sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it would appear that news of Lachlan’s bounty has traveled, your images have been posted all over the town. It’s only a matter of time before someone contacts Lachlan, and he knows where you are.” Asher tells me, releasing the breath he was holding in.

My heart starts racing rapidly and I feel a shiver ripple throughout my body. My eyes begin to tear up. Then I close my eyes and focus my energy. I will not let this fear consume me. I take a few deep breaths and try to control my emotions.

Kingston goes to pull me into him and sit me on his lap, while I would usually feel comfort and protection in this action, right now I want to stand. I need to stand. I will not cower and let fear take over whenever a curveball is thrown at me. I am to be Luna of this pack Although I love that Kingston wants to protect me, I am done with being a passive subservient Luna like I was when I was at Evergreen. I need to learn to protect myself, my pups, and my pack properly. Kingston growls at my actions and looks at me questionably.

“Okay, so, we need a plan! We can’t leave anything to chance, we really need to be a few steps ahead of Lachlan at all times!” I declare to them both.

Asher looks at me incredulously, usually, I would be an emotional wreck right now, and would act before thinking. But I was done with being that girl. Kingston looks at me with a proud look on his face. I can feel through the bond that he approves of this side of me.

“Well Luna, I have taken them all down, but we have to work on the premise that they have already been seen by most people.”

“For example, the people that knew you from working at the tavern, people who may be walked past you in the street, or saw you in a shop. We will speak with all pack members, I can’t imagine we would have any problems there. But the humans and any rogues we will have no control over.” Asher replied.

“I have just called all pack members to the training grounds in fifteen minutes, we will discuss this issue with them immediately. Aleksa we will need to tell them about your past, about Lachlan, and about Evergreen. What are your thoughts on this?” Kingston asks me.

“I agree. The pack needs to know the truth. It is better that they know now before they decide whether or not they will accept me as their Luna officially.” I said.

Kingston growled. “They have already accepted you. You are their Luna.” He declared.

I put my hands on his cheek and pulled him in for a quick kiss to calm his wolf.

“Looks like we will be speaking with Lachlan sooner than we expected,” Kingston says to Asher, their eyes meeting each other knowingly in agreement.

“I will have two elite warriors assigned to Liam and Layla twenty-four hours a day, I will also assign two elite warriors to the Luna if you agree Alpha?” Asher asked Kingston.

“Sounds good. We will need to tighten pack security and double the patrols. I will have to speak with our neighboring packs to advise them of the situation and ensure our bases are covered should we need additional backup.” Kingston tells Asher.

“Everything will be ok Aleksa, you are safe, Liam and Layla are safe. Your pack will protect you.” Kingston reassures me.

“I know we will be. I refuse to let Lachlan control our lives. I am done with running and done with being afraid. That being said, I need a little help with something Asher. If you have some free time later this afternoon?” I ask him hopefully.

“Of course Luna, although I must say I am rather curious,” Asher remarks to me. Kingston is looking at me, raising an eyebrow.

“Relax, I just need a little training, some basic but effective defensive moves, I need to be able to fight if necessary,” I tell them both.

Kingston mind-links me “This more dominant side of you is turning me right now on my love!”

“Uh guys, I’m still here,” Asher says, looking uncomfortable.

Kingston and I both chuckle, “Sorry man” Kingston says to Asher.

I feel the heat creep over my cheeks, I know that I am blushing right now.

A few minutes later, there is a knock on the door. "Mason, please come in," Kingston calls out.

Mason walks in, "Alpha, Luna, Beta Asher," He says as he nodded his head respectfully. "What can I do for you?" He asks.

"Well Mason, we have a problem. Those images you warned us of, well they have been posted all over town. We have to assume that Lachlan already knows where Aleksa and the twins are, so we have a problem."

"I asked you to come here today in the hopes that you would consider being Liam and Layla's protection detail for now, until this is all resolved. I would also assign two of our elite warriors to the twins, but I think it would be reassuring for Aleksa to have someone she trusts looking out for the twins, and less stressful for them to have a familiar face around them." Kingston asks Mason.

Mason answers straight away as if he didn't even have to consider the request. "Absolutely Alpha, I would be honored to." He said, winking at me, which made me smile, lessening my nerves a little.

Kingston got up out of his seat and everyone else stood and made their way out of the office. It was time to address the pack and tell them of my life before coming to Rocky Mountain. It was time to tell them of the threat to the pack. Although it wasn't the time to tell them of my lineage and that I was a Crescent Moon wolf as I still didn't really know what that meant myself.

I had just hoped that they would still accept the twins and I once they knew the truth about my past before coming to Rocky Mountain.

Aleksa POV

It's been a few days since we had "the talk" with our pack. It actually went really well. Everyone was a bit quiet initially. I could hear gasps and whispers, but I kept talking, telling my story, and before long, I could sense that the pack understood what I was saying and why I had to leave my previous pack. I explained what happened with Lachlan and Eva, and how I ended up in the pack dungeons. Then I explained how I had to leave with my pups, and mentioned my friends, Mason and Kaia, who helped facilitate that escape. Everyone just stood and listened to what I had to say. Kingston took over and

explained to the pack about the bounty placed on me, as well as explaining that what Lachlan had told people about Mason and Kaia was untrue, that they were helping me, not k*****g me, and to not pay attention to the lies they might hear. He reassured the pack that he had done his due diligence before we came to join Rocky Mountain,

Since then, everyone has been even friendlier, which I didn't think was possible, because they were already so welcoming. I feel lighter not having to hide my past, like a weight has been shifted from my shoulders. I feel relieved to know that the pack accepts me as their Luna, because I love Kingston and the pack, and I feel like we have made this place our home. I don't even want to imagine what might have happened if the pack hadn't accepted me and my pups.

Due to the news of the bounty, and mine and my pups faces being plastered everywhere, as well as Mason and Kaia's, pack security and patrols have doubled and the place is like Fort Knox around here, which is making things a little harder for the deliveries and preparations needed for the summit, but as Kingston reiterates, it's better to be safe than sorry.

I know I need to face Lachlan once and for all. And every day I feel more and more ready for it, I just want to get it over with, so we can all live our lives without having this hanging over our heads.

Asher has been taking the time out to train me twice a day. We meet at dawn and dusk. He is mostly teaching me defense. He's keeping it short and sweet for now, teaching me how I can use my size to my advantage, as well as teaching me moves that are easy to execute and are highly effective.

Tomorrow, Chase and Cordelia will be taking Liam and Layla away to a lake house in Idaho. Mason and Quinn will be accompanying them, as well as several elite warriors. I know my pups are in safe hands. I am sad that we will be separated, but I know it's only temporary. I feel confident knowing that they will be further away from Lachlan's clutches.

We are spending the day at the packhouse today. I want to make the most of my time with my pups before their trip away. I have told them they will be going away with their grandparents and they don't seem phased. I guess they are too young to really understand. But at least they have fun with Chase and Cordelia, Mason and Quinn, and they are familiar faces for them, which should help alleviate any stress or anxiety that they may feel from being away from their Mama.

I won't see Kingston until tonight as he has back-to-back meetings with some of the Alpha's from nearby packs all day, they will be busily preparing for the summit as well as Lachlan's probable arrival. I have organized a special lunch to be delivered to the conference room for them today. I know what those Alpha's are like when they are busy talking about business they often won't eat, so at least they can eat while they work. I know I will feel better knowing that they are being fed.

I hear a knock at the door and I get up from the floor where I am playing blocks with the twins to open it. I was surprised to see Kaia at the door. "Aleksa, I wondered if you and the twins would like some company. I heard that they were leaving tomorrow and I needed to get my cuddle quota in before they leave" Kaia says enthusiastically, opening her arms up for Liam and Layla.

"Aun-ty Kaia! Aun-ty Kaia!" they yelled, barrelling towards her with open arms.

"My pups!" She replies, pulling them into her arms, and snuggling them.

"Perhaps we could go to the kitchen and get some snacks to have a picnic on the front lawn?" I suggested to everyone.

"Yay!" the twins shouted in unison.

"Sounds good to me!" Kaia says cheerfully.

I grab my go-bag for the twins, they each take Kaia's hand, and we walk out the door, kitchen bound for snacks.

Ready to enjoy the rest of the day together creating fun memories.

It's the day before the summit, which means my pups are about to embark on their first holiday without their Mama this morning, and I am feeling a little anxious. I woke up super early today. I had the twins' suitcases packed last night and had taken them to the front door, ready to be loaded into Chase's SUV this morning.

I have already had two coffees and I'm considering my third one already. I've just been sitting here watching Liam and Layla sleep for the past few hours. Just thinking about how fast they are growing and wondering where the time

has gone. It seems like only yesterday they were in my womb. Now they aren't far off their third birthdays.

We have all been through so much over the past six months or so. But I wouldn't change a thing because it has got us to this point. To Rocky Mountain, to Kingston, to our beautiful friends who have become our family. To this kind and caring and protective pack. We are all so blessed.

I am disrupted from my thought process by a sleepy Liam, "Mama?" He questions me.

"Good Morning Liam, yes it's Mama, how did you sleep?" I asked my big boy.

"Good." He says to me,

"Mama?" He asked me.

"Yes, Liam?" I said, trying to hold back my chuckle at how cute my little boy looked half asleep and trying to communicate with me.

"Pancakes?" Liam asks.

"Yes Liam, you can have pancakes this morning, let's get you changed while we wait for your sister to wake up, shall we?" I said to Liam.

"I'm awake!" Layla called out.

I laughed out loud. Layla never missed an opportunity to have pancakes.

"Of course, my princess, let's get you dressed too, and head down to the kitchen," I say to my pups.

They both smile and start clapping with glee.

After breakfast, I got Liam and Layla cleaned up and we made our way back downstairs to the main entrance of the pack house. Kingston and Mason help strap the twins into their car seats and I give them big cuddles and kisses goodbye. I then say thank you to everyone and wish them all a safe trip.

I waved continuously with a big smile on my face, holding back the tears until Liam and Layla were out of sight. I feel tears flooding my eyes, and I try to

contain myself in front of everyone. I end up laughing at myself and overcome with emotion. I wipe my eyes and take a few breaths trying to settle myself down. Kingston pulls me into his chest and tries to console me.

“It’s for the best, Aleksa, they will be safe with my parents, and with Mason and Quinn, I promise,” Kingston tells me.

“I know, I don’t doubt that, Kingston. I’m just sad, it’s my first time away from the twins, well, with the exception of my time in the dungeons.” I replied.

Kingston growled at my mentioning the dungeons. Well, it was probably more Sabre growling in all honesty.

I wiped my eyes one last time and took a big breath and exhaled. It’s time to pull myself together. I am doing this for my pups. I need to focus on the summit, on confronting Lachlan, and ensuring he is no longer a threat to me or the twins.

Kingston looks at me proudly, as if he knows exactly what I am thinking. Asher clears his throat.

“Alpha, Luna.” He starts.

“Border patrol has told me that some of the Alpha’s have already started to arrive for the Summit,” Asher tells us.

I had a shocked expression on my face, “But the Summit doesn’t start until tomorrow?” I replied to them both, suddenly wondering if we were actually ready. Although if they are already here, we will just have to be ready.

“It’s okay, my love, it’s not unusual for some packs to arrive a little early. We have already anticipated this. Let’s quickly refresh ourselves, then come back down to greet our guests Aleksa.” Kingston gestures for me to follow him.

“ OK, sure, good idea,” I said in reply to him, feeling a bit dazed, but following his lead. We left Asher at the main entrance, waiting to greet the guests and direct them once they arrived, as well as stalling for time as we made our way back.

The first pack to arrive was from North Dakota. Alpha Logan and his Luna Louise looked to be in their late thirties, their Gamma Joel, who I imagine was of a similar age and accompanying them, were four elite warriors. Their Beta was at home leading the pack in their absence. They were a lovely pack, very friendly. After some small talk, Asher accompanied them to the cottage they would be residing in for the entirety of the summit. We had suggested they get settled and meet us back at the packhouse for lunch if they wish to. Which they happily accepted.

As we were about to leave to head back into the packhouse, another pack was arriving, so we decided to wait at the main entrance for them, as Asher was busy with the North Dakota pack.

Three SUVs drove up to the entrance. A burly man, probably in his early twenties, ran up to the door of the SUV and opened it for his Alpha, a very tall and muscular man who looked to be in his late twenties. He then opened the door on the other side and a gorgeous woman with red hair and green eyes walked out. She had a shy smile on her face, she joined hands with her mate and they walked up to us.

After introducing ourselves to them, we learned that they were from Nebraska, Wyatt, and Willow Robinson. They seemed like a nice couple, they seemed happy to be here, and I had a really good feeling about Willow specifically, there was something about her. I look forward to getting to know her better over the next week.

Kai arrived at the entrance, he promptly introduced himself to Wyatt and Willow and offered to take them to their cottage so that they could get settled in. They also agreed to meet us at the packhouse for lunch.

Kingston and I took this as a chance for us to spend a little time together while welcoming our guests. It was looking like the summit might be starting a bit earlier this year, so Kingston sent out a mass mind-link to the pack, informing them of the guests that had already arrived, and reminding them to make sure they all felt welcome.

As we walked inside the packhouse, I told Kingston that I needed a quick word with Rose. I said I would be quick if he could just wait for me. I made my way to the kitchen, leaving Kingston to check his emails on his smartphone in the lobby.

I needed to let Rose know our guests had started arriving and that we would be making a special lunch today for our guests. I wanted to give her a heads up numbers-wise but to also potentially prepare for even more guests, as we were not sure who else might arrive early and we didn't want anyone going hungry.

Rose was excited to hear that our guests were arriving and she got to work organizing food. I asked Rose if she would like some help, but she just started shoo-ing me out of the kitchen. So I took the hint and made my way to Kingston.

"My love, you still haven't told me what you and Asher have decided to do about Lachlan? What's this grand plan? I don't mean to pressure you, but I would really like to know what the plan is, considering it will involve me." I told him, pouting and looking into his eyes.

"How about we get through this afternoon, and then tonight after dinner, I will call a meeting with Asher and some of our elite warriors, then we can all talk about it then and there. Does that sound fair?" Kingston asked me. Although it was more of a statement than a question if you ask me.

"I guess I can wait," I said, feeling unimpressed that he seemed to be stalling me.

"So uh, if we have some free time now, would you like a massage?" Kingston says with a cheeky grin on his face.

"How about we get through this afternoon, have dinner, and then after the meeting we can spend some quality time together. Does that sound fair?" I said smugly to Kingston, trying to stifle my laugh.

"I see what you did there. Touche." Kingston says, trying to suppress his laughter.

"It's ok. Come to think of it I should really go over everything one last time, and check in with security." Kingston says matter of factly.

"Ah, yes, and I will touch base with the planning team for the festivities, to ensure everything is on schedule," I said to Kingston, leaning on him to kiss him on the cheek.

"I love you!" I said to Kingston as I looked into his eyes sincerely.

“I love you too!” He replied back to me. And we go our separate ways.

As I was walking down the hallway, I realized I had left my phone in the kitchen, so I turned back and headed toward the kitchen. As I walked through the door, I saw that Rose and some of the kitchen staff were busy preparing lunch. I could hear a commotion outside, so I quickly grabbed my phone and made my way outside.

As I opened the door and walked down the steps of the packhouse following the raised voices, I saw some of our pack members preparing to direct our guests. One of them has a checklist, and the other is trying to communicate with the driver of the first SUV. A total of two SUVs have arrived at the main entrance of the packhouse. I am surprised there are no ranked wolves down here to greet them, so I quickly mind-linked Kingston telling him we have more guests arriving. Then I started to confidently stride toward the SUV. I’ve got this thought to myself, it’s just meet and greet, how hard can it be.

I then see a tall and muscular man in a fitted black suit step out of the first SUV and as he turns towards me I gasp, stopping in my tracks.

“Aleksa? Well, this is a pleasant surprise.”

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 35

Aleksa POV

I looked up at the woman in front of me and I could sense that what she had to tell me was important. Even though I was anxious and desperately wanted to see my pups, and hold them in my arms. I knew I had to hear her out, and find out what she meant when she told Kingston that I wasn’t an ordinary wolf.

I looked at Kingston who looked unphased by the appearance of the Healer. I on the other hand was a little nervous about what I was about to find out. Kingston led us into a room in the hospital that was used for family conferences, and we took a seat at the conference table.

I started biting my nails, I know it’s a filthy habit, but it’s just something that I do when I’m anxious. The healer went on to tell me that her name was Xanthe, and she had been meaning to speak with me for some time now. She also told me that she foresaw my arrival here at Rocky Mountain and she had seen what happened at Evergreen, but that everything happened for a reason and led me to where I was right now.

“How could you know I would come here? How could you be expecting me?” I bit down on my lip, furrowing my brows.

“I didn’t even know that I was coming here. I looked at a map and randomly chose Colorado. If I hadn’t found out about Lachlan and Eva, I never would have come here. So how could you possibly know?” I said a little breathless and a little taken back by the Xanthe’s words.

“I have been watching you since you were born. Who do you think left you in the basket outside that church, on that very night, at that very time, just as the Petrovs were leaving church service?” Xanthe questioned me, with a smile on her face.

“You left me there? You’re not my mother though. I feel no connection to you.” I told her, with a skeptical tone in my voice.

“You are right, I am not your mother. But I knew your mother very well. And your father.” Xanthe told me.

“Are they, are they alive? Did something happen to them?” I asked her hesitantly, not sure that I really wanted to know the answer.

“Your Father died protecting you and your mother. You see, you are a gifted wolf, as was your mother Kristina. You come from a lineage of gifted wolves, on your mother’s side.” Xanthe informed me.

I stared at her in disbelief. “Gifted wolves? I barely function as an average werewolf. I can’t fight. I know very little about being a werewolf. How could I be a gifted wolf? I think you have the wrong person.” I exclaimed, shaking my head in disbelief.

“I can assure you, Aleksa, you are gifted. Tell me has anything strange happened recently, anything you can’t explain, like a newfound power perhaps? Have you ever felt something was going to happen before it did, or, have you ever had a “feeling about someone’s intention or character” without knowing anything about them?” Xanthe asked me.

“Well, I guess, the other day, there was something. When I was being attacked by rogues, I felt a surge go through me, and I could have sworn my eyes were glowing. I still don’t quite understand what happened. One moment the rogues were charging for me, the next they were out cold like they had been electrocuted.” I blurted out to Xanthe. “And I have always had “feelings”

about people, I figured I was just good at reading people. Like I could tell by their aura what their intentions were.” I told her. Starting to wonder if what she is telling me might actually be true.

“Aleksa, your birth parents’ names were Aleksander and Kristina. You were named after your father. Your parents loved you very much. Your father fought to his last breath trying to protect you from those who wanted to harm you. Your mother sacrificed herself, also, for you. They entrusted you in my care. But I knew you would never be truly safe as long as you were with me. So I did what I felt was best for you. I started observing the humans, to find a couple who didn’t have children but would love you as their own, and when I found the Petrovs, I knew you would be safe, and that you would be loved, so I manifested it so that they would find you, fall in love with you and adopt you as their own.” Xanthe told me, shedding a tear from her eyes.

I was stunned. I sat there open-mouthed, and I had no words. I just stared at Xanthe, dumbfounded and trying to digest what I had just been told. I felt sad that my birth parents had lost their lives trying to protect me. All these years I just figured that they didn’t want me. And now I was told that I am some gifted wolf. This is all too much. I needed some air, I thought to myself.

“I, uh, I need some air. Do you mind? Could we finish this talk later? I’m feeling tired and overwhelmed, and I just wanna see Liam and Layla right now.” I said rhetorically to Xanthe and Kingston. I quietly sniffed, with tears threatening to erupt from my eyes.

“I think this has been a lot for Aleksa to take in. It might be a good idea to pause the conversation here, for now, Xanthe.” Kingston suggested.

“Very well. But we’re not finished, Aleksa – there is more I have to tell you, I realize you are overwhelmed right now, but we will need to speak again, very soon. How about tomorrow afternoon? Will that be enough time for you to think about what I have told you today?” Xanthe asked me.

“Yes. Tomorrow afternoon will be fine. I’m sorry. I appreciate you coming here and speaking with me. It’s, just, a lot to take in.” I told Xanthe, trying to hold myself together. I felt like I need a shower and a cry. Just to get it all out. I gave her a half-smile and got up from my seat and walked towards the door. I heard Kingston thanking her for her time, and bidding her farewell. But I just keep walking. I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to hug my babies. That would make everything better.

A good night's sleep made the world of difference. I felt so much better today. I had time to reconcile things in my head, and I was ready to hear what else Xanthe has to tell me. I would apologize for my behavior yesterday. I wasn't nearly as polite or grateful as I should have been towards Xanthe. Now that I've had time to think I have so many questions, about my birth parents, my lineage, my gifts, and more importantly I want to know who was after me and my mother, and why exactly.

I would ask all these questions in just a few hours. For now, I had a brunch date planned with Quinn and Kaia, we had so much to catch up on. I wanted to hear all about what they had been up to, Quinn and her plans with Mason, Kaia with her training not to mention how things were progressing with a certain dashing Beta. It would be nice to just unwind with some girl talk and forget about my own complicated life for a moment.

Liam and Layla were still fast asleep, they had a late night. So I thought I would sneak downstairs to grab a coffee and then make my way back upstairs to wake Liam and Layla for daycare.

"Good Morning Aleksa, or shall I say Luna?" Mason mocked me, with a grin on his face, which soon turned serious. "We need to talk, Where is Kingston?" Mason asked me with a sense of urgency emanating from him.

"Is everything ok Mason?" I said suddenly worried by the grave expression on his face.

"I have some news but I would prefer to tell you and the Alpha at the same time." Mason declared.

"Sure. I will mind-link him now. I was just about to make a coffee, would you like one? And, will the kitchen be an appropriate place to discuss this, or does it require more privacy?" I asked Mason.

"I think we should move this somewhere private," Mason said discretely.

As we walked into the kitchen, Kingston was already there, sitting down drinking coffee, and looking at his laptop. Billie Eilish's song "Happier than ever" was playing, Gawd I loved that song I thought to myself. Kingston was looking quite relaxed. I really hoped that this wasn't bad news.

“Good Morning my love,” Kingston said as he pulled me into him and kissed me passionately on the lips. I could taste the fresh blend of coffee that he was drinking was still on his lips mixed with a hint of chocolate, he tasted so good. I reluctantly pulled my lips from his, feeling a flush creep over my cheeks, I was still not used to this affection that he showered me with. Thank you Moon Goddess for pairing me with this man, he really was perfection, I thought silently to myself.

“Good Morning,” I said to Kingston with a beaming smile on my face, feeling smitten.

“So what is it that you wanted to speak about Mason?” Kingston asked. “Shall we take this into my office perhaps?” Kingston asked, to which Mason nodded and replied, “I think that would be a good idea, Alpha.”

“Oh, I’ve left Liam and Layla upstairs, I was just sneaking down for coffee. I didn’t expect anyone else to be up. They are still sleeping.” I told both Kingston and Mason.

“Aleksa, if you don’t mind I’ll mind-link Quinn, she was on her way here anyway. I’m sure she would be happy to watch and tend to Liam and Layla while we talk in the office?” Mason asked me.

“That would be amazing! Thank you Mason!” I said feeling relief wash over me. I watched his eyes haze over indicating he was in a mind-link.

I quickly poured a coffee for myself and for Mason, and we made our way to Kingston’s office.

“Thank you, Luna,” Mason said as he accepted his coffee from me.

“Please, just Aleksa, Mason you are like family to me, please don’t call me Luna” I insisted to Mason who just chuckled.

“So, Mason, what was it that you wanted to talk about?” Kingston asked, sitting back on his leather chair in front of his rich mahogany desk, which was for a change completely clear, a far cry from the messy cluttered desk only a few days ago.

“Well Alpha, Caleb (Aleksa’s previous Gamma) contacted me the other day. He had news about Lachlan. Apparently, although Evergreen’s trackers couldn’t scent us, they have managed to obtain visuals of us at the airport,

and they have tracked us as far as Iowa. Sources have suggested that Lachlan has redirected and increased his search party. But there's more." Mason pauses, then continues.

"Apparently, there is a bounty out on you, Aleksa." He says directing his eyes to me specifically.

"There is a huge reward for whoever can find you and your pups and bring them back to Lachlan unharmed. According to Caleb, they are distributing our visuals nationwide. It appears that we are gonna need a contingency plan." Mason told us with concern etched all over his face.

Aleksa POV

A wave of apprehension overtook me after learning of Lachlan's attempts at finding us. Confirming that he was actively searching for us, and how much closer he was getting made me feel nauseous. I felt like I was going to be sick. My stomach was churning at the thought of him finding us. It wasn't myself that I was worried about, it was Liam and Layla.

I would never let him take my pups from me. I would never go back to Evergreen with him. I had loved that pack like family. I was so broken when I realized that they had all known what was happening all along. I still felt so betrayed by them all. With the exception of Caleb and Kali of course. Caleb was under an alpha command, I know now that he couldn't physically tell me. And they had both risked so much to help us all escape from Evergreen. And for that, I would be eternally grateful.

I had hoped that Lachlan would just go about his business with Eva and forget about us. Actually, I take that back as I remember that Eva is Sam's mate. Poor Sam. I wish I had let him know what I had discovered before I escaped. I had been so caught up I hadn't even considered that he would still be suffering at the hands of Lachlan and Eva.

I would need to discuss this with Kingston. I'm sure he could help me think of something. Some way we could ease his suffering. How Eva could hurt someone as sweet as Sam I'll never know. He deserved so much better. I needed to make that right somehow. And I would. I just wasn't sure how.

I was interrupted from my thoughts when Kingston placed his hands on mine and I felt tingles and the calm of our mate bond.

As Mason looked at me with grave concern on his face I had no words. I didn't want Kingston to know how terrified I was right now. He already had so much on with the Royal Alpha Summit that was fast approaching.

This was such bad timing. We were just starting to settle here at Rocky Mountain. The pack members were all so welcoming and accepting. Mason and Kaia were settled and had roles within the pack hierarchy. Liam and Layla were settled at daycare and thriving. I was about to officially become Luna. I couldn't expect the pack to fight for me. They hardly knew me. It was only a matter of time before Lachlan found us – especially if he was distributing our images.

“Aleksa, I can feel your fear through our bond. I know you are nervous – but you don't need to be. I will protect you and our pups. I realize Lachlan is their biological father, but I also have a bond with Liam and Layla and I will protect them both with my life. I will not let him take you or take them. You are Luna of this pack. We will all protect you with our lives.” Kingston declared to me looking into my eyes and cupping my face with his strong and calloused hands.

“I would never expect anyone to risk their life for me. Kingston, they don't deserve this. They hardly know me. I can't put this on the pack.” I told him trying to fight the tears that were starting to well up in my eyes.

“Aleksa, you are safe. You always will be safe. And whatever you are thinking right now – stop it. You will not run. You are not putting anyone out. Rocky Mountain has waited for you for a long time. You make the pack stronger just by being here. The fact that you want to protect the pack shows how amazing you are. We will figure this out.” Kingston reassured me, pulling me into his chest for comfort. This action alone gives me a sense of security and calms my nerves somewhat.

“Alpha, if I may suggest something?” Mason interjected.

“What if you sent an announcement out to the media and to all of the packs. Informing them of Rocky Mountain's new Luna, and your true mate. That would let Lachlan know that Aleksa had found her second chance mate and had been claimed by another alpha. It will help to draw some attention to this. The council will be watching no doubt. It will be much harder for him to make a move, or do anything underhanded if he is being closely watched.” Mason suggested.

Kingston took a moment to consider the idea. “It could work. It would definitely be the more diplomatic approach and it would put the spotlight on it for a bit. It would make it more challenging for Lachlan to act on any urges he may have.”

I took a breath and tried to imagine what Lachlan’s reaction to such an announcement might be. I was interrupted from my thoughts when I notice both Kingston and Mason looking at me as if they were waiting for my response.

“Sorry. I kinda zoned out then. Did you say something?” I asked them both simultaneously.

“I asked you how you felt about us putting out an announcement? Perhaps a follow up to that might be a phone call or a video conference if required.” Kingston added.

“Uh, yeah let’s give it a go I guess,” I said, still feeling unsure about it all, and still feeling a bit distracted thinking about Sam.

“He might be willing to let me go, but I worry about Liam and Layla, he’s biologically their father, he does have a claim to them. But I absolutely refuse to give them up to him. I will not let him take them!” I said exasperatedly, feeling my heart racing in my chest, and feeling my anxiety surge through me.

“Aleksa, we will work something out. I promise you. No one will take Liam and Layla from you. You are their mother. And an amazing one at that.” Kingston declared to me, and I found a sense of calm in his words.

“Aleksa – Luna, we have all come so far. We will not let anything happen to you or your pups. We are a family. And family protects one another.” Mason declared. He looked at me with determination and sincerity.

I looked into Mason’s eyes and I felt tears start to fall from my eyes. I felt so blessed and so lucky to have made strong bonds with people that I now call my family. I felt such a sense of belonging.

My stomach growled loudly, snapping me out of my train of thought. I felt a warm blush creep over my face, of embarrassment. Kingston and Mason chuckled. “Perhaps we should have some breakfast?” Kingston suggested.

“Sounds like a good idea. I’ll mind-link Quinn to bring Liam and Layla down to join us.” Mason replied to Kingston.

“Come, my love, let’s get some food into your stomach. We have a big day ahead of us.” Kingston remarked to me.

“Mason, thank you, for everything. I am so lucky to have you in my life. You are like the brother I never had.” I tell him, as I launched at him for a hug. Mason embraced me for a hug also, however, at that moment Kingston growled at our closeness, and Mason and I both looked back at him.

“Sorry guys, Sabre gets a little overprotective of his mate” Kingston replied chuckling.

Mason then added, “That’s understandable Alpha.”

“Aleksa, I feel the same way about you. Ever since we met in the dungeons of Evergreen I’ve felt this overwhelming urge to protect you. You are also like a little sister to me.”

My heart instantly swelled at Mason’s words.

“I sure am a lucky girl. I have some really special people in my life. And I feel so grateful for you all.” I said to Mason, while I locked hands with Kingston getting ready to leave the room.

“See you at breakfast!” I called out to Mason, as Kingston lead me out the door.

It was approaching midday, and in light of the news that we had learned of earlier this morning, I had decided to cancel my brunch date with Quinn and Kaia. I ended up explaining the situation to them since it directly involved them both anyway. They pretty much repeated what Mason had told me, about us all being family, and having each other’s backs. Again my heart swelled with love, I had always wanted sisters, and now that dream had come true. I loved them both with all my heart. Sometimes when you meet people you just instantly click, and that’s exactly what happened when I met Kaia and Quinn.

They both offered to watch Liam and Layla for me while I met the Healer. This was a relief for me because I didn’t know what to expect from our meeting today. I was nervous yet excited, and I was curious to learn more. It all felt very surreal.

I was on my way to meet Xanthe and to learn more about my birth parents and my lineage. It was a gorgeous sunny day and it was so warm. Too warm to be sitting inside even though there is air conditioning. I thought it might be nice to chat outside, so we are on our way to a gazebo that was located near the rosegardens.

It really was a sight to behold, the roses were in full bloom and they smelt amazing. There was a crawling red rose bush covering the sides of the gazebo, and it looked so magical. Kingston must have asked someone to bring a table and chairs prior to our meeting because the set in front of us didn't look like it was supposed to be there. It looked brand new rather than the weathered set you would expect to see outside. There was a large jug of water and some glasses in the centre of the table.

We took a seat, and moments later Xanthe appeared before us.

"Hello Aleksa, I trust you are well-rested and ready to hear what I have to say?" Xanthe looked at me with a small smile on her face.

"Hello Xanthe, yes, please let me apologise for my behaviour yesterday, I was rude. I am not usually that way towards others. I was just dealing with a lot, and everything kinda overwhelmed me." I said pausing to take a breath. Xanthe just watched me and waited patiently as if she knew I wasn't finished.

"I think I just needed a good night's sleep and to spend some time with Liam and Layla. Thank you so much for coming back to speak with me. It means the world to me. I have so many questions!" I said, ready to unleash my questions on Xanthe.

"No need to apologize. How about you hear what I have to say. Then we can have question time afterwards." Xanthe said rhetorically.

"That sounds fair," I said. Although I was a little disappointed that I would have to wait. Chill Aleksa, I thought to myself. Yesterday I didn't want to hear any of this, and today I want to bombard her with questions. I swear I am all over the place at the moment. I looked up at Xanthe who was ready to speak.

"Let's start at the beginning then shall we." Xanthe begun.

Xanthe POV

“I’m not going to beat around the bush. I’m going to tell you this straight. So brace yourself.” I started to tell Aleksa, deciding that what I had to tell her would be overwhelming so I may as well keep to the point.

“Many millennia ago, the moon goddess blessed a lineage of wolves with special protective and healing powers, their role was to help heal and protect vulnerable wolves, they were known as the crescent moon wolves.”

“Crescent moon wolves carried a unique marking, which consisted of a sapphire blue crescent moon with two wolves under it, and a crown with a purple hue to it. Unfortunately, crescent moon wolves were constantly hunted and exploited, many living their lives in captivity, many dying after being drained of their powers and healing abilities. There were many powerful wolves who wished to harness their special abilities. I realize this all sounds unbelievable to you right now. Especially since you were led to believe you were human for the first eighteen years of your life. But I can assure you that it is all true.”

“Aleksa, your mother was a crescent moon wolf with special abilities and healing powers. She had left her pack when she met your father. You see Aleksa, your Grandfather was the Alpha of Moon Valley Pack. He was aware of Kristina’s abilities from a very young age and knew that she was a gifted wolf, as her mother was also one, and it was passed down by females in the family.”

“Back then, an alpha female taking the role of Alpha alone was unheard of, so they needed her to be mated and marked so that there would be a male alpha running the pack, thus maintaining their reputation and bloodline.”

“They (her parents) had planned to marry her off to the Alpha heir of a neighboring pack, in a bid to merge the two packs as they had no male heir so that their son would take the role of Alpha, and Kristina would be his Luna.”

“The alpha heir of the neighboring pack was an unkind, arrogant, and evil wolf, and rumor had it that he had planned to use Kristina for her gifts to heal his mistress, who suffered from some rare disease for which there was no known cure. The Alpha’s Heir was in love with his mistress and wanted to take her as his luna, but his parents had denied him.”

“And, Kristina had no intention of being mated to or being marked by him. Not long before the agreement was made, Kristina had met her fated mate in a chance meeting, your father. He was from another pack, and he was a

warrior. When Kristina told her parents this news, they were not accepting of this, they felt that he had nothing to offer them, and being that they were in so much debt at the time, they refused to acknowledge her fated mate.”

“You see, I had met your mother back at her birth pack – Moon Valley. I would occasionally consult at the pack hospital. I had met your mother on a few occasions as she would volunteer at the hospital regularly. We had an instant connection. I met your father, Aleksander, a few times also. Actually, Kristina had only met him a few times before they ran off together. I met your father because your mother needed help leaving the packhouse to visit him. I was usually her cover story as she was constantly followed by her father’s guards. We would tell them that she was volunteering at the hospital, she would sneak out the back, and meet Aleksander just outside the pack boundary.”

“Worried that Kristina might defy them, and mess up their plans, her parents fast-tracked the agreement. The night before Kristina was supposed to leave for the neighboring pack, Aleksander with the help of some of his fellow warriors created a distraction and managed to help Kristina escape. That was the last she saw of her parents and her pack. They were on the run for months putting as much distance between them as they could.”

“Kristina’s parents never stopped looking for her. Their debts got higher, and they were on the brink of losing their pack when a Hunter came to them and made them a proposition. He would bankroll the pack but they wanted Kristina’s firstborn daughter in return. Somehow they were aware of her crescent moon wolf lineage. Kristina’s father was desperate to retain his title and his pack so he reluctantly agreed to the hunter’s proposition.”

“After some time the hunter had managed to find her, and surely enough, Kristina and Aleksander had mated and had a baby girl -that was you Aleksa. They came for you, time and time again. Aleksander and Kristina were so determined to keep you safe and hidden that they veered away from packs and pack life, and opted for life in the human world.”

“However, one day they were caught unprepared, and that is the day Aleksander died trying to protect you.”

“Kristina was on her own then, she was heartbroken but determined to protect you with her life. She moved from town to town and worked menial jobs in order to support you, over the course of a few months she managed to do this well until they came again one night. They came in the still of the night, Kristina managed to hide you in the ceiling. She fought hard and managed to

take them all out, however, she was critically injured and died from blood loss that night.”

“When Kristina didn’t show up to work the next day I had a feeling something had gone horribly wrong. I left work at midday and when I arrived at the flat I was horrified at the scene that awaited me. It was like a scene from a horror movie, with bodies, and blood everywhere.”

“I found Kristina on the floor in front of her bedroom, the door was shut behind her, she was protecting you trying to keep them from finding you. I checked for a pulse but I already knew Kristina was gone, she was so cold and I couldn’t sense her energy. I will never forget that terrifying feeling that struck me when I realized that you were unaccounted for. I searched frantically. Then I focussed my mind and found you fast asleep in the ceiling, warm, and unscathed, although a little dehydrated and hungry when you finally woke.”

“I had decided it was best that we left that town as soon as possible. I bent down and kissed sweet Kristina on her forehead, and that’s when I saw the locket. She wore it everywhere and treasured it with her heart. I knew I should grab it so that you always had something of your mother’s with you.”

“I took you home with me, and then I decided it was time to move on. I needed to get you somewhere safe, as there was a high chance that they would still be looking for you.”

“We traveled for a few weeks, and then I realized that this was no life for a little pup. I realized that I couldn’t give you what you needed. I managed to find a job and somewhere for us to stay in a small town a few states over, it was a lovely quiet Christian community. I had gotten a job as a cleaner at a local church and would often overhear conversations between people. One day I heard an older couple talking about how they wished they had been blessed with a child that they could shower with love. I watched them for a few more weeks, did some background checks, and then I decided they were the perfect couple to raise you and love you.”

“Often they ran the community soup kitchen at the church and they were often the last to leave, so I wrapped you up in a little Moses basket and left you with a note at the door. I rang the bell then ran into the bushes and waited and watched.”

“I saw the amazement and concern and love in their eyes as they fussed over you. I saw the police arrive. I watched in the background over the next few

months and I watched them take you in and eventually adopt you as their own. I then went on my way. I would check in every now and then to ensure they were taking good care of you and to watch you grow. I was so proud of the beautiful person you had become.”

“I was there when you met Lachlan and I knew what was coming but I couldn’t interfere. I just watched on the sidelines, waiting for the time to come when you would need me.”

“When you had made your way here to Rocky Mountain and I had heard that Kingston was requesting a Healer, I knew it was the right time for me to make an appearance in your life.”

“So Aleksa that is the story of your parents and what happened to them, that is also the story of how you came to be adopted and live in a human town. Now you know you are a Crescent Moon Wolf, there is still so much I have to tell you, you will need to learn to properly harness your powers and your gifts, and in time you will.”

“I knew one day you would need to know everything, and I needed to be able to explain it to you. You might ask why I did not tell you earlier that you were a werewolf. I planned to trust me. I was planning to come to you and reveal myself to you just before your eighteenth birthday and to be there with you when you shifted for the first time. I couldn’t let you go through it alone.”

“However, my past had caught up with me. You see I too was on the run. Probably part of the reason Kristina and I understood each other so well. We were in similar situations. I was detained against my will, and it was a few years before I could escape. I am so sorry my child. I am sorry that I had let you down, and that I had left Kristina down. But I am here now and I will answer any questions you have to the best of my ability.”

I looked up at Aleksa and I could sense a sadness within her. She was not looking back at me, she had her head down and was quietly sniffing and wiping back her tears. I looked to Kingston who looked astonished as if he was still processing what I’d just said.

Silence enveloped us and I waited patiently for Aleksa’s response and her impending questions. I also hoped that she would forgive me for my failures.

Aleksa POV

I sat there listening to Xanthe tell me about my birth parents – Aleksander and Kristina. I felt something I didn't expect to feel. I felt an overwhelming sense of determination. A desire to do better, to be better, to be stronger, and to fight harder. I didn't want my parent's death to have been in vain. They had sacrificed so much for me. And now it was my turn to do the same for my children.

I would be damned if I was going to let something happen to my precious pups, especially Layla. If what Xanthe is saying is correct, then Layla is also a crescent moon wolf. That means she is in danger.

I felt a sense of fear and panic engulf me, all I wanted to do is to run to my precious Liam and Layla and hold them tight. But I needed to finish this conversation. There were still questions to be answered. I needed to be strong and know what we are up against.

A flurry of emotions was consuming me right now. There was a determination to make my birth parents proud. Fear that my children, especially Layla, were in danger, not just from the threat of being taken back to Evergreen and separated from me, but that there were wolves out there who may know of her existence and wish to harm and exploit her. Sadness – that I was the reason my parents died. If it weren't for me they may not have been caught off guard and might still be here today. I was also concerned that this will all be too much for Kingston and the pack. And finally, anger, at the people that had hunted my parents and me and in the process robbed me of the life I was supposed to have, the one where my biological parents never died, where I was raised with my birth pack.

Just breathe Aleksa I told myself, as I felt Kingston's arms wrap around me for comfort. He must have sensed my emotional hurricane through our mate bond. I looked up at him and he has a soft smile on his face, I can feel that he is concerned about me.

I nodded at him and told him through the mind-link that I'd be ok. And thanked him for being here for me.

I looked back at Xanthe and I said "There are so many questions I want to ask you, especially about what being a Crescent Moon wolf means. But I feel the first question I need to ask is this – where are my Grandparents? Are they still alive, and if so where?"

My rationale for this is that I need to know how much of a threat they were, as they are the reason that both my parents are dead. They were ruthless, they cared not for the mate bond, not for their own blood, and their greed and ambition were clearly their priorities. I wanted to know where they were and if there was any chance that they could know of my existence and of Liam and Layla's. Although in all honesty, I hoped there were gone. I had no intention of ever meeting such cruel people, in my mind, there were already dead.

"Aleksa, I wish I could answer this question without a doubt but I can't. Your grandmother passed not long after Kristina was murdered. My contacts told me she took her own life out of heartbreak and regret. Apparently, she never wanted any of this for her daughter, and she was a subservient Luna and did what her mate had commanded her to do. While she didn't agree with his actions, she also didn't take a stand against them either. As for your grandfather, when the agreement with the neighboring pack fell through and Kristina left, there was no heir to take over. After the Luna passed, your grandfather's wolf became feral and started to lose his grasp on reality, the pack began to suffer, and at this time the neighboring pack invaded the Moon Valley and took over control.

There was an alpha challenge, and your grandfather was grievously wounded, but it is unknown as to whether he actually died, as a rogue attack occurred while the challenge was taking place, and chaos ensued, it was at this time he disappeared, and his body was never found, although it is assumed he died but it is not certain. The wounds he sustained in the challenge coupled with losing his mate would be enough to end any wolf. I don't think he is a threat to you Aleska, or to your pups." Xanthe told me looking absolute in her answer.

"And, the Hunter, did you ever find out his identity? Who was the person that made the agreement with my Grandfather for my mother's firstborn daughter?" I asked Xanthe, wanting to get an idea of the players that were involved here, and who we were up against.

"No, I'm afraid not. I tried to keep a low profile. I had to keep you safe. I used some of my contacts to find out about your grandparents, but I was unable to find anything about the Hunter. I didn't want people to know I was asking questions." Xanthe told me apologetically.

"Hmnm, ok, fair enough, thank you Xanthe for everything, you have done for me. I do appreciate it. It sounds like I owe you my life. I'm not sure how I can ever repay you, but I will surely try." I told Xanthe, feeling a great deal of respect for the woman sitting in front of me right now.

“If you don’t mind, I do have some more questions?” I ask Xanthe.

“That is fine Aleksa, I have no place else to be right now. Fire away.” Xanthe said sweetly.

“You said that my mother died fighting to protect me. But I don’t understand. If she was also a Crescent Moon wolf, why did she die? Why didn’t she use her powers?” I questioned Xanthe. As that is one part of this story that I can’t seem to get my head around.

“I wondered when you were gonna ask me that question. The wolves that showed up that night didn’t appear to have any scents. And when I arrived on the scene I detected the faintest hint of magic, of dark magic Aleksa. I fear that a witch who practices dark magic was involved. I can’t say for certain, but I imagine that there was a barrier or forcefield that your mother’s powers couldn’t penetrate. I’ve wracked my brain throughout the years trying to understand what happened there, that’s all I have come up with that makes any real sense.” Xanthe told me bowing her head down. I got the impression she was unhappy that she hadn’t been able to uncover more.

“Dark magic? So she stood no chance then? Outnumbered by wolves and facing off against a dark witch.” I said anger searing through me, I feel my whole body starting to shake, and I could feel my eyes glowing.

“Aleksa, honey, try to calm down, just breathe,” Kingston said as he tried to calm me down, his touch alone was enough to soothe my soul.

“Aleksa, I can help you. Just knowing that there was a dark witch involved gives us more of an advantage. We can prepare better. I’m sorry I know this is all a lot. I know it’s horrible. I hate that this all happened and I couldn’t do anything to help. We have a chance here though, to prevent history from repeating.” Xanthe soothingly tells me while placing her hands on my hands.

“Tell me of my father’s death. I need to know – everything.” I expressed to Xanthe. I needed to know as much as I could about the events that had transpired all those years ago.

“Aleksander was a warrior from a pack a state over from Moon Valley. They met by chance really. Kristina would every once in a while sneak out with her friends into one of the nearby human towns for a bit of dancing and fun. One night she bumped into Aleksander while leaving the club, they knew they were mates right away, and instantly connected. They would meet every chance

they got, as Kristina set about introducing him to her father. Aleksander wasn't able to mark and mate with Kristina straight away with her being the alpha's daughter, so he had to be patient and undergo formalities, however, the alpha was opposed to their mateship."

"You see, Aleksander was an elite warrior for the Dark Moon pack, he was revered among his squad, and everyone that met Aleksander took an instant liking to him. He was very popular with the she-wolves but was determined to wait for his mate, which he did. Your mother – Kristina was the same, she was holding out for her mate too. They were so in love. It was a perfect match."

"You wanted to ask how your father died. He was a fierce fighter, but he was outnumbered the night that they first came for you, however, he was holding his own just fine. but the rogues that attacked him stabbed him in the back multiple times with a silver blade laced with wolfsbane. He wasn't able to heal and ultimately died of blood loss and wolfsbane poisoning. I'm sorry Aleksa, he was so courageous right to the very end. He managed to take them all out with him. When they had first attacked, he had already told Kristina to take you and run, which she did reluctantly. No one anticipated a silver blade and wolfsbane, they fought dirty." Xanthe explained. "Your mother never forgave herself for that. No matter how much I would tell her that she did the right thing, she followed Aleksander's orders and got you to safety. Kristina was heartbroken but found the strength to go on for you. She was most likely able to do this because she was a Crescent Moon wolf."

"She knew she would meet Aleksander again one day, and she wanted to make him proud by protecting you."

Salty tears were slowly escaping my eyes as Xanthe recounted the events leading up to my father's death. I had so much love and respect and regret in my heart right now for the parents I had once thought hadn't wanted me.

I wiped away my tears, took a sip from the glass of water in front of me, and took a few breaths.

"What more can you tell me about my wolf? You said I am a Crescent Moon wolf. How can I find more information about myself, about my powers and abilities? I need to know how to use them properly, and how to control them. Everything that has happened so far happened randomly. I have no clue of what I am doing." I confessed to Xanthe.

“There is not a lot of information about the Crescent Moon wolves. Aside from Kristina, I had not heard of a Crescent Moon wolf until then. Kristina learned to harness her powers to a point, but even she didn’t know a lot about her powers, and she never had a chance to master them. And with all that was going on we didn’t speak much of them.” Xanthe replied.

“The best way for us to learn more about your wolf would be to speak with an elder. I have some contacts we can utilize, but we need to be careful as to who we trust with this. Can you give me a few days? Give me some time to reach out to a few of my contacts. I feel they will be able to point us in the right direction?” Xanthe asked me.

“Of course. Maybe we should end this meeting here. I need to get back to Liam and Layla, and I’m sure Kingston has plenty of pack business to attend to. Xanthe, thank you for your time. I appreciate everything you have told me. I really do appreciate you coming here.” I thanked Xanthe.

“Aleksa, Kingston has my details, and you can contact me anytime. I want to be here for you.” Xanthe said warmly as she got up from her seat.

“Can I just say how much you look like your mother? You really are the spitting image of her.” Xanthe told me. That made my heart swell with pride. Kingston and I stood up from our seats.

“Uh, Xanthe, do you have any photos of my parents? I’ve never met them or even seen a picture of them. I don’t even know what they look like, and I would like to.” I asked Xanthe, as my lips started to quiver, I was fighting to prevent my emotions from consuming me once again.

“I actually do. I’m sorry Aleksa, I wasn’t thinking. Of course, you would want a photo of them. I believe I have one or two. I could bring them with me when I come back in a few days if you like.” Xanthe asked me.

“That would be amazing – thank you! Well, we will get going and we look forward to hearing from you in few days, all going well. Goodbye Xanthe!” I said as I walked over to Xanthe embracing her in a hug, she smelt like wild jasmine, the hug felt strangely familiar, as did her scent. I walked over to Kingston, and we locked hands and walked off through the gardens. I lay my head against his shoulder and we walked together, our bodies molding into one another’s. I could feel the warmth from the bond. I looked up at Kingston’s face while we were walking, he looked down at me and kissed me on the forehead. “I love you so much,” I said to Kingston.

"I love you too, Aleksa," Kingston said back. And we kept walking towards the packhouse to see our pups on this warm sunny day, the blue sky was dotted with fluffy white clouds, there was a gentle breeze passing us, I could hear the birds chirping in the background, bees buzzing over the wildflowers that littered the sides of the path we walked on, and a faint sound of children playing with frisbees on the grass in front of the packhouse.

There was so much going through my mind right now, but it could all wait a few hours. This mama needed some time with her pups.

Aleksa POV

It's been two weeks since we spoke with Xanthe, and strangely we haven't heard back from her yet. We assume she has been busy or hasn't yet found anything further out about crescent moon wolves. It's been very busy here at the packhouse lately.

Everyone is getting prepared for the Royal Alpha Summit which will be taking place over the next week. We've had the caterers in to organize the meals for the week-long event. Quinn has been helping me with this as I am still new to all of this. Back at Evergreen we never had an event even remotely resembling this. It's all a learning curve for me.

We decided against the media release about Kingston and I's mateship. The pack knew most importantly, but the rest of the world could wait a little bit longer.

After speaking with Xanthe and learning what we did about my lineage, about the Crescent Moon wolves being hunted, about my grandparents, and the Hunter that was potentially looking for me and Layla, we decided that it was best to keep things under wraps for now. We would wait for the summit and deal with things as they happened. Meaning that we would be dealing with the Lachlan situation as it arose.

I really hoped that Lachlan wouldn't attend the Royal Alpha Summit. He had never attended one previously so with a little bit of luck he wouldn't attend this one. Although, in saying that we weren't leaving it to luck. Kingston and Asher were working on a plan for what would happen if he did attend and how we would approach that situation without placing a damper on the celebrations or any disrespect to the alpha king himself.

Kingston was determined that this would be the best summit he had organized yet. We had all the accommodation organized, housekeeping was paying attention to detail to ensure that everything was perfect for our guests, and we had guides and point of contact organized for each pack.

We had entertainment organized for each night of the summit. The conference room had been extended and prepared to seat all attending alphas comfortably. Maintenance had outdone themselves, as the pack landscaping looked immaculate. The pack members were all excited and ready to host the attending packs. Unmated wolves were excited at the possibility of meeting their mates at the summit. The pack was a hive of excitement and anticipation.

While I was putting on a brave face, my anxiety was at an all-time high. I was trying to distract myself and not overanalyze everything because I knew Kingston would feel it through our bond, but I just couldn't. I was scared of what would happen if Lachlan attended. So much so that I had made plans to have Kingston's parents Chase and Cordelia take Liam and Layla away to a cabin in a nearby state for the week of the summit. I needed to know that they were safe especially if I was to see Lachlan face to face. Also, I would constantly be on edge worrying about whether or not they were safe if they were to be here while the Summit was taking place.

Although I would worry regardless, I would worry less knowing that they were in the capable hands of Chase and Cordelia. We had gotten to know each other a lot more over the past few weeks. They were very welcoming and genuinely happy for us both. They knew of my past with Lachlan and Evergreen, and accepted me with open arms.

Chase was still very fit and also very intimidating when you first met him, he was an older more distinguished version of Kingston, and Cordelia was sophisticated and elegant, she looked like an older version of Quinn, she was very nurturing and absolutely loved being around children, she doted on Liam and Layla as if they were her own pups. They would be leaving two days before the summit started, which I was happy with, as it gave us that little bit more time to plan, and sort our backup plan, as well as our back up to the backup plan.

Kingston had been very busy, but he had a very capable team working with him, he was at this point just checking that everything was organized and ready to go. Initially, he had played a bigger role in preparing the summit, but

in light of the rogue attacks, Xanthe telling us of mine and Layla's lineage and preparing for the probable fallout with Lachlan, he had decided to delegate.

Quinn and Mason had been busy renovating their cottage, and it was almost ready, they were just putting the finishing touches on it. They were so happy stuck in their own little love bubble. Kingston had been giving Mason more and more responsibility within the pack leadership and Mason was handling it all so well. He seemed very comfortable and settled here. I was so happy for my friend. He deserved happiness.

Kaia was still heavily involved with the warrior squad and practically trained all day every day. She was still spending a lot of time with Asher, they had even been on their first date. They were taking things slowly but you could feel the s****l tension in the air whenever those two were around each other.

Liam and Layla were settled and fitted in so well with the pack, everyone had been so welcoming towards them. It's crazy to think that in a few months they would be celebrating their third birthdays. I hadn't planned anything yet for that but I plan to once the summit is over, and everything is sorted out in regards to Lachlan, I will start planning for it then.

I was on my way to Kingston's office to bring him some lunch as he tended to skip meals often when he was hyperfocused and immersed in pack business. Liam and Layla were at daycare so I was just doing errands today and helping with the final preparations. As I walked down the hallway I heard raised voices coming from Kingston's office.

The voices stopped. I assumed they could scent me considering I was standing just outside the office. "Come in Aleksa" Kingston called out.

I walked in to see Kingston leaning back in his chair, Asher was sitting on the chair in front of Lachlan's desk. "Good afternoon Asher, good afternoon My Love," I said as I walked up to Kingston, placing his lunch on his desk in front of him and kissing him on his forehead.

"Did I walk in on something?" I ask sheepishly.

Asher shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

"Just tell her Asher," Kingston says to Asher sighing.

“Well Aleksa, I’m sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it would appear that news of Lachlan’s bounty has traveled, your images have been posted all over the town. It’s only a matter of time before someone contacts Lachlan, and he knows where you are.” Asher tells me, releasing the breath he was holding in.

My heart starts racing rapidly and I feel a shiver ripple throughout my body. My eyes begin to tear up. Then I close my eyes and focus my energy. I will not let this fear consume me. I take a few deep breaths and try to control my emotions.

Kingston goes to pull me into him and sit me on his lap, while I would usually feel comfort and protection in this action, right now I want to stand. I need to stand. I will not cower and let fear take over whenever a curveball is thrown at me. I am to be Luna of this pack Although I love that Kingston wants to protect me, I am done with being a passive subservient Luna like I was when I was at Evergreen. I need to learn to protect myself, my pups, and my pack properly. Kingston growls at my actions and looks at me questionably.

“Okay, so, we need a plan! We can’t leave anything to chance, we really need to be a few steps ahead of Lachlan at all times!” I declare to them both.

Asher looks at me incredulously, usually, I would be an emotional wreck right now, and would act before thinking. But I was done with being that girl. Kingston looks at me with a proud look on his face. I can feel through the bond that he approves of this side of me.

“Well Luna, I have taken them all down, but we have to work on the premise that they have already been seen by most people.”

“For example, the people that knew you from working at the tavern, people who may be walked past you in the street, or saw you in a shop. We will speak with all pack members, I can’t imagine we would have any problems there. But the humans and any rogues we will have no control over.” Asher replied.

“I have just called all pack members to the training grounds in fifteen minutes, we will discuss this issue with them immediately. Aleksa we will need to tell them about your past, about Lachlan, and about Evergreen. What are your thoughts on this?” Kingston asks me.

"I agree. The pack needs to know the truth. It is better that they know now before they decide whether or not they will accept me as their Luna officially." I said.

Kingston growled. "They have already accepted you. You are their Luna." He declared.

I put my hands on his cheek and pulled him in for a quick kiss to calm his wolf.

"Looks like we will be speaking with Lachlan sooner than we expected," Kingston says to Asher, their eyes meeting each other knowingly in agreement.

"I will have two elite warriors assigned to Liam and Layla twenty-four hours a day, I will also assign two elite warriors to the Luna if you agree Alpha?" Asher asked Kingston.

"Sounds good. We will need to tighten pack security and double the patrols. I will have to speak with our neighboring packs to advise them of the situation and ensure our bases are covered should we need additional backup." Kingston tells Asher.

"Everything will be ok Aleksa, you are safe, Liam and Layla are safe. Your pack will protect you." Kingston reassures me.

"I know we will be. I refuse to let Lachlan control our lives. I am done with running and done with being afraid. That being said, I need a little help with something Asher. If you have some free time later this afternoon?" I ask him hopefully.

"Of course Luna, although I must say I am rather curious," Asher remarks to me. Kingston is looking at me, raising an eyebrow.

"Relax, I just need a little training, some basic but effective defensive moves, I need to be able to fight if necessary," I tell them both.

Kingston mind-links me "This more dominant side of you is turning me right now on my love!"

"Uh guys, I'm still here," Asher says, looking uncomfortable.

Kingston and I both chuckle, "Sorry man" Kingston says to Asher.

I feel the heat creep over my cheeks, I know that I am blushing right now.

A few minutes later, there is a knock on the door. "Mason, please come in," Kingston calls out.

Mason walks in, "Alpha, Luna, Beta Asher," He says as he nodded his head respectfully. "What can I do for you?" He asks.

"Well Mason, we have a problem. Those images you warned us of, well they have been posted all over town. We have to assume that Lachlan already knows where Aleksa and the twins are, so we have a problem."

"I asked you to come here today in the hopes that you would consider being Liam and Layla's protection detail for now, until this is all resolved. I would also assign two of our elite warriors to the twins, but I think it would be reassuring for Aleksa to have someone she trusts looking out for the twins, and less stressful for them to have a familiar face around them." Kingston asks Mason.

Mason answers straight away as if he didn't even have to consider the request. "Absolutely Alpha, I would be honored to." He said, winking at me, which made me smile, lessening my nerves a little.

Kingston got up out of his seat and everyone else stood and made their way out of the office. It was time to address the pack and tell them of my life before coming to Rocky Mountain. It was time to tell them of the threat to the pack. Although it wasn't the time to tell them of my lineage and that I was a Crescent Moon wolf as I still didn't really know what that meant myself.

I had just hoped that they would still accept the twins and I once they knew the truth about my past before coming to Rocky Mountain.

Aleksa POV

It's been a few days since we had "the talk" with our pack. It actually went really well. Everyone was a bit quiet initially. I could hear gasps and whispers, but I kept talking, telling my story, and before long, I could sense that the pack understood what I was saying and why I had to leave my previous pack. I explained what happened with Lachlan and Eva, and how I ended up in the pack dungeons. Then I explained how I had to leave with my pups, and mentioned my friends, Mason and Kaia, who helped facilitate that escape. Everyone just stood and listened to what I had to say. Kingston took over and

explained to the pack about the bounty placed on me, as well as explaining that what Lachlan had told people about Mason and Kaia was untrue, that they were helping me, not k*****g me, and to not pay attention to the lies they might hear. He reassured the pack that he had done his due diligence before we came to join Rocky Mountain,

Since then, everyone has been even friendlier, which I didn't think was possible, because they were already so welcoming. I feel lighter not having to hide my past, like a weight has been shifted from my shoulders. I feel relieved to know that the pack accepts me as their Luna, because I love Kingston and the pack, and I feel like we have made this place our home. I don't even want to imagine what might have happened if the pack hadn't accepted me and my pups.

Due to the news of the bounty, and mine and my pups faces being plastered everywhere, as well as Mason and Kaia's, pack security and patrols have doubled and the place is like Fort Knox around here, which is making things a little harder for the deliveries and preparations needed for the summit, but as Kingston reiterates, it's better to be safe than sorry.

I know I need to face Lachlan once and for all. And every day I feel more and more ready for it, I just want to get it over with, so we can all live our lives without having this hanging over our heads.

Asher has been taking the time out to train me twice a day. We meet at dawn and dusk. He is mostly teaching me defense. He's keeping it short and sweet for now, teaching me how I can use my size to my advantage, as well as teaching me moves that are easy to execute and are highly effective.

Tomorrow, Chase and Cordelia will be taking Liam and Layla away to a lake house in Idaho. Mason and Quinn will be accompanying them, as well as several elite warriors. I know my pups are in safe hands. I am sad that we will be separated, but I know it's only temporary. I feel confident knowing that they will be further away from Lachlan's clutches.

We are spending the day at the packhouse today. I want to make the most of my time with my pups before their trip away. I have told them they will be going away with their grandparents and they don't seem phased. I guess they are too young to really understand. But at least they have fun with Chase and Cordelia, Mason and Quinn, and they are familiar faces for them, which should help alleviate any stress or anxiety that they may feel from being away from their Mama.

I won't see Kingston until tonight as he has back-to-back meetings with some of the Alpha's from nearby packs all day, they will be busily preparing for the summit as well as Lachlan's probable arrival. I have organized a special lunch to be delivered to the conference room for them today. I know what those Alpha's are like when they are busy talking about business they often won't eat, so at least they can eat while they work. I know I will feel better knowing that they are being fed.

I hear a knock at the door and I get up from the floor where I am playing blocks with the twins to open it. I was surprised to see Kaia at the door. "Aleksa, I wondered if you and the twins would like some company. I heard that they were leaving tomorrow and I needed to get my cuddle quota in before they leave" Kaia says enthusiastically, opening her arms up for Liam and Layla.

"Aun-ty Kaia! Aun-ty Kaia!" they yelled, barrelling towards her with open arms.

"My pups!" She replies, pulling them into her arms, and snuggling them.

"Perhaps we could go to the kitchen and get some snacks to have a picnic on the front lawn?" I suggested to everyone.

"Yay!" the twins shouted in unison.

"Sounds good to me!" Kaia says cheerfully.

I grab my go-bag for the twins, they each take Kaia's hand, and we walk out the door, kitchen bound for snacks.

Ready to enjoy the rest of the day together creating fun memories.

It's the day before the summit, which means my pups are about to embark on their first holiday without their Mama this morning, and I am feeling a little anxious. I woke up super early today. I had the twins' suitcases packed last night and had taken them to the front door, ready to be loaded into Chase's SUV this morning.

I have already had two coffees and I'm considering my third one already. I've just been sitting here watching Liam and Layla sleep for the past few hours. Just thinking about how fast they are growing and wondering where the time

has gone. It seems like only yesterday they were in my womb. Now they aren't far off their third birthdays.

We have all been through so much over the past six months or so. But I wouldn't change a thing because it has got us to this point. To Rocky Mountain, to Kingston, to our beautiful friends who have become our family. To this kind and caring and protective pack. We are all so blessed.

I am disrupted from my thought process by a sleepy Liam, "Mama?" He questions me.

"Good Morning Liam, yes it's Mama, how did you sleep?" I asked my big boy.

"Good." He says to me,

"Mama?" He asked me.

"Yes, Liam?" I said, trying to hold back my chuckle at how cute my little boy looked half asleep and trying to communicate with me.

"Pancakes?" Liam asks.

"Yes Liam, you can have pancakes this morning, let's get you changed while we wait for your sister to wake up, shall we?" I said to Liam.

"I'm awake!" Layla called out.

I laughed out loud. Layla never missed an opportunity to have pancakes.

"Of course, my princess, let's get you dressed too, and head down to the kitchen," I say to my pups.

They both smile and start clapping with glee.

After breakfast, I got Liam and Layla cleaned up and we made our way back downstairs to the main entrance of the pack house. Kingston and Mason help strap the twins into their car seats and I give them big cuddles and kisses goodbye. I then say thank you to everyone and wish them all a safe trip.

I waved continuously with a big smile on my face, holding back the tears until Liam and Layla were out of sight. I feel tears flooding my eyes, and I try to

contain myself in front of everyone. I end up laughing at myself and overcome with emotion. I wipe my eyes and take a few breaths trying to settle myself down. Kingston pulls me into his chest and tries to console me.

“It’s for the best, Aleksa, they will be safe with my parents, and with Mason and Quinn, I promise,” Kingston tells me.

“I know, I don’t doubt that, Kingston. I’m just sad, it’s my first time away from the twins, well, with the exception of my time in the dungeons.” I replied.

Kingston growled at my mentioning the dungeons. Well, it was probably more Sabre growling in all honesty.

I wiped my eyes one last time and took a big breath and exhaled. It’s time to pull myself together. I am doing this for my pups. I need to focus on the summit, on confronting Lachlan, and ensuring he is no longer a threat to me or the twins.

Kingston looks at me proudly, as if he knows exactly what I am thinking. Asher clears his throat.

“Alpha, Luna.” He starts.

“Border patrol has told me that some of the Alpha’s have already started to arrive for the Summit,” Asher tells us.

I had a shocked expression on my face, “But the Summit doesn’t start until tomorrow?” I replied to them both, suddenly wondering if we were actually ready. Although if they are already here, we will just have to be ready.

“It’s okay, my love, it’s not unusual for some packs to arrive a little early. We have already anticipated this. Let’s quickly refresh ourselves, then come back down to greet our guests Aleksa.” Kingston gestures for me to follow him.

“ OK, sure, good idea,” I said in reply to him, feeling a bit dazed, but following his lead. We left Asher at the main entrance, waiting to greet the guests and direct them once they arrived, as well as stalling for time as we made our way back.

The first pack to arrive was from North Dakota. Alpha Logan and his Luna Louise looked to be in their late thirties, their Gamma Joel, who I imagine was of a similar age and accompanying them, were four elite warriors. Their Beta was at home leading the pack in their absence. They were a lovely pack, very friendly. After some small talk, Asher accompanied them to the cottage they would be residing in for the entirety of the summit. We had suggested they get settled and meet us back at the packhouse for lunch if they wish to. Which they happily accepted.

As we were about to leave to head back into the packhouse, another pack was arriving, so we decided to wait at the main entrance for them, as Asher was busy with the North Dakota pack.

Three SUVs drove up to the entrance. A burly man, probably in his early twenties, ran up to the door of the SUV and opened it for his Alpha, a very tall and muscular man who looked to be in his late twenties. He then opened the door on the other side and a gorgeous woman with red hair and green eyes walked out. She had a shy smile on her face, she joined hands with her mate and they walked up to us.

After introducing ourselves to them, we learned that they were from Nebraska, Wyatt, and Willow Robinson. They seemed like a nice couple, they seemed happy to be here, and I had a really good feeling about Willow specifically, there was something about her. I look forward to getting to know her better over the next week.

Kai arrived at the entrance, he promptly introduced himself to Wyatt and Willow and offered to take them to their cottage so that they could get settled in. They also agreed to meet us at the packhouse for lunch.

Kingston and I took this as a chance for us to spend a little time together while welcoming our guests. It was looking like the summit might be starting a bit earlier this year, so Kingston sent out a mass mind-link to the pack, informing them of the guests that had already arrived, and reminding them to make sure they all felt welcome.

As we walked inside the packhouse, I told Kingston that I needed a quick word with Rose. I said I would be quick if he could just wait for me. I made my way to the kitchen, leaving Kingston to check his emails on his smartphone in the lobby.

I needed to let Rose know our guests had started arriving and that we would be making a special lunch today for our guests. I wanted to give her a heads up numbers-wise but to also potentially prepare for even more guests, as we were not sure who else might arrive early and we didn't want anyone going hungry.

Rose was excited to hear that our guests were arriving and she got to work organizing food. I asked Rose if she would like some help, but she just started shoo-ing me out of the kitchen. So I took the hint and made my way to Kingston.

"My love, you still haven't told me what you and Asher have decided to do about Lachlan? What's this grand plan? I don't mean to pressure you, but I would really like to know what the plan is, considering it will involve me." I told him, pouting and looking into his eyes.

"How about we get through this afternoon, and then tonight after dinner, I will call a meeting with Asher and some of our elite warriors, then we can all talk about it then and there. Does that sound fair?" Kingston asked me. Although it was more of a statement than a question if you ask me.

"I guess I can wait," I said, feeling unimpressed that he seemed to be stalling me.

"So uh, if we have some free time now, would you like a massage?" Kingston says with a cheeky grin on his face.

"How about we get through this afternoon, have dinner, and then after the meeting we can spend some quality time together. Does that sound fair?" I said smugly to Kingston, trying to stifle my laugh.

"I see what you did there. Touche." Kingston says, trying to suppress his laughter.

"It's ok. Come to think of it I should really go over everything one last time, and check in with security." Kingston says matter of factly.

"Ah, yes, and I will touch base with the planning team for the festivities, to ensure everything is on schedule," I said to Kingston, leaning on him to kiss him on the cheek.

"I love you!" I said to Kingston as I looked into his eyes sincerely.

“I love you too!” He replied back to me. And we go our separate ways.

As I was walking down the hallway, I realized I had left my phone in the kitchen, so I turned back and headed toward the kitchen. As I walked through the door, I saw that Rose and some of the kitchen staff were busy preparing lunch. I could hear a commotion outside, so I quickly grabbed my phone and made my way outside.

As I opened the door and walked down the steps of the packhouse following the raised voices, I saw some of our pack members preparing to direct our guests. One of them has a checklist, and the other is trying to communicate with the driver of the first SUV. A total of two SUVs have arrived at the main entrance of the packhouse. I am surprised there are no ranked wolves down here to greet them, so I quickly mind-linked Kingston telling him we have more guests arriving. Then I started to confidently stride toward the SUV. I’ve got this thought to myself, it’s just meet and greet, how hard can it be.

I then see a tall and muscular man in a fitted black suit step out of the first SUV and as he turns towards me I gasp, stopping in my tracks.

“Aleksa? Well, this is a pleasant surprise.”