

Luna Aleksa's Escape Chapter 51

Aleska POV

Kingston chased Lachlan beyond the pack border, but he had just disappeared. Our best trackers were out there looking for his scent but had so far come up empty-handed. We had decided that we needed to tell the Alpha and their entourage as well as our own pack what was happening so that everyone was aware of the threat that we all faced. Lachlan would be back and, knowing what he is capable of, he wouldn't return alone.

Most of the attending packs were shocked to hear what had occurred at Evergreen and pledged their support to us, although there were a few packs that were sceptical and said very little. If I'm totally honest, I'm not surprised, as even though we had all just met, the few that said nothing gave me the impression that our way of life and values did not align.

We had collectively agreed to continue with the summit. Everyone looked forward to this annual meeting, so we would proceed cautiously. We had quadrupled our border patrol courtesy of our visiting Alpha's, and we had spoken without neighbouring packs to ensure we had their support if things got out of hand.

Both Kingston and I were rattled by the early morning attack. I left Kingston to continue his meetings with Kai, Caleb, and Jackson. The Alpha's conference will be starting a little later this morning due to earlier events.

I wanted to go check on Sam before Luna's brunch started. I also wanted to check on Lily and see how she was processing everything. She will become a Beta Female when she and Sam accept each other, and while I know she will have some initial anxiety, I have a feeling she is going to be just fine.

As I walked out of the packhouse I bumped into Roxy. "Watch it b***h! Oh, it's you! I hear you had a little trouble this morning," Roxy smirks at me, waiting for my response. I can see that she wants to provoke me, but I won't give her the pleasure. I have too much to do today already. I don't have the time for this.

"Nothing I can't handle Roxy, see you at the spa," I said to her, smiling sweetly. Roxy screws up her face and snickers at me.

I walked off towards the pack hospital. I am hoping my dear friend might finally be awake. I really hope he and Lily accept each other.

I walked into Sam's room to find him and Lily in an embrace. Sam is sitting up in his hospital bed and Lily is straddling him. I can't hide my broad smile. I didn't want to interrupt them, so I turned to walk back out of the room when I smacked into a wall. Except it was not a wall, it was Caleb's chest.

This is enough to get Sam and Lily's attention. Lily jumps up off Sam and has a bright red blush on her face. Sam looked very happy, and even Sam was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Sorry Luna," Caleb teased.

"Seriously Caleb," I said, looking at him with an unimpressed expression on my face.

"Just kidding, Aleksa," Caleb says, trying to suppress his laugh.

"Aleksa!" Sam called out to me.

"Hi Sam, I am so glad you are awake. How do you feel?" I blurt out quickly.

"Honestly, I've never felt better," Sam tells me, his eyes moving in Lily's direction. Lily had a shy smile on her face.

"I'm so glad you are OK Sam. I see you have met Lily." I said to Sam.

"Yes, I have met my second chance mate, but I feel she is more my true mate. I've never felt this feeling before," Sam tells me.

"I know exactly how you feel, Sam, it is the same with me and Kingston. I am so happy for you both," I told him happily.

Caleb placed two coffees down on top of the bedside drawer next to Sam and Lily.

"Well, I hate to be rude guys, but I've got a meeting that I am about to be late for. I'll see you all later," Caleb tells us, with that he bows his head towards me, and I just shake my head at him, trying to hide my amusement. He loves teasing me.

“See ya, Caleb, thanks for stopping by,” Sam called out.

“Thank you, Caleb,” Lily called out politely.

“I won’t stay long, I know what it’s like when you first meet your mate or true mate in this case,” I told them both.

“Sam, I don’t want to worry you, but, Lachlan turned up a few hours ago,” I told him calmly.

“What, are you OK, did he?” Sam started before I cut him off.

“Kingston and Lachlan fought, and then they stopped, and then the warriors circled him, but he ran off into the woods. We have the trackers out there, but he seems to have vanished,” I told him feeling confused, trying to explain it all, and leaving out the part where I have the power to command alphas. I will tell Sam but now is not the time.

“Sam, he will be back. Kingston is meeting with Caleb, Kai (his Gamma) and Jackson. I am not sure if you know Alpha Jackson, he’s,” I started. Before I was cut off by Sam.

“Yes, I have met Alpha Jackson on a few occasions, he’s a good guy,” Sam replied.

“Anyway, they are meeting to discuss what we will do about Lachlan,” I told Sam, unsure about where he stands on this matter.

“Aleksa, I have no loyalty towards the bastard. I would gladly end him.” Sam tells me as if he could read my mind. He looks mad at the mention of his name and I don’t blame him.

“I am, however, loyal to Evergreen. Our pack has suffered for too long under his control, he needs to go.” Sam tells me.

“What are you saying, Sam?” I asked, suddenly feeling nervous as to where this was going.

“I am going to challenge him, for the pack,” Sam continued.

“But Sam, with all due respect, you are still recovering,” I told him, feeling concerned that my friend might get hurt.

Lily walks over to Sam and cuddles up beside him, as a show of loyalty and support.

“Aleksa, I have never felt better. After feeling weak and empty for the past few years, I feel as though I have just woken up from a bad dream. I feel energised and reborn. I can’t explain this feeling,” Sam tells me.

“Maybe it’s the will of the Moon Goddess? Oh, maybe it’s finding Lily? Sam, I am so glad you have found happiness, and I am so sorry about ...”

“It’s OK, Aleksa, you were a victim too, but we need to put that all behind us now, like you said the Moon Goddess has blessed us, although we do have to sort Lachlan out. He will keep coming for you and the twins, he won’t let you go without a fight,” Sam declared.

“Evergreen deserves better than what they have been getting, we need to rebuild, the pack is in financial ruin and Lachlan has destroyed our alliance, we need to try to get back in the good graces of our allies, and we can’t do that with Lachlan as Alpha,” Sam tells me with an air of confidence I haven’t seen from him before.

“I agree with you completely, Sam, and I think you would make a great Alpha. You have my full support,” I told him proudly.

Although we hadn’t talked much before I left Evergreen, I had always respected Sam and had always considered him a close friend. I had no doubt he could bring Evergreen back up to the standard it once held.

The pack doctor walked in at that moment with Sam’s discharge papers, Sam disconnected himself from the monitor and I took that as my cue to leave.

“I’ll see you a little later today, Sam. Lily will take good care of you. Lily, please link me if you need anything,” Lily nodded.

“Thank you, Luna,” Lily said happily.

“Please Lily, just call me Aleksa,” I told her.

“Sorry Luna, I mean Aleksa,” Lily replied.

“Thanks, Aleksa, I’ll see you at the packhouse most likely. Kingston has asked me to report there once I am discharged,” Sam said.

“Great, see you then,” I called out to them, with a small wave.

And I started to make my way back to the pack house to freshen up for our spa date with the rest of the Lunas and their entourage.

What a day it has been. The Luna brunch and spa went well. Most of the Lunas seemed unaware of what had happened earlier today, or they just didn't deem it of importance. The chat was relatively superficial, they spoke of their favourite places to holiday, about how well their pups were doing and how happy they all were with their respective mates.

Roxy was her usual snide self, dropping little remarks and insults here and there. In all honesty, I wasn't in the mood to fight her right now. My mind was elsewhere. Surprisingly, Abbey wasn't present today. I did wonder where she was. Maybe a spa wasn't her idea of fun, although I would have thought that one might attend out of respect.

Thankfully, my dearest friend Kali was there. If anyone needed pampering, it was her. She must be knackered. I remembered how it was to be pregnant, it could be very fatiguing. We briefly spoke of what happened this morning with Lachlan turning up. Kali reassured me the guys would sort Lachlan out. I wanted Kali to be safe. I didn't want her to put her pup at risk, so I made her promise to stay at the packhouse for extra protection. I will ask Kai to help me move her and Caleb's belongings into the packhouse today. It was clear Lachlan had lost his mind completely, and I would not put my friend and her unborn pup at risk.

Thinking of pups, I missed Liam and Layla desperately. I missed talking with my pups, but we had decided it was best if we didn't communicate while Lachlan was nearby. We couldn't risk him finding out their location. I knew they were safe though. In the short time I had known Mason, I knew I could trust him with my life.

I hadn't spoken much to Kingston since this morning's events. I realised he had been busy organising extra warriors, extra patrols, solidifying our allies and so on, not to mention the alpha conference, but I had the feeling he was avoiding me. It didn't take much to send out a quick mind-link even just to say hello. Something wasn't right.

I walked towards his office. I could hear muffled voices. Then, the office door opened before me. Kai had opened it. He stood there with a big goofy smile on his face, dimples and all.

“Good Afternoon Luna,” Kai greeted me, knowingly, almost as if he had known it was my intention to stand by the door and listen a little longer.

“It’s Aleksa, Kai, please only use my title in official settings, we are friends,” I told him, for what seemed like the millionth time.

“Sorry Luna,” he said with a cheesy grin on his face.

“Aleksa, is it important? We are kind of in the middle of something,” Kingston tells me gruffly.

I haven’t heard him speak to me like this before. He must be stressed, I thought to myself.

“I wanted to have a word with you in private, if I may, and no, it cannot wait,” I told him abruptly before he could answer.

“Very well,” he sighed in defeat.

And with that, Jackson, Caleb and Kai all exited the office quickly.

“So, what’s going on? I feel like there is something you aren’t telling me.” I stated firmly, watching his face closely.

“Aleksa, everything’s fine, I’m just a little under the pump,” Kingston declared.

“I am your mate, I can feel that something is wrong, and it’s more than what happened this morning,” I tell Kingston, letting him know I won’t leave until I get my answer.

“Do you remember the other day, when I had to take an urgent phone call?” Kingston started reluctantly.

“Yeah,” I replied.

“It was Xanthe. She had run into a little trouble along the way. She hadn’t managed to contact one of her Elders, but she had discovered something that she said could change everything. She said it was too important to mention it over the phone and that she needed to tell us in person. Xanthe felt that she

was being followed, so she was going to try to shake whoever was following her. I made her promise to call me the next morning to let me know that she was safe but she never checked in.” Kingston said with a grave expression on his face.

Aleska POV

After Kingston had dropped that bombshell on me, I was feeling a little on edge. I felt overcome with guilt. If it wasn't for me, Xanthe wouldn't have even left on the mission. I shouldn't have pushed her for more information.

“Xanthe will be ok. She wants to help us.” Amber said in my head.

“You don't know that. What if something happens to her!” I replied to Amber.

“Aleksa, I know Xanthe will be fine, trust me, it's all part of a greater plan,” Amber declares.

“Amber, I'm not in the mood for your cryptic messages. Could you just this one time, elaborate a bit for me.” I pleaded with my wolf.

“Xanthe's story isn't over. Trust the Goddess's plans.” Amber says, and then she retreats and puts a block up on me.

“Grrr. That wolf!” I said out loud in frustration.

Kingston just looked at me quizzically.

“Amber?” Kingston asks.

“Amber's gone. She blocked me!” I told Kingston angrily.

“What did she say? Sabre can't reach her either,” Kingston replied.

“She said Xanthe would be alright, said to trust the goddess's plan and that her story isn't over yet,” I told Kingston a matter of factly.

“Well, that's good then. Why are you so stressed?” Kingston asks me.

“Do you have any idea of how frustrating it is when your wolf is privy to all this information that concerns you and the ones you love the most, and yet she picks and chooses what she thinks I have a right to know!” I blurt out.

Then I look at the expression on Kingston's face and realize something.

"I'm being a brat aren't I?" I said, laughing at myself.

"You are just stressed, and rightly so, a lot has happened recently, Aleksa, my love, you are doing great!" Kingston tells me as he sniffs my neck where he marked me.

He starts to lick my mark and it sends shivers of excitement and arousal all over me. Kingston is sitting in his oversized executive chair, so I climb onto his legs and started to straddle him. I could feel my arousal seeping through my panties, I know it must be overwhelming his senses right now.

I can feel his c**k harden in his pants, straining tightly against the fabric of his pants. His c**k is throbbing against my panties.

"I want you in me now!" I demand, looking into Kingston's eyes with the utmost determination and desire.

Kingston unzips his pants and his large hardened c**k springs to attention, he then rips off my sheer wet panties, and I lower myself onto his c**k riding him as if my life depends on it. He pushes me further down onto his c**k. Using his arms to push me up and down into him, harder and faster, I'm grinding into him, until I'm riding him to a gallop. I can feel his c**k twitch and pulsate inside me. We both reach our highs in no time. I feel Kingston find his release emptying into me. My walls are still throbbing post c****x as his c**m drips down my inner thighs.

I looked into Kingston's eyes with a smirk on my face. I don't know what just came over me. I've never been so spontaneous like that before. I looked at Kingston's face and he looked a lot more relaxed than he did when I first entered the room. I knew that I was definitely feeling more relaxed.

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, my goddess. The others were just outside the room! I was beyond mortified.

Kingston looked at me as if he could read my mind, he reassured me, "They left before we got physical. I told them to take a quick break and report back in thirty minutes," he chuckled.

I didn't find it as funny as Kingston. I felt my heart rate starting to normalize. I picked myself back up and discarded my ripped panties in the bin. Kingston

walked into the ensuite in his office and washed himself off. I walked in and cleaned myself up also. Although, I would need to go straight to my room and shower properly. I can't walk around smelling like s*x, not in a pack of werewolves with a heightened sense of smell.

Kingston then came over to me and pulled me in for a loving embrace. We kissed, and then I told him my plans with Caleb and Kali. Kingston agreed with me that they should move to the packhouse. He said that he would ask Kai to help me organize it all. Kingston received a mind-link. Sam is here to speak with him. So I took this as my cue to leave. I was shower-bound. Then, I wanted to go and find Abbey, check that she is OK, and have that chat with her that we had spoken of when she had first arrived.

I started to make my way into my room. I grabbed a fresh new outfit out of the walk-in wardrobe and grabbed my cosmetic bag with all my hygiene needs in it, and as I made my way to the bathroom, I saw a note and a long-stemmed red rose on my bed.

My heart immediately swelled, and I wonder how Kingston organized this so quickly. I took a sniff of the rose, as I held it I felt a thorn pierce my finger. Ouch. I thought to myself, as I watched a few drops of blood fall on my bed linen.

The rose smelled sweet and spicy at the same time. Then I dropped it as quickly as I picked it up. It smelt familiar, but not in a good way. It smelt like Lachlan.

I picked up the letter and began to read it, "YOU BELONG TO ME!" "Lachlan."

I screwed the note up and chucked it hard against the wall. I then mind-linked Kingston and told him I needed him urgently.

In a matter of moments, my door was kicked open and came off its hinges, flying against the wall. In stormed Kingston, Sam, Caleb, and Jackson. I stood there shocked. That was quick. Not quite what I had expected.

"Aleska, I could feel your fear and panic through our bond. What happened?" Kingston yelled. The others were all looking around the wall with fierce facial expressions. I almost felt the urge to laugh. But I didn't. This was not a laughing matter.

"Lachlan happened," I said sternly.

The men started walking around my room inspecting it for signs of intruders. They didn't appear to be picking up any scents.

Jackson picked up the crumpled note and opened it. He looked enraged.

"Kingston, I think you should read this," he told Kingston, passing the note to him. The others watched Kingston and waited for his response.

Kingston's growl ripped through the room, everyone except Jackson and myself was affected by his alpha aura.

"What is it, Kingston?" Sam asked.

Kingston passed the note to Sam. He and Caleb read it.

"It came with the rose. The rose has Lachlan's scent on it, but nothing else seemed to." I spoke of my own observations.

"How the hell did he get past our border patrols and security measures!" Kingston demanded. He looked like he wanted to break something.

"He's masking his scent, Alpha," Caleb declared.

"I agree," I said in support of Caleb's observation.

"He must have a witch working with him," Jackson added.

"We need Xanthe!" I said to the group.

Jackson appeared to stiffen at the mention of her name.

"Who is Xanthe?" Jackson asked with furrowed brows.

"Xanthe is a Healer. She knew my parents, and she has been really supportive of – everything, she would know what to do right now," I said to Jackson and the others.

Jackson seemed to be deep in thought right now, he was rubbing the side of his neck with a very serious expression on his face. I was about to ask him if everything was alright when I got a mind-link.

"There's been a breach on the eastern perimeter, I've got to go, Sam/ Caleb - could you keep an eye on Aleska for now please?" Kingston called out.

“I don’t need minders, Kingston! We have discussed this already. I can take care of myself,” I protested.

“Look, can you just work with me, Sabre is losing his mind right now, he doesn’t want to leave you, but I need to attend to this breach,” Kingston tried to reason with me.

“Yeah, OK, go, I’ll play along just this once,” I told Kingston.

“Permission to tag along, Kingston,” Jackson asked.

“Gray could do with a run,” Jackson added.

“Yeah, thanks man, I’d appreciate that,” Kingston replied, and with that, they both shift into their wolf forms and they bolt through the packhouse.

I looked at Sam and Caleb. “Alright guys – Sam, I’m sure you would rather be with Lily right now, and Caleb – I’m sure you would much rather be with your pregnant mate, so how about we all go our separate ways?” I said slyly.

“No can do Aleska, you heard Kingston,” Sam replied to me.

“Looks like you’re stuck with us,” Caleb added.

I sighed. “OK, well, I’m gonna take a shower so I’m sure you don’t wanna hang out here, come back in ten minutes. OK?” I said to them.

“We will wait outside in the hallway, Aleksa, please don’t make this hard for us,” Caleb pleaded.

“I’ll behave. After that, I need to see my friend Abbey though,” I told them.

“No problem, we shall escort you there,” Caleb replied.

“Alright, see you soon,” I said to them both, and with that, I headed into the shower.

As we made our way to Abbey and Alaric’s cottage, I realized it was starting to get late. The sun looks like it’s getting ready to set, and it’s a beautiful sight. I made my way up the cobblestone pathway to the front door of the cottage. I

am still taken aback by how cute these cottages are, littered with wildflowers, and fragrant undertones of jasmine, stock, and gardenia.

As I go to knock on the door, it opens before me.

“Come in Aleksa, I’ve been expecting you,” Abbey said with a welcoming smile on her face, as she stood in the doorway.

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

“I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance,” Abbey told me.

“A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch.” Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

“The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived.”

“As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King,” Abbey clarified.

“The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups,” Abbey continued.

“The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters’ pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn’t make it to the safe house in time.”

“The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming.” Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

“The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession.”

“After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations,” Abbey continued.

“Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced,” Abbey declared.

“The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself,” Abbey proclaimed.

“I know it’s a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups’ names were Viktor, and Kristina,” Abbey continued.

“Kristina! That was my mother’s name!” I said, realizing where this story is going now.

“Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom,” Abbey continued.

“I, don’t know what to say, I don’t really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans,” I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

“Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you,” Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

“I can’t be! I’m not a royal! I’m just plain old me.” I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn’t exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

“I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!” Amber says in my head, she’s feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

“Wait! You said there were two pups?” I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

“Yes, they were siblings, twins actually,” Abbey added.

“Interesting,” I replied.

“What is it Aleska?” Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

“Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?” I asked her.

“Yes, of course, I’ll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon,” Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father’s name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what’s up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I’m right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I’ll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it’s true, and I’m expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

“Hey Jackson,” I decided that I’m just gonna get straight to the point, “What is your father’s name?” I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

“Why do you want to know my father’s name?” Jackson asked me.

“Please, just humor me, I need to know,” I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said “I will tell you my father’s name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information,” he added.

“Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know,” I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

“Vicktor, his name is Vicktor,” Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Aleksa, what is it?” Jackson demanded.

“I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins,” I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnm, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It’s not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don’t find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It’s not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won’t say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I’m not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she’s already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I’m relieved when she said that she wouldn’t beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I’m not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I’ve ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. “MATE! MATE!” He screamed in

my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa

and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I

could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

“I’m Sam,” I told her.

“I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I’m sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here,” she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

“Hey, it’s okay, relax, I’m just glad you are here.” I tried to reassure her.

“Are you going to reject me?” She asked me hesitantly.

“What, why would I reject you?” I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

“It’s just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I’m an Omega.” She said. A pained look on her face.

“Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!” I said sternly.

“Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never,” She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

“There is something you should know though Lily,” I told her.

“You are my second chance mate.” I declared.

“Second chance mate? How?” Lily asked. She looked confused.

“My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale.” I told her.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily,” I stopped.

“What’s your last name, Lily?” I asked her.

“Owens,” Lily responded, looking nervous.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate,” I declared proudly.

“I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate,” she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I’ve ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily’s cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

“MINE!” I growled.

“YOURS!” Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I’m all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb’s chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She's just so cute. But we are all adults here. It's only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all,

and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must

have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

“We aren’t alone are we Amber,” I asked my wolf.

“Nope,” Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

“Ahh!” I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that’s gonna bruise I thought to myself.

“Just the person I wanted to see,” a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

“Jackson, I need your help,” I mind-linked.

“Aleksa, what’s wrong?” Jackson responded immediately.

“Ezra. He attacked me.” I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. “Where are you?”

“Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree,” I told him calmly.

“I’m on my way,” Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

“Gray!” Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

"It's ok, he can't hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up," I told Gray.

"Of course, but, where's your mate?" Gray asked confused, and then mad.

"I don't know. I haven't seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can't get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on," I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

"Hey, how did you get here so fast?" I asked Gray.

"We've been out searching, for our mate," Gray responded.

"Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!" I tried to reassure him.

"I'll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute," Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be

nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new

pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they

finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

“Ahh!” I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that’s gonna bruise I thought to myself.

“Just the person I wanted to see,” a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

“Jackson, I need your help,” I mind-linked.

“Aleksa, what's wrong?” Jackson responded immediately.

“Ezra. He attacked me.” I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. “Where are you?”

“Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree,” I told him calmly.

“I’m on my way,” Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

“Gray!” Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn’t get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn’t part of our pack. It didn’t take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn’t appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

“He’s still alive! But his pulse is very slow.” I called out to Jackson.

“Let’s investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me.” Jackson declared.

He didn’t need to say a word, I wasn’t planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

“Magic!” Jackson said abruptly.

“I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either,” Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

“Where’s the Hybrid!” Jackson called out angrily.

“Abbey?” I replied to him.

“Yeah, her.” He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey's cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn't surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

"I'll do the talking!" I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

"Aleska, are you okay?" Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

"Yeah, I'm fine," I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

"What's going on around here?" Abbey asked.

"I've had no power all night, and Alaric hasn't arrived back yet. I've had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night," Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

"You wanna come in?" Abbey offered.

"We don't have time for this!" Jackson declared.

"Hmnm, unfortunately, he's right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can't mind-link anyone but Jackson," I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey's face dropped, "Oh dear," she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

"Let's walk and talk," Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

"I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing

with the pack's ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch." Abbey stated.

"When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?" Abbey asked.

"I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday," I replied.

"And you Jackson?" Abbey asked him softly.

"Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa's mind-link just before," Jackson replied.

"Hmmn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn't interact with anyone," Abbey recalled.

"I wonder," Abbey started.

"What?" Jackson replied in anticipation.

"I wonder if something didn't happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn't happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?" Abbey asked.

"But why?" I replied in denial.

"I don't know, It's just a thought, let's investigate some more," Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren't any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

"Let me, Aleksa," Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

"That was seriously cool!" I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmmn, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can’t deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

“It’s ok Kai, we will find him, this isn’t your fault!” I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

“Any ideas Abbey?” I looked to her for an answer.

“Dark witches don’t attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way,” Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

“Lachlan!” We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although, it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren’t ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn't currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be

ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

“You healed them both at the same time!” I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

“Thank you. I haven’t done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I’m not that long out of my witch training” Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

“Sam!” Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

“What happened?” Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

“Lily!” I called out. “Are you okay?” I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn’t get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn’t where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn’t feel anything through our bond, but I didn’t feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues

descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

"No. I'm here to fight for my friends and my pack!" I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

"Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!" Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

"Hello, Aleksa," she called out.

"Why are you doing this?" I asked her aggressively.

"Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control." She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch's hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

"I'd watch this one if I were you. There's more to her than meets the eye," the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

"I have a feeling this isn't the last we shall see of one another Aleksa." the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

"Where is my mate?" I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

"I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down." Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

"Please, where is Kingston?" I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

"That mutt. He's none of your concern," Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt’s filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the

packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I'm on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

"What do you want?" Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

"That b***h isn't going anywhere! We have unfinished business!" Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

"And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?" Lachlan asked.

"She knows where my mate is!" Ezra screamed.

"Tell me now! Where is Kaia?" Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

"We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!" Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

"WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!" Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

"Yyyour mate?" He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

"He tried to r**e me!" I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

"Whatttttt!" Lachlan roared.

"She was asking for it!" Ezra boomed.

"No one touches my mate but me!" Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

“Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!” I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

“Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!” Lachlan declared.

“I think I’m gonna be sick!” I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

"Your eyes!" Lachlan called out incredulity.

"Where is my mate!" I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan's direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

"What the!" Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

"Turns out you didn't know me as well as you thought," I told him coldly.

"What are you? Some kind of witch?" Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleksa POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn’t sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

“Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!” He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

“Aleska is mine!” She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

“Have at it, just don’t k**l her, do you hear me!” Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

“I can’t make any promises!” Eva replied snarkily.

“Eva!” Lachlan called back.

“Yeah, ok, fine I won’t k**l her,” She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn’t contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I’m not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolve’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn't want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn't stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva's wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, adn nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c*****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

"Sam, go help your mate! I'll be fine here!" I called out to him via mind-link.

"Are you sure?" He called out nervously.

"Yes, go!" I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn't pick anything up.

"Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can't get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted." I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmnm, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jacksons powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn’t he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn’t paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue’s throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my

chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jacksons' groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

"I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!" He called out to Sam.

"I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?" I mind-linked Sam and Caleb.

"Yes Luna," They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

“Stay with me Jackson!” I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

“Jackson, please!” I called out desperately.

“Please Moon Goddess, help him!” I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, “Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!” I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, “Move!” She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

“Xanthe, what are you doing?” I asked her.

“He is my Mate!” She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson’s face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my

mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we begun the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet,

although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I began to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolf's secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly begun to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they can't all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 52

Aleska POV

After Kingston had dropped that bombshell on me, I was feeling a little on edge. I felt overcome with guilt. If it wasn’t for me, Xanthe wouldn’t have even left on the mission. I shouldn’t have pushed her for more information.

“Xanthe will be ok. She wants to help us.” Amber said in my head.

“You don’t know that. What if something happens to her!” I replied to Amber.

“Aleksa, I know Xanthe will be fine, trust me, it’s all part of a greater plan,” Amber declares.

“Amber, I’m not in the mood for your cryptic messages. Could you just this one time, elaborate a bit for me.” I pleaded with my wolf.

“Xanthe’s story isn’t over. Trust the Goddess’s plans.” Amber says, and then she retreats and puts a block up on me.

“Grrr. That wolf!” I said out loud in frustration.

Kingston just looked at me quizzically.

“Amber?” Kingston asks.

“Amber’s gone. She blocked me!” I told Kingston angrily.

“What did she say? Sabre can’t reach her either,” Kingston replied.

“She said Xanthe would be alright, said to trust the goddess’s plan and that her story isn’t over yet,” I told Kingston a matter of factly.

“Well, that’s good then. Why are you so stressed?” Kingston asks me.

“Do you have any idea of how frustrating it is when your wolf is privy to all this information that concerns you and the ones you love the most, and yet she picks and chooses what she thinks I have a right to know!” I blurt out.

Then I look at the expression on Kingston’s face and realize something.

“I’m being a brat aren’t I?” I said, laughing at myself.

“You are just stressed, and rightly so, a lot has happened recently, Aleksa, my love, you are doing great!” Kingston tells me as he sniffs my neck where he marked me.

He starts to lick my mark and it sends shivers of excitement and arousal all over me. Kingston is sitting in his oversized executive chair, so I climb onto his legs and started to straddle him. I could feel my arousal seeping through my panties, I know it must be overwhelming his senses right now.

I can feel his c**k harden in his pants, straining tightly against the fabric of his pants. His c**k is throbbing against my panties.

“I want you in me now!” I demand, looking into Kingston’s eyes with the utmost determination and desire.

Kingston unzips his pants and his large hardened c**k springs to attention, he then rips off my sheer wet panties, and I lower myself onto his c**k riding him as if my life depends on it. He pushes me further down onto his c**k. Using his arms to push me up and down into him, harder and faster, I’m grinding into him, until I’m riding him to a gallop. I can feel his c**k twitch and pulsate inside me. We both reach our highs in no time. I feel Kingston find his release emptying into me. My walls are still throbbing post c****x as his c*m drips down my inner thighs.

I looked into Kingston's eyes with a smirk on my face. I don't know what just came over me. I've never been so spontaneous like that before. I looked at Kingston's face and he looked a lot more relaxed than he did when I first entered the room. I knew that I was definitely feeling more relaxed.

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, my goddess. The others were just outside the room! I was beyond mortified.

Kingston looked at me as if he could read my mind, he reassured me, "They left before we got physical. I told them to take a quick break and report back in thirty minutes," he chuckled.

I didn't find it as funny as Kingston. I felt my heart rate starting to normalize. I picked myself back up and discarded my ripped panties in the bin. Kingston walked into the ensuite in his office and washed himself off. I walked in and cleaned myself up also. Although, I would need to go straight to my room and shower properly. I can't walk around smelling like s*x, not in a pack of werewolves with a heightened sense of smell.

Kingston then came over to me and pulled me in for a loving embrace. We kissed, and then I told him my plans with Caleb and Kali. Kingston agreed with me that they should move to the packhouse. He said that he would ask Kai to help me organize it all. Kingston received a mind-link. Sam is here to speak with him. So I took this as my cue to leave. I was shower-bound. Then, I wanted to go and find Abbey, check that she is OK, and have that chat with her that we had spoken of when she had first arrived.

I started to make my way into my room. I grabbed a fresh new outfit out of the walk-in wardrobe and grabbed my cosmetic bag with all my hygiene needs in it, and as I made my way to the bathroom, I saw a note and a long-stemmed red rose on my bed.

My heart immediately swelled, and I wonder how Kingston organized this so quickly. I took a sniff of the rose, as I held it I felt a thorn pierce my finger. Ouch. I thought to myself, as I watched a few drops of blood fall on my bed linen.

The rose smelled sweet and spicy at the same time. Then I dropped it as quickly as I picked it up. It smelt familiar, but not in a good way. It smelt like Lachlan.

I picked up the letter and began to read it, "YOU BELONG TO ME!" "Lachlan."

I screwed the note up and chucked it hard against the wall. I then mind-linked Kingston and told him I needed him urgently.

In a matter of moments, my door was kicked open and came off its hinges, flying against the wall. In stormed Kingston, Sam, Caleb, and Jackson. I stood there shocked. That was quick. Not quite what I had expected.

“Aleska, I could feel your fear and panic through our bond. What happened?” Kingston yelled. The others were all looking around the wall with fierce facial expressions. I almost felt the urge to laugh. But I didn’t. This was not a laughing matter.

“Lachlan happened,” I said sternly.

The men started walking around my room inspecting it for signs of intruders. They didn’t appear to be picking up any scents.

Jackson picked up the crumpled note and opened it. He looked enraged.

“Kingston, I think you should read this,” he told Kingston, passing the note to him. The others watched Kingston and waited for his response.

Kingston’s growl ripped through the room, everyone except Jackson and myself was affected by his alpha aura.

“What is it, Kingston?” Sam asked.

Kingston passed the note to Sam. He and Caleb read it.

“It came with the rose. The rose has Lachlan’s scent on it, but nothing else seemed to.” I spoke of my own observations.

“How the hell did he get past our border patrols and security measures!” Kingston demanded. He looked like he wanted to break something.

“He’s masking his scent, Alpha,” Caleb declared.

“I agree,” I said in support of Caleb’s observation.

“He must have a witch working with him,” Jackson added.

“We need Xanthe!” I said to the group.

Jackson appeared to stiffen at the mention of her name.

“Who is Xanthe?” Jackson asked with furrowed brows.

“Xanthe is a Healer. She knew my parents, and she has been really supportive of – everything, she would know what to do right now,” I said to Jackson and the others.

Jackson seemed to be deep in thought right now, he was rubbing the side of his neck with a very serious expression on his face. I was about to ask him if everything was alright when I got a mind-link.

“There’s been a breach on the eastern perimeter, I’ve got to go, Sam/ Caleb - could you keep an eye on Aleska for now please?” Kingston called out.

“I don’t need minders, Kingston! We have discussed this already. I can take care of myself,” I protested.

“Look, can you just work with me, Sabre is losing his mind right now, he doesn’t want to leave you, but I need to attend to this breach,” Kingston tried to reason with me.

“Yeah, OK, go, I’ll play along just this once,” I told Kingston.

“Permission to tag along, Kingston,” Jackson asked.

“Gray could do with a run,” Jackson added.

“Yeah, thanks man, I’d appreciate that,” Kingston replied, and with that, they both shift into their wolf forms and they bolt through the packhouse.

I looked at Sam and Caleb. “Alright guys – Sam, I’m sure you would rather be with Lily right now, and Caleb – I’m sure you would much rather be with your pregnant mate, so how about we all go our separate ways?” I said slyly.

“No can do Aleska, you heard Kingston,” Sam replied to me.

“Looks like you’re stuck with us,” Caleb added.

I sighed. “OK, well, I’m gonna take a shower so I’m sure you don’t wanna hang out here, come back in ten minutes. OK?” I said to them.

“We will wait outside in the hallway, Aleksa, please don’t make this hard for us,” Caleb pleaded.

“I’ll behave. After that, I need to see my friend Abbey though,” I told them.

“No problem, we shall escort you there,” Caleb replied.

“Alright, see you soon,” I said to them both, and with that, I headed into the shower.

As we made our way to Abbey and Alaric’s cottage, I realized it was starting to get late. The sun looks like it’s getting ready to set, and it’s a beautiful sight. I made my way up the cobblestone pathway to the front door of the cottage. I am still taken aback by how cute these cottages are, littered with wildflowers, and fragrant undertones of jasmine, stock, and gardenia.

As I go to knock on the door, it opens before me.

“Come in Aleksa, I’ve been expecting you,” Abbey said with a welcoming smile on her face, as she stood in the doorway.

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

“I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance,” Abbey told me.

“A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch.” Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

“The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived.”

“As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King,” Abbey clarified.

“The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups,” Abbey continued.

“The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters’ pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn’t make it to the safe house in time.”

“The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming.” Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

“The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession.”

“After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations,” Abbey continued.

“Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced,” Abbey declared.

“The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself,” Abbey proclaimed.

“I know it’s a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups’ names were Vicktor, and Kristina,” Abbey continued.

“Kristina! That was my mother’s name!” I said, realizing where this story is going now.

“Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom,” Abbey continued.

“I, don’t know what to say, I don’t really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans,” I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

“Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you,” Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

“I can’t be! I’m not a royal! I’m just plain old me.” I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn’t exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

“I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!” Amber says in my head, she’s feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

“Wait! You said there were two pups?” I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

“Yes, they were siblings, twins actually,” Abbey added.

“Interesting,” I replied.

“What is it Aleska?” Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

“Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?” I asked her.

“Yes, of course, I’ll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon,” Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father’s name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what’s up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I’m right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I’ll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it's true, and I'm expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

"Hey Jackson," I decided that I'm just gonna get straight to the point, "What is your father's name?" I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

"Why do you want to know my father's name?" Jackson asked me.

"Please, just humor me, I need to know," I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said "I will tell you my father's name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information," he added.

"Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know," I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

"Vicktor, his name is Vicktor," Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

"Aleksa, what is it?" Jackson demanded.

"I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins," I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnm, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It’s not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don’t find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It’s not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won’t say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I’m not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that he had been frequenting brothels day and night and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleksa deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleksa and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleksa and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

“Second chance mate? How?” Lily asked. She looked confused.

“My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale.” I told her.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily,” I stopped.

“What’s your last name, Lily?” I asked her.

“Owens,” Lily responded, looking nervous.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate,” I declared proudly.

“I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate,” she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I’ve ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily’s cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

“MINE!” I growled.

“YOURS!” Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I'm all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb's chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She's just so cute. But we are all adults here. It's only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to

myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

"Ezra!" I called back to him.

"You lied to me the other day. Do you think I'm f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?" He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn't let him know I was scared.

"I have no idea what you are talking about," I said faking confusion at his question.

"Look b***h, I want my mate and I'm not leaving until I get her," He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

"If you don't want to tell me now, that's ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you," Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don’t feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I’m still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn’t seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn’t lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

"Hello Gray," I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

"Gray!" Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

"You're hurt!" Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

"A little, I'll be ok," I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra's top on the ground next to it.

"I'm gonna rip him to shreds!" Gray roared.

"It's ok, he can't hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up," I told Gray.

"Of course, but, where's your mate?" Gray asked confused, and then mad.

"I don't know. I haven't seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can't get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on," I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

"Hey, how did you get here so fast?" I asked Gray.

"We've been out searching, for our mate," Gray responded.

"Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!" I tried to reassure him.

"I'll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute," Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it

might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find

their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my

arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

“Ahh!” I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that’s gonna bruise I thought to myself.

“Just the person I wanted to see,” a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

“Jackson, I need your help,” I mind-linked.

“Aleksa, what's wrong?” Jackson responded immediately.

“Ezra. He attacked me.” I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. “Where are you?”

“Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree,” I told him calmly.

“I’m on my way,” Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

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"Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!" I tried to reassure him.

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Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn't know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

“Magic!” Jackson said abruptly.

“I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either,” Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

“Where’s the Hybrid!” Jackson called out angrily.

“Abbey?” I replied to him.

“Yeah, her.” He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

“What’s going on around here?” Abbey asked.

“I’ve had no power all night, and Alaric hasn’t arrived back yet. I’ve had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night,” Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

“You wanna come in?” Abbey offered.

“We don’t have time for this!” Jackson declared.

“Hmmn, unfortunately, he’s right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can’t mind-link anyone but Jackson,” I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey’s face dropped, “Oh dear,” she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

“Let’s walk and talk,” Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

“I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack’s ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch.” Abbey stated.

“When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?” Abbey asked.

“I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday,” I replied.

“And you Jackson?” Abbey asked him softly.

“Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa’s mind-link just before,” Jackson replied.

“Hmnn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmnm, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can't deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

"Luna?" Kai croaked out.

"Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?" I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

"Luna, they took him! I'm sorry!" Kai declared.

"What, who?" I looked at him puzzled.

"The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way," he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

"Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?" I asked him in shock.

"Yes Luna, I'm so sorry," Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn't protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

"It's ok Kai, we will find him, this isn't your fault!" I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

"Any ideas Abbey?" I looked to her for an answer.

"Dark witches don't attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way," Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

"Lachlan!" We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although, it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren't ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn't currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

“Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?” He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

“Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine,” Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb’s room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn’t be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm’s way for now.

We made our way to Caleb’s designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn’t take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn’t want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was

laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

"Aleksa! What are you doing here?" Lily called out confused.

"Wait, Sam?" Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

"Ah, what's going on?" Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn't have time to spare. There wasn't a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night's events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn't seem to move any further.

"I can feel a strong energy," I declared to my friends.

"So can I," Jackson responded.

"Uh oh," Abbey commented.

"It's a forcefield," a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson's warriors from earlier tonight.

"The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can't leave and no one else can come in," He replied.

"Nice of you to join us, Bryant," Jackson replied.

"Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant," Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

"Comms!" Kai declared.

"We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse," Kai reiterated.

"Worth a try," Jackson replied.

"Let's go then," Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn't surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

"s**t!" Jackson called out.

"I can't get through to Elijah." Jackson declared.

"We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don't k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first," Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, “I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,”

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

“f**k!” Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb’s lead. If we don’t follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha’s flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha’s fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

“Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I’ll keep the rogues busy!” Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha’s followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

“Get your mate and baby to safety!” I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

“What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!” He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen's warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn't be getting out of this situation without a fight.

"Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!" the witch demanded eagerly.

"Don't dare disrespect me, Witch!" Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn't appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch's hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

"I'd watch this one if I were you. There's more to her than meets the eye," the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

"I have a feeling this isn't the last we shall see of one another Aleksa." the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

"Where is my mate?" I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

"I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down." Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He’s none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt’s filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven't left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

"I'm no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!" He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver's seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I'm on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

"What do you want?" Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

"That b***h isn't going anywhere! We have unfinished business!" Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

"And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?" Lachlan asked.

"She knows where my mate is!" Ezra screamed.

"Tell me now! Where is Kaia?" Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

"We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!" Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

“Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!” I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

“Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!” Lachlan declared.

“I think I’m gonna be sick!” I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

"Your eyes!" Lachlan called out incredulity.

"Where is my mate!" I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan's direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

"What the!" Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

"Turns out you didn't know me as well as you thought," I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleksa POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn't sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

"Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!" He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

"Aleska is mine!" She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

"Have at it, just don't k**l her, do you hear me!" Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

"I can't make any promises!" Eva replied snarkily.

"Eva!" Lachlan called back.

"Yeah, ok, fine I won't k**l her," She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn't contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I'm not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

"Pathetic!" I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf's attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn't want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn't stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva's wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

“Run away, and don’t come back, and I will let you live!” I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, “I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him,” I called out.

“You got it!” Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends “Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,”

My mind was flooded with replies.

“Need a hand, Sam?” I mind-linked Sam.

“Sure thing Luna,” He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn't pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can't get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I'm on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmnm, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it's ok, I'll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them

seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

“I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!” He called out to Sam.

“I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?” I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

“Yes Luna,” They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

“Stay with me Jackson!” I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

“Jackson, please!” I called out desperately.

“Please Moon Goddess, help him!” I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running

towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, "Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!" I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, "Move!" She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

"Xanthe, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"He is my Mate!" She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson's face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her

neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I began to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly begun to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would “see me soon,” and I’m pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra’s death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It’s going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn’t happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 53

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

“I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the

Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance,” Abbey told me.

“A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch.” Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

“The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived.”

“As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King,” Abbey clarified.

“The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups,” Abbey continued.

“The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters’ pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn’t make it to the safe house in time.”

“The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming.” Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

“The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession.”

“After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations,” Abbey continued.

“Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced,” Abbey declared.

“The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself,” Abbey proclaimed.

"I know it's a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups' names were Viktor, and Kristina," Abbey continued.

"Kristina! That was my mother's name!" I said, realizing where this story is going now.

"Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom," Abbey continued.

"I, don't know what to say, I don't really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans," I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

"Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you," Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

"I can't be! I'm not a royal! I'm just plain old me." I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn't exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

"I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!" Amber says in my head, she's feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

"Wait! You said there were two pups?" I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

"Yes, they were siblings, twins actually," Abbey added.

"Interesting," I replied.

"What is it Aleska?" Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

"Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?" I asked her.

"Yes, of course, I'll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon," Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father’s name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what’s up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I’m right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I’ll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it's true, and I'm expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

“Hey Jackson,” I decided that I'm just gonna get straight to the point, “What is your father's name?” I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

“Why do you want to know my father's name?” Jackson asked me.

“Please, just humor me, I need to know,” I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said “I will tell you my father's name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information,” he added.

“Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know,” I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

“Vicktor, his name is Vicktor,” Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Aleksa, what is it?” Jackson demanded.

“I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins,” I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnn, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It's not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don't find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It's not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won't say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I'm not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night

and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

"Second chance mate? How?" Lily asked. She looked confused.

"My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale." I told her.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily," I stopped.

"What's your last name, Lily?" I asked her.

"Owens," Lily responded, looking nervous.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate," I declared proudly.

"I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate," she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily's cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

"MINE!" I growled.

"YOURS!" Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I’m all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb’s chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She’s just so cute. But we are all adults here. It’s only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who

the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

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After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

“Gray!” Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

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"Ezra!" I called back to him.

"You lied to me the other day. Do you think I'm f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?" He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn't let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don’t feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

"Hello Gray," I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

"Gray!" Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

"Magic!" Jackson said abruptly.

"I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either," Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

"Where's the Hybrid!" Jackson called out angrily.

"Abbey?" I replied to him.

"Yeah, her." He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

“What’s going on around here?” Abbey asked.

“I’ve had no power all night, and Alaric hasn’t arrived back yet. I’ve had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night,” Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

“You wanna come in?” Abbey offered.

“We don’t have time for this!” Jackson declared.

“Hmnn, unfortunately, he’s right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can’t mind-link anyone but Jackson,” I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey’s face dropped, “Oh dear,” she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

“Let’s walk and talk,” Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

“I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack’s ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch.” Abbey stated.

“When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?” Abbey asked.

“I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday,” I replied.

“And you Jackson?” Abbey asked him softly.

“Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa’s mind-link just before,” Jackson replied.

“Hmnn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmmn, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can’t deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

“It’s ok Kai, we will find him, this isn’t your fault!” I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

“Any ideas Abbey?” I looked to her for an answer.

“Dark witches don’t attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way,” Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

“Lachlan!” We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren’t ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn’t currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea

who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch’s hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

“I’d watch this one if I were you. There’s more to her than meets the eye,” the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

“I have a feeling this isn’t the last we shall see of one another Aleksa.” the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

“Where is my mate?” I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

“I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down.” Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He's none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt's filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I’m on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

“What do you want?” Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

“That b***h isn’t going anywhere! We have unfinished business!” Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

“And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?” Lachlan asked.

“She knows where my mate is!” Ezra screamed.

“Tell me now! Where is Kaia?” Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

“We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!” Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

"Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!" I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

"Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!" Lachlan declared.

"I think I'm gonna be sick!" I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

“Your eyes!” Lachlan called out incredulity.

“Where is my mate!” I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan’s direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

“What the!” Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

“Turns out you didn’t know me as well as you thought,” I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleska POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn’t sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

“Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!” He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

“Aleska is mine!” She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

“Have at it, just don’t k**l her, do you hear me!” Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

“I can’t make any promises!” Eva replied snarkily.

“Eva!” Lachlan called back.

“Yeah, ok, fine I won’t k**l her,” She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn’t contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I’m not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn’t want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn’t stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva’s wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c*****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn’t pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can’t get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmmn, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha,” Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

“I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!” He called out to Sam.

“I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?” I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

“Yes Luna,” They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

“Stay with me Jackson!” I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

“Jackson, please!” I called out desperately.

“Please Moon Goddess, help him!” I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure

emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, "Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!" I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, "Move!" She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

"Xanthe, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"He is my Mate!" She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson's face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle

taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I begun to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly began to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 54

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has

worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn't actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

"Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?" Jackson questioned Abbey.

"That's a fair question, Jackson. I'm not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me." Abbey said thoughtfully.

"While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I'm not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don't mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?" Jackson huffed.

"I think I'll hang out here with Abbey a little longer," I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It's not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don't find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It's not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won't say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I'm not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as

her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find

evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's

photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I

opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

“You are my second chance mate.” I declared.

“Second chance mate? How?” Lily asked. She looked confused.

“My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale.” I told her.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily,” I stopped.

“What’s your last name, Lily?” I asked her.

“Owens,” Lily responded, looking nervous.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate,” I declared proudly.

“I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate,” she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I’ve ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily’s cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

“MINE!” I growled.

“YOURS!” Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I'm all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb's chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She's just so cute. But we are all adults here. It's only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

"Ezra!" I called back to him.

"You lied to me the other day. Do you think I'm f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?" He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn't let him know I was scared.

"I have no idea what you are talking about," I said faking confusion at his question.

"Look b***h, I want my mate and I'm not leaving until I get her," He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

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“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don’t feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I’m still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

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Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

"Hello Gray," I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

"Gray!" Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn’t want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan’s arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all,

and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must

have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

“We aren’t alone are we Amber,” I asked my wolf.

“Nope,” Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

“Ahh!” I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that’s gonna bruise I thought to myself.

“Just the person I wanted to see,” a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

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Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn't know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

"Magic!" Jackson said abruptly.

"I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either," Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

"Where's the Hybrid!" Jackson called out angrily.

"Abbey?" I replied to him.

"Yeah, her." He said gruffly.

"She will be sleeping. Wait, you don't think?" I start to speak before I am cut off.

"It feels like magic. She's a witch! Let's start there!" Jackson demanded.

"I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She's my friend." I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn't about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

"Yeah well let's see what she has to say," Jackson replied gruffly.

"Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?" One of Jackson's warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

"You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done," Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

“What’s going on around here?” Abbey asked.

“I’ve had no power all night, and Alaric hasn’t arrived back yet. I’ve had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night,” Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

“You wanna come in?” Abbey offered.

“We don’t have time for this!” Jackson declared.

“Hmnm, unfortunately, he’s right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can’t mind-link anyone but Jackson,” I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey's face dropped, "Oh dear," she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

"Let's walk and talk," Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

"I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack's ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch." Abbey stated.

"When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?" Abbey asked.

"I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday," I replied.

"And you Jackson?" Abbey asked him softly.

"Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa's mind-link just before," Jackson replied.

"Hmmn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn't interact with anyone," Abbey recalled.

"I wonder," Abbey started.

"What?" Jackson replied in anticipation.

"I wonder if something didn't happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn't happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?" Abbey asked.

"But why?" I replied in denial.

"I don't know, It's just a thought, let's investigate some more," Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren't any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

"Let me, Aleksa," Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

"That was seriously cool!" I called out in awe.

"Not bad," Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, "Kai! Kai! Wake up!" I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

"Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?" I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

"Hmmn, let me see," Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

"I can feel that he's still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell." Abbey declared.

"Can you counteract it?" I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

"I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage," Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

"That's ok, it's a start!" I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can't deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I'm sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I'm so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn't protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

“It's ok Kai, we will find him, this isn't your fault!” I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

“Any ideas Abbey?” I looked to her for an answer.

“Dark witches don't attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way,” Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

“Lachlan!” We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although, it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren't ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn't currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

“Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?” He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

“Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine,” Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb’s room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn’t be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm’s way for now.

We made our way to Caleb’s designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn’t take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn’t want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was

laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

"Aleksa! What are you doing here?" Lily called out confused.

"Wait, Sam?" Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

"Ah, what's going on?" Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn't have time to spare. There wasn't a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night's events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn't seem to move any further.

"I can feel a strong energy," I declared to my friends.

"So can I," Jackson responded.

"Uh oh," Abbey commented.

"It's a forcefield," a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson's warriors from earlier tonight.

"The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can't leave and no one else can come in," He replied.

"Nice of you to join us, Bryant," Jackson replied.

"Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant," Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

"Comms!" Kai declared.

"We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse," Kai reiterated.

"Worth a try," Jackson replied.

"Let's go then," Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn't surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

"s**t!" Jackson called out.

"I can't get through to Elijah." Jackson declared.

"We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don't k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first," Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

“f**k!” Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb’s lead. If we don’t follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha’s flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha’s fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

“Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I’ll keep the rogues busy!” Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha’s followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

“Get your mate and baby to safety!” I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

“What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!” He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen's warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn't be getting out of this situation without a fight.

"Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!" the witch demanded eagerly.

"Don't dare disrespect me, Witch!" Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn't appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch's hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

"I'd watch this one if I were you. There's more to her than meets the eye," the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

"I have a feeling this isn't the last we shall see of one another Aleksa." the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

"Where is my mate?" I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

"I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down." Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He’s none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt’s filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven't left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

"I'm no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!" He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver's seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I'm on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

"What do you want?" Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

"That b***h isn't going anywhere! We have unfinished business!" Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

"And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?" Lachlan asked.

"She knows where my mate is!" Ezra screamed.

"Tell me now! Where is Kaia?" Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

"We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!" Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn’t care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn’t like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn’t hold back.

He held Ezra’s arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan’s. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other’s neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra’s wolf’s neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

“Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!” I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

“Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!” Lachlan declared.

“I think I’m gonna be sick!” I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

"Your eyes!" Lachlan called out incredulity.

"Where is my mate!" I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan's direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

"What the!" Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

"Turns out you didn't know me as well as you thought," I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleksa POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn't sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

"Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!" He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

"Aleska is mine!" She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

"Have at it, just don't k**l her, do you hear me!" Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

"I can't make any promises!" Eva replied snarkily.

"Eva!" Lachlan called back.

"Yeah, ok, fine I won't k**l her," She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn't contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I'm not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

"Pathetic!" I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf's attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn't want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn't stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva's wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

“Run away, and don’t come back, and I will let you live!” I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, “I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him,” I called out.

“You got it!” Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends “Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,”

My mind was flooded with replies.

“Need a hand, Sam?” I mind-linked Sam.

“Sure thing Luna,” He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn't pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can't get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I'm on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmnm, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it's ok, I'll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them

seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

“I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!” He called out to Sam.

“I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?” I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

“Yes Luna,” They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

“Stay with me Jackson!” I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

“Jackson, please!” I called out desperately.

“Please Moon Goddess, help him!” I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running

towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, “Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!” I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, “Move!” She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

“Xanthe, what are you doing?” I asked her.

“He is my Mate!” She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson’s face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson’s breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe’s mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

“Are you sure?” I asked Xanthe hopefully.

“I can heal him!” Xanthe declared.

“I just need some space,” Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her

neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I began to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly begun to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would “see me soon,” and I’m pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra’s death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It’s going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn’t happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 55

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn’t where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew

that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

"Second chance mate? How?" Lily asked. She looked confused.

"My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale." I told her.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily," I stopped.

"What's your last name, Lily?" I asked her.

"Owens," Lily responded, looking nervous.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate," I declared proudly.

"I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate," she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily's cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

"MINE!" I growled.

"YOURS!" Lily replied.

"We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston." I told Lily.

"My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don't want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?" I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

"Tonight would be perfect Sam. I'll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?" Lily asked me.

"That would be great, thank you, sweetheart," I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I'm all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb's chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She's just so cute. But we are all adults here. It's only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some

concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it

might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find

their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

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"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

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I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

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arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

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“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

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I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

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I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

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The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

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I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

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Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

“Jackson, I need your help,” I mind-linked.

“Aleksa, what's wrong?” Jackson responded immediately.

“Ezra. He attacked me.” I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. “Where are you?”

“Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree,” I told him calmly.

“I’m on my way,” Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

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“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

"I don't know. I haven't seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can't get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on," I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

"Hey, how did you get here so fast?" I asked Gray.

"We've been out searching, for our mate," Gray responded.

"Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!" I tried to reassure him.

"I'll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute," Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who

the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

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Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn’t get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn’t part of our pack. It didn’t take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn’t appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

“He’s still alive! But his pulse is very slow.” I called out to Jackson.

“Let’s investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me.” Jackson declared.

He didn’t need to say a word, I wasn’t planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

“Magic!” Jackson said abruptly.

“I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either,” Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

“Where’s the Hybrid!” Jackson called out angrily.

“Abbey?” I replied to him.

“Yeah, her.” He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey's cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn't surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

"I'll do the talking!" I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

"Aleska, are you okay?" Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

"Yeah, I'm fine," I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

"What's going on around here?" Abbey asked.

"I've had no power all night, and Alaric hasn't arrived back yet. I've had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night," Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

"You wanna come in?" Abbey offered.

"We don't have time for this!" Jackson declared.

"Hmnm, unfortunately, he's right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can't mind-link anyone but Jackson," I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey's face dropped, "Oh dear," she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

"Let's walk and talk," Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

"I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack's ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but

no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch.” Abbey stated.

“When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?” Abbey asked.

“I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday,” I replied.

“And you Jackson?” Abbey asked him softly.

“Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa’s mind-link just before,” Jackson replied.

“Hmmn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, "Kai! Kai! Wake up!" I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

"Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?" I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

"Hmnn, let me see," Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

"I can feel that he's still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell." Abbey declared.

"Can you counteract it?" I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

"I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage," Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

"That's ok, it's a start!" I said with some optimism in my voice.

"OK, give me a few minutes and some space," Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can't deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

"Luna?" Kai croaked out.

"Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?" I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

“It’s ok Kai, we will find him, this isn’t your fault!” I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

“Any ideas Abbey?” I looked to her for an answer.

“Dark witches don’t attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way,” Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

“Lachlan!” We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although, it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren’t ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn't currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be

ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

“You healed them both at the same time!” I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

“Thank you. I haven’t done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I’m not that long out of my witch training” Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

“Sam!” Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

“What happened?” Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

“Lily!” I called out. “Are you okay?” I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn’t get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn’t where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn’t feel anything through our bond, but I didn’t feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues

descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

"No. I'm here to fight for my friends and my pack!" I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

"Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!" Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

"Hello, Aleksa," she called out.

"Why are you doing this?" I asked her aggressively.

"Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control." She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch's hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

"I'd watch this one if I were you. There's more to her than meets the eye," the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

"I have a feeling this isn't the last we shall see of one another Aleksa." the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

"Where is my mate?" I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

"I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down." Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

"Please, where is Kingston?" I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

"That mutt. He's none of your concern," Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt’s filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the

packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I'm on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

"What do you want?" Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

"That b***h isn't going anywhere! We have unfinished business!" Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

"And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?" Lachlan asked.

"She knows where my mate is!" Ezra screamed.

"Tell me now! Where is Kaia?" Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

"We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!" Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

"WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!" Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

"Yyyyour mate?" He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

"He tried to r**e me!" I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

"Whatttttt!" Lachlan roared.

"She was asking for it!" Ezra boomed.

"No one touches my mate but me!" Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

“Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!” I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

“Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!” Lachlan declared.

“I think I’m gonna be sick!” I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

"Your eyes!" Lachlan called out incredulity.

"Where is my mate!" I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan's direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

"What the!" Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

"Turns out you didn't know me as well as you thought," I told him coldly.

"What are you? Some kind of witch?" Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleksa POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn’t sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

“Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!” He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

“Aleska is mine!” She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

“Have at it, just don’t k**l her, do you hear me!” Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

“I can’t make any promises!” Eva replied snarkily.

“Eva!” Lachlan called back.

“Yeah, ok, fine I won’t k**l her,” She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn’t contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I’m not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn't want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn't stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva's wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, adn nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c*****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

"Sam, go help your mate! I'll be fine here!" I called out to him via mind-link.

"Are you sure?" He called out nervously.

"Yes, go!" I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn't pick anything up.

"Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can't get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted." I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmnm, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jacksons powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn’t he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn’t paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue’s throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my

chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jacksons' groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

"I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!" He called out to Sam.

"I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?" I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

"Yes Luna," They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhghing out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

“Stay with me Jackson!” I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

“Jackson, please!” I called out desperately.

“Please Moon Goddess, help him!” I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, “Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!” I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, “Move!” She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

“Xanthe, what are you doing?” I asked her.

“He is my Mate!” She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson’s face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my

mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we begun the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet,

although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I began to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolf's secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly begun to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they can't all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.