

Healing the Rogue Alpha by Anna Kendra Chapter 16

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Flora's P.O.V

"There! You look absolutely gorgeous!"

Daphne stepped aside so I could look at myself in the mirror and I had to admit, even I couldn't recognize the woman staring back at me.

I was dressed in a mint green dress that reached my knees and Daphne had styled my blonde hair into loose curls that hung around my face. The material of the cloth was light and airy and everything was just perfect, but I just didn't feel the colour. Ezra told me that these clothes were given to me when I first arrived at Lindersay, before I decided to be a Lunar Maiden. But now, after two years of donning white...they seemed out of place.

"It's so weird seeing myself in color...it's feels like an eternity since I wore anything like this..." I looked up at Daphne, hoping she could relate.

"That's why I chose the lightest colour in your clothing pile." Daphne straightened out the pearl necklace I was wearing. "To be honest...I feel the same. Wearing the Goddesses robes has a certain sense of belonging and security to it. But you've found your mate, so..."

"A mate I can't even recognize." I sighed, knowing full well that Daphne was the biggest gossip collector, but she has yet to betray me. "I don't even understand what's wrong with me."

"Hey...take it easy." She wrapped an arm around my shoulder reassuringly. "Everything happens for a reason and once you understand what that reason was, everything else will become easier."

"Do you really believe all this was for a reason?" I asked her sincerely. "Me losing my memories, the rogue attack, and even Andre's attack on the rogues?"

"There's nothing we can do but believe." Daphne's smile was a little sad as she combed her hands through my hair one last time. "All you can do now is enjoy the night and get to know your mate better. Maybe once you've gotten to know him, the mating bond will snap into place."

"Maybe you're right." I left it at that, knowing full well that I couldn't share more with anyone for now.

Malachi wanted me to forget everything and move forward. Ezra seemed like she had no clue as to what had happened last night and Daphne too seemed blissfully unaware. Emma, my other friend, was also busy taking care of the new born in the nursery as we had three births in these past two months. The pack and the

entire castle were buzzing with life. Only I seemed to be the one person stuck in the past.

"Oh! I almost forgot to tell you!" Daphne exclaimed with her hand in front of her lips before giving me a sheepish look. "Actually...I have some good news and some bad news."

"Gossiping behind my back again, Daphne?" I gave her a mock glare, but we all knew I couldn't stay mad at her for long. "One of these days, you're going to get into a lot of trouble because of this."

"You know I can't keep secrets, Flora." She gave me her best doe-eyes while rubbing her tummy over her pristine white gown. "I get tummy aches."

"Okay, fine." I threw up my hands in exasperation. "Gimmi the good first."

"Shouldn't it be the other way around?" She gave me a frown. "So that after you hear the bad, the good will cheer you up?"

"Daphne, love, when someone tells you that there's both good and bad news, usually both news are related and neither of them are all that helpful." I explained. "Now give me the good first and then the bad."

"Okay, weird explanation, but here goes the good news." Daphne clapped her hands together. "Samuel was discharged from the infirmary today and he's been given permission to join his duties as early as next week!"

"Oh my Goodness!" I had completely forgotten about Samuel! The soldier who had nearly been ripped apart while trying to protect me. "He's doing okay?"

"Yes!" Daphne's joy was evident in her eyes. "He wanted to thank you for healing him back from the brink of death, but he's supposed to be in bed-rest for the next couple days."

"I'll go to meet him personally...tomorrow." I added at the end when I saw her giving me a disapproving look. "I'm glad he's alright, though. He had lost so much blood that I was afraid my healing wouldn't even work. But...if this is the good news, what's the bad news?"

"Well..." Daphne looked hesitant. "It's...maybe it's not that important. You should just go and enjoy the night and maybe we can for-"

"Daphne." I warned in a strict voice, that I usually reserve for the younger teens. "What are you avoiding?"

"I really didn't want to ruin your mood or hurt you." She sighed in defeat. "But just know that this is all gossip and stupid speculations from jealous women who haven't found their mates yet."

"Tell me!"

"A lot of the pack women as well as the Lunar Maidens had been gossiping lately...about how you said you couldn't feel the mating bond..." Daphne hesitated once again before giving in. "They think you're either a defective wolf for not being able to feel such a sacred bond, or...cursed."

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Honestly, the speculations and rumors about me didn't hurt as much as listening to the word 'cursed'. It felt like the word was stuck inside my head and no matter what I did, I just couldn't shake it off.

I twiddled with the crystal heart pendant around my wrist that I had worn as a bracelet today, instead of it being around my neck because Daphne thought a pearl necklace would go better with my dress. She wasn't wrong but for some reason, I just couldn't let go of the pendant.

It was the only connection I had to my previous life aside from Clay, but he was a rogue now and I couldn't just venture into the forest as I pleased. I would have to be careful from now on, especially now that Malachi knew about my visits. So in the meantime, I used the pendant to get comfort from it.

A knock sounded at my door at exactly seven in the evening and I got up from the chair that I had placed in front of the large windows overlooking the forest and went to open the door to Andre.

"Good evening, my lady." Andre's smile was wide and contagious as he held out a bouquet of freshly plucked red roses towards me.

I accepted them with a smile took a whiff of the deliciously sweet fragrance. "Thank you, Lord Andre. I'll go place them in a vase."

"Please, just call me Andre." He laughed. "Lord is reserved only for my subjects."

"Then you too must only call me Flora." I returned the humorous banter. "Only the soldiers call me My Lady."

"We have a deal." He gave me a salute and I excused myself to quickly place the flowers in a vase and placed them on the vanity where its sweet fragrance could linger in my room.

"Let's go, shall we?" Andre gave me his elbow as I closed the door behind me. "Our date awaits us."

"Of course."

I had my doubts about Andre and this date I was going to, but I couldn't decide until I at least tried to get to know him.

I didn't want to be the weirdo who couldn't feel the mating bond. I didn't want to be the defective wolf; the odd one out...or cursed.

But then, why did the word cursed get stuck in my head on repeat. Why did I feel like my loss of memory might as well be a curse of some sort? Was I really cursed or was my mind trying to grasp onto any concept it could so I didn't feel so lost?

I shook my head to get rid of all my doubts and insecurities. Tonight wasn't the night to think about the negatives. Tonight I promise to spend my time getting to know Andre, the man who was my mate. And maybe once I've developed an emotional connection with him, I'll finally be able to feel the mating bond?

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Clay's P.O.V

The clothes I was given fit me perfectly, although they were not mine.

I returned back to the abandoned house I had been living in for the past years, but now everything was different. I needed a room to sleep in and raw food wasn't that appealing anymore. My pack was trying to make sense of how I was standing on two legs now, just as much as I was.

I was a rogue now, that much I understood. But what caused me to change back to my human form? Rogues couldn't do that. Once we become rogue, we embrace the feral life of the wolf and there's no turning back. Then how was this possible?

My memories were hazy, but I had knowledge. I understood and I learned, but not as fast. I was weaker; my brain didn't work as fast as it was supposed to.

With confusion swirling in my mind, making the fog inside even heavier, I was standing in one of the many rooms of this broken house and looking for a place to sleep in, when I heard the growls of my wolves from outside. A second later, a familiar yet unfamiliar scent came to me.

I went outside running and growled at wolves to stay down and watched them turn to me in confusion before they lowered their heads and moved aside to let the man with silver hair walk in. He was holding two larger bags this time and even though they looked heavy, he was carrying them with ease.

"I brought more supplies." He said as he saw me. "I didn't expect your pack to still be this obedient."

"Who are you?" My voice was still husky from unused, so I cleared my throat.

"Malachi, the Alpha of Lindersay." He introduced himself. "I'm not here to fight."

"Your people killed my wolves!" I growled at him, my nails lengthening to form claws.

"It wasn't my people." He corrected. "And if we're keeping records, then you must know, our people never attack first."

He was right. One of my wolves had lost control and attacked. But wasn't that how it was supposed to be? Rogues and wolves attacking each other? But as I looked at the man, I didn't feel any need to attack him. He was just another wolf...a sane one.

"I didn't come here to pick a fight, Clay." Malachi shook his head. "I'm here to help you settle in. Your needs will be different now that you are able to become human."

He pushed the bags forward and a few of my wolves let out a low groan, but I silenced them.

"You can come in." I gave him permission. "My wolves will not harm you again."

"Thank you." Malachi eyed a few of the wolves suspiciously, but entered nonetheless. "Do you have a room?"

"This way." I showed him. "I'm trying to clean up."

"Good. I think I came at the right time."

I didn't know how much time passed after that, but it was almost morning by the time we were able to set everything up. A mattress that was filled with air and a fire pit to cook food. And then there were food and water and clothes and a blanket.

"Why are you helping me?" I asked him at last when we walked side by side, as he headed back to the castle.

"I can give you a lot of reasons, but they will all sound like petty excuses." Malachi said, looking up at the full moon. "To be honest, I am being selfish and that is the main reason why I'm helping you."

"Selfish?" I frowned. "Wolves don't help rogues because they are selfish."

"No, but I am." He stopped to look me in the eyes, but it wasn't in a challenge. "You need to get your memories back in order to know more, but all I can tell you is that a lot of things are at stake. I cannot help you much other than making your life comfortable to live, for now. But as the days pass, your tests will get harder and harder."

I didn't understand what he said. Tests and hardships...something at stake? And what did all of this have to do with me? But oddly, all of what he said reminded me of Flora.

"How is she?" I asked him instead.

"She's better now." Malachi gave me a small smile. "She found her mate."

A growl tore through my lips as my nails lengthened to form claws. Anger pulsed through my veins, raw and raging.

"NO!" I roared at Malachi. Flora couldn't find her mate! No!

She was mine!

"Why are you upset? She isn't your mate."

Those words cut through my anger and made my eyes widen in disbelief.

Malachi was right...Flora wasn't my mate...I didn't feel the bond with her...then why...?

"That's what you need to find out, Clay." Malachi gave me a pat on my shoulder. "That's what at stake, for you...and for all of us."

With that he walked away from me, leaving me more confused than ever.

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Flora's P.O.V

"Thank you for calling me here." I smiled up at Andre as he poured me a glass of water. I didn't like alcohol so I had opted out when he had offered me some.

"I'm glad you accepted my invitation." Andre smiled and took the seat opposite to mine.

The cool night air was a welcome feeling against my flushed skin. I didn't know why I felt so nervous, but it probably had to do with the fact that Andre was a powerful wolf; his energy was a constant hum on my senses.

But to see how this wonderful and powerful man had made all these arrangements by himself...it made me feel glad that I had accepted the invitation.

We were at the balcony of one of the residential complexes inside the castle and this was one place I didn't often frequent, so I had no idea exactly what I had been missing. The balcony overlooked the front gates as well as a major part of the Shrine and seeing all the lights and hearing the hustle of my packmates all

around me, made me feel happy. However, the balcony was high enough that it still gave us privacy and saved us from curious eyes.

The railing was lined with potted plants and a couple rose bushes, hence telling me where my gift came from and then there was the table, a bit on the inner side to give us privacy. Andre told me that this entire area had been offered to Andre by Malachi and he was the only person who lived on this floor. Two guards stood on the farthest ends of the balcony, both to prevent anyone from coming up here and to warn Andre of any emergency. The man was dedicated to his job.

Andre had set up a table and a romantic candle light dinner for two, with steak and wine and sautéed vegetables in butter sauce as well as a chocolate mousse cake for dessert. He told me he had given special instructions to the kitchen to have these prepared the way he thought I would like them, and he was right. The steak melted in my mouth as soon as I had it and the vegetables were delicious.

We had enjoyed dinner in a comfortable silence with Andre occasionally asking me about my duties as a Lunar Maiden. I wasn't allowed to disclose much, so I gave him some vague answers and as little information as possible, until he understood what was going on and changed the topic with a laugh.

He had a nice laugh and whenever he did, I found myself smiling too. It felt good to smile freely again. It felt like it's been ages since I smiled properly.

"You can ask me anything you want to." Andre's grey eyes sparkled with delight. "I want to be as open as possible with you. We are mates, after all."

Every time he said the word 'mate', the wrongness of it hit me anew, but I couldn't let it show. Like Daphne said, I couldn't let the rumors spread about me. So I asked him the only thing I could think of right at the top of my head. "Why did you become a rogue hunter?"

It probably wasn't the best thing to ask a rogue hunter as his expression darkened immediately. I was about to tell him that he didn't have to answer me, but Andre beat me to it.

"My entire family was slaughtered by rogues." His voice was harsh as he spoke. "I was only a child. I had to watch them rip apart my father and then my mother. But for some reason, they let me go."

"I'm so sorry." Now I felt guilty for asking him the question. He had to have gone through such severe trauma as a child after witnessing such violence.

"Don't be." He shook his head, making a few stray strands fall on his forehead. "Keeping me alive was their mistake. Now I live to slaughter them. They were the reason I found my calling."

"Calling?" I frowned.

"My purpose in life." Andre shrugged with a smile. "But now that I've found my mate, I have another calling, another purpose. To protect you and to love you eternally."

Once again, I felt awkward at not knowing how I should react. His words were flattering, kind and wonderful to hear, but they just didn't feel like they were from the heart. Or were my fellow Maidens right and I was an abnormal wolf?

"So, tell me," Andre came to my rescue by deciding to change the subject. "What do you think is your calling?"

"My calling?" I raised my eyebrows at him. "I'm a healer. I don't think there's anything else I'd rather do."

"Oh, silly me." Andre laughed. "Of course, it is! I'm amazed at just how different we are. I'm a rogue hunter and you're a healer. I guess the Goddess had a purpose of putting us together. To learn and to grow together."

"Yes, indeed." I gave him a polite smile. "The Goddess indeed had a reason of putting us together."

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Andre's words stayed with me a long time after I had returned to my quarters. He had been the gentleman and left me at my door and I was glad that I had an overall nice time with him.

He was a good person and I was happy I got to know him a little better and also got to know about the tragedy of his past that made him the man he was today.

But now, as I stood in front of my large windows alone, looking up at the full moon in the sky...several questions plagued my mind.

What was my calling? Whatever it was, it wasn't just limited to healing. I had healed two soldiers but one of them had turned rogue anyways, but Samuel hadn't. And when I had healed the rogue Alpha...he had been able to turn back to his human form.

There has to be a connection between the two. What if...what if that was the connection? What if I was supposed to heal not just wolves but rogues?

I looked at the moon for answers, basked in its silvery glow. But I found none. The Goddess remained silent and my mind was still swirling with so many thoughts.

I hadn't realized that I had been unmindfully twirling with my pendant until the clasp came loose and it fell to the floor with a dull thud. Looking down, I found

the moon reflecting off of the pendant in a faint glow, making the colors vibrant, almost like they had come alive.

I picked it up quickly and wore it around my neck, afraid of losing the necklace...and suddenly, the entire world started to spin.

"What..." I pressed my hands to my head, to prevent the dizziness, but black spots appeared in my vision and I fell to the floor, unable to keep my balance.

And then the entire world was engulfed in darkness.

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Flora's P.O.V

"Hey! Looks like I'll be your babysitter tonight."

"Yay!" I squealed in delight as I jumped up and down. I had been waiting for this all week! Clay and I would be alone all evening while mom and dad went out to a restaurant and Riley was going on a date of his own once mom and dad left.

"Someone's excited," my mom smiled down at me as she ruffled my hair. She was looking so beautiful in her red dress. She never dresses like this; she's always wearing shirts and pants. She even had her hair down!

"Thank you for looking after Flora." Mom told Clay before turning to Riley. "And remember what I told you, young man?"

"Treat every woman like your dad treats your mom." Riley recited the lines like he was in an exam. "I know mom, I'll behave and have her back at her parent's before eleven."

"Good boy." Dad patted Riley's shoulder before wrapping an arm around mom's waist. "You kids have fun. We'll be on our way now."

"Bye!" The three of us waved at my parents until their car left the driveway.

"Well," Riley said to Clay. "I'm off too."

He ruffled my hair and pinched my cheeks. "Be nice, chubby!"

"I'm not chubby!" I whined at Riley as he got on his bike, before looking up at Clay. "Am I?"

"Of course, not." Clay gave me a bright smile. "You're adorable."

"See? Clay thinks I'm adorable." I stuck my tongue out at Riley.

"Yeah...adorably chubby!" Riley laughed as he put on his helmet and left.

I sniffled, trying to keep from crying in front of Clay, but I guess he heard my sniffles as he bent down in front of me and put his hands on my shoulders in comfort.

"Heyyy..." He gave me an adorable smile. "You are a beautiful young lady and even Riley wishes he could be this pretty. Don't cry."

"You think...I'm beautiful?" I sniffled, wiping at my eyes.

"Of course," he gave me a small tap on my nose. "No matter what anyone says, I will always think you're the most beautiful woman in the world."

"Thank you." I smiled at him in happiness. Riley can say whatever he wants! But Clay thinks I'm beautiful! That's enough for me!

"Now, what do you want to eat?" Clay got up and held out his hand. "Should we order pizza?"

"Yes! I love pizza!"

Clay threw back his head and laughed. "Pizza it is then...with extra pepperoni and cheese!"

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"Come on, Flora." Riley called from the door. "Come say goodbye or you won't get to see you again for ten years! Who're you gonna be mad at then, huh?"

I hid in my room, silently crying as I heard my brother's voice through the closed door.

I wasn't just sad because Riley was leaving for his training...but Clay was leaving too. They would both be gone!

But Riley was right...if I didn't say goodbye now, I won't see them again for ten years and Lindersay didn't have phones.

I wiped at my eyes vigorously, getting rid of the tears and then hesitantly turned the knob on the door....only to find Clay standing on the other side.

I looked up at him with wide eyes. He was really tall now and he had just turned seventeen. He didn't have very big muscles but neither did Riley. At ten, I only

reached a bit higher than his waist, so he crouched down in front of me, so we could be eye level.

"There you are." Clay gave me his gorgeous smile. "Were you really going to let us leave without saying goodbye?"

I shook my head instantly. "No."

"Good," he tapped my nose with a finger. "Come now. Everyone is waiting for you."

"Not just Riley..." I told him quickly, before he got up. "I'll miss you too."

"Yeah?" Clay's smile was gentle and beautiful. "I'm happy to hear that. Next time we see each other, you'll be a grown woman and you'll be beautiful. I guess there will be a lot of fight for your attention then."

"Don't worry!" I felt myself smile. "I'll always pay attention to you!"

"Thank you; it'll be an honor, My Lady." Clay got up from his crouch and held out his hand. "Let's go."

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"You need to work on you footwork, Flora."

Spoke the man standing in over me in a pair of cargo shorts and a black vest. His copper hair was messy, but he hadn't even broken a sweat, while I was down on the ground, covered in perspiration and dirt and about ready to murder someone.

"Must be nice having Alpha strength," I sneered up at him, my exhaustion getting the best of me. "Next time, don't even dare come to me to get healed. I'd like to see Jessica whoop your sorry ass!"

Clay threw back his head and laughed; the sound throaty and contagious...and it made the corner of my lips tilt up despite my sour mood. But I controlled my emotions before he saw me smile and gave him my meanest glare.

"Someone's grumpy today." Clay simply came down on top of me, straddling my hips so I couldn't escape while he leaned down with his hands on either side of my head. "Was it because of all the valentines' chocolates I got?"

"Grrr!" I growled low in my throat, remembering the long line outside the Staff room, all women with flower bouquets and chocolates in hand and all of them for Clay. Why did I have to fall for the hottest guy in the pack?

"Don't be sad." Clay grinned. "I still have room for your chocolates."

I decided to tempt the beast. "I gave them to Garrick."

This time, the growl that came from his throat wasn't nice or playful. His mood went from teasing to dark in a blink of an eye, enough to give me a whiplash.

"That soldier is dead the day I become Alpha." Came his gritted out reply.

"You will do no such thing!" It seems like dating the future Alpha had given me a spine as well. "You aren't the only one allowed to be jealous and growly."

Once again, the change in Clay's expression was so sudden, I found myself wondering if he had been joking before.

"You were jealous?" He blinked at me, eyes wide in surprise.

"Don't change the subject." I narrowed my eyes at him, bringing my hands up to his chest to push him back. He didn't budge an inch.

"You were jealous." This time, a wide grin spread on his face and I found it increasingly difficult to stay mad at him.

"So were you." I countered.

"I'm the jealous type, remember?" Clay raised his eyebrows at me. "I get growly the instant another wolf looks at my girl."

"Then I guess you're rubbing off on me." I smirked.

"Yeah?" Clay smirked back. "That actually sounds pretty good right now...I want to rub off on you more."

"Clay!" I felt my face heat up. "I'm dirty!"

"You know I like it dirty." With that, he claimed my lips.

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I woke up to the startling bright rays of the sun and the chirping of birds outside my window. I opened my eyes to find myself lying on the floor, where I had been standing last night and my entire body felt sore.

Groggily, I got up from the floor, using my hands to steady myself when I felt my head spinning. By now I had a hunch that the reason for my headaches and disorientation were a result of my memories coming back little by little. And last night...I hit a milestone.

I remember how I had always been fond of Clay since I was young...and how I was his lover when I was older.

Not only was that a valuable memory...it told me one very important detail that I had been missing. A detail that might actually be connected to the reason why I lost my memories in the first place.

Clay wasn't my mate.

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Flora's P.O.V

Large chunks of moonstones were brought out into the open as Ezra stood watch.

They were big and heavy, but only us maidens had the permission to carry them out. Daphne and I walked out in a line, followed by Emma. We all held the moonstones in different shades of green and all shaped in perfect rounds, but their size was bigger, like boulders.

A faint circle had been drawn on the land behind the Castle and we placed the stones on the line, marking the circle and took our positions in front of the stones. Each stone was placed at least half-a meter apart.

At the centre of the circle, there was a large cauldron filled with clear water and the reflection of both the sun and the moon had fallen on it for two nights. This was moon water and it was to cleanse our mind and body and centre our thoughts. We were to drink this water at the end of the ceremony.

There were also flowers in different vases around the circle, all white and so fresh and fragrant that it filled my heart with joy. Incense sticks were lit up as well, but their scents were overpowered by that of the flowers. Tube roses had a strong scent and it only grew stronger at night. Since it was midnight, their scent seemed to be the strongest. Flowers were a must in Full Moon Rituals, especially the ones like this, which were held during the onset of summer. It wasn't time for tube roses to bloom yet, but somehow, the Castle gardens managed to have them in bloom all year round.

Ezra came to the middle of the circle, dressed in pure white robes and with a crystal in her hand. Each of us were dressed in white too and all of us had a crystal that symbolized our birth month. Since mine wasn't known at the time of me becoming a Lunar Maiden, I was given a quartz crystal shaped like a pyramid. I held it in my hand now and closed my eyes as Ezra was given a flaming torch by a Lunar Maiden, who then rushed back to take her place in the circle.

She stood close to the cauldron where a smaller circle was drawn and filled with inflammable material. Ezra held up her torch and touched it to the circle, causing it to light up in a show that was both dangerous and magical.

“My fellow Maidens.” Ezra’s voice was firm yet gentle. “Tonight, the moon and the sun are as far from each other as possible. Tonight our emotions, both good and bad, are at the forefront of our mind. Come...let us centre our thoughts and cleanse our emotions. Let us choose good over evil, light over darkness, and dedicate our life in prayer of our creator, the Goddess of the Moon, Selene.”

We closed our eyes and began chanting the ceremonial song of the Full Moon ceremony. All maidens joined us one by one and it created a beautiful melody that soothed the soul and cleared the mind.

Tonight was one of the nights when the soldiers and other inhabitants of Lindersay were allowed to view our ceremony and join us as well. And then the howls sounded.

Our brothers and sisters in wolf form, joined in our ritual chant, in a language that was universal; a language that was our soul...the howl of the wolf.

“Come now, my Maidens.” Ezra called. “Drink the water purified by the sun and the moon and cleanse your soul.”

One by one, we left the circle and went up to Ezra, the fire of the inner circle having died down by now. Ezra dipped a small goblet into the water and drank the first gulp before passing the goblet to the next maiden. Each of us took turns dipping the goblet in the water and took a sip before wiping it with a piece of cloth and handing it to the next maiden.

I put my quartz inside a pocket in my robe and went to the inner circle where Daphne handed me the goblet after it had been her turn. I took it from her and walked up to the cauldron, watching the full moon reflect inside it, right at the centre. I dipped it at the reflection of the moon and drank the water in one go before wiping the goblet clean. Somehow the water tasted different, sweeter.

“I hope this ritual helps you find direction.” Ezra whispered to me with a smile.

I nodded, understanding her words and gave a small bow to her before exiting the inner circle and handing the goblet to Emma, before retaking my position.

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Andre was waiting for me as we came out of the circle. I had Emma walking in the middle with Daphne and Emma on either side of me. Daphne immediately gave me a nudge with her elbow.

"Good evening, My Ladies." Andre gave a small bow. "It was a wonderful ceremony. I feel extremely lucky to be able to witness it."

"Oh, you sure know how to flatter!" Daphne laughed. "Soldiers are allowed to watch two of the Full Moon ceremonies in a year and one Blue Moon ceremony during the summer is celebrated with the entire Castle in view."

"Then I guess I have much to look forward to this year." Andre gave me a smile. "Especially since my eyes were glued to only one person."

"Oooohh!" Daphne and Emma both cooed from beside me, making me blush. Goodness! With friends like these!

"But I was also wondering..." Andre looked thoughtful for a second and Daphne, being the nosy woman she is, instantly asked, "About what?"

"There will be a Blood Moon in two months time." Andre told us. "Will there not be a ritual to celebrate that?"

"A Blood Moon?"

"Yes," Andre looked confused. "It's when the moon is blood red and bigger than usual. There are rituals to celebrate a Blood Moon."

"A Blood Moon ritual?" I blinked at Andre, surprised to hear there even was a Blood Moon ritual. Why did Ezra never-

"We do not have Blood Moon Rituals." Ezra's voice came from behind me, startling all of us. "They were banned from Lindersay centuries ago."

"My apologies, My Lady." Andre bowed to Ezra. "I overstepped my boundaries."

"Yes, you did." Ezra said, much to my surprise. "Please learn about the rules of Lindersay before you speak of our rituals."

"Of course," Andre bowed again. "Please, accept my sincere apologies. I acted like an ignorant fool. If you'll excuse me..."

"You may leave."

Another curt reply had me looking at Ezra wide eyed. I was sure Emma and Daphne were doing the same as they stood impossibly still beside me. I didn't realize when Andre left from beside me but when Ezra finally turned to face us, her eyes were stormy. This was the first time I'd ever seen her this mad at anything and it stunned me how this woman could ever be this angry.

"The same applies to all of you." She told us sternly. "Never speak of the rituals that weren't taught to you by me. Am I clear?"

“Yes, Shrine Maiden.”

We bowed as she left like a whirlwind, her skirt floating behind her like the clouds. When she was gone, Daphne, Emma and I looked at each other and I immediately shook my head.

“Are you thinking what I’m thinking?” Daphne raised her eyebrows at us, a smirk on her face.

“No! Absolutely not!”

The only thing we got from Daphne in return, was a knowing smirk. Shit!