

Payment To the Alpha by Ms.M Chapter 41

Third-person POV

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The black car took a left turn and drove up on a secluded road before reaching the parking lot of a nearby B&B. The pink sign with red neon letters showed itself clearly once the person was near it, but from the main road, it was nearly invisible.

Natasha and Avery stepped out and took out Avery's bags. The driver stayed seated and kept the car running.

They walked up to the check-in window where an older woman greeted them.

"Hello girls, what may I do for you?" She asked in a raspy but kind manner.

"Um, I have a reservation under 'Carla'?" Avery told the lady who opened a book and checked. She gave them a smile and went to the board where the keys hang and brought down number 6.

"Here you go, sweetheart. Enjoy your stay and if there is anything you need, don't hesitate to call the number on the door." She said and pointed to the main entrance door.

The B&B was an old farmhouse that had been remodeled a long time ago. It was timber and painted yellow with pink lining on the door frames and windows. It was two-leveled and held a warm, homey feeling.

"Thank you so much Ms."

"Please, call me Rosie." She said with a bright smile.

"Thank you so much, Rosie." Avery said and grabbed her hand.

Avery and Natasha proceeded up the teal-colored ladder, which led to the second floor. They walked down three doors before reaching number 6.

"Are you going to be okay from here?" Natasha asked, sounding unsure about her decision to leave.

"I'm sure. Thank you for your help." Avery responded, giving Natasha a big hug.

"If there is anything you need, please."

"I'll call you. I promise." Avery reassured. She smiled at the woman who she knew was her sister and wished there was another way to go about this. But she also knew that there wasn't.

"Avery, when this all goes down, you're going to be in the middle, and I want you to be prepared. Remember, anything and everything the wizard says is coming from a place of manipulation and ill meanings. You're going to be stuck in the middle of a war field Avery and if it goes south... I want you to leave." Natasha said, and Avery looked at her in shock.

"I can't do that. I can't abandon everyone, if it goes south, then I will do what I can, but I will not run." Avery said. Her voice was laced with distress but also a strong will. She wouldn't run. She wouldn't be like her parents and save herself before her pack, her family, her friends.

Natasha looked at her baby sister, hoping she could change her mind some way. She was proud of the woman Avery was shaking up to become. But she was also dreading the day that was approaching them. She needed to keep her safe, but how can she do that when she knows that Avery doesn't want to be saved?

"I need to go, but you have my number. Take care, okay?" Natasha said as she grabbed Avery's hands in her own, giving them a light squeeze.

"I promise." Avery said with a smile before unlocking her door and stepping in, she gave Natasha a last smile before closing the door.

Natasha stared at the closed door for a few minutes before puffing out a breath of air and walking back down to the car.

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Avery was sitting on the edge of the bed, holding a picture of her and James in her hands. She stroked the picture, and a tear fell down and hit the frame, landing on his cheek.

"I will be home soon." She said as she took the frame and held it to her heart. She laid down on the bed, staring at the roof,

~FLASHBACK~

Avery's POV

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I was sitting on my mattress in the dungeon, holding my knees to my chest and staring at the wall.

James had just left to deal with some other pack that was calling.

We had sex. I lost my virginity to a man that I love and whom I know loves me.

Did it go the way I thought it would? No. I didn't exactly picture myself having sex for the first time in a dungeon. But still, it was perfect. I went over the whole event in my head. Over and over and over again. Smiling more and more every time.

I was broken from my reminiscing when I heard footsteps coming from the end of the hall.

The footsteps echoed amongst the cells until they became louder and clearer.

"Natasha?" She was standing on the other side of the bars, hiding a key. She popped the key in and unlocked my cell.

She stepped in and exhaled before walking over to me.

"Is it okay if I sit?" She asked and pointed to the mattress. I nodded my head, not knowing how else to react.

I knew so much now, and so does she, but I'm not allowed to talk about it. It hurts for some reason, knowing I have a family member who cares about me, but I'm not allowed to embrace it.

Natasha sat down beside me and put one leg over the other. She looked around the cell before her eyes fell on me.

"I'm sorry, Avery. About everything." She said, casting her eyes down on her feet. She shook her head, and she looked so guilty. But why? None of this is her fault.

"You have nothing to be sorry for." I said with a stern voice, the blame should be placed where it's due, and that's not on Natasha.

"I have a proposition. A way to help you, but there is a big sacrifice that needs to be made."

She said, and I felt my whole body shiver.

"What?" I asked, not sure I wanted to know.

"I have noticed that the single most important thing for you is to protect the people you love, even if it means sacrificing yourself to do so." I nodded my head at her statement. It was true; I would die to protect the ones I love. I think most would.

"So would I. Which Is Why I'm telling you this." She said and looked back at me.

"I can semi-permanently block out the wizard from controlling your mind, but there is a cost. You must be in complete control of your emotions, and sometimes the only way to be that is to not act on them. If you want this, if you want to protect the ones you love, you must leave them."

My eyes grew big and wide, and my heart started speeding. Leave them? How can I leave them when I just found them?

"I know it's hard, Avery, but it's the only way. All emotions can interfere; the blocking takes a while to build. While it is building, you need to be alone and unattached. Being alone will bring up feelings as well, but loneliness, sorrow, and sadness aren't nearly as strong as love."

I felt my breath hitch and the air getting stuck in my lungs. I just gave myself to James. How can I possibly leave?

"When will I have to go?" I asked, feeling my eyes blur.

"Whenever you're ready, but the sooner, the better. We don't know when the wizard will come for you, so it is better to be in the clear."

I thought about it for a while. I had to leave them, but it was to protect them.

I remembered the moon goddess' words she spoke in my dream. I would have to make a difficult decision. 'Follow your heart.' My decision had been made.

"Give me a day, and then we'll leave." I said, sounding quite determined.

"But wait, how will we leave without them noticing?" Natasha smiled at me and took my hand.

"Leave that to me. I will stage a rogue attack, and so most of the pack will be busy. We will time it to when the younger pups are in school and the adults at work."

"A ROGUE ATTACK?!" I yelled. The plan was to protect them, not kill them!?"

"Scream a little louder, would ya?" Natasha said, looking at me as if I was crazy.

"Fake rogues Avery, I'm a witch, remember?" I scoffed and released a breath I didn't know I was holding.

"Maybe start with that next time." I said, scowling at her.

~END OF FLASHBACK~

James' POV

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I was sitting on the floor. Staring at the letter, I still hadn't started reading it.

This entire situation was driving me crazy and breaking my heart at the same time.

'Read it. I'm here with you. You're not alone.'

Blade assured me. I dragged my hand over my face and then started reading the letter.

'Dear James, my wonderful Alpha.

I am truly sorry for this, but my most important responsibility is to keep you and the pack safe, even from me. Writing this letter is the single hardest thing I've ever had to do.

You taught me so much in the short time I have known you. But the one thing I will always be grateful for is the fact that you gave me a family. People to love and the feeling of being loved. The feeling of being a part of something. The feeling of belonging.

You gave me that, James, and for that, I will be eternally grateful. Another thing you gave me was the chance to fall in love, with myself and with you. I realized it is a feeling unlike anything I have ever experienced. I know that this is all very hard for you and the others. But I needed to leave, to keep you safe. So please, please be safe.

This isn't a goodbye. It's only for now. It's a moment, and one day this moment will end too. And I will be home.

Love, Avery. Your mate. '

The letter got sprinkled with stains from the tears that were falling.

'Your mate.' She knew. She knew that she's my mate.

I wiped the tears away and folded the letter, putting it back in its envelope. I sent out a mind link to the ranked members.

'I want her found.'

'But Alpha-' Jackson started.

'FIND HER!' I roared, and the line went dead.

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Sofia's POV

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"HELLO!" I screamed, banging and pulling at the bars. The silver burning into my skin. My ankles and my wrists were restrained with silver cuffs, and cell bars were of silver as well.

I knew that there was at least one guard standing at the end of the corridor. But there was no reaction to my screams. My pleas.

How the hell did I even end up here?

I went to sit on the concrete floor, bringing my legs up to my chest. I stared blankly down at my feet. I turn eighteen in three weeks; that's when I gain my wolf. I had planned my celebration and what I was going to wear. I imagined what it would be like when I met my mate. A werewolf can't find their mate until they have their wolf. But I remember in the office when I got dragged off. She was trying to surface. Sometimes we can feel them slightly even though were not of age.

It was a powerful feeling.

However, if I get charged with espionage and treason, I'm as good as dead. A death I don't deserve.

I was torn from my thoughts when the door to the dungeon opened, and footsteps echoed through the empty hall and cells.

"Open the cell." I looked up only to see the witch, Natasha standing there.

Emilio, the guard, unlocked my cell, and Natasha stepped in.

I moved over to the wall, pressing myself against it.

What does this bitch want? I have never known her to have a nice side.

She scanned the room, and then me. Her eyes were showing her amusement, and so was the smug grin on her face.

Oh, how I want to beat that smile away.

"I must confess. There is something quite joyful in seeing you like this." Natasha said as she tilted her head to the side.

"What do you want?" I said, emphasizing every word.

"I want to talk." She said as she leaned against the wall.

"Well, I don't. You can leave now." I turned my head and broke eye contact. I was on the verge of tears and would rather die than have anyone see me cry.

Natasha came and kneeled in front of me, grabbing my chin and turning me to face her.

I looked into her eyes, and she no longer looked amused. She looked caring. Natasha wasn't looking at me like someone would a werewolf who was accused of treason.

I pushed back the tears and gulped down the lump in my throat.

"I didn't do it." I said. My voice was weak and trembling. Natasha looked deep into my eyes and pushed back the hairs that were falling onto my face.

"I know." She said, and my eyes opened widely. Did she believe me? She knows I'm innocent.

"You do?" I asked in shock, and the first tear fell. I quickly wiped it off and grabbed her hand. She believed me. A sense of joy filled my body, giving me the energy I haven't felt since I was brought down here. I thought that everybody saw me as a traitor, as someone who would work against them only because she wanted to be with the Alpha.

"I do. That's why I want to talk." I nodded my head fast, and Natasha sat down. She tried taking her hand away, but I wouldn't let her. I don't know why, but I need her to hold my hand. I needed the comfort more than I realized.

She smiled and left her hand in mine. Taking a seat where she was kneeling.

"What's going on?" I asked her.

"You do have a traitor within the pack. That much is clear and true. However, this person has framed you so as to not shine light upon themselves. The Alpha doesn't know who it is, and neither does anyone else, but they are all fairly certain that it isn't you."

"Fairly? So they still believe I'm guilty?" I said, sounding exasperated. I removed my hands and placed them on my lap.

"Yes and no. They don't believe it's you but seeing as nobody else has been known to have contact with the wizard, it looks very much like you're guilty. What can you tell me about your contact with him?" I looked at Natasha dumbfounded.

"What wizard?" I asked her.

"You were talking to him on the phone the day you were captured," Natasha stated. She looked at me as if she was searching for something.

"You truly don't know him, do you?" She asked, and I shook my head. I tried to regain my composure.

"No, I don't know any wizard. The man I was talking to on the phone, his name was Cross or crisis or something,"

"Crow." Natasha said.

"Yes! His name was Crow. And I didn't call him. I have never heard of him before. He called me, saying he wanted to schedule a meeting for some event. He said that he needed the name of my Alpha, and I told him his name. Then he proceeded to talk about Avery, saying they knew each other and that he needed my help getting in contact with her. He referred to her as the Luna. I told him that I didn't have a way for him to contact her and that if he needs to talk to them, he should come...here."

I realized my mistake. I talked to him about the Alpha and Avery. I invited him to our pack, I told him the Alphas name.

Natasha sighed and looked at me.

"I fucked up," I admitted.

"You did, but the thing is, Sofia, that is not all you said." I looked at Natasha, waiting for her to continue.

"You also told him who Avery is, where she came from and how the pack feels about her. You told him everything you knew, and that is why the Gamma believed you to be guilty. Because you shared information regarding the future Luna that isn't yours to share." I felt another tear roll down.

"I'm so sorry. I know now that I shouldn't have, but I- I don't know why I did." I said, shaking my head. How could I have been so stupid? Of course, it sounds like I'm a traitor, even I hear it now.

"You didn't know who he is, but you did know not to speak of the pack to an outsider."

"Yes, but he told me that he knew Avery from before!" I tried defending myself.

"Even if he did, why wouldn't he know where she came from? If they knew each other, shouldn't he already have that information?" Natasha made some very valid points. I can't believe how badly I fucked up.

"Nonetheless, right now, the most important thing is to find the actual traitor. Do you have any idea who it could be?" I thought long and hard but came up blank. I couldn't think of anyone that would betray the pack, let alone the Alpha.

I shook my head after coming up empty. In some way, it makes me glad to not be able to think of anyone who would do such a thing.

"I'm sorry, but no."

"That's okay. Sooner or later, they will show themselves. I just hope for sooner rather than later. But, for now, you need to stay down here, I'm afraid. Whoever it was that framed you need to believe that they succeeded." Staying down here didn't sound like much of an option, but I did understand the reasons. I nodded my head, and Natasha stood up, helping me up as well. She gave me a warm hug and then called for the guard to let her out.

I watched as she left and then went back to take a seat on my usual spot by the wall. Having someone believe in my innocence and knowing that the Alpha and the others somewhat see it too is enough to bear this out.

James' POV

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I slammed open the door to my office. All the ranked members were waiting for me.

"Any news?" It had only been a day, but I was hoping it was enough.

"Sorry, Alpha, the warriors haven't found a trace." Jackson said, not meeting my gaze. I felt the uneasiness stir up in the pit of my stomach.

"Well, what have they found?" I wanted something, anything.

Jackson and Alex shared a look, and Amber was looking at me with pity.

"ANSWER ME!" I roared, making everyone wince.

"Alpha, they haven't found anything." Alvin said this time. My patience was non-existent, and my mood was foul and not at all easygoing at the moment. I turned around and looked out through the window.

"Leave." I said.

"Alpha, there is one other thing," Jackson spoke. I walked over to the bar, ready to pour myself a drink, but opted against it and pulled out a bottle of water. Drinking when I'm in this state leads to a downward spiral that I don't have time for.

I went back to sit on my chair at my desk and looked at Jackson.

"What?" I asked.

"Natasha is here. I got a mind link from Emilio. She visited Sofia." A frown quickly spread on my face, and my nostrils started flaring.

"Bring her to me." I growled. My eyes turning black. Jackson's eyes dimmed over, and I knew he was mind-linking one of the warriors.

"No need, I'm right here." The door to my office opened up, and Natasha took the liberty to step in.

"What is this thing about you just barging in here without knocking first? You do know the doors are there for a reason, right?" Alex snapped at her. Before Natasha had a chance to give a snarky comeback, I used my speed and was in front of her within a millisecond. Pushing her up against the wall with one hand around her throat.

"WHERE IS SHE?!" I roared loudly. Alex and Alvin were behind me, pulling at me to let her go. However, I had no intention of doing so.

"James, let her go!"

"LET HER GO, MAN!" They were shouting, but I could barely hear them. My focus was on not killing Natasha too soon.

"THAT IS ENOUGH!" A loud voice roared from the door.

"You let her go this instant, Mr!" It was Alice. She was scowling with her arms crossed over her chest. She took quick steps towards me, and my eyes went from hers to Natasha's.

I growled and stared into Natasha's eyes, slowly loosening my grip around her throat before removing it.

Natasha wasn't mad. She didn't look bothered at all. This bitch was getting on my last nerve.

"Where. The fuck. Is she." I said as Natasha massaged her throat with her hand and looked bored.

"She's in town. That's all I can tell you. For now, Alpha, there are more important matters at hand."

"MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY MATE?!" I was prepared to lunge at her, but Alice got in my way. She stepped in front of Natasha and gripped my shoulders.

"Breath, sweetheart," She said. My heart was racing, and my breathing was ragged. One more misstep, and somebody will die.

"James, breath." Alice said again more sternly. I tore my eyes from Natasha and looked at Alice, mimicking her breathing like I did when I was younger. I was starting to calm down.

After a few more breaths, I felt a little more at ease. However, the thought of killing Natasha was still appealing. She has been dishonest and deceiving. Why did I ever agree to have her here as much as I have?

I stepped back, and Alice's hands dropped to her sides. I went over to my desk once again, but the frustration inside me wouldn't rest. I lifted my hand and slammed it down on my desk with all my power, breaking the thick oak table in half. That somewhat calmed me, but not enough.

'We'll go for a run later. But, for now, don't break anymore shit.'

Shut your fucking trap.

Blade growled at me.

'I want to kill Natasha as badly as you do but she is the only one who knows where Avery is. And she wants to help, let her. At least see what she has to say.'

I turned around and faced everyone. I then locked eyes with Natasha and when she saw that she had my attention, she spoke.

"Sofia is innocent. You have another traitor within your pack."

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James' POV

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"We already had our suspicions about that." I told Natasha when we were all seated.

"Yes, but I'm telling you, I'm absolutely certain that she is innocent. It's not a suspicion."

Everyone looked at Natasha and then at me. Waiting for a reply.

Natasha had told Sofia that she needs to stay in the dungeons so that the real traitor will believe they've succeeded.

"Do you know who it is?" I asked Natasha. She shook her head and straightened her back.

"No, I'm afraid I don't, but I do have a way for us to figure it out." She said with a determined voice. But I somehow got a feeling that whatever her plan was, I wasn't going to like it.

"Continue." Jackson said impatiently. Natasha took a moment before she spoke. She didn't look too certain of her own plan.

"The war. When it begins, we will know. Crow will take any and all opportunities to show his power. Having a spy within a pack like this certainly fits the criteria." So she wants us to wait until the war breaks out? Is she fucking insane?!

"And risk what in the meantime?! What if this fucking traitor tries something else? And we have no idea who it is!" Lisa screamed. Clearly not too happy about the idea.

"It's the only way, I'm afraid." They all turned to me, except for Amber, who held her gaze at Natasha. I pondered on the idea of waiting. However much I despised the thought of having a traitor within my pack, I also knew that this was our best shot. I needed to think about my pack and not my pride. He or she would not dare to pull another move now that Sofia is in the dungeons.

The only problem is them outing our pack's business to outsiders. Something that hit us hard in the end.

"Then that's what we will do." I said.

"James!" My sister yelled, looking at me like I was an idiot. Maybe I was.

"We can't just let a traitor roam the pack grounds! They know how we fight. They know our strategies, what we're good at and what we're not. Doing this could be suicidal once the war starts." Amber said, stating some valid facts. However,

"I'm the Alpha. I would never make a decision that would harm my pack!" I roared. It didn't have much effect on my sister, who was still frowning at me.

"And I'm your big sister, telling you not to be an idiot about this!" Amber and I were now standing, facing each other. The others sat there and enjoyed the scene that was unfolding.

This reminded me of an incident when we were kids.

~FLASHBACK~

"James, wait! Don't go!" Jackson yelled behind me as I ran towards the forest. I had overheard the warriors running to fight rogues that had trespassed onto our territory.

As the future Alpha of this pack, I should help them. So I took off towards the right border where the rogues were said to be. I may have only been fifteen and not had a wolf, but I'm an Alpha by the blood which means I'm stronger than most kids my age.

When I got closer to where the fight was, I could hear the snarling and growling of the werewolves. There they were, bones were cracking, and blood was spurting everywhere.

I'm ready. I told myself and joined the fight. When the warriors saw me, they started circling me so that the rogues couldn't attack.

"Hey, move! I want to fight!" I was about to crawl out from the circle and out on the field when an even larger wolf jumped in front of me. The wolf was facing me and baring its teeth, snarling at me so I would back up, which I did.

It was my sister.

"Oh shit." I knew I was screwed.

'Stay back, James!!' She roared at me.

"I'm the future Alpha, and I want to fight!" I yelled I was going to fight. She wasn't going to stop me. I should help my pack.

'I'M YOUR OLDER SISTER, AND I'M TELLING YOU TO STAND BACK!' She roared in her alpha tone, making me jump back as far as possible. I crawled back and hid behind a tree for the rest of the fight.

When my sister wanted to, she could be one scary-ass werewolf.

I heard as the fight died down and they were shifting back, getting dressed. Footsteps came from behind the tree, and I stood to my feet.

"Are you insane!? You could've gotten yourself killed!" Amber scolded me.

"I just wanted to help. I felt like I should protect the pack too." I said.

"James, the best way for you to help this pack is to stay alive until the day you're ready to take over. It will do no good to the pack if their future Alpha is killed in a battle before he even has his wolf. With that said, if you ever pull a stunt like that again, I'll kill you. You not only endangered yourself but the warriors as well when they had to shift their focus to protect you. You're my baby brother James, don't ever do that again. I was scared shitless." Amber pulled me into a hug and held on tightly.

"I won't. I'm sorry, sis." I said as I hugged her back.

~END OF FLASHBACK~

I looked at Amber. The memories of that day so many years ago played in my head.

I opened my arms and wrapped them around her, engulfing her in a big hug.

"I know, sis, but trust me, I know what I'm doing." Amber sighed and hugged me back. I knew she was pouting without seeing her face.

As we parted, Amber and I took our seats.

"So now that we've gotten this figured out, onto more pressing matters. Where is my mate?" I asked, looking at Natasha.

"I told you, James, she's nearby. She will come back when the time is right. Your warriors won't find her because I covered her scent. Alpha, you're going to have to trust me, there is a plan for all of this, but Avery needs to stay away for it to work. At least for now."

What plan could possibly demand that Avery stay away from me?

"When will she be home?" Lisa asked.

"I can't say. Only time will tell. But she's safe, and trust me. It was just as hard for her as it is for you. If not harder." She said in a soft tone.

'Natasha is telling the truth. And Avery will be back. We just have to wait.'

You know why, don't you Blade?

'I do.'

"Fine. What do we do until then?" Natasha stiffened, and her eyes went dark.

"You prepare for war. We don't know when Crow is going to hit, so it's better to be prepared."

Natasha said, and I felt a chill that made me shiver slightly. Something told me that he's hitting pretty soon.

"I'm going to go back home for a while. Next time I come, Carlos and Lydia will be with me, and Cameron, the Beta, will be in charge of our pack. In case you need me sooner, just call." Natasha said as she stood up. We shook hands and bid our goodbyes, and then she left.

"It's going to be pretty nice having a break from that woman." Alex said.

"Oh, come on, she's been helpful and a lot nicer than I have ever seen her." Lisa said.

"Yeah, but she's erratic and sleek." Jackson said, and Alex nodded at the statement.

"So be it. Neither of you can possibly say that we could've done this without her." Trish said in a cocky tone.

"No." I said.

"We couldn't have done this without her, at least not as fast. Yes, she's a snake and a real bitch at times, but she also has good intentions when it comes to this family. And she would never put Avery in harm's way." I continued. Natasha has helped us a lot. Sure this is all happening because of her father, and she probably feels some kind of guilt over the fact, but she could've kept it a secret. She didn't have to share anything with us, let alone help us, but she did.

"Oh right, what did your letters from Avery say?" Trish asked in a giddy voice.

I thought I saw Alex tense at her question, but he quickly gained composure.

Making me wonder what his letter said. I hadn't thought about the fact that my siblings got a letter as well, I did want to know what she had written.

"I have mine here, I'll read it." Amber said as she picked out the letter from her back pocket.

She cleared her throat and took a few deep breaths, probably to keep herself from tearing up.

I saw her puffy, red eyes earlier and assumed she had cried. I was going to talk to her about it after the meeting, but I guess now I know why.

"Dear Amber,

I don't know where to begin. You're my sister. There is no other way to describe it. You are the epitome of what I believe a sister to be like, to act, and love like.

I am truly sorry if my leaving causes you any pain. Trust me; I'm not doing much better myself. But I had to leave. I couldn't stay. I would have put everyone in danger, and if something were to happen to any of you on my hands, I wouldn't be able to live with myself. So believe me when I say that this is for the best.

You're one of the most fun, outgoing people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

You have a heart of gold, and you use it well.

You have the patience of a priest and the mouth of a sinner.

You confided in me with your biggest secret. The amount of trust I knew from that moment that you had for me, was overwhelming, to say the least. Whatever we shared and will share in the future, I will carry with me to the grave.

As I will always carry you with me wherever I go. Now and for always.

Love, a very proud sister.

Until we meet again.”

The room was silent. Not a single one dared to speak. Instead, you could hear their breaths, heartbeats, sniffles, and the wiping of tears. Had it been any quieter, you could've heard the tears drip down.

However much she tried to cover her sadness, Amber broke down when she started reading the letter for the second time. She barely made it through the half before the first tear rolled down.

Jackson had his arm around Trish while Alvin had his around his mate. Both guys had bloodshot red eyes and sniffled as well.

I was digging my nails into my palms, not to keep from crying, but rather to keep my anger from surfacing. I had noticed my temperament is more unstable than ever before—something I need to get under control before I do something stupid.

I am the Alpha of this pack. I have to be the strong one, the front, the pillar, and the fighter.

Not the Alpha that breaks into a fight with the werewolf who pushes his buttons. Not the Alpha that hits things, breaking them and unable to control his fucking rage.

A low growl came out as I tried my best to contain the infuriating storm brewing inside me.

They heard it, but they didn't react. Instead, amber simply took my hand and looked me in the eyes.

I felt even that comfort soon ceasing to bring me down.

~1 WEEK LATER ~

Avery's POV

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I had been to the grocery store, to the post office, and was now heading to the small cafe down the road of where I was staying. I had walked past it for the past three days now when I took my evening strolls. The only thing that kept me from losing my mind.

Nature always had this way of calming me down. Of bringing me comfort and slowing my thoughts. Something I was in much need of at this point.

It had been a week since I left James and the others. Since I left my home. I was doing fairly okay, everybody at the B&B was welcoming and nice.

For some reason, even though the thought of war scared me to my core, I wanted it to come. Nothing can end if it hasn't yet started. I wanted this war to be over so that our lives could resume as they had. Only this time, it would be honest, real, and genuine. I wouldn't have a wizard in my head controlling me.

I made a right turn and drove up to the small, secluded cafe on the side of the road. Natasha had left me a small red fiat for me to drive. I've had a license since I was sixteen but never had my own car. I never drove much in general. However, I picked it up quite quickly.

The cafe was colored pink on the outside with a large neon sign on a pole that read 'Tasha's Take Away'. They also served food, breakfast, dinners, and sometimes held functions, according to the two lovely people at the B&B.

As I walked in, a bell on the door rang, indicating someone's presence, but I had been so jumpy lately that the doorbell made me turn around in shock.

The inside of the cafe has the same pink theme albeit a little darker than I would assume, seeing the sunshine brightly outside. The round tables were chocolate brown, while the adjoining seating areas were pink leather. The bar desk was pink as well but a lighter shade, and where the counter opens, there was a brown wooden lid. There were pictures of Audrey Hepburn and Elvis, along with countless other icons hanging on the walls. There was a blue and black acoustic guitar hanging beside a clock, the guitar had different autographs on it. I couldn't believe it when I walked in, the feeling of time traveling had never been this distinct to me. I absolutely adored it.

I walked up to the cashier. She had big puffy hair that reminded me of the movie 'Hairspray'.

She wore a big smile showing her teeth and I noticed a golden star on one of them.

"How can I help you, dear?" She asked me as she brought up a pad and a pen.

"May I have a vanilla latte please?" I asked her politely. The woman smiled sweetly at me before grabbing a menu and passing it to me.

"We ain't got none of those fancy beverages here sweetheart. Here is what we have, we're big on milkshakes and breakfast so you're gonna see a lot of that on the menu. However, if you want something easier going, we have regular coffee or hazelnut brew. We also have some different teas if that's what floats your boat." The woman said in a southern accent I hadn't noticed before.

I skimmed through the menu and decided to try something new.

"Alright, I'll try the chocolate ice swirl with a plate of pancakes please." I said, a little unsure of myself. The cashier whose name I read to be Wendy, took the menu from my hands.

"Great choice." She said with a wink before handing over the note through a hole in the wall. Behind which I'm assuming is a kitchen.

"You can just go sit down darling and I'll bring your food when it's ready." She said and pointed to the empty seats behind me.

I thanked her and walked over to one of the tables next to the window. I sat down on the pink leather sofa and took off my jacket, making myself comfortable.

I'm not sure why but I've always favored sitting next to a window and overlooking the crowd. I feel more in control that way like I'm seeing everything.

As I was admiring the pictures and accessories hanging on the wall, the doorbell rang once again. I looked toward the door and saw a largely built man walk in. His arms were three times the size of James' and his stature was bold and intimidating.

He had tattoos along the base of his throat as well as his chest. His arms were covered as well and through the t-shirt, he was wearing I could tell that there was something tucked inside his jeans.

"Baby!" Wendy called as she jumped over the bar and into the arms of the man. He wrapped his arms around her and they looked so very loving. He reached down for the object in the hem of his pants and pulled out a box.

"Here you go baby, happy anniversary." The man said in the same loving voice. Wendy squealed and kissed his lips before returning to her station. The man stood there, looking around the empty venue before his eyes stopped on me. He took long and quick steps towards me until he hovered over my head.

"Excuse me Ms, is it okay if I have a seat?" He asked me and pointed to an empty seat on the other side of the table. I nodded my head and squirmed uncomfortably where I sat. Not because of him, but because this is the first time I've had to interact with anyone.

Natasha firmly told me before we left, that I am not to trust a single soul. 'Nobody is who they say they are', were her exact words.

"So," the man started.

"What's a young girl like you doing all the way out here, alone?" He asked me with a stare that gave me chills. He licked his lips and kept his sleazy-looking glare locked with mine.