

## Chapter 107

“What are you doing, Lola? Did you not hear me? Your mate has sent me. I’m here to protect you.” The gruff male voice sounded deeper...distorted in a way that made my breath catch.

‘What is this? This isn’t a vampire.’ Maya snarled, her hackles raising. ‘Her scent is ...wrong. Asher isn’t answering us... something must have happened. I think you should call on the shadows, Lola...’

This was bad, it had to be if Maya was condoning channeling the power of the shadows. The moment I reached out, feeling that bitter frost curl across my fingers like the greeting of an old friend, that voice sounded behind me. ①

It was different, this time. No longer the deep rasp of a man, but the watery rasp of a woman. She hacked and coughed, but there was an accuracy to her voice that sounded deadly.

“Turn around.”

I reacted without thinking my eyes darting to either side of me whilst my



instincts screamed not to move. Panic and fear were telling me to tear open the front door and run into the night, where the shadows would surely protect me.

A crash sounded feet behind me, and instead of darting out the front door like panic instructed, I veered to the right. I knew I had made the right decision when I felt five long fingers grasp at back of my head, missing by inches. If I had taken the time to unlock the door and yank it open, I would've been on the ground.

“Do not turn around, Luna! I've got her!”

It was Rowena's voice I heard, but it was also her warning that kept me from acting any further. My heart hammered in time with the seconds that passed, until a garbled screech filled the air. The scent of fresh blood permeated the room, but the smell held an underlying tone of rot. I counted to one hundred and sixty-three before Rowena let out a soft breath and spoke.

“You can turn around now, Luna.”

Rowena panted softly, hovering over the form sprawled out onto the floor.



Crimson blood, thick and dark pooled onto the floor. I cringed as it soaked into the pale carpet. There was nothing mouthwatering about this blood, which smelled of dust and all things old.

Her bony and gnarled limbs were tangled beneath the black cloak she wore. A thin neck, covered in dark colored veins protruded from one of the couches throw pillows. It had been placed over her face by Rowena. Long hair, jagged and dry like straw, emerged from beneath the pillow. I was sure it had once been a glossy shade of amber, but the color was ruined by the thick chunks of grey. Rowena hovered over her, auburn eyebrows gnashed together as she ran her hands over the woman's body, murmuring to herself.

“What—what the hell just happened? What is that?”

I removed my hand from the arm of the couch, which I had been gripping for dear life. Just as I stumbled towards the body, falling to my knees a few feet away, Rowena's head snapped up.

Her mossy eyes were wide and a bit



frazzled and clutched in her hands was a curved dagger. The metal wasn't silver or steel, but some kind of dark gemstone.

"That is a witch, an experienced one." Rowena exhaled, catching her breath while letting the knife clatter to the ground. Her eyes were severe when they glanced up to my face, "And as for what happened, she was trying to curse you." 1

"What do you mean she was trying to curse her?" Asher snarled, his golden-toned eyes falling on Rowena. 1

He had been pacing the living room for near an hour now, rubbing the stubble along his jaw with a frustrated hand. Giovanni and Breyona had come, keeping watch as Asher, Zeke, and Mason scoured the forest. Rowena was positive there were no other witches in the house, but we needed to be sure.

"This isn't her first rodeo." Rowena frowned lifting one of the arms of the dead woman. Her skin was tinged yellow, with veins much darker than normal. On the palm of her hand a puckered scar sat at an odd angle. It took up most of her hand and was shaped like a crescent



moon with a vertical slash down the center. "She's cursed someone before, and from the looks of it, it was a nasty one."

"How convenient it is, that she showed up here the day of your arrival. This is the first and only witch I have ever encountered on my land." He commented, his voice harsh and accusing. I couldn't blame him, not when our entire pack could have been harmed. It was risk enough allowing witches into the pack, and already we were getting off on a bad foot. "Would you care to tell me why you were in our house in the first place? Already you have overstayed your welcome."

"If a witch was on your land, you'd never know. Not unless they wanted you to." Rowena scoffed dryly, leveling Asher with a look. She stood and dusted off her hands, never once breaking eye contact. There was something about the way she stood up to Asher that I liked, even if I held no trust for the woman. "As for why I was here, I had a bad feeling and followed it. It was the same kind of feeling that let me know I had been



chosen for the job two days early. As you can now see, Alpha Asher; magic has its benefits. If it weren't for my own, your mate would be worse than dead." 1

I could hear no defensiveness in her voice, only truth as she explained that all witches have varying levels of intuition. It explained the gut feelings I had been having lately, the same one that consequently saved my life.

"Her face...why did you cover it?"

It was Breyona who had mustered up the courage to ask. I had wondered the same thing but was still stunned and trying to process. It was an odd feeling, to have two near-death experiences in one day. With the ambush during our announcement, I had felt more in control. Asher and I had planned everything, down to where I would stand on stage. There had been no hint, no whisper of attack from the witches.

"Curses, they're tricky. In order to create one, you have to tap into dark powers. They can easily corrupt, and that corruption rots you from the inside out. Her expertise was why she was sent here

..." Rowena murmured her eyes glancing down to the mark on the woman's hand. "There's someone out there whose curse has been lifted, I wonder who the lucky soul is." 5

It would have been smart to stay up for the night to figure out why this happened in the first place, but I was exhausted from spilling the truth to thousands of people and nearly dying twice. Asher lifted me into his arms and placed me in the Escalade.

Rowena suggested it might be smarter to stay with Asher's family a few days longer, until the witch specializing in protective magic made it to the pack. Until then, we were left with nothing to do but draw conclusions and chase sleep.

When I opened my eyes and yawned that morning, I was surprised to find Asher already awake. He had slipped in the room just as I sat up in bed.

I noticed instantly the darkened circles beneath his eyes, and the way the muted the golden tones into a deep brown.

"You've been busy early." I pointed out,



sliding from the bed as I lifted my arms over my head and stretched.

“I couldn’t sleep, but without knowing why there was a second attempt on your life yesterday.” He grunted, running a hand through already messy hair. His grip on my hips was nothing short of possessive, providing that flicker of pain I’ve become fond of. “I have spoken with Giovanni and the witch. The only conclusion we are able to come up with, is that the vampire’s rallying against you have somehow gained the favor of a witch.”

“My father was in contact with a blood-witch. He mentioned it once, but I was never able to get anything more out of him. It could be that this witch is sending others, possibly to avenge his death.” I yawned, feeling just a tad better when Asher huffed and nodded. I padded over to the closet, digging for a pair of shorts and a comfortable t-shirt. After switching on the shower in the bathroom, I poked my head from around the door. “What’s on the itinerary for today? Hopefully no more assassination attempts, at least for the next few days.”



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“Mm, I think I need more time before we poke fun at your already numerous murder attempts.” Asher smiled dryly. The flicker of normalcy brought a teasing grin to my face. I knew that if we weren't in a house full of people, his parents included, I'd be draped over his lap by now—my reddened bottom poking towards the ceiling. “As for today, we're going to deal with the repercussions of last night...and try to get through this fucking catastrophe of a party you've roped us into.”



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