

## King Breeder 41

### Chapter 41 : Dream And Reality

"I want you, Rosalie." Ethan's soft whisper wrapped around me as we lay tangled in the sheets, our bodies molding together in heated passion.

"Don't leave me," I begged him.

He forced me to look at him. My fingers ran through his jet-black hair, and my gaze met with his clear blue eyes.

He was my gorgeous Alpha. He was my world.

Over and over again, he made me come undone around him. The feeling of him sliding in and out of me made my mind spiral.

I wanted him-all of him, always.

His hands brushing over my bare skin sent shivers through my body. "You are mine forever, Rosalie- and I am forever yours."

His declaration made the love I had for him grow. I knew there was no way that I would ever get over how he made me feel.

Yet, as the passion grew between us, he suddenly felt so far away.

His body was sliding away from me, leaving me with an empty feeling inside.

"Ethan?"

My panic-filled voice drifted in an endless sea of darkness, and the sound of whispers drew me out of that place of lust and desire until, finally, my eyes opened.

A groan of disappointment left my lips as I rolled over, facing the bedroom door, which was cracked slightly open.

It was a dream, and it had been more than an amazing dream. Everything that had happened was something I wished deep down would come true, but I knew better than to get my hopes up.

"What are you going to do?"

A voice from the living room caught my attention, and I knew right away it belonged to Talon.

"What do you mean, what am I going to do? You were there in the meeting, too. I have to marry Madalynn and let Rosalie go," Ethan's voice replied.

This wasn't anything surprising. Everyone in the Capital knew. However, hearing it out of Ethan's mouth caused more pain than I expected.

"Even if Madalynn will bring chaos to our pack?" Talon asked.

"The Luna Queen can not have children, and my child will be the heir to the throne one day. We're talking about a qualified Luna here, Talon."

Qualified...of course. I would never be a "qualified" Luna like Madalynn. The support that her pack could provide to Ethan and to this kingdom was something I could never offer.

My mother and I were the last survivors of her family. When I was young, I asked her about my maternal grandparents, but she refused to tell me much. Although she was beautiful and graceful, she couldn't have been from any noble or powerful bloodline. And my father he was only an alpha of a small pack, one that could be wiped out as easily as any of the powerhouse alphas wiggling their fingers.

Perhaps the only good use for my alpha blood really was making me a competent breeder.

That had a bitter taste in my throat.

"But things have changed since Rosalie came to us. We all care about her even you."

I held my breath, and how I wished I would hear a word of affirmation from him.

Thad noticed a change with him since we came to the capital, and especially since he found out I was pregnant. I wanted more than anything for the dream I had just lived to come true, although I knew it would never happen.

Don't assume you know how I feel," Ethan's rough voice replied, and it was obvious he was growing irritated. "I did everything for the baby."

I sighed bitterly. Rosalie, you should've known better...

"Just for the baby?" Talon protested quietly. "Ethan, I have known you since we were boys, and we both know that isn't true."

"So?" Ethan repeated plainly, and I could tell he was losing his patience. Then, as if he was persuading himself, he added, "It was the king's order. I can't keep her."

It took me a second to take in that news, but I found myself not even feeling resentful towards the King's decision.

I wanted to be part of my child's life. The idea of begging Ethan to allow me to stay had been in my mind- until he agreed to marry Madalynn.

I couldn't bring myself to be with Ethan after his marriage – and it wouldn't be fair for his bride, either.

"You know that's not what I was talking about!" Talon said, his voice rising.

"Will you f\*cking keep it down?" Ethan replied in a harsh tone, and he walked over to close the door fully.

It was obvious I wasn't supposed to hear whatever they were discussing. Unfortunately, people seemed to forget that I bore Alpha blood. My senses were quite sharp- especially when it came to my instincts. My instincts told me I shouldn't continue to listen, but I couldn't help myself.

"Nothing has changed, Talon."

"Please

give yourself some time to reconsider it," I heard Talon plead, a slight panic surging in his voice.

"Talon, you knew the plan when she came to us. I warned you not to get close to her, but you didn't listen. You and your sister will have to deal with the consequences of that when she's gone."

He didn't want me to stay. After all, I was nothing but a convenience to him. Someone to carry his child- and when I was done, I would be cast aside.

I let the tears fall from my eyes down my cheeks, soaking the pillow beneath my head.

"I'm sorry, Alpha..." Talon bit out, struggling to speak, "but I don't agree with the plan."

"I don't need you to agree," Ethan said coldly. "You just need to execute it."

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"So after everything.. you're still going to do this? She is the mother of your child!"

"Yes, Talon. I can't let the same thing happen again."

Ethan's voice was so low, but I still heard the next sentence, the sentence that would forever haunt me.

"Find a way to make her go peacefully."

Ethan's words sent a cold stab of hurt straight to my heart, and my eyes widened.

What did he say? What did he mean?! Could someone tell me?!

Fear and panic filled me, and my hands slapped across my mouth to hold back the sob that threatened to burst out. I couldn't allow them to hear me. I couldn't allow them to know that I had heard everything that they had said.

Eventually, their voices trailed off, and the sound of the front door closing echoed through the small apartment. Rising from the bed, I peeked out into the main space, looking around to make sure they had

indeed gone.

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Once I knew for sure I was alone, I finally let the weight of everything come crashing down around me.

Why was it that, every time I thought I saw hope, someone had to destroy it?

No one was there to answer my question, and I felt more desperate at that moment than I ever had.

I was such a fool! How could I forget that they were the Drogomor pack, the cruel and bloodthirsty Drogom pack?

I cried out as my knees buckled beneath me, and I slid to the floor against the bedroom door.

I wrapped myself in my arms and asked myself in tears, "What do I do...?"

Chapter 42: She Found Out

Shock and disbelief still filled me when I woke up the next morning.

The room was dark thanks to the light-blocking drapes. I stared at the ceiling in vain. My eyes were tear stained and swollen from the amount of emotions I had let escape me.

What Ethan had said the night before played over and over again in my mind.

No. There must have been some misunderstanding.

It couldn't have been what I thought it would be...

Slowly, I slid from the bed and stood to my feet. I cringed as the groggy feeling washed over me. For a moment, I wished that everything I had heard last night had just been a nightmare that never happened.

"Rosalie-

I jumped at Ethan's voice from the living room.

I quickly made my way back to the bed, buried most of my face in the pillow, and pretended to be sleeping.

The bedroom door opened, and I heard his footsteps approaching. Thank goodness the room was dark enough that he wouldn't be able to see my puffy face.

Then I felt him gently pull up the blanket to cover me better.

If it had been yesterday, his gesture would make me secretly happy for an entire day. However, all I could feel right now was fear.

I felt his hand brushed a piece of hair behind my ear, causing my body to flinch.

"Rosalie?" His voice was concerned, but his caring tone sent cold shivers down my spine.

I faked a low groan, and murmured, "May I sleep more... please?"

I could tell he was a bit surprised. To make him let it be, I made up an excuse. "Had some bad dreams. I'm so tired... sorry."

My words seemed to make him hesitate for a moment, but he quickly accepted what I told him. "Okay, then take it easy today."

His words were meant to be kind, but my voice started to shake uncontrollably, so I nodded my head and grunted, "Um..thank you."

Why was he being so gentle toward me?

Ah... of course. I was carrying his heir – like he said, it was just for the baby.

After last night, I could no longer lie to myself that maybe a small part of his sweetness was for me.

"Go back to sleep," he ordered, his voice low and gentle, like a whisper.

If Ethan was going to kill me, he wouldn't act this way towards me, would he?

How I wished that I hadn't woken up to eavesdrop the previous night- and how I wished, again, that what I had

While I was lost in my thoughts, Ethan had taken his leave.

I looked around the room, searching for answers in the elegant decor.  
Maybe he didn't really mean to order my death? Maybe I had misread it all, had misunderstood what they were talking about?  
Did Vicky and Georgia know about this, too? It couldn't be possible that they faked their friendship with me. could it?  
Estrella... My doctor and confidant... Did she know?  
My eyes shot open. I'd made up my mind.  
Thad to find out the truth.

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A couple days passed, and I spent most of my time in bed and tried not to see anyone. I gave myself that time to clear my mind. Luckily, I didn't have that many visitors.  
Ethan hadn't visited since that morning. I was thankful for that, because I didn't know how I could face him.  
"Rosalie?" Vicky's voice called out as I layed in bed.  
Thad been refusing to talk much at all. At first, they thought I was not feeling well, and attributed my change in attitude to the pregnancy. But Vicky knew me too well to buy that.  
I heard her moving in through the bedroom door, but with my back facing her, she couldn't tell if I was asleep or awake.  
"Please tell me what's wrong..." she said, and my heart broke hearing how upset and hurt she was. How could I believe that she was only putting on a show for me?  
Vicky had become my best friend, and I trusted her with all my heart. Should I trust her one more time?  
I turned over to look at her, my face red and puffy and my eyes dry from crying all the tears I had shed over the situation.  
She was so terrified when she saw me that, as talkative as she usually was, she didn't let out a word.  
"Did you know?" I asked softly, my voice cracking in my raw throat.  
Her brow furrowed in confusion at my question. "Know what?"  
I sat up to better face her.  
"Rosalie, you're making me very worried right now," she said slowly. "Don't scare me. What is it?"  
I could tell she was genuinely confused and terrified.  
I smiled bitterly. Vicky, Vicky  
should I trust that she was really my friend?  
"Rosalie...?"  
She didn't give up. That was Vicky.  
I looked her in the eyes and decided to take the risk.

Chapter 43 : Talon's Problems

**\*\*Talon's POV**

After I put away the last pile of files I needed to handle today, I sat down by my desk, watching the pouring rain outside. My thoughts drifted.  
The conversation with Ethan hadn't gone as I had expected the other night.  
I tried several times to make him reconsider, but he was now more adamant than ever that we were going to go through with the plan.  
No matter how much he tried to deny that he cared for Rosalie, I knew he did. And I just needed a way to make him realize that.  
I had to do something.

“Talon!” My sister’s voice echoed from the other side of my door along with a knock, pulling me from my thoughts. Quickly, I opened the door.

Clearly she was upset. Before I could ask what the matter was, she pushed her way into my room.

“What’s wrong?” I was immediately on high alert. “Did something happen?”

Her expression was sad and angry. I knew she had gone to check on Rosalie...I had a bad feeling about it.

“Is Rosalie okay?!” I urged.

“Like you care,” she replied coldly, looking at me with a deadly stare.

“Excuse me?” I was caught off guard.

Vicky stood before me. It was obvious she’d been crying.

My sister was strong, and never let anyone see her in a disheveled state. Something terrible must have happened.

“Is it true that the plan for Rosalie all along has been to kill her after she has the baby?”

Those words were the last thing I’d expected to come out of her mouth. The only people who knew were Ethan and me.

I quickly moved toward the door and closed it before anyone else could hear the conversation.

“Who told you that?” I asked, narrowing my eyes at her.

“So it’s true, then!” she gasped, covering her mouth. “How could you? She trusted you!”

“The situation is more complicated than that.”

More complicated, Talon?! Rosalie is like family to us, and has become one of my best friends. You tasked me with taking care of her knowing what you’d be doing. How could you?”

Vicky sobbed in front of me, and it broke my heart. I stepped forward, wanting to comfort her, but she ripped her body from my grasp.

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“Vicky, you have to calm down, now!”

“Then explain! Because, right now, I can barely stand to be around you.”

I sighed, trying to find a way to explain the situation to her.

“Ethan never wanted a mate. He never thought he would get close to someone. He had hoped whoever he picked would quickly get pregnant, have a baby, and be out of his hair. He didn’t expect Rosalie to come into his life.”

“That doesn’t make it okay to kill her, though,” Vicky hissed. “How do you think Georgia would feel about this?”

“Keep Georgia out of this if you want any chance of changing his mind,” I warned her.

“No, Talon,” Vicky snapped back. “Rosalie is a kind and loving person, and would make the best of Lunas. The Alpha is letting a king without a child dictate his future. He’s letting that man force him to marry a horrible woman without any of the traits of a good Luna. She will destroy us all.”

“Shut your mouth before someone hears you,” I growled at her.

However, I knew what she said was true.

“You need to remember your place, Vicky,” I added.

“Or what, Talon? Are you going to kill me, too?!”

I was speechless. She glared challengingly at me.

Finally, she looked away and said, “Do me a favor and forget we had this conversation.”

Something was nagging at me. I had asked her a question earlier that she didn't answer...

"How did you know?" I asked again, slowly.

"It doesn't matter how I found out," Vicky replied, acting hesitant.

She quickly went to leave, and I grabbed her arm, roughly pulling her back.

"I won't ask you again! Tell me!"

Vicky began to cry, and my grip softened a little. "Let me go, Talon!"

Then I realized, and my heart sank.

"Rosalie..."

The word came out in a whisper as I let Vicky go.

"If you tell Ethan that she knows.. he will make her life worse. If he's going to kill her, fine, but let her live her life as she chooses until then. She doesn't want Ethan to know that she knows the truth."

"Vicky-" | sighed, feeling defeated. "I have to tell him."

"Please, Talon... For once, think about her. You both have already caused her so much pain. Just let her have this. Please don't tell him she knows."

Taking a deep breath, I nodded my head, not saying another word.

Vicky hesitated for a moment before quickly turning and walking out of my bedroom.

This was the worst situation I could have imagined. In anger, I picked up the lamp from a nearby table, barely

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restraining myself from throwing it against the wall.

This was the capitol. There were so many eyes watching us. I needed to stay calm.

All I could do was stand there and try to empty my brain for a little while, until I heard a knock on the door again.

"What else?" I opened the door, expecting it to be Vicky returning to say more.

But I was met with Georgia's puzzled face.

"What's wrong with Vicky? I just saw her in a hurry while I was walking up here, and she didn't even notice me saying hi..."

I sighed at her words, because there wasn't much I could tell her. The last thing I needed was my passionate mate to be upset at me, even if she didn't know she was my mate.

"She was mad because she wanted to take care of some things, and I wouldn't let her. Hopefully, soon we should be able to leave here and head back to the pack. I'm sure she'll be fine then."

The lies flowed from my lips, and I prayed that Georgia believed me.

Her expression told me she was skeptical of my answer, but she didn't pursue it further.

"Oh-" She said, biting her lip. "Okay... Well, I will get her to do something fun with me tomorrow to cheer her up. Leave it to me. I know you're busy."

"Thanks," I said, relief warming my voice.

Besides, regardless of how bad the situation was, Georgia's visit was a pleasant distraction for me.

"What did you come here for?" I asked. "I was actually heading out to meet Ethan."

I noticed how Georgia had a large, old, brown leather book tucked under her arm. She seemed uncertain as to whether she wanted to go through with whatever she had come to tell me.

"Oh, it's nothing. Just something silly I found."

"Mind showing me?" I stepped closer to her.

The scent of fresh grass after rain filled my nose, and I wanted more than anything to hold her close to me. Her breath hitched a little at my close proximity, and slowly her eyes looked up into mine.

"I was," she stuttered, staring at me. "Just, um.. In the library, I found something that I thought was pretty interesting."

She piqued my curiosity, and I gestured for her to show me. "What is it?"

She pulled the book from underneath her arm and scanned through the pages until she found the one she was looking for

Turning the book towards me, she showed me a photo of a soft, elegant woman with regal attributes. Her long white hair flowed down over her shoulders, and a tall red and gold crown sat upon her head. She looked powerful, but yet something in her eyes seemed so kind.

"I don't understand. What is this?" The question came out a little harsher than I had meant.

"I thought that Rosalie resembled her. If Rosalie were to be her heir... maybe you can persuade Ethan to forget about the marriage with Madalynn."

The mention of Rosalie could not come at a worse time.

"What do you think?" Georgia pressed.

I pinched the bridge of my nose, trying to keep my voice level. "Georgia, marrying Madalynn was the King's order. Romero came to seek an alliance and power, and he can only get it through his daughter's marriage. The problem is, we can't turn down the support he's offering."

I lifted my eyes to look at her. "Also, lots of people look like people from history. It doesn't mean they are related."

Georgia's eyes narrowed at me, and she quickly slammed the book shut.

"Forget it," she snapped. "Obviously, I was wrong to come to you about this."

She didn't give me a chance to say anything else before quickly turning on her heels and marching out of the room, slamming the door behind her.

I was at a loss for what happened, and my wolf was angry at me for upsetting my mate. "Shit," I mumbled, rubbing my temples. "Now I have to fix that, too."

#### Chapter 44: Did She Say "Screw You"?

##### **\*\*Rosalie's POV**

The days seemed to pass in a blur after I got the confirmation from Vicky about Ethan's secret plan.

And as much as I wanted to lay here day after day and cry my eyes out – I couldn't.

Vicky and I had talked things over. Even though she didn't tell me as much, I knew she had confronted Talon, because Talon stopped coming to check on me, and if we happened to be in the same room, he wouldn't look me in the eye anymore.

"Rosalie?" Georgia's voice intoned softly as she walked into my room. "I was coming to see if you wanted to go down for lunch. I'm meeting Vicky."

Forcing a smile on my face, I turned to her.

I knew very well that Ethan didn't want me to leave my room. And ever since I had arrived at the Drogomor pack, Thad made sure to comply with everything he asked me to. But, at this moment, I didn't care.

"That sounds wonderful." I replied, faking cheerfulness and following her out of the suite.

If I was going to die, then I was going to do it on my own terms, and live the rest of my life the way I wanted to.

I was grateful that I still could keep my friendships with Vicky and Georgia, but I wasn't going

to allow Ethan to make me feel like less than I was any more.

Walking down the halls, I saw Talon approaching us from the opposite direction. His eyes landed on us, and he turned to me.

“Hey, um, what are you doing?”

“She is-” Georgia started, before I cut her off.

“I am going to eat lunch with friends. Is there a problem with that?” | quickly said, meeting his gaze.

Talon seemed surprised by my outburst, his mouth opening and closing. He looked to Georgia silently asking for help, but she only shrugged her shoulders innocently.

In a voice I could barely hear, he replied, “You’re not supposed to leave your room...”

“Why, because Ethan said so? I’m pregnant, Talon. I want food and company. Both of which are in the restaurant downstairs,

I didn’t wait to hear Talon’s reply. Instead, I looped my arm through Georgia’s and started walking off with her.

She probably felt bad for Talon, so she patted him on the shoulder as if she was comforting him while we walked past. However, her gesture just seemed to make him even more tense.

After we’d gotten a few more steps away from Talon, Georgia rounded on me, surprised. “What the h\*ll was that?”

Sighing, I turned to her, letting a small smile cross my lips.

“As you’ve told me before, I should come out of my shell a little.”

Georgia froze, then burst into laughter as we continued walking. “I knew I would teach you something useful eventually. I like it- a new Rosalie. It suits you.”

I wasn’t too confident that it did; in fact, I hated acting that way toward Talon. I knew that he’d tried to stand on my side that night, and he was duty-bound to obey Ethan. But still, the fact he’d known for so long. It hurt.

As I walked into the restaurant, I refused to let anyone intimidate me. I held my head high and ignored the whispers of the people around me. I wouldn’t even let glimpsing Madalynn’s face on the far side of the room stop me from enjoying my lunch with Georgia and Vicky.

“Rosalie?” Vicky said in shock as I took my seat across from her at the table.

“Good afternoon, Vicky. Georgia invited me, I hope that’s okay.”

“Of course it’s okay. I just didn’t think Ethan would let you leave the room.”

Georgia chuckled, shaking her head.

Vicky turned to her, confused. “What?”

“We ran into Talon in the hallway, and, in not so many words, Rosalie basically said, ‘f\*ck Ethan’.”

I choked on my water. I tilted my head. “I didn’t think I was that bad.”

Vicky turned back to me, giving me a dubious look.

I smiled.

“I’m living how I want to, remember?” I said to her, raising a brow in question.

“Of course, if that’s what you want,” she replied simply. “Now, shall we have appetizers?”

I was thankful that Vicky was quick to change the subject. The last thing that I wanted was to continue having the conversation on what I was and wasn’t supposed to do.

Thad been quiet and timid my entire life, always scared of everyone around me.



For once, I wanted to do something for myself.  
Plus, what was Ethan going to do about it? I was pregnant with his child.

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**\*\*Talon's POV**

Never did I expect for Rosalie to speak to me in the way that she had.

Thad tried not to act indifferent toward her, but it was hard when I couldn't even look her in the eye without feeling the guilt of what Ethan was planning.

Thad betrayed her, and she knew.

As I walked out of my room, carrying the file that Ethan wanted, I watched him exit Rosalie's room with panic in his eyes.

"Alpha, are you okay?"

"Rosalie's missing-send the guards," he ordered.

I quickly shook my head. "She isn't missing."

He turned towards me with a dark glare.

"Where the hell is she, then!" he roared- as if the world was ending and he needed someone to lash out at with all of his anger.

Taking a deep breath, I spoke carefully and slowly so that I sounded calm. "I just passed her and Georgia in the hall. They were meeting Vicky in the restaurant for lunch."

\*YOU let her go?" He emphasized the word "you," and his fists clenched as if he wanted to hit me. "She was ordered to stay in her room, for her safety!"

I saw people down the hallway turning to look our way. I walked over to Rosalie's room, opened the door, and gestured for him to finish the conversation in private.

When we were both inside, I shut the door behind me and turned to face him.

"What do you want me to do, Ethan? She's pregnant. I can't manhandle her. And she was pretty adamant that she was going-even going as far to say, in not so many words, 'screw you, I'm going':"

"Excuse me?" Ethan replied as if he hadn't heard what I had just said.

I sighed. "Ethan." she has guards with her. I made sure two followed her down the stairs after I saw her with Georgia in the hallway. I'm not that stupid. But, honestly, if you plan on killing her, what harm will it do to let her have some type of freedom?"

"She is f\*cking pregnant, Talon!"

"Yes, sure, but she isn't disabled." I was trying to calm him down- something I hadn't needed to do often since we were boys.

He just stood there with anger in his eyes. I looked back at him, waiting for his reply.

Finally, he spoke.

"She hasn't been willing to see or talk to me much for days, and now she thinks she can do whatever she wants! What's going on?"

I decided not to answer his question directly. "Ethan, please just let her have this one thing. She's been locked inside for almost a month now. She just wants something normal. I will make sure she's taken care of, and Vicky mindlinked me and told me that she is coming straight back here after lunch."

There was a moment of silence.

Then a knock at the door drew both of our attention,

“Come in,” I said, opening the door.

It was Mary, a full load of snacks in her arms.

“Alpha, Beta!” Mary did not expect to see us, and she bowed nervously. “Miss Rosalie asked me to stock the fridge in the room.”

Fruit, yogurt, candy and ice cream. Okay, at least half of them were on Estrella’s recommended list.

Ethan’s expression grew even darker.

“Go put them down,” I directed, and Mary escaped as fast as she could from us to open the fridge.

Ethan growled, “Move.” He pushed past me, about to walk out of the room.

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I followed him immediately, thanking the Moon Goddess that Rosalie wasn’t here at the moment. I wouldn’t want to witness him unleash his frustration on a pregnant lady.

Unfortunately, I soon learned I’d spoken too soon.

“Miss Rosalie... please wait,” the voice of one of the guards echoed down the hall.

Oh great, just f\*cking kill me.

Chapter 45: He Is Not My Alpha

**\*\*Rosalie’ POV**

Lunch with Georgia and Vicky was lovely – being able to do the things I wanted to and not having to worry about following anyone’s orders was lovely.

However, the joy vanished as soon as I was by myself. My mind could not escape from the thoughts about Ethan.

How could he be so cold-hearted?

I didn’t know whether I would feel better or worse had he never shown me his gentleness. He gave me hope, but that made it worse. Never had anyone caused me so many emotions that I didn’t believe could co-exist – fear and pleasure, pain and... love.

The gentle ways he touched me showed me he cared, but he also acted as if the affection we had was nothing more than a business transaction.

Since the first day I met him, I was attracted to him. He saved me, he protected me, and he owned me. No matter what his decision was, I was foolishly and hopelessly in love with him.. even if he wanted to take my life.

I pondered over everything that had happened in my twenty years of life up until that moment. They weren’t easy, but I had learnt to live with tribulation, and I had survived.

Now that my days were counting down, I suddenly didn’t want to be my usual self anymore. I wanted to be treated like everyone else.

I would only live once, and I wanted more.

I slipped out of the restaurant and went back on my own.

Walking down the hall toward my room, I heard my latest guard calling my name as he ran towards me.

“Miss Rosalie.. please wait.”

“Samuel, you don’t have to follow me around.”

He stopped behind me.

“Miss Rosalie, you know I can not disobey my Alpha.”

I stopped at my door and turned to face him. A smile crossed my face.

"You're right. But he is not my Alpha." "Say that again?!"

A deep, angry roar rang from inside of my suite.

I almost jumped when I saw Ethan march out of the room. His dangerous bearing made it obvious that he was in a terrible mood. Based on his suit, it seemed that he had just finished his business meeting.

It would be better if he had come by to check on me instead of the baby.

My mouth was partially open, but no words escaped it. Everyone there was horrified by my rebellious comment.

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#### Chapter 45: He Is Not My Alpha

I didn't explain myself, and lowered my head to greet him. The temperature in the room seemed to have dropped all of sudden.

I was nervous about Ethan's anger, but I wouldn't take back what I said.

"Mary and Samuel, you guys can go." Talon hurriedly dismissed my maid and my guard, then turned to Ethan.

"Alpha, I have some files waiting for you to review." He was trying to distract him.

"Leave us," Ethan ordered, without sparing his beta a glance.

Talon seemed to freeze, as if searching for a way he could stay, but an order was an order. Finally, he sighed. "Yes Alpha. Your next meeting is in fifteen minutes."

"Now!!" Ethan raised his voice slightly, and I could feel the rage was building in his tone.

Talon left, hesitantly, shooting me a worried look.

The main door clicked behind me. I knew I had to face Ethan on my own.

It had been a few days since I had truly interacted with him. I took him in. His brows were furrowed, his lips were tightly pressed together, and his blue eyes were tinted with gold flecks, showing his wolf was on the brink of pushing through

I tried to move past him, but he stepped closer to me, causing me to back up until the door was completely flush against my back.

With nowhere to go, I watched with wide eyes as he leaned toward me.

His breath fanned against my cheek, his firm ripped body pressed against mine, and his tone was dangerous.

"Say that again..." The growl laced in his tone made me tremble in fear.

"..." I moved my lips, but my throat was dry.

All of sudden, my mind and heart cried out that it was unfair.

He had no right to treat me like this!

I looked back at him firmly and made up my mind to assert my new outlook on life.

"I don't need a babysitter all the time," I said. I saw him raise his eyebrow but pressed on. "I am capable of getting to places unaccompanied."

"You are pregnant, and you need to be safe!" he gritted through his teeth.

I could tell he was trying to control his temper, but all of a sudden, I just didn't care how he felt.

"I won't put the baby at risk," I argued.

"You will do as you're told!" he growled at me with irritation.

"I'm not just a poor girl who doesn't know how to protect herself!!" I snapped back.

Ethan was shocked by my retort, and so was I.

“DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT?!” he roared.

My body was trembling with both anger and fear. However, I knew Ethan wouldn’t harm me.

After all, I was carrying his heir – his precious heir.

“You...” he said.

He took a deep breath. His brows furrowed slightly.

“What’s going on with you?”

His grip loosened up, and I didn’t waste a moment.

I fled into the bedroom, and, for the first time ever, locked the door from inside.

Everything happened so quickly that I didn’t notice my heart was pounding until I was alone.

“Rosalie, open the door!” Ethan demanded.

“No, I won’t!” I cried aloud, covering my face.

I was hurt, I was scared, I was desperate – but I couldn’t tell him that. It would mean nothing to him, anyway.

I sobbed so hard that I couldn’t breathe.

“Rosalie!!!” he roared.

“Please..could you PLEASE just leave me alone?!” | begged.

For a couple seconds, it was eerily quiet.

Then — BANG!!

The door burst open, and I let out a shriek.

Ethan’s shadow enveloped me, and my whole body shook in terror.

“Don’t don’t come any closer!”

He ignored my protest, and my heart dropped.

I didn’t want to know what he would do to me next. I closed my eyes and waited for him to unleash his anger

upon me.

‘Whatever, just let it be.’ I told myself. ‘He always gets what he wants.’

However, his fury never came.

Topened my eyes. I was met with an angry but perplexed expression on his face, as if he was trying to analyze my behavior.

He scooped me up, and gently sat me on the bed.

He knelt before me, and his cold fingers wiped the tears from my face. With a soft rip, his fingers lifted my chin until my eyes met his.

Hesitation seemed to fill him as he cleared his throat.

“I didn’t mean to raise my voice.”

I froze, trying to comprehend what he had just said.

Was he... apologizing to me?

My eyes widened, and I looked at him in disbelief.

“Rosalie.. why did you leave without your guard?”

I didn’t expect him to calm down so quickly. The fury in his eyes had faded away and had been replaced by concern and worry.

Then I saw my own reflection, and it reminded me of the first time I met him. I was lost in his gaze.

“.....” I sobbed. He waited patiently for me to finish what I was about to say. “I...just wanted to have a little freedom.”

That was the truth.

Ethan let out a sigh as both of his hands cupped my cheeks.

He studied my face for a couple seconds, and the crease between his brows deepened. It was as if he didn't know what to do with me.

"Rosalie, it's for your protection." He reiterated patiently.

"I'm sorry..." I was so used to apologizing to him, and I had no idea what else I could say.

I was disappointed in myself. I wanted to live my life, but as soon as he was a little soft toward me, all of my ambitions flew away.

"But if you need to move around, send a message to me so that I'm not worried."

I was stunned, and stuttered, "I, um, okay. Than-... Thank you."

It was wrong to thank a man who planned to take my life, but I couldn't lie to myself – whatever he was willing to give me, I was grateful.

My tears welled up again, but this time, not because of fear. I wiped them away.

In an attempt to explain my abnormal behavior and to make peace between us, I murmured, "Sorry.. my hormones just are all over the place."

\*\*Ethan's POV

She quickly wiped the tears off her face and said, her voice quivering, "Sorry. My hormones just are all over the place."

I caressed her cheeks.

Her silky skin was so tender. It was a little wet from her tears. Her long eyelashes cast shadows under her innocent doe eyes.

I couldn't have picked a better breeder.

Thad to admit that I totally lost it when I heard her daring announcement at the door.

TOWNED HER! It didn't matter whether she was officially part of my pack or not.

Tgave her a chance to correct her mistake, but not only did she defy me again, she also locked me out.

No one, NO ONE dared to turn their back at me.

When I busted into the bedroom, the storm of outrage consuming me, all I wanted to do was devour her alive until I witnessed her terrified expression.

It was like an ice cold bucket of water was dumped on me and, in an instant, extinguished the burning rage in my body.

She was scared of me.

Yes, she should be. Just like most people should.

But the realization. bothered me.

I was frustrated with myself. This was a task. She was my breeder and she was pregnant. So what else did / want from her?

My eyes moved down, and her pink lips were like the most tender flower petals. They looked delicious.

My wolf growled, and I couldn't resist the urge. I covered her lips with mine.

Her sweet scent filled my senses, and her reciprocation of my kiss set a fire of desire within me. I pushed her back onto the bed as I leaned over her, taking advantage of how delicious she tasted.

'He is not my alpha.'

All of sudden, her earlier rebellious comment echoed in my mind again.

Damn it, damn it, damn it!

My wolf was growling inside, and we were both beyond furious,

How dare she!

I pinned her down on the bed. My lips crashed harder on hers, and my tongue aggressively invaded the soft inside of her mouth.

She whimpered. I was overwhelmed by the mix of my anger and the burning desire that didn't give her any chance to get away from me.

Finally, our lips parted because both of us needed air.

"Now, I dare you say that again..." | murmured.

Her breath hitched, and her swollen, pink lips parted.

My heart tightened. For a moment, I almost wished I hadn't pushed for her reply.

"You're not my alpha."

Her words were like a knife to my chest as I looked down upon her.

I wanted her to comply, but those words seemed to stop me- until she spoke again.

"You are my everything."

I stared down at her.

Then I took her lips again, and tried to make sense of the feelings rushing through me.

How did she do it? One moment I was fueled with fire that would destroy the world, and the next moment, I felt something totally different.

It was something foreign.

Something soft, warm and... content.

#### Chapter 45: He is Not My Alpha

I forced myself to quit studying my own emotions. My instinct told me it was dangerous, and I needed to stop

So I released her wrists and slowly climbed off of her.

"You need to rest while I go to this meeting."

Then I left the room as soon as I could without looking at her again, it would be best if I didn't know her reaction.

Whether she was disappointed that I left her hanging, or she was hurt that I didn't respond to her, or even worse she showed no particular interest in me sticking around. Besides, whatever her reaction might be, I knew for sure I would lose my control again.

If I didn't leave now, then I might never want to.

pick! I needed to create more distance between her and myself.

But how could I?

#### Chapter 46: Too Sweet

##### **\*\*Rosalie's POV**

My first ever fight with Ethan ended on good terms. I was no longer grounded in my room, but in return, I had a total of four guards with me at all times.

Georgia stuck her head around my door smiling at me. "You ready?"

I slid on my shoes and grabbed my bag. "Let's go." ;

The guards didn't hesitate when I informed them Georgia was merely taking me on an afternoon walk on the ground floor like usual. Estrella made it known that exercise was important during pregnancy, and if I wanted easy labor, I would need to walk more.

"Georgia, where are we going? This isn't the way..."

“Shhh! Do you not want to go to the market?”

“Excuse me?”

WW

“It’s an outdoor space within the enclosure of the capital walls. The castle estate completely surrounds the market. Once a month, local people come to sell whatever they have to those of high society. Georgia wasn’t known for being patient, and she clearly wouldn’t wait for me to decide. “Coming or not? I’ll go by myself if you quit.”

I thought about it for a moment. Ethan never said I couldn’t exit the castle building. The market was directly in the center of the estate, in its open courtyard. Plus, I did still have the guards...so I was probably OK to go?

“Let’s do it!” I concluded, all excited.

“Woah... sounds like I really needed to twist your arms,” Georgia commented, arching an eyebrow. “You do realize that he is going to lose his shit with you, right?”

I blinked at her innocently, and then explained, “Um he said I just need to let him know.”

But we both knew he probably wouldn’t allow me to go to the market.

Georgia nodded with a huge grin, seemingly very proud of herself. “It’s better to ask forgiveness than seek permission. I’ve taught you well! Haha!”

When we got close to the gate, Georgia and I quickly took off in a quick jog towards the back stairs, which led down to the kitchens. From there, we could blend in with others as we made our way toward the market.

The guards realized where we were heading, but it was too late. When I glanced back, and one of them had left to report to Ethan.

Still, we are going to be in so much trouble.” Georgia laughed as we went through another door to come out under the open sky.

I stared up at the blue sky as I inhaled the fresh air. “I’ve missed being outside.”

“Let’s shop.” She let out a chuckle and pulled me towards the stalls.

It was loud at the market. I was amazed by the variety of products. Clothes, accessories, produce, fur and handcrafted products. I could have spent days going from one stall to the other.

“Rosalie!” Georgia called out, tossing an apple my way.

“Oh my goodness it’s so beautiful!” The gold and red colors swirled together; it was so unique compared to the regular, solid red ones I was used to in my home region.

“I bought it for you. Try it.” She smiled as I took a large bite, my eyes widening at its sweetness.

I mumbled with my mouth full, “This is amazing.”

As I did so, Georgia handed me a basket full of fruit – Oranges, grapes, peaches... they were so colorful and juicy, and I couldn’t wait to taste them all!

Engrossed as I was in enjoying my delicious snack, I didn’t notice that the people around us had quiet down.

“Georgia!”

Ethan’s dominating voice rang across the market. He wasn’t loud, but somehow, everyone heard him. People stopped in their place and bowed their heads toward him out of respect.

“Busted,” Georgia mumbled to me as we both turned to face Ethan.

“Do you not have any sense of responsibility?!” Ethan scolded Georgia.

Georgia spared me an “I-told-you” glance.

It wasn't right for me to hide behind Georgia. It was my own decision to come to the market.

I picked one grape from the basket and took a breath, then stepped towards Ethan.

"Ethan, I persuaded Georgia to come out with me," I said, successfully drawing his attention to me. He wouldn't do anything bad to a pregnant woman in public, right?

"Would you try this grape, please?"

Before he could turn down my offer, I shoved the deep purple grape into his mouth, forcing him to take a bite.

"Delicious, isn't it?"

Georgia looked at me, wide-eyed.

I forced a smile on my face, but my palms were sweating. I knew I was tempting my fate.

WS

Ethan glared at me for a moment before chewing and swallowing the grape. In a low hiss, I heard him call my name in a warning tone, "Rosalie."

Picking a fight with him wouldn't help this situation. I'd learned that already. So, in response, I apologized.

"Sorry that I made you worried again."

He grabbed my hand and pulled me to the side, slightly away from prying ears.

"Why did you disobey me again?"

His tone had already softened, I noted.

I gave him an innocent and pleading look. "But I didn't. The guard reported my whereabouts to you right away. I didn't leave the castle. This is in the courtyard, right in the center of the castle grounds. There are guards everywhere, and I have Georgia with me."

I lowered my head and apologized again. "...I am sorry if I worried you."

He stared at me for a moment. "Still too dangerous."

Without thinking twice, I let the words on my mind slip out. "I would love it if you spent the day with me here exploring, but..." I sighed, looking down. "I know you can't."

I lifted my head and sought out his eyes – they were as blue as the sunny sky.

Ethan gently grabbed my wrist, pulling me closer.

"Only this once."

He paused, and then added, "No, too sweet."

I beamed brightly at him – he meant the grape was too sweet.

Georgia was so shocked that she wasn't able to speak, which was a first for the young woman, who typically had a lot to say. However, her eyes told me what was going through her mind: "HE DIDN'T YELL AT YOU?!!"

I scurried back to the vendor. "I must have some more of these marvelous apples. Can I take six, please?"

The vendor hesitated in fear as his gaze traveled between Ethan and me. I turned to Ethan, waiting for him to say something

He hesitated before nodding his head. "Six it is."

The vendor handed me the bag, but before I could reach out, Ethan had already grabbed it. At the same time, he looked at one of the guards. Before I knew it, the basket in my hand was taken away from me as well.

"You shouldn't carry weight, no matter how small it is." He was firm, and I knew he had already made his biggest compromise, so I nodded my head.



Then he asked, "What else would you like to check out?"

Walking around the market with Ethan wasn't as fun as I'd hoped. True, I enjoyed his company; but the problem was, everywhere we went, the crowd fell silent and no one dared to look up.

"I know you're busy right now," I replied. "I don't want to keep you."

As much as I would have liked to spend time with Ethan, I didn't want to ruin Georgia's fun coming to the market. Hopefully, I could persuade him to leave.

"I have time until my dinner meeting."

Georgia scoffed, looping her arm through my own. "That's not true. I know that for a fact."

"Georgia, this has nothing to do with you," Ethan warned, seething with anger over her words.

It was obvious that he wouldn't allow me to stay at the market without his supervision.

I shook my head and smiled at both of them. "Actually, I am a bit tired. Maybe it would be best for me to go back to my room."

#### Chapter 46: Too Sweet

"I'll walk you back," Ethan said quickly, agreeing to my plan.

"Georgia, see you around dinner," I said with a smile. "Enjoy the market, and maybe pick up something fun for me too."

"Don't worry, I'll enjoy myself." Georgia gave me a wink.

Ethan seemed to be very pleased with my choice, and he walked me back to the castle without delay.

I tried to start a conversation to break the silence. "I feel bad about abandoning Georgia."

"She'll be fine." Ethan's answer was as concise as usual.

I smiled. I had no doubt that Georgia would still have fun without me. She always knew how to make the most of life. That was something I was so envious of.

"Thank you for walking me back to my room."

I was expecting him to drop me off by the door, but he entered without saying a word.

"Our room," he corrected me.

Then he strode into the suite and pulled out his phone. "Talon, bring the files to my room.

He would spend the rest of the afternoon with me?

I had almost forgotten that this was, indeed, supposed to be a shared space. He hadn't come back at all lately... and I didn't need to ask to know where he might have been.

I tasted bitterness in my mouth, but I decided to not let that ruin my afternoon.

"So..grapes are too sweet. How about some apples?"

I realized that I really didn't know Ethan at all. What was his favorite color? What food did he like?

To my surprise, he nodded his head.

I picked up an apple and was about to wash it for him when I saw him frown.

I was confused. What was wrong with the apple I picked?

"That one."

I looked towards where his gaze was – the one I had taken a bite from.

"Uh – oh, sure!" | clumsily washed that apple again and brought it to Ethan. But he had no intention to take it from me.

His narrowed eyes made it clear... he wanted me to feed him.

My face was burning red, and I felt my heart racing.

I lifted the apple to his lips. He took a bite, and his tongue brushed over my fingers.

I felt as if I was struck by electricity and couldn't breathe.

It was so unfair! This man was deadly, but I couldn't stop my eagerness to be close to him. How I wished I had never learned the truth! That way, I could have lied to myself and enjoyed every moment with him.. until the day I died. The thought of his order to end my life wiped the smile off my face, and my pounding heartbeat stilled.

"What's wrong?" he asked, frowning.

"Nothing just a bit tired," I murmured.

Luckily, a knock at the door rescued me from his grip.

"Alpha, I brought the files." It was Talon's voice.

"If it's okay with you, I'll go get changed now," I said. Ethan nodded and went to open the door.

I dashed into the bedroom before he could see my tears fall down.

#### Chapter 47: A Tempting Offer

Being around Ethan for the rest of the afternoon wasn't easy. I couldn't lie to myself, after all. Luckily, I had the default excuse of being pregnant, so I ended up laying in bed while Ethan focused on his work in the living area. As soon as he left, around dinner hour, I decided a nice warm shower to wash his scent off would be a great idea if I wanted to have some peace of mind for the rest of the night.

My life was never going to be normal, and the sooner I accepted that fate, the better. Regardless of how Ethan acted around me-regardless of how I put on a happy face-I had to live with the fact that I was only useful for as long as I was a breeder.

Once my task ended, so would my life.

'Don't cry, Rosalie. Tears are the most useless thing in the world!' I told myself.

A knock on my door caused me to turn from the sofa to see who it was.

"Come in," I called out, wiping away the evidence of my pain. I had pushed off my dinner plans with Georgia and Vicky, so it could be Mary bringing me food.

"Hey, Rosalie."

In came the voice of the last person I ever wanted to see again.

Madalynn.

Rising to my feet, I turned to face her, and this time, it wasn't with terror. Nothing could scare someone who knew their death was coming.

"How may I help you?" I asked her coldly.

She made her way in and closed the door behind her.

"Look, I know we've never seen eye to eye, and that's partially because of me-"

"Partially?" | echoed, raising my brow.

She looked at me in disbelief, but her surprised look was quickly replaced by an apologetic one.

"Yes" She gritted out. "You and I both want Ethan. Don't lie to yourself."

I didn't want to continue the pointless argument. "Your point, Madalynn? You don't want Ethan to catch you here with me alone."

That statement made her eyes shoot to mine, and I could tell she was a little nervous, but just a little.

"Look, I came by to say that I'm sorry."

"Excuse me?"

That was the last thing I would have ever expected to hear from her. I was taken aback by her admission. "You're sorry?"

I shouldn't have acted the way I did toward you. I know you're pregnant, and that makes what I did

I stared at her, dumbfounded.

What was going on in this world?! The people I trusted most wanted to kill me, and the person who had made her scorn clearly known was apologizing to me?!

"What's done was done," I said. "I am not one to hold grudges, Madalynn. I appreciate your gesture. You shouldn't hang around too long."

I moved toward the door, implying she should take her leave now. I didn't want any more conflicts than I had already

"I know Ethan is planning to kill you."

Madalynn's words froze me in place.

Slowly, I turned to face her, and saw excitement and venom growing in her eyes.

This was why she was here- to remind me of the pain I had to go through?

"Excuse me?"

Did she know this whole time? Did they all plan together from the beginning to use me and then kill me?

That raised a question I wanted answered. How did she know?

I decided not to confirm it, hoping to coax out her source. "I don't understand what you're talking about."

She chuckled.

"You don't need to play the fool with me. It doesn't matter how I know. It's true, and you don't need to deny it."

I sighed as I walked back to the sofa, taking a seat and letting the information sink in.

"Well, when I am gone, you will have everything you want with Ethan. So no need to worry. It will come soon enough..." I was surprised that I could be this calm discussing my own terrible fate.

She walked towards me and took a seat on the edge of the arm chair, staring at me.

"It isn't right... Even if I didn't like you, I didn't want that for you."

Her words took me by surprise.

I looked away and turned my head towards the window. "Well, there's nothing that can be done. I am stuck here, and from what I've heard the guards say to each other. no one leaves until all is clear."

I didn't want to discuss this with Madalynn, but I felt that, if I didn't let it out, I would drive myself crazy.

A moment of silence between us made me believe that there was more that she wanted to say, but was hesitating to

IS,

She seemed to have something in her mind, but I was done waiting for her to get to her point. I didn't want to waste my time on someone who only brought me negative emotions.

"If you are here to remind me of my own death, you've already done it." I looked back at her, not in a friendly manner. "I'm tired, and I want to be left alone."

Her attitude shifted slightly at that. She looked up at me with a straight face and sighed.

"What if I told you I could get you and your baby out of here alive?"

My eyes widened as she continued, “You would be able to start over some place far away where no one would know who you were.”

I took a second, but I could hear my heart start to pound.

This was the first time in the past few days that I actually felt alive again.

If she could get me out of here..

But I soon shook my head, trying not to get my hopes too high.

“That isn’t possible. Ethan won’t let me go, Madalynn. He owns me.”

“Nothing is impossible,” Madalynn replied with her signature sinister smirk. For the first time ever, it didn’t trouble me.

“Please explain, then.”

She could be in so much trouble for even coming here and suggesting something like this, and she knew it. It wouldn’t make sense for her to risk it unless she was serious, regardless of what her true motives were.

“Don’t worry about the ‘how’s’ right now, because I still don’t have all the details. Just think about it. I have a place you can go, and people who will help you start over. You just have to decide if that’s something you really want to do.”

Leaning back, I studied her for a moment.

I was curious as to why she cared if I was able to start over. It wasn’t like my life affected her in any way.

“So, why do you suddenly care about helping me? What’s in it for you?”

Madalynn looked at me for a moment and sneered. I knew that her performance of compassion was going to slip away eventually, and I was waiting for the moment she showed her true colors.

“Well, you’re not as stupid as you appear.”

A snake couldn’t change its skin. At the end of the day, it would always be a snake.

Madalynn stood to her feet as she straightened out the long dress she had been wearing. “You stand in my way of the future I want, Rosalie. Even if I give him a child, it will never see the throne. Your child will be the oldest, and that means that it will take the throne if Ethan dies. I can’t have that.”

She shot me a grin. “Don’t misunderstand things. This is about me.”

A small chuckle escaped my lips as I smiled. “I wouldn’t expect anything less. I’m just surprised, honestly. You’re the last person I ever expected to help me.”

“Well, don’t flatter yourself,” Madalynn replied as she made her way across the room. “I’m doing this for me.”

“I’ll think about it.” I looked at her with mixed emotions. “And thank you anyway.”

“My time is up.” She walked to the door. “Send word if you want to see me again. In the meantime, I suggest you really consider my offer. There will only be a small window in which we can make it happen, and if you want to save yourself..., you’ll take it.”

With these final words, she exited the suite.

After being alone for a few seconds, I realized my breathing had become fast. A feeling was rising in my chest

that made me want to cry again.

I had jumped right to trying to accept death, and I never took any notice of the fact that there

could be another way – a way to find a path where I could continue my life.

My mind raced with the possibilities.

If I stayed with Ethan, the baby would be born safe and would grow up under Ethan's watchful eyes, regardless of my death.

But if I could escape...

I shook my head. I knew I shouldn't trust Madalynn. Once the plan was in motion, I would be at Madalynn's mercy, and I might be risking both mine and my child's life.

Yet, how could I possibly not be tempted by the chance at freedom? How could I not desperately want a new life with just me and my baby?

#### Chapter 48 Is Sex Safe During Pregnancy?

The smell of the clinic turned my nose up a bit.

Ever since I had become pregnant, I had developed an aversion to many different smells. The smell of the capitol hospital was at the top of my "dislike" list. However, today, I was thrilled to be here.

"Good morning, Rosalie!" Estrella greeted me with a warm smile.

I eyed Estrella, thinking. She was in charge of my health... did she know?

She had been so supportive of me all along, though. I was certain she wasn't involved in Ethan's plan.

"Hey, Estrella." I smiled sweetly, trying to remain positive. "Do we get to see the baby today?"

"That's the plan. We'll try and get a proper ultrasound done today. I know that last time we couldn't see much because you were too early, but I think, by now, we should be able to get a real picture."

Despite everything that was going on lately, this was something I had been waiting for. I was excited to see my child.

"Yes. I could barely sleep last night thinking about it."

"Let me take a look at you." Estrella started checking my vitals. "Have you been losing some sleep lately? High quality rest is important, dear."

She pulled out a piece of paper and started writing something down. "I've got some pills-herbal medicine-that can help you sleep better and are safe for pregnancy. You can take one or two as needed."

I nodded. I couldn't tell her that woke up from nightmares during the night.

Then she smiled and gestured toward the table. Looking at her watch, she asked, "Is the Alpha still not here yet?"

"Um.. it seems so," I replied.

My feelings towards Ethan had gotten more and more confusing, even for me. I should've been happy about his more frequent visits, lessened restriction and growing patience, but I couldn't.

When I thought about how I had a certain death ahead of me, most things didn't bother me anymore. Still, it felt strange to enjoy the company of the man who would take my life.

But I couldn't help it. I rationalized it as making the most of the days I had left.

Besides, Ethan's behavior had been almost... tender the past few days. I had felt myself starting to let go of my anger toward him.

But then Madalynn swept in and tore the rose-tinted filter from my life, forcing me to face the stark reality. It was ugly—but it also held hope.

If I chose to accept Madalynn's offer, I would need to be independent and strong, for myself and for my child. I could rely on no one but myself.

I chose to be here alone because I believed this moment belonged to me. I wanted to meet my precious baby for the first time as their mother.

But of course, Estrella didn't know my secret.

"I'm so excited, Estrella" | effused. "Is there any way to speed things up?"

Estrella chuckled at my enthusiasm. But really, I was just giddy with relief that Ethan hadn't shown up.

If Ethan was here, it would throw a bucket of cold water over what I wanted to be a sweet moment between mother and future child. I knew that Ethan would be warm and gentle – but I also knew he only did that for the baby, not for me.

Estrella shook her head with a smile. "Alright, impatient young lady, let's get started."

As I laid down, she brought the ultrasound machine across my stomach to try to pick up a view of the fetus within. I held my breath as I stared at the screen.

The door to the room opened, and in stepped the one person I was hoping wouldn't be here, Ethan.

My heart skipped a beat.

"Alpha, great timing! I wasn't sure if Rosalie told you about the schedule change," Estrella said with a grin, looking at me.

"She didn't," Ethan said flatly.

All I could do was to pretend I didn't hear him.

Luckily, again, I had the perfect built-in excuse of being pregnant.

"Oh! It must have slipped her mind pregnancy brain fog is a terribly common thing, especially during first pregnancy. Don't pay it any mind," Estrella commented, trying to reassure him about the situation.

The look she gave me, meanwhile, said that she knew I didn't tell him on purpose.

I sighed inwardly.

"Is that the baby right there?" I asked, changing the subject.

She squinted, looking at the screen. Then a smile spread across her face.

"Yes! There it is." She chuckled before looking over her shoulder at Ethan.

The moment I saw the shape of my child's adorable tiny body, tears welled up in my eyes. The little one lay there, safe inside my belly.

I knew we were connected. They were part of me, and I could almost feel their heartbeat rhyme with mine.

I would do anything for them. Regardless of what a disaster my life had been, I couldn't be more grateful to be a mother.

"Estrella, there isn't any picture in the world more beautiful than this..." | murmured to myself.

Ethan was also quiet. I couldn't tell what might be going through his mind.

"How is the baby?" He finally asked in a serious tone, as if its physical well-being was the only thing he actually cared about.

Overall, the pregnancy is going amazingly. The baby looks very healthy and strong. Nothing to worry about." Estrella's words were a big relief for me.

She turned around and instructed me, "Just please remember to stick to your diet, and take it easy."

I nodded, wiping my tears away. They were tears full of happiness.

But Ethan's next question struck me.

"Boy or girl?" he asked in an even tone.

Bitterness built up in my heart. Why did it matter?

I looked towards him with disappointment. Boy or girl, the baby should be loved either way.

But I knew my opinions on child-rearing didn't really matter to him.

Ethan turned to face me, the dark gaze in his eyes revealing some undercurrent that I could not quite understand.

I met his gaze firmly, refusing to submit to his authority. I might have been a mere breeder, but I was the baby's mother, and I needed to stand up for my child.

The tension in the room seemed skyrocketed, and Estrella shot me a hesitant glance before she replied to her Alpha, "It's too early to tell."

Ethan didn't comment further, but I was surprised to capture a glimpse of relief from his eyes.

What was he thinking?

"Sweetie, keep yourself hydrated." Estrella poured me a cup of water and helped me sit up from the bed. Then she walked towards her desk to print out the pictures.

Ethan followed her. "Estrella... Is sex safe during pregnancy?"

I choked on my drink.

Estrella obviously did not expect this question, so she stuttered, "Um...well, technically, yes."

Ethan glared at her, and she added, "I mean-yes, it is."

She grabbed a few small photos and handed them to me.

"Thank you, Estrella," I replied as she looked between the two of us.

Before I could say anything else, she made her way from the room, leaving Ethan and me alone.

"Here..." I said softly as I handed him one of the photos. "One for you to keep."

Ethan took it, his eyes staring down at it with curiosity before he slid it into a pocket in his jacket-a secret location for only him to know.

Seeing him cherish the picture brought a smile on my face.

"Um •may I go back now?" I had already gotten up to leave, but I still asked out of politeness.

However, as I reached for the door, Ethan spoke. "What's going on, Rosalie? Why did you not tell me about the appointment?"

I didn't want to have this conversation with him right now. The pain inside of me was too heavy, and with what I had planned for myself, I just couldn't do it.

"I'm doing well. Sorry, maybe my hormones make me a little out of sorts."

"Rosalie," he said with a commanding tone to his voice. "Tell me the truth,"

I looked at the ground and shook my head.

There was nothing left to tell. He had his secrets; well, now I had mine.

"I'll be okay, don't worry." I didn't want to act too abnormal. He expected me to be compliant, and thus, I would act compliant

"Keeping whatever is upsetting you inside doesn't help."

What could I say?

I looked at him, and how I wished I could cry and beg him and ask him to change his mind.

But I knew I couldn't. I would have to defy him if I wanted my freedom.

I sighed. "I don't want to talk about it."

He moved forward. "Say it."

"Rosalie, look at me." He paused. "Don't make me-"

"It's Madalynn," I interrupted him.

His expression changed, and he grit his teeth. “She was troubling you? I told them..”  
“No, she didn’t.” I look him in the eye, and stated clearly, “It’s about you. You’re marrying her...”

And so, I lied.

I had to. I needed to lower his guard; I needed him to believe I was “misbehaving” for a reason, since he didn’t accept pregnancy as an acceptable root cause.

He was taken aback and didn’t say anything.

“...See, there’s nothing you can do about that,” I said, turning to walk toward the door.

“I have to,” he said quietly. It’s about protecting my property and making alliances, even if I don’t want to. It’s the king’s order.”

I stilled.

as if he was trying to explain himself, as if I

I had never expected that, one day, he would speak to me like this was not just someone he gave orders to.

I lowered my head. “Please accept my apology. It isn’t my place to tell you not to.”

Ethan gripped my upper arm, stopping me from leaving.

“Rosalie, stop acting like this.”

The touch of his skin on mine brought back a warm, familiar feeling I wanted to sink and fall into.

If I wasn’t careful, my heart would betray me.

Tam just finally looking out for myself” I whispered, refusing to look at him. “My entire life, everyone around me has tried to hurt me in some way. For once, I want to matter.”

He forced me to look up to him. After a few seconds, he murmured, “You do matter to me, Rosalie.”

It was that small phrase that made the tears rush to my eyes.

All of the emotions rolled through me like a tidal wave. I wanted so badly to lash out at him for everything he had put me through – or to dive into his arms and beg him to change his plan.

But I knew I couldn’t.

“I wish I could believe that.” I choked out before pulling away from him and quickly exiting out the clinic door.

I rushed hurriedly to get away from him- to put as much distance between him and myself as I could. As my feet moved across the halls, I found myself rushing like I was fleeing for my life- and, in a sense, I was.

Finally, I shut the door of my room behind me and slid to the floor.

Ethan was a man of his own words. As much as I hoped he would change his mind, he wasn’t going to. Talon had already tried and failed.

I broke down in tears, trying in vain to stifle the pain I was feeling until I glanced at the ultrasound photos in my bag.

I pulled the photo out. The baby was growing beautifully. I gently brushed my fingers over its head, its body and its little heart.

A smile returned back to my face. I was amazed at how quickly I calmed down.

My hand gently touched my belly. It was like magic, my heart was warmed by knowing its existence.

“Little one, thank you for being my strength.”

I wouldn’t give up.



## Chapter 49 : Ethan's Past

It was dark by the time I awoke to find myself on the floor. The photos of my unborn child were still lying in my lap.

I didn't remember falling asleep, but the exhaustion of everything I had been through made me realize that I definitely needed more rest.

I pulled myself up from the floor, my joints protesting the movement after being in that awkward position for hours.

After a stretch, I opened the bedroom door and moved to the living room, which was dim, lit only by a small fire. I realized Mary had come in to bring me dinner at some point without me hearing her.

"Rosalie..."

I jumped in surprise, a small scream escaping me as I turned to find Talon sitting on the sofa.

"Talon-" I said in shock. I looked around, expecting to see Ethan, but there was no sign of him. "What are you doing here?"

Slowly, he rose to his feet, switching on a small lamp that sat on the end table near him. "Mary came to me earlier because you hadn't answered her, and she was worried. I decided to wait for you to wake up."

"Oh, thank you. I'm ok. Don't worry."

This was the first time in a while that Talon and I had talked alone. We couldn't get along like before anymore, although only I knew why.

It was then that I noticed the smell of alcohol. Frowning, I asked, "Have you been drinking?"

"Just a few sips. I still have to finish up my work later tonight."

He looked at me with sadness in his eyes. After a moment of silence, he said, "I'm sorry."

That was why he came. He was here apologize to me.

I just didn't expect that the fearless Beta of the Drogomor pack needed the push from alcohol to make his apology.

I took a seat and sighed. "Why, Talon? Why didn't you tell me?"

Then I chuckled, "You don't need to answer. Of course you couldn't. You're his Beta."

Talon sighed as well, and shook his head. A look of remorse filled his eyes. "I'd been trying to get him to change his mind, Rosalie."

I said nothing, waiting patiently for him to finish.

He spoke faster than usual. "I'd been trying to get him to accept how he feels about you. I had hoped that, with time, he would see that, and you wouldn't have had to know about the plan at all."

"Talon, I'm nothing special to him, as you can see," I said bitterly. "Besides, I'm already over it now."

Talon looked defeated. "I'm sorry, Rosalie, but I am his Beta. I would be breaking my oath to Ethan if I were to tell

## Chapter 49: Ethan's Past

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you the truth."

I watched as he walked towards me, then stopped just a few feet away.

"Talon, I appreciate that you tried to change Ethan's mind. Really."

After all, there wasn't much Talon could do. As a Beta, he could not disregard his position or his Alpha.

"What's done is done. He's made his choice, Talon."

"I want to explain something to you, if you will give me a chance," Talon said, suddenly. "I want to

explain to you why Ethan is the way he is. Maybe, that way, you won't give up on him, and you can help change his mind."

Nodding my head, I picked up the tray of food Mary had brought me and moved towards the small coffee table setting it down.

"If you don't mind me eating?" I asked. Even though I had no appetite at all, I needed to eat for the baby.

Talon was surprised by my question. I gave him a smile. "The baby is hungry."

No matter how bitter I felt inside, I needed to be strong for my child. I told myself that over and over again, and magically, it seemed to be working.

"Please, go ahead," Talon replied quickly. "I only need ten minutes, I promise."

He followed me and took a seat, his elbows resting on his knees as he watched me get comfortable.

"Go ahead," I replied as I picked up the small bowl of soup, which was still a bit warm.

"Ethan wasn't always the way he is now," Talon began.

He took a breath.

"When he was a small boy... he saw his father being killed in front of him. It wasn't until he was older that he realized his mother was behind the death of his father, and all so she could be with another man."

I was shocked. "She betrayed their matebond?"

"Yes, she did. Because another man promised her more power. Power he couldn't give her."

Talon's voice was gentle, and it was so quiet in the room that I could hear the fire crackle.

"When Ethan got older, his step-father was beyond abusive. Not only did he abuse Ethan himself, but his people did, too- his beta, his servants... everyone. I've always found it a miracle that he survived."

Talon stared at the fire and continued, "That man was a monster. He didn't even treat his own children properly." He took a shuddering breath. One day, while Georgia was playing, his step father smacked her so hard it knocked her unconscious."

Georgia was Ethan's half-sister?

And, did that mean...?!

Talon gritted his teeth as he relived the memory. "That was the last straw for Ethan. He ended up challenging his step-father and killed him. Not long after, his mother died, too."

I gasped.

"He vowed to always keep his pack safe, but at the same time, he vowed to the moon goddess to never take a mate."

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Things began to make sense.

Ethan's bloody reputation, his coldness toward women in general...

"So, he doesn't want a mate because he thinks any woman would be like his mother?"

"Yes, essentially. He doesn't want to give a woman enough power to be able to betray or destroy our pack... or him. So, since he knew he needed an heir..."

"...He bought a breeder. And with his plan, he can just get rid of me, and doesn't ever need to worry about me coming back and using the child over him..."

I smiled bitterly. "It's unacceptable that I could possibly harm him, but it's totally fine for him to kill me?"

"Rosalie..."

Talon didn't know how to answer. How could he?

His explanation hadn't made me feel any better.

"And he feels this way but is still going to marry Madalynn...?" I couldn't help but feel stung by all this.

"Please excuse me, but I don't understand."

"Rosalie, you do understand..." Talon said, staring at me, waiting for me to come to the conclusion myself.

My brain was in a mess, but I took a few deep breaths so that I could sort through everything.

Ethan agreed to marry Madalynn because my child would be the first-born heir. It wouldn't matter if Madalynn became the Luna or not, her child would never be the next Alpha. She understood it, and Ethan of course did as well.

"Rosalie," Talon could tell that I had already comprehended the situation, "Ethan wanted an heir solely to himself. Someone he could trust to hand over his pack to in the future, without any influence from the child's mother, or even, the mother's pack. He had to do it as soon as possible, because with the war approaching, he knew he would need to do whatever that's necessary for the alliance, including marrying someone he has no interest in."

I couldn't speak. I didn't know what I should say.

He sighed. "I'll be going now. I just wanted to try and explain everything. I wouldn't dare to beg you for your forgiveness, and you have all the right to stay upset with me."

Talon stood to his feet. As he left the room, he stopped, casting one more glance back toward me.

"If there is anything I can do for you to make your stay better, please let me know." He hesitated for a moment, and I waited patiently for him to complete.

"Regardless of what you think, Ethan cares about you."

Talon was trying to convince me as well as himself, "Rosalie, please, don't give up on him."

Then he left the room. The door clicked behind him.

I sat in the dark. Talon's words replayed in my head over and over again.

"Don't give up on him..." I repeated to myself.

Ethan had suffered from his childhood due to his mother, so he didn't trust most women. I didn't agree with him, but I could understand him a bit better now.

Had I not known about his plan for me, I would even think that, maybe, I meant something a little more to him.

I didn't expect him to love me back, but I was hopeful that at least some of his tenderness was genuine feelings for me.

How foolish.

Everything he did was for one and only one purpose — he needed an heir, and he would do whatever that might take to make a strong and healthy child, including making me somewhat happy.

Just like he would do whatever that was needed for strengthening the alliance.

He was a man who clearly knew what he wanted and how to get it.

My heart hardened.

Ethan might have been blinded by his painful past, but it didn't mean I had to pay the price for his burden.

Everyone had bad things happen to them; what made the difference was how we chose to handle them.

Living by this philosophy was what got me through the longest of days growing up, back when all I received was abuse.

My hands moved to touch my belly.

What about my child? Would this little life be raised without a mother? Would they only have a father who was nothing but distant and cold? Would they have a stepmother that would never love them, or worse, hate them because they stood in her way?

No. I would never do that to my child. I was not afraid to face death any more, but this little baby deserved way more than a life of coldness, politics and hatred.

It was more than clear what I had to do.

Yes-to get the ending I desired, I would have to work with my enemy.

Sighing, I leaned my head back and closed my eyes.

“Everything’s going to be okay,” I said to the small fetus growing in my stomach.

I would have to make sure of it on my own.

Chapter 50: What Am I Going To Do With You?

### **\*\*Ethan’s POV**

My mind had been full of a lot of things lately. With the war growing closer, and more of the outlying cities and villages being attacked, my warriors were stretched thin. James was persistent that we needed more troops, but my gut told me adding more men wasn’t the solution for the problem. The enemy knew us too well.

Romero’s pack owned the islands between the East continent, which James ruled, and the West continent, where our enemy was located. It was crucial that we had his support, both for additional troops and for the permission to use his islands as a base of operations.

However, I was going to lose my godd\*mn mind if I had to hear another word from Romero or his daughter.

I couldn’t believe that, with everything going on, I was basically being blackmailed into marrying a woman I couldn’t stand.

I knew that cunning old fox wanted to plant his influence in our kingdom, but something seemed off. I couldn’t trust him fully, and if I ever found out he had any intention to undermine the alliance, I would make sure I was the one to end his life.

And Rosalie. I couldn’t stop thinking about what Talon and I discussed.

I couldn’t let the same thing happen to me and my pack again.

But maybe she was different...

My wolf was on edge, and, slowly, the pressure was eating away at me.

I needed something, anything, to help take the edge off before tonight’s engagement dinner.

My feet carried me towards the suite I was supposed to be sharing with Rosalie. The echo of my footsteps reminded me that I was walking faster than I usually did. There were many eyes in this palace watching my every single move, so I slowed down my pace.

I sneered at myself. What was I anxious about, anyway?

Quietly, I opened the door and allowed myself to slide into our suite.

I heard her singing a soft melody, her voice flowing freely. My eyes searched for her throughout the living area before I realized that the sound was coming through her bedroom door.

Standing there, I closed my eyes listening to the sweet melody I didn’t recognize. The language was not one I was familiar with, but it soothed my troubled mind.

Her singing just touched me in places that had been closed down for so long. It was as if a warm blanket fell over me and smoothed away all the negativity that had been there before.

“Ethan?”

Her voice snapped me back to reality, and I saw her at the bedroom door, staring at me. I had been so

enraptured by her singing I had not even noticed she had stopped.

“Um, I just want to check on you.” | cleared my throat.

“Oh-” Her eyes fell downwards. I noticed that there was yarn and needles in her hand, and it took me a moment to realize what she was doing.

She responded mildly, “I appreciate you coming by.” Her voice was gentle and soothing, just like her.

Nothing she said gave offense... but I was not impressed by her flat greeting.

She used to react to my arrival a bit differently- sacred, excited... or even happy? Some sort of emotion, I wasn't sure what.

But now she was so calm. Too calm.

I frowned.

She hadn't seen me for some time now. I expected more from her- although, even I couldn't articulate what exactly that was.

Finally, she smiled.

“Good to see you. It's been a few days.”

My mood was better. Way better.

What she didn't know was, while she might not have seen me for a few days, I had seen her every night.

I would get comfortable on the sofa late at night, for a few hours. Then I'd made sure I was up and gone before she awoke.

“Knitting?” I asked her, although it was quite obvious.

The only other woman I remembered seeing knit before was my grandmother when I was a boy, but she had passed not long after my father was killed.

“Uh, yes. I know that I will be gone after the baby is born, but I want to make something for the baby.. so that they can have a piece of me.

'I will be gone...'

It just didn't sound right to me.

Rosalie looked towards me quietly, seemingly waiting for my reply. I could see the pain and sorrow in her eyes she had the most innocent and beautiful eyes I'd ever seen, and that made my throat tighten.

Why was she like that?

She told me it was about Madalynn.

Was that really it? For some reason, I felt her pain was more than just jealousy, although, a very small part of me was a little happy that she was jealous.

What the fuck was wrong with me?!

I was going to be getting married to Madalynn. I had already made my decision and my choice, and that was all there was to it.

There was a knock on the door, and Georgia came in before either of us could even call her in.

“Ca-.-!-

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Rosalie was curious. “Hi Georgia. Bring what to me?”

“This!” Georgia extended a bag. “I bought it at the market the other day. Check it out.”

Rosalie took the bag and reached inside. “Oh, my goodness!” she exclaimed, pulling out a large wooden train.

Georgia was a little nervous. “Well, I figured whether it's a boy or a girl, the baby can play with it, but if

you don't think..."

Rosalie interrupted her with a huge grin on her face. "Georgia, this is just perfect! I LOVE it!"

My sister was never the most affectionate girl, but for those she cared about, she would support them to the end of her days.

Rosalie set the train down and hugged Georgia tightly. "You're so thoughtful! Thank you so much."

Georgia chuckled, "You're very welcome." The two of them went on to try out the toy.

So I was totally ignored.

D\*mn it, Georgia!

I turned around, cleared my throat, and gave Georgia a get-out-of-my-hair look.

She rolled her eyes at me, but put down the train on the desk immediately.

"Rosalie, I'm glad you like it. Well, I still need to go to my training today. I gotta go."

Before she left the room, she gave me a look I couldn't quite read. I frowned, was she judging me for something?

I shook my head to turn my attention back to Rosalie.

She was still playing with the train a little, and her smile brightened the room.

For a moment, I couldn't look away, nor did I know what to say.

A thought came to mind- if things turned out the way I wanted... perhaps the future could change for Rosalie.

"I'm sorry," Rosalie seemed to finally remember that I was still there. "Where were we?"

"It's all right. If you don't need anything, I have to get prepared," I mumbled.

Rosalie gave me a soft smile and nodded. "The engagement dinner. Yes, I know. Please enjoy yourself this evening. You don't need to worry, if I need anything, I'll call Mary."

I frowned. It felt like she didn't need me here. She was mine, and she should need me. It was my job to take care of her and my child, not someone else's, I was her Alpha.

"Stay in your room tonight." I said, nodding. Those were the only words I could force out of me.

She lowered her gaze. Her thick and long eyelashes blocked me from looking into her eyes, as if she was avoiding me.

"I will," she assured me, and I knew she would.

Except for that one time, she'd never disobeyed me, and we had already sorted that out.

Her promise put me a bit more at ease, knowing that she would be safe. I turned quickly, exiting the room, and felt a release of tension flow off of me that I hadn't known I had been holding.

Her voice chased me out: "Oh, and congratulations."

## Chapter 50: What Am I Going To Do With You?

I paused. I found myself holding my breath again.

But she didn't say anything more.

I clenched my fists. I needed to release this illogical emotion, or else I might just punch the next person who walked by in the face.

Yes- ultimately, I was upset with myself.

I had always known what I wanted and how to get it. Nothing would stand in my way. But why couldn't I make up my f\*cking mind about what I wanted to do with her?

I forced myself to stop thinking about it and closed the door behind me.

—

—Rosalie's POV

After Ethan left, I let out a long exhale. I knew I was quite dismissive towards Ethan. Hopefully, he didn't notice anything abnormal.

I sighed, and started pacing back and forth in my living room waiting to hear back from Madalynn. My gaze landed on the toy train again. Georgia was very sweet to bring the baby a gift, but I knew the toy probably would never be played by my child.

Sorry, Georgia.

I had sent my words, but I wasn't entirely sure what her plan was. I had to have faith, though this would benefit her, so I had to believe that she wouldn't bail on me.

I would be free of this life. Free to raise my child as I saw fit.

"Miss Madalynn, you can't go in without the Alpha's permission," I heard the guard say outside.

I jumped from my seat and rushed over to open the door.

I then heard Madalynn's voice. "I mean no harm. I just want to make up with her."

"Please go back, or..."

I opened the door and came face to face with Madalynn.

"Miss Rosalie, please stay in the room..."

The guards stepped in between me and Madalynn. I looked towards her and realized she was accompanied by Romero's Beta.

"Relax," she said to the guards, nodding and seeming very reasonable. "If it makes you guys more comfortable, can just stay here outside of the door to talk to her." ?

Then she looked at me and said in a sincere tone, "Rosalie, I'm sorry for what happened between us. It was totally a misunderstanding. Look, here's just a little something. I hope you accept my apology."

She then presented me a gorgeous blue dress and luxury accessories to go with it, waiting for my response.

The guards almost dropped their jaws- I would have, too, had she not paid me the previous, secret visit.

"I accept your apology." I said flatly. "You didn't have to bring such valuable gifts, though..."

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Madalynn put on a smile. "Please, I insist!"

"Well..thank you, then. Oh, please come in- it wouldn't be polite to have a guest standing outside."

I then turned to the guards. "It's going to be alright. Madalynn is your future Luna. She won't harm me."

The guards looked at each other. Then, finally, they caved. "We'll be right outside of the door if you need anything," the more senior one grumbled.

I managed to put on a smile and assured them, "Thank you, but I think I'll be fine."

Once my two visitors entered my suite, I closed the door. I realized that my back was soaked in nervous sweat.

Madalynn seemed satisfied with how I had handled things, though, and commented, "Not bad."

\* know you don't have a lot of time, Madalynn." I said, not beating around the bush. "What do I need to do?"