

The Silver Hope by Sheila Prologue

PROLOGUE

It was a stormy night. Loud thunder and the torrents of rain pouring on the roof of the house can be heard overhead. The dark sky illuminated repeatedly by the constant flickering of lightning. Odd. The weather forecaster said it would be good weather for the week. I felt the house shake as the thunder rumbled. A moment ago, the full moon was shining, glistening so beautifully. Then, all of sudden, dark clouds appeared, covering the moon and releasing an angry burst of rain.

I was washing the dishes while Jim, my husband, went around the house making sure the windows were all shut tight. The wind was howling outside. Good thing the animals were all safe in the barn.

Jim and I have been married for quite some time. We tried to conceive but it never happened. I decided to get a fertility check-up by the local doctor a few years back. After the results of the series of tests came out, the doctor called me to come see her. I sat in the middle of her office like I was a dartboard. First dart... Mrs. Alarie, you are diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome or PCOS." Second dart..."I can put you on fertility medication for the meantime so we can induce ovulation and see if you can conceive." Third dart... "If all fails, we can try IVF." I tried fertility medication for a year. It didn't work. I discussed the IVF procedure to Jim and he told me, "If it is God's will, He'll give us a baby. For now, Mirasol, let's just be happy and content with what we have." I looked down at my flat stomach. So many women out there getting pregnant without even trying, leaving their babies or either having them aborted and here I am willing to offer my life to another human being, but will never be given the opportunity of the gift of life. Life's little ironies.

I sighed looking out the window. I saw a pair of car lights from the distance. Seemed the car was parked out in front of our yard. The lights of the car suddenly turned off.

"Jim," I called. "Honey, there's a car parked in front of our yard."

"You sure?", he said looking through the window. "I can't see a damn thing outside."

"Yes. I just saw the lights turn off. Maybe it's the neighbors. They might need some help."

Jim goes to the closet and takes out his rifle. "I'll go check. I hear the dogs barking. If that were Sam, they wouldn't be growling like that. Heard over the news, there's been a number of break-ins. Better safe than sorry." Jim looks into the barrel to make sure its loaded and heads to the front door.

I hear him open the door and yell "Hey you!"

All of sudden, I hear the car screech away without even turning their headlights on. I frantically wipe my hands and head to the door when Jim calls me. "Mirasol come here quick. It's a baby."

With a look of confusion, I peek from behind him and see a basket on our doorstep.

The Hooded Strangers

It was raining like it was a Category 5 Hurricane. The Moon Goddess was angry and released her anger through the elements. She should be. Her favorite Priestess and her Alpha mate were just murdered by The Rogue Lord. Goddess, please have mercy on us all.

I tried to get to my sister but it was too late. The Rogue Lord had pulled her head off

from her body. Her gold eyes still open as her head rolled away from her body. Then I heard her, her pup! I went to the other room, picked her up and ran out as fast as I could. I saw the locket on the chest drawer near the foyer, grabbed it, covering the pup, I ran and jumped through the window. I mind linked my mate that I had my niece and the locket. He mind linked me to meet at our car. The Moon followed my every step, lighting my path until I reached the car. That was when the storm began.

I looked down at the pup sleeping in my arms. She didn't know it yet, but she is destined for great things. I sniffle, holding back my tears. I couldn't keep her. I wanted to. It would've been what my sister had wanted. But we had a pack of murderous wolves on our tail and I know if they caught up with us, this little angel would be dead in a snap of a twig.

"I think the safest thing to do is to leave her with humans," my mate said, his face hidden under his hood. "If we keep her, it's like giving her her death sentence."

"Who will take her? I just can't leave her on someone's doorstep."

"I know of a nice couple. I've traded with them a few times on my visit to the towns trying to get information. No one knows I know them. They don't have children and I know the woman has been praying to get pregnant. I know they will love and protect her like their own daughter. Don't worry. They're good people. I'm heading toward their house now."

After 30 minutes, he suddenly parks the car and points at the farmhouse on our side. I could see a woman doing dishes through the window. "Here, put the pup in the basket so she won't get wet and leave her on their porch."

After making sure the pup was comfortable in the basket, I placed her mother's locket on her neck and whispered an incantation to keep her safe until her coming of age. I kissed her one last time and fixed the hood of my coat over my head and made sure it covered my face. I sprung out of the car and ran as fast as I could to the front of the house. The dogs could sense me and started to bark and growl. I hurried and set the basket on the porch. I turned around and ran back to the car when I heard a man yell, 'Hey you!' I jumped into the car and said, "Drive!" We screeched through the darkness without even looking back.

Chapter 1 Hope

I sat on the fence of the farm looking out through the horizon. I just loved how the orange and red sky would meet the mountains as it sets and the sky turns dark. Not a lot of people like the dusk. I just loved it.

Tomorrow is my 18th birthday. The day of the Summer Solstice when the moon was lowest in the sky. I just graduated high school as the class valedictorian and have been accepted to University. My mother and father are so proud. Especially my mother. You could always hear her tell people how proud she is of her baby.

We live in a small town of Chelan in Washington State. For 18 wonderful years, this is the place I call home. My family and I live in a red farm house with white shutters. A two story house filled with all the happy memories of my childhood. I remember the day I learned how to ride a bike. I was able to ride on my own on the path that leads to my Dad's apple farm. I stayed on my pink bike for two whole minutes before I fell down on the pavement. My Dad came running towards me, worry on his face when he saw me hugging my knee, blood flowing down on my white shorts. I looked up at him and said, "

Sorry Dad. I didn't stay on long and I got a scratch. He started laughing, telling me he was proud of me for staying on that long. He picked me up and brought me inside the house to clean up my wound. That was the first time he noticed my accelerated wound healing. "Well, Hope, you are indeed special," he said..

Here in Chelan, my father grows the sweetest Red Delicious apples in all of Washington. He won the award 5 times in a row. My father said when they had" me, the apples for some reason became so sweet and juicy and have been like that all these years. Plus, the trees give fruit all year round. Another blessing for having me.

I never get tired of the story of how I got my name, HOPE. My mother said the moment she held me in her arms, the raging storm that was happening around us, suddenly quieted. The clouds moved to show the full moon of the Summer Solstice whose light shone on me. I looked like a glistening diamond...a star. My mother, then and there, named me Hope as a reminder. A baby as precious as me is a light through the darkest of times.

Yep, I know I'm adopted, but in no way would I trade my adoptive parents. Even if my real parents didn't want me, they did me a huge favor and gave me to the best parents anyone could wish for. My mother is a small Filipina woman. She's a teacher at the local grade school. She has a big heart for all her students and even calls them "her children". I love her cooking. When her friends are over, she works up the kitchen and cooks all the Filipino dishes she can make. Good thing I love to run. If not, I'd gain weight from all her food.

My father, who has the most caring green eyes, is the gentlest man on this planet. He couldn't hurt a fly even if he tried. He may have that rifle in the closet, but he has never used it on anyone. We just do target practice from time to time. He says it doesn't hurt to know how to protect yourself. I go fishing with him, camping, make furniture, hell, I even learned a little on how to fix cars. Yep, I'm Daddy's Little Girl.

I'll be leaving home soon to go to University for Pre-Med. My mother wants me to become a medical doctor. My Dad well, he would rather I help him on the farm. I laugh at the thought then it hits me. The sadness. It hurts me to leave my parents, but mom says blessings should be shared. She thinks I'm destined for great things. Scratch that. Not thinks, knows.

Unlike my mom, I'm tall at 5'8. I have long legs and long black hair. I have pale skin and honey colored eyes. My dad says he finds it strange boys aren't pounding on our door because he says I've grown up to be a beautiful young woman. I don't have the heart to tell him I intimidate the whole lot of them. Even the hormone raging jocks who want to "score" with every girl. Not me though. They need me to help them out with their schoolwork. They screw me, they screw with the chance of getting a passing grade. I touch my necklace. Nothing is known about my biological parents. I only have this necklace as an heirloom. The pendant is shaped into a crescent moon with a star on the tip where a diamond lays in the center. Engraved on it is some writing I can't read. Just like my pendant, I also have a crescent-shaped birthmark with a star on my hip. My mom said it might go away in time like most birthmarks do. Mine seems to have become more prominent over the years. I sometimes imagine it sparkles.

The wind picks up suddenly, swirling around me and I smell it. The scent of fresh cut grass and wood shavings. Two of my favorite things.

"Do you smell that, my child? Follow it,' says a woman's voice.

I sat there thinking against it. The first time I heard voices, I freaked out my mom. She wanted me to see a psychiatrist because hearing voices isn't a good sign. I explained they were guiding me to do things. My mom said, "Ok, but before you do whatever these voices tell you to do, sit down and think before you do. AND, if it becomes too much to handle, tell me so we can go see an expert. So far, whatever I hear, hasn't gotten me into trouble. So why not follow that scent? As the wind picks up again, I jump off the fence and follow the scent.

Chapter 2 Alexander

I turned the car and drove up to the red farmhouse with the white shutters and parked the car in front of it. My sister, who is pregnant, messaged me to get a crate of Alarie's Red Delicious apples. I've tasted their apples and my Goddess, theirs was the sweetest apples I have ever tasted. My sister, knowing I was visiting the area, has begged me to get as much as I can. Although apples are usually harvested in September, this farm seems to have fruit all year round. Obviously they are blessed! Only means one thing- they are good people.

I was supposed to be in Seattle for an event sponsored by Ulrich Group of Companies. Unfortunately, my sister needed me to deliver some clothes she had designed and created to her boutique as well as some furniture for her newly renovated wellness center located at the hotel. She couldn't just let anyone else do it. It had to be me. How can I say no to my pregnant sister? Plus, I've graced so many events in Seattle anyway. Missing one isn't going to hurt although, I was hoping I could go around and meet some ladies. It's been a while since I've had some fun. Maybe I can have some fun with my men after I finish up here

Thankfully, I finished with business in town. Actually, I was also overseeing the commitments of my mother and sister who have set up businesses and foundations in Chelan. My mother seemed to love this town. When I was growing up, she would always find the time to make a trip here and when she came home, she'd have a couple of bags of Alarie's red apples with her. My sister who now manages the businesses for her also has the same penchant for these apples. Like mother, like daughter, I guess. So, here I am, following "tradition". Well, more of "I really need to get the apples my sister and the little pup of hers- the one in her belly that is- want so I won't get into trouble"...that kind of thing.

I step out of the car and the wind blows towards me with the most amazing scent. Like chocolate and strawberries. Maybe someone's baking a cake I asked myself.

"No, the scent isn't from a cake." Echo says.

I sniff some more trying to locate where the scent was coming from. It smells like it's coming from a wolf. The Alarie's are wolves?!

My wolf, Echo, starts to prance around, excited. Before I could speak to my wolf, I hear footsteps.

"Hi! I'm Jim Alarie. You must be Alex. I have your order of apples on the porch. Do you want me to help you get them in the trunk of your car?" He extends his hand for me to shake. I hesitate for a moment trying to figure out where the scent was coming from.

"So sorry of me. Nice to meet you Jim. Yes, I'm Alex," I extend a hand to Jim and we shake hands.

Jim gives me a warm smile while he shakes my hand enthusiastically. "If you're

interested Alex, I can deliver apples to you on a regular basis. Just as long as you buy in bulk.”

“That’s actually a nice offer. How about two or three crates of apples once a month? I can even order more if there are gatherings or parties.”

“No problem. I can do that for you. How about you come inside so we can fill up the paper work for this order of yours?”

I smile at the old man and start walking towards the house. The scent from a moment ago gets stronger as we approach the house. When I enter, I almost go crazy. The scent is all over this house! I sniff out Jim. Strange. Jim smelled human though. I wonder who lives in this house with him.

“Such a lovely and warm house, Jim. Who lives here with you?”, I ask Jim nonchalantly. Jim turns to point at a family photo.” Oh. Just the family. The missus and my daughter”, he said. He goes to his office while I stand in front of the photo looking at his daughter who was seated in between him and his wife. What a beauty! I look at her twinkling gold eyes and her dazzling smile with perfect teeth. Her black hair framing her small face and freckles at the bridge of her nose. How I could have missed a rare beauty like her was beyond me.

I was still looking at the photo when Jim comes back out with some papers. “Here we go. All you have to do is sign. You can pay me either through card or COD. Every month of your preferred date, we’ll deliver the apples on your doorstep.” I had to peel myself away from the photo so, I could look at him. Moon Goddess please, make her appear!

“My mother and sister would love that. They love your apples. They never come home without a bag or two when they are in town visiting.”

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I read and sign the papers. The red light from the setting sun was entering the house when I heard her come in. “The Moon Goddess has heard our prayer.” My wolf, Echo, stood upright at attention. His tail wagging in anticipation. I sniffed. The overpowering scent of chocolate and strawberries was coming closer with every step she made.

“Hey Dad. Did you happen to cut some gra-? Sorry. I didn’t know you were with someone. I’ll just excuse myself.”

I turn around, smile and see her with those gold eyes staring back at me. She was wearing a white T-shirt with denim shorts. I looked down and stared at her creamy legs. So simple, but so exquisitely beautiful.

“MATE!”, Echo, my wolf said.

I can see the reflection of my eyes in her bright gold eyes. While hers flicker with confusion and panic, mine dance with happiness and amazement. After all these years, I have finally found my mate... in a red farm house with white shutters.

Chapter 3 Mate

· The voice in my head yelled “Mate!” Wait. What? I don’t understand. What ‘mate’ are you talking about?

“This man is your mate!” The voice inside my head yelled it this time like what is so hard to understand.

The tall handsome man doing business with my father smiles at me and politely introduces himself, “Hi! I am Alexander Ulrich. And you are?” He extends his hand

towards me for a handshake.

I look at him and his huge hand absentmindedly trying to figure out what the voice in my head meant by “mate” when my father interrupts my thoughts and gently says, “Sweetie, Alex is waiting for you to say something.”

“Oh gosh, I’m so sorry. Where are my manners? Nice to meet you Alexander. I’m Hope. Hope Alarie”, I clasped his hand and a jolt of electricity courses through my arm and throughout my body causing my legs to buckle from beneath me and I stumble.

Alexander rushes towards me and breaks my fall, catching me in time. I felt the electricity between us as he held me in his arms while I stared into his blue black eyes like the color of the sky where space meets earth. He felt so good. I was breathing heavily, trying to catch my breath. Oh my gosh, he smells like freshly cut grass and wood shavings. It was a heady combination. “Are you ok, Hope? Are you hurt?” He looks at me with sincere concern etched on his handsome face. I look at his lips and I imagine kissing them. Dear Lord, what am I thinking?! 2

“I’m sorry. I don’t know what has come over me. I’m usually not this clumsy.” I try to explain, aware I was touching his arms, his skin smooth to the touch.

My Dad starts laughing. “Woah! I’m guessing Alex here is your first crush.” He teases and laughs even louder after saying it.

Thanks Dad! Now, I feel embarrassed. I was blushing through the roots of my hair and I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me whole. CRUSH? Come to think of it, my Dad was right. I have never had a crush. I thought I did once, but I was always put off with his smell- like dirty socks and wet dog. I wrinkled my nose just thinking of it.

Alexander seeing my nose wrinkle in disgust laughs and asks, “Do I stink or maybe your Dad is mistaken and you don’t like me at all?”

I pull away from him, stood up with as much dignity as I had left and apologized, “Sorry, no, it’s not you. I was thinking of a boy in school who smelled like dirty socks.”

My Dad and Alexander both laughed heartily at what I said, when my Mom walked into the house with bags of groceries in her arms. “Hope, honey, can you help me with these please.” Alexander rushes over to her and grabs the bags of groceries. “Here, let me help you. I’m Alex by the way.” he said. “Oh sorry. I didn’t know we had company.

Thank you dear for helping me.” My mom had this huge smile on her face. I knew what was going through her mind. What a hunk! He definitely was a hunk. I sighed dreamily.

He was tall. I’m guessing 6’4” and muscular. His chest went on forever. He looked like he was in his mid or late 20’s. He had a commanding presence but was such a gentleman. I watched under hooded eyes as his biceps moved under his skin. His chest muscles bulging under his gray shirt. I wonder how it would feel to rest my head on his chest and listen to his heart. Maybe kiss it. I felt myself blush again. “Hope, you gotta keep it together!”, I thought. “But he’s so HOT!”, the voice answered back. “Stop reminding me,” I groaned.

“By the way, there are 2 other cars parked outside. I don’t know if they’re with you,” looking at Alexander, “Or they’re customers.”

“They’re with me, Mrs. Alarie.” Alexander said. “I know this sounds so straightforward of me, but may I ask you out for dinner?” He looked at me. “All of you out for dinner perhaps?”

My mom answered, “Sure OR we can cook here? Either way, I’m good. We can have a pre-celebration of Hope’s 18th birthday. Which is tomorrow.”

Alexander looked at me puzzled, "You're turning 18 tomorrow?"

I smiled, "Technically, yes. Tomorrow is my 18th birthday.

I saw the confusion in his eyes for a split second." Happy Birthday then, Hope. I'll take everyone out for a pre celebration birthday party for my-ah Hope. How about that? Only the best for Hope. At Lemuria. It will be an honor and a privilege to spend this special day with you." His intense gaze was on me and it felt as if we were the only two people on the planet. I had only met the man several minutes ago, but it seemed like I had known him my whole life. I shook my head. Silly me. It's not possible.

My mother gasped, "It's expensive there." Alexander smiled, "Don't worry about the expense, Mrs. Alarie. Everything on me." He looks at his watch. "I'll see you all there at 7:30PM." He shakes my Dad's hands, pats my Mom's arms and turns to give me a hug. He lingered a little, then with a sigh, he let me go. He gave me one last smile and then he was gone. I stood there rooted at the spot, staring at the door, hoping he'd forgotten something and come back.

"Well, Hope dear, scoot." My mother gives me a push to go upstairs to my room. "You have an hour to get ready."

I look at the clock on our wall and give a little screech of panic. I need to get ready. I run upstairs to take a shower and change. I want to be pretty when I meet him again.

Chapter 4 Questions

(Alexander POV)

I have found my mate and not just any mate, my fated mate!

I walked out of the red farmhouse with white shutters fighting the urge not to turn and go back inside to be with my mate. My wolf, Echo, was already howling his longingness for our mate. Truth be told, I have waited and searched all over the world for my mate for years. I can't believe she was just right here in Washington State growing up. With human parents nonetheless!

Hope was hidden here. While Jim was in his office, I tried to think who she looked like. She seemed so familiar like I saw her everyday. Then it hit me. I have to give my mother a call. She will give me some answers.

Odd though, she isn't 18 yet. Is that possible? Not 18 but can be fated mates? Or has the Goddess felt my yearning for my mate all these years as I searched? I don't mind. My long search is over. No more nights with any pretty thing in a skirt. No more emptiness. No more being jealous of other wolves who have found their mates. No more reminiscing of the past and the self-doubt. I have found the one who completes me and she is mine as I am hers.

Has she ever shifted? I guess not because she feels right at home with her human parents. I could feel the love and respect she has for them. I know if anyone were to get in between her and her parents, she would choose her parents.

I look at the red farmhouse hoping to get a glimpse of her before I leave. She must already be getting ready for our dinner tonight. I sigh in frustration. I still have to wait a while longer to be with her. One thing is for sure, once she enters the restaurant, she is never leaving my side ever again. That is a promise.

As I thought about her, more questions started popping into my mind about my mate when my Beta, Oliver, said, * The apples are in the trunk. What happened Alex? What took you so long? I was about to come inside and get you. I thought maybe you were in

trouble.”

“Let’s go. We are having dinner with them later. Call Lemuria and get reservations. It’s my Mate’s birthday.”

Oliver, clearly shocked, “ You found your mate in there?” He pointed at the red farm house with white shutters.

“Yes, but she has no idea she’s a wolf.”

(Hope POV)

I run up the stairs to my bedroom to get ready to have dinner at Lemuria. LEMURIA! I have never had a 5 course meal ever! This man, Alexander, wants to celebrate my birthday at Lemuria. How could I be so lucky!

I only have an hour to get ready. I look at myself in the mirror. I pull my hair back to see what I should do with it. But first, I have to figure out what to wear.

I open my closet and rummage through my clothes. I sighed. A closet full of clothes, but nothing to wear. I thought only spoiled little rich kids said that so they could get more clothes, but now I know better.

My mom knocks on my door. “Hope, honey, I got you this. I know you don’t like wearing body fit clothing, but I just had to get this for you. The color matches your hair!” She puts a paper bag of a local boutique shop on my bed. I open it and lift up a sparkling black bodycon dress with a matching shawl. My mother always has perfect timing.

“Mom, thank you. It’s beautiful.”

“Oops! Almost forgot! Shoes too,” my mother said as she put a box of shoes on my bed.

“Strappy heels. I may look conservative but, I want to see my daughter be the sexy woman she is. Plus, I want to take pictures. You only turn 18 once after all. Now, go take a shower.” My mother blew me a kiss and went out of my room.

I can’t believe it! My mom got me a dress to wear for my birthday. I laid the dress on my bed. I need to take a shower first before I try it on.

I take a quick shower lathering up with my favorite chocolate and strawberries body wash. Good thing I washed my hair this morning. I don’t have time to dry my long hair.

Right now, I just want to look and feel my best in

front of Alexander. I giggled. I definitely have a crush. “He’s our mate,” I hear the voice again. Whatever. Right

now, I just want to see him again.

I towel dry and put on a clean pair of bikini underwear. Tricky things with bodycon dresses...underwear makes it bulge. I try putting on pasties. I got the idea from my bestfriend Nina when we were dressing up for prom. When you can’t wear a bra, use pasties. I looked at my breasts in the mirror. They are perky enough that I don’t need to use a bra. I slip on the bodycon dress and it fitted me like a glove. I looked at myself in the mirror. Not bad. (2

Now what do with my hair. I pull it up with my hands and decide to just leave it down. I brush the ends of my hair inward to help the curls. Perfect.

I’m not a make-up type of girl. I have good skin and rarely suffered from breakouts. Nina always envied my skin. She thought I made regular trips to the dermatologist to keep my skin clear.

When I need to look done-up, I just use a pink lipgloss and some blush if I feel I look pale. I face the mirror and put some on then I fix my eyebrows a little with an eyebrow brush. I look at my reflection in the mirror and I felt satisfied with my appearance.

I look at my bedside clock. Done with 10 minutes to spare. I pick up my locket and put it on completing my look. I take one last look at myself in the mirror. I can't believe I'm looking at the same Hope that is usually in jeans and shorts. I smile. Well, it is my 18th birthday after all.

I'm all set to meet Alexander Ulrich again. My mate.

Chapter 5 Lemuria

(Alexander POV)

Lemuria is a fine dining restaurant located at a 5 star hotel and resort near Lake Chelan. My hotel and resort.

I arrived at Lemuria early with Oliver and was escorted to the private room I had Oliver reserve earlier. I wanted everything special for my mate. I didn't mind if I had to wait though I was already starting to miss her and I was praying to the Goddess she would arrive soon. Echo, my wolf, had his ears up anticipating the arrival of our mate.

When I was at her home studying their family photo, I noticed the locket around her neck. The locket of famed Priestess Adella, who was murdered along with her mate Alpha Davis Brandt of The Crescent Moon Pack as well as most of their pack members. While most of the wolves believe her to be dead, there are rumors the daughter 'escaped the slaughter and is in hiding. Is Hope she? She does look like Adella. If not, how did she get that locket? It was foretold the Destined One, the child of a Priestess and an Alpha, would kill The Rogue Lord.

I felt a tug in my chest. My mate doesn't know the burden she carries on her shoulders if she is this so-called "Destined One."

I smiled thanking the Goddess for giving her a happy life with such caring parents. The Alarie's were well-loved in this town. They were always willing to help people in need. Apparently, even a pup in dire need of a family.

Oliver, coughed and motion to me they have arrived. I mind linked him to tell our warriors to keep a look out for rogues. If it is true Hope is The Destined One, The Rogue Lord may not be far.

I stand up and walked to the entrance as they were walking in and usher them into our private room. Hope was stunning. As Hope walked by the other tables, the heads of other men turned to watch her as well as the women. The women eyed her with envy and jealousy while the men... I knew what the men were thinking and I wanted to tear the heads from their bodies. Hope walked without even noticing the heads that turned to stare. She was looking at me. I smiled. She has eyes only for me. Echo growled his frustration. "Easy Echo. We have to pacify her parents first. They are not wolves and do not understand how we 'operate'."

"Mr. Ulrich, this is so much. We can dine out there with the regular folks," Jim said.

"No need to worry about anything Jim. Just gives us some privacy and it's Alex. No need to be formal," as I shake his hand.

"Mrs. Alarie, you are absolutely stunning." She giggles as I help her into her chair.

"Dear, call me Mirasol."

"Mirasol. Filipina, I presume?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

"I've been to the Philippines a couple of times. Such a friendly country. On one of my visits, I met a woman named Mirasol. You remind me of her. Always smiling."

“As for you Hope, you sit here beside me.” I kiss her hand and her eyes widen. She was absolutely beautiful. The most beautiful woman I have laid eyes on. If she were to join a beauty pageant, she would definitely win the title.

Her long black raven hair flowed with her every move. Her simple black dress showed her long legs and hugged every inch of her curves. The black of her dress made her skin glow. Her gold eyes danced with the light as well as the freckles along the bridge of her nose. Resting on her chest was the locket which glowed against the paleness of her skin.

She smiled sweetly and said, “Thank you Alexander!” after I helped her with her chair. When we were all seated comfortably, the waiters served us our drinks and gave us some appetizers, salad and soup before we start with the main course.

“So Hope, that’s a beautiful locket. Is there a story from where it came from?” I asked nonchalantly hoping I could get some answers to the questions that were plaguing me. Jim and Mirasol both coughed and looked away. I think I struck a nerve. I apologized to them for brazenness. I didn’t know certain things shouldn’t be talked about.

“No dear. It’s ok.” Mirasol sighs. “It’s not hidden from anyone,” Mirasol started, but Hope here, my darling daughter, isn’t my biological daughter. I wish she were, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. She is my daughter even if she isn’t mine.” I saw tears form in Mirasol’s eyes. So, Hope is adopted. I felt bad. I shouldn’t have asked.

“Mom, I know that. I love you,” Hope reached her Mom’s hand and pats it. “Wouldn’t have it any other way either. This locket is the only thing I have of whoever left me with my Mom and Dad. Maybe if someone recognizes it, I would at least know where I came from. Have a better understanding of who I really am. At the end, I would still choose you, Mom and Dad. I love you both. I can’t imagine my life without the both of you.” Hope looks down. I see a tear fall down her face. I rub her back to comfort her. Great, I ruined the mood.

“You are such an ass,” Echo says. “You even made our mate cry.” “Thanks, Echo. Now I feel really really bad.” I told him. Echo sniffed. “You should.”

“We allow Hope to look for her parents. Not right now knowing who you are,” Jim said drinking some sherry.

“I might have some information for all of you,” I said to the three of them, their eyes widening with shock. “But let’s eat first.” I motion to the butler to serve us the main course. “I hope everyone loves steak.” I hear “Aaaaahhs all around and look to see the big smiles on their faces.

Chapter 6 The Rogue Lord

· Up in the mountains of Montana, hidden from view, is a menacing castle which looks as if it had grown out of the mountain in a twisted most sinister way. The towers look like claws. The doors and windows were dripping with slime. The stone walls, dark and damp. The smell was a putrid smell of decay. It was a cursed place. All who dwell were outcasts, criminals and murderers.

The sun and the moon never touched this place. It was hell perched on a mountain. In the center of the castle was a lone giant throne. The throne of the vicious Rogue Lord.

The Rogue Lord was a law-abiding, dutiful wolf in his previous life until he lost his mate in childbirth. As he looked down at his son in his arms, he concluded he was the reason

for her death. He then took his newborn son out into the forest, raised him to the Moon and yelled, "This pup is not a blessing, but a curse. He is the reason for the death of my mate. Because of this, I sentence him to DEATH!" He shifted into his wolf form, picked up his son with his teeth and bit through him, cutting the pup in half. 3)

The Moon Goddess seeing this cursed him, "On this day, you will no longer be man or wolf, but half of each. The blood of your pup will stain you until your dying breath. Destruction and decay will follow you. Only a child born of a Priestess and an Alpha will release you from the curse from which you will endure for eternity." A flash of light enveloped him and exploded showing him his new form. A menacing lycan.

He was casted out from his pack and he was forced to join the rogues who also showed their disdain for him. He fought to get to where he is now, to sit on this throne as the lord of the rogues.

At first, they would pillage and destroy towns and villages. Taking their food and their women to rape sometimes some men and children to be their slaves. Unfortunately, the Clan of Wolves which comprised of all the packs all over the country joined forces with the humans and decided to put an end to their pillaging and destruction. At the start, the rogue army was a big pack of 2000 wolves, but after the retaliation of the Clan of Wolves allied with humankind, their numbers dwindled. The Rogue Army retreated to the mountains of Montana to increase their numbers while biding their time for war. While all thought the rogues were gone, Priestesses of the various packs who aided in the retaliation against the Rogue Army, went missing or were murdered. The last was the murder of Priestess Adella. However, unlike the previous Priestesses, the rogues went on and killed off her entire pack. Crescent Moon Pack is no more. The lands where Crescent Moon toiled were now barren with thorns along its borders.

"Sire, we have tracked the scent of the sister of Priestess Adella. Seems she is in Canada."

"Any word if she is with the daughter?"

"Sire, only 2 scents can be traced. Her's and her mate's."

"Find them and bring them to me. Alive."

Today is the Summer Solstice, the supposed birth day of the daughter of Adella and her mother's death anniversary.

No one knows what happened to the daughter of Adella. For 18 long years, I have searched high and low for the only wolf who has been destined to kill me. Curse you Moon Goddess!

Many of my men believe the pup went down with the floods when the storm raged above the territory of the Crescent Moon Pack. When my men returned to the territory after the storm, a tall wall of thorns stood between them and the land, daring them to cross. They waited until first light to catch a glimpse of the remnants of Crescent Moon, but only saw dark black land. The structures that once stood on the territory were all gone. Believed to have either washed away by the flood water or swallowed by the earth itself.

Some believe Adella had a stillbirth. No one, not even I, had seen or heard the pup that fated night.

Amidst the proof there was no daughter of Adella, I believed someone had hid the daughter of Adella from me.

· And when the time is right, they will use her to kill me. So, for 18 years I have searched for her, increased my army in whatever way I could and had placed spies in places I knew I could find information. I knew the Moon Goddess was laughing at me knowing I could not rest, not knowing if the daughter of Adella was alive or not.

“Sire, your Beta requests an audience with my Lord.” says my butler.

“Let him in.” The doors of my fortress open and my Beta walks in and bows.

“My Lord, we have received information the daughter of Adella is alive.” Gasps could be heard from all around, echoing what I have believed to be true all these years.

“Where is she?” I growled.

“In a small town known as Chelan in Washington State, my Lord.” My Beta’s voice trembles as he related the information.

“Which pack has given her refuge?”

“If I understood correctly, my Lord, none.”

“What do you mean by NONE?”

“None of the packs within the state provided refuge nor did any pack within the Clan of Wolves. The informant says she was raised by humans. How she came to be raised by humans, we do not know. Her human father is believed to have been a general during the war, my Lord.”

“HUMANS?” I howled with laughter. The wolves around me started to laugh as well. The daughter of Adella will be easy to kill just like her pitiful mother. “Ready the army, we go to Chelan tonight.” I ordered my Beta.

“I beg your pardon, my Lord. The daughter of Adella will no longer be in Chelan tonight, my Lord.”

“And where will the daughter of Adella hide this time?” I asked amused.

“Alpha Alexander Ulrich of The Dark Moon Pack has taken the daughter of Adella as his mate, my Lord. As of this moment, they are to be wed as human tradition dictates. Tonight, under the full moon, will be their mating ceremony on Dark Moon Territory.”

“Dark Moon.” I knew of Dark Moon. They are a rich and ruthless pack. “Ready a small group of warriors. I will be gate-crashing their ceremony tonight.”

Chapter 7 Opal

I had just finished the last bite of my mouth-watering steak with gusto. I licked my lips and caught Alexander staring at my lips as my tongue came out like it was the most desirable thing he saw. I blushed when his eyes caught me and I immediately looked down at my empty plate. He chuckled and quietly asked, “Do you still have some room left for desert? Cake and ice cream. It is after all your birthday.”

“There’s desert? Yes please.”

“So respectful. Your parents have taught you well.”

My Dad laughed, “That’s Mirasol. Teacher and all.”

My Mom playfully slapped her husband, “Kids today need to be taught to be respectful at all times. I find this calling parents on a first name basis so disrespectful. The least we can do is show some respect for the people who raise us. Another thing, being respectful is also a way of showing kindness. Please and thank you are simple words with a lot of meaning.”

Alexander motioned to the butler to clean our table and bring out desert. He asked if

they would like some champagne. My Dad said he would be driving and declined. Alexander then said, "No driving tonight. You will all stay here at the hotel. I have taken the liberty of arranging rooms for all of you here at the hotel. So Jim, how about a glass of champagne? To celebrate Hope."

"How can we say no to that. Sure, give me some Champagne. My daughter, here's to you. Class valedictorian, soon to be off to University to pursue medicine and now 18. An adult," my Dad said as he raised his glass in salute of Hope.

"Mom, is it ok if I have a glass of Champagne? I'm not 21 yet."

"No, you have some sparkling non-alcoholic fruit wine instead," Alexander said giving me a glass of sparkling grape juice.

The butler suddenly came in with a chocolate cake topped with strawberries and candles. It smelled heavenly.

"How did you know I love chocolate and strawberries, Alexander?", I asked.

"I just knew. You should say my name more often. It sounds magical when you say it," he whispered and I blushed once again.

They all started to sing "Happy Birthday to you" when suddenly I felt a blinding pain in between my eyes. I blinked rapidly to ease the pain. My vision started to blur. My body started to feel hot. My stomach started to feel queasy. I can't vomit in front of these people. What an embarrassing end to my birthday.

"Do you guys feel hot? I feel hot." Beads of sweat started to roll down my face. "Mom, I don't feel so good."

"Hope, you have rarely been sick before. Is it something you ate? The steak. Could be indigestion," my Mom lept from her chair to come to me. 1

"Stay back everyone," Alexander growled. At the corner of my eye, I saw 2 men come in our room. Alexander gave them a look to stay back.

"What do you mean stay back? She's in pain. Help me get my daughter to the hospital." All of a sudden, I could hear the sound of bones breaking. The pain came in pulses. It was the most painful thing I had ever felt. My mom was right. I was never sick before and I never went home with a broken bone. If I got a cut, it would magically disappear in hours without even a scar. But this! What is happening to me?!

"Hope, don't fight it. It will just become more painful. Just breathe," I heard Alexander say.

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I started doing what he said. I took long breaths like what I saw women do when they are in labor. Then, I heard it, the voice.

"Hope, it's time. Breathe baby girl. It will be over soon."

My bones started to break even more. My body started to morph into something. I could hear my Mom crying, not knowing what to do. My Dad was fighting the urge to run to me. I let out one deafening scream and it was over. The pain that suddenly came was gone. All I felt now was power and strength.

I looked down and saw paws.

"Hello Hope! I am your wolf. My name is Opal."

My mother looked at Alexander, "What have you done to my daughter?"

"Nothing beyond of what is her true nature."

"Hope, sweetie, is that you?", my father extended his hand to my nose. I came over and licked it then I laid down on my belly. "Dad, yes, it's me."

“Will she turn back? I mean, can she be human again?”, I hear my mother ask Alexander.

“Of course. This is her first shift. Oliver. Clothes please. David put the dressing screen there. Oliver, drape the clothes on the screen. Hope, darling, ask your wolf to shift back. But go behind the dressing screen first.”

“Ah, Opal, I need to shift back to human form. Can you do it for me? And oh, will it hurt? The pain was unbearable shifting to wolf form.”

“No dear it won’t hurt. Just a shimmer and you will be back as your human self.”

“Great to hear. Ok, we’re behind the screen. Ready to shift back when you are.”

I saw a shimmer of light. I looked down to see my naked self.

“Stay back. I’m naked. Ah...thanks for the clothes and underwear. Seems you got the same dress for me.”

“Hope, honey, you ok?”, my mother was crying.

“Yes, Mom. I’m ok. Just frazzled I’m naked in front of so many people. Are my shoes out there?”

“I have a pair of heels here. Size 8 right?”, Alexander said.

“Wow, you even know my shoe size.”

“Of course, you are my mate. We are connected you and I. Forever.”

I came out from behind the screen. I was mostly annoyed that I never knew I was a wolf. I mean, if I had just known, I would have asked my parents if I could go off on a retreat somewhere and shifted there, instead I had to shift at a fine-dining restaurant with my parents bawling their eyes out because their adopted daughter is some alien or something.

“What happened to your hair?,” my mom exclaims.

“What do you mean? Does anyone have a mirror please I can use? Or maybe there’s a restroom I can use.”

My mother came to me with her small handheld mirror. “Here, baby. Look.” The hair framing my face was no longer black. It was white, maybe silver even. It glistened in the light like glitter. My eyes shone like gold and had bright golden flecks in them. My eyelashes had grown like I was wearing falsies. My freckles gone. My skin now a pale white.

Strange though. My necklace was there like it didn’t break in the shift. Obviously, it possessed magic.

“You and your wolf are now one. It shows in your human form. So beautiful.”

“You, Mr. Alexander Ulrich, you have some explaining to do. You knew about this and said nothing. Now sit down all of you. I want to hear this. Mom, Dad, I am so sorry I had to scare you this way. Are you guys mad? It’s ok if don’t want me anymore.” I

My Dad and Mom came over to me and said, “Bear hug.” That meant nothing would break us apart.

“Thanks guys. I love you so much.” They smiled and sat back down at the table.

“It’s time for cake. I’m hungry. That, whatever you call it, uses a lot of energy.” We all laughed.

Chapter 8 Proposal

(Alexander POV)

I waited until Hope had her cake. I was going to explain her past and there was no easy

way to say your biological parents are dead. Better she gets some sugar into her system first.

“First of all, I would like to introduce myself formally. I am Alpha Alexander Adolpha-Ulrich of the Dark Moon Pack. I, too, am a wolf and the leader of my pack. This is Oliver, my Beta and David my Gamma. The Dark Moon Pack Territory is here in Washington State.”

“When I was looking at your family photo at your house, I noticed the locket you were wearing. That locket is the locket of famed Priestess Adella, the favorite Priestess of the Moon Goddess. She was murdered along with your Alpha father and if not all, most of the members of their pack.”

“My parents are dead? And here I thought they abandoned me,” she sighs with regret.

“Whoever left you with the Alarie’s knew you would be taken care of. No if’s or but’s.

The lands of the Crescent Moon Pack is not far from here. One of the wolves must have done business here before and knew your mother and father are well-loved in this town.” Alexander looks at Jim and Mirasol. “This is the reason why your apples are the sweetest and your trees bear fruit all year round. You were blessed by the Moon Goddess herself because both of you took it to look after Hope without any misforgivings.” 1

Jim looked at me and asked, “Why would someone murder her family? Hope is a kind sweet girl. If there was any bad in her we would have known.”

Alexander took a deep breath. “There is someone who is pure evil. He is known as The Rogue Lord. He was cursed to live as half human and half wolf, a lycan, for killing his newborn son.”

Mirasol gasped. “What kind of thing would do such a thing?!”

“Well, one in despair for losing his mate, wife, in childbirth. He just lost it. He didn’t think clearly through the pain. When he was cursed, the Moon Goddess foretold he would die from the hands of a child born by a Priestess and an Alpha. That’s where you fit in Hope.”

“I’m going to kill this Rogue Lord?,” Hope said incredulously, “I can’t even kill a spider let alone a half-wolf, half human who’s cursed ’til eternity.”

“You are what the wolves call The Destined One.’ You are the one who will bring peace to us all.”

“Ok. It’s like I’m hearing the storyline of The Matrix, you know Neo being The One.”

“This is all I know. Everyone thinks you are dead. Looking at that locket...I feel HOPE.”

Mirasol smiles, “See? The reason why I named her HOPE. My dear, I knew you were destined for great things. Well, I don’t like the killing part, but if there is a demon rogue out there, then sure. I’ll accept it.” She laughs.” But I still want you to become a doctor.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Alarie, wolves are different from humans. As you are called, husband and wife when you get married, we on the other hand call each other mates.”

“Because of the test of time, it has been very difficult for wolves to find their FATED mate, their soulmate. The one who completes the puzzle of our existence. Each wolf is believed to be a half of another wolf. Unfortunately, as I said, finding a fated mate has started to become difficult, wolves have started to mate even if they aren’t fated. We would die out if this wasn’t allowed.”

“When I turned 18, I thought this woman in my pack would be my fated mate. I was mistaken. When I reached 21 and took over as leader of my pack, I would visit other

packs to see if I could find my fated mate. Again, I only found disappointment. I travelled the world to various wolf colonies, searching. Again, I came out empty-handed.”

“At the beginning of this day, yes, I was irritated with all the work I had to finish. My sister, who usually travels to this area, is heavy with child. So, I took to her responsibilities including the purchasing of her favorite red delicious apples.”

“I would like to ask the Goddess forgiveness. When I thought today was an inconvenience, never did I think this would be the happiest day in my life.”

Jim looks at me, “You mean, our Hope, is your mate?”

Hope was the one who answered, “Yes, Dad. We are mates. Fated Mates.”

I smile at her and she smiles back. She takes my hands into hers as a sign of acceptance.

“So what does this mean? You two are going to elope or something?”

I laugh. “Something. Mr. and Mrs. Alarie, I would like to ask Hope’s hand in marriage.” I turn to Hope, kneel on one knee, pull out a small box and open it. “Hope Alarie, will you marry me?”

Everyone gasps. Except for my Beta Oliver and Gamma David who both burst in applause.

I was shocked. The ring was huge. A yellow diamond with blue-black sapphires around it. Talk about celebrating your 18th birthday with a BANG!

I looked at my mom and dad. Their faces were crushed. I had to fix this.

” Before I answer you Alexander... Mom, Dad, you can come live with us if you want. I mean, it’s time for the both of you to retire. Why not come with us? It’s alright if they come with us, right Alexander?,” I said sweetly so he wouldn’t refuse me this.

“Of course they can come live with us. I know you would want to protect them. If the Rogue Lord found out about them, he would torture them if he found out who they were to you.”

My mother’s face turned green. Torture?

“That settles it. Yes, I will marry you. Mom and Dad...get ready. We are off to an adventure.”

My mom and dad smile weakly. Everything was going to fast. One minute, I was their class valedictorian, in the next, I was going to be someone’s bride.

“But you still have to earn your medical degree.”

“Yes, Mother.” I hug the both of them.

I hear a champagne bottle pop open. Alexander’s friends started to celebrate.

Chapter 9 The Moon Goddess

(Hope POV)

We all decided it was best if Alexander and I got married in the morning. Alexander wanted to get married then and there, but my mother said it was a bad omen to get married in black. There was a boutique in the hotel and the seamstress rushed in to take my measurements to alter the wedding gown I picked out from their brochure.” She said the dress would be ready as well as the suit and dress my mother and father picked out. I was tired anyway. I didn’t want to go through my vows dead tired.

Alexander put on a pout, but I gave him a hug and Riss on his cheek so he wouldn’t feel too disappointed. It worked because he gave me his 1000 watt smile and ran his hands

down my back, which sent shivers down spine by the way, and agreed he could wait a bit more.

I'm really surprised that my parents were taking this quite well. I thought my father would disagree with all this. We just met Alexander Ulrich this afternoon and all of a sudden, I am engaged to this man who we hardly know, although for me it felt I have known him my whole life. My mother was the one who put more of a fight than my father. My father just sat back, watched with a twinkle in his eyes and looked really happy with the turn of events. I felt he knew more about my new life as a wolf than he was actually telling us. Maybe he was the reason why I was given to them when my parents died. Well, I have to thank my lucky stars that it was them and not some wolves who knew who I was and would exploit this information.

Alexander reserved the suites of this hotel for us. My mother and father was in see of the extravagant room given to them. I had the same reaction. I couldn't believe I'd be sleeping in such a luxurious room. Obviously, Alexander had money and was willing to spend it at my expense. The ring he bought me must have cost enough to buy a car maybe even a small house. I better make sure this ring never gets lost.

It was past 11 when we got to our rooms. Alexander lingered in my room when he showed me inside. I knew what was in his mind. He wanted to stay with me.

Unfortunately, my mother wouldn't agree to any of that. She was conservative in her ways. She said when we are married, she wouldn't care if we stayed glued together forever. Right now, Alexander would have to play a perfect gentleman until we have been married.

When he said good night, he raised my chin up and looked into my eyes. I stared back at him; I couldn't look away even if I tried. His dark blue-black eyes professed his love. It made my skin burn with intensity.

"Good night, my love. Tomorrow, you will be my wife and mate. We will never part. I will always be at your side and you at mine. I know this is whirlwind relationship for you, you being raised human, but for me, this is right. I promise you, I will never hurt you and will protect you with all of my being." He gently caressed my cheek. "Good night, my Luna." I wanted to say good night to him, but I was tongue-tied and all my brain cells went dead. All I could do is show him what I felt through my eyes. He smiled at me and made a growl of happiness. He turned and took his leave. I just stood there for a good while hoping he'd come back. I sighed. He has to act the perfect gentleman.

I still had to take a shower and brush my teeth. After my shower, I looked at the clock beside the bed. It was almost midnight. I yawned and sat on the bed. Finally, I can get some sleep. I lie down on the bed and fluff my pillows. I was about to fall asleep when Opal nudged me awake.

"Hope, darling. Wake up. The Moon Goddess would like to commune with you," Opal said.

"I'm dead tired. Will I need to shift into you to speak with her?" I ask while yawning.

"No dear. You just need to go outside onto the balcony and step into the moonlight." Opal said.

"Ok. That shouldn't be too hard." I groggily walk out onto the balcony of my hotel room and into the white light of the Moon. I could see the moon overhead. It was huge and looked so close. I waited. Did I have to utter a prayer or something? "Just wait." Opal told me, her ears up in anticipation.

A flash of light suddenly appeared. I was blanketed in its warmth. I could feel myself floating like I was being carried. It was as if I was being held in a motherly embrace. "Greetings Stella! Or do you prefer I use Hope?" a woman's voice said. It was a dreamy husky lullaby kind of voice. The type of voice that makes you all sleepy and calm inside. "Moon Goddess, I prefer Hope. I have, after all, been called Hope for almost 18 years. Is Stella the name my biological parents named me with?" "Yes, my dear child. You were named Stella Coeli Brandt of the Crescent Moon Pack, Stella Coeli meaning "Star in the Sky." You were your father's firstborn pup which would have made you Alpha of the Pack if your pack survived. Sadly, only a few are remaining. This is the reason why I have mated you with Alpha Alexander. Both your territories are beside one another which will make it easy for both your packs to merge into one." "You are also the firstborn of a Priestess which makes you a Priestess by birth, a very powerful one. The pureness of your soul makes you a powerful conduit of energy." "Child, you have an aunt. The sister of your mother. She has hidden you these 18 years. Find her. She will help you start your training." "Moon Goddess, how do I find her? I don't know where to start. I don't even have a picture of her." "Travel with your mate. First, go to the barren lands of the Crescent Moon Pack. Spill a drop of your blood onto the lands. Blood sacrificed forgives bloodshed. Next, follow your mate into his territory. Look for the Magnolia tree where the honeysuckles bloom. There you will find the one with the Crescent Moon and Star symbol. Remember, Hope, forgiveness is more powerful than vengeance. Go child. Be blessed." I flutter my eyes open. Beside me was Alexander...sleeping!

Chapter 10 Our Parents

"What are you doing here? How did you get inside my room?", I scream trying to get out of his embrace. I was raised conservative. I knew if my mom found out, I wouldn't hear the last of it. "Uhmhhh, through there," he said lazily, pointing at the adjoining doors of our bedrooms. "Out! My mom will have a fit if she sees you here." "Hey! It was your mom who said I could sleep here. You scared the bejeezus out of us," he pulls me back in his arms and signed, relieved I was fine. His hands were moving up and down my arms. They were giving me goosebumps. "Don't you feel that. That connection. I can't bear to lose you. Please don't do that again." "What?" "Talk to yourself like you're in a trance then faint like your dead." "Sorry. Opal, my wolf, said the Moon Goddess wanted to talk to me. I thought it was normal for all wolves to do that." "No, my love. Only special wolves whose mothers were priestesses." "My love?" "Yes. You are my love," Alexander sighs. He lays me down on the bed and props his head up with his hand. "I can't stay away from you. We may not know each other well, but it feels like I do know you." He rubs my lips with his thumb. "I promised your mom I

wouldn't do anything ungentlemanly, but I have this craving to just kiss you."

He kisses my lips lightly at first, parting my lips with a flick of his tongue. My first kiss! I part my lips and his tongue enters mine with longing. He deepens the kiss and I feel a rush of desire. So this is what kissing is like. Hmm... It felt good. I arch my body where his hand is, brushing his hand with my breast. He instinctively cups it, rubbing his thumbs on my erect nipples.

"Woah. Let's get married first. I know this is a human ceremony and is not aligned with wolf laws, but I feel I should give this to your parents. They have been good to you, to me. They took care of you for me. It's the least I can do."

"Don't worry, my love, I will bring you to heights of pleasure you have never known. Now, let's have breakfast and get ready. Now, you become my wife. Later, you become my Luna." He jumps off the bed and picks up the hotel room phone to call for breakfast. "Alexander, darling, I need to go to the Crescent Moon Pack territory before we go to yours."

"As instructed by the Moon Goddess herself? Sure. We will go to your territory before heading to mine. It's on the way anyway."

I get up and walk to the breakfast table at the balcony. I have to find my aunt. If she is my mother's sister maybe she has my coloring or maybe my eyes. I hope it will be easy. I don't want to have to start asking people if they knew the Priestess named Adella. I pick up my smartphone and start to do a web search on Priestesses and wolves. I made a mental note to head to the library or bookstore for books so I can read up on my kind.

"Hmm...reading material? The pack has a library so you don't need to go anywhere to find books on wolves, Priestesses or magic spells." Alexander kissed the top of my head and say down beside me. "My parents will be here shortly by helicopter. They insisted they be here." They hear a knock on the door. "And this must be your parents."

2

"Hope, honey, you ok? You fainted on the balcony last night. The hotel doctor said you were fine, but Alexander here insisted he stay with you. Did you sleep ok?," my mom rushed in with a carry-on case trailing behind her.

"I went back to the house and got some of our things. Your father will be here shortly. He's packing up all the stuff he can't leave without. I told him we can hire movers to bring all our stuff to our new home."

"Mom, I told you my people can do that for you," Alexander said.

"Did you just call my mom, Mom?"

"Yes, my love and I expect you call my parents Mama and Papa, too."

"Hope, here, why don't you change in this. Your night gown is see-through."

I smile," Sure, Mom. Thanks for bringing me some stuff." I head to the bathroom and take a quick shower and change. When I come out, my Dad was already here and they were all having breakfast together. I was putting some cream cheese on my bagel when we heard a knock on the door.

Alexander opens the door. "Alpha, your mother and father have arrived."

"Mam, Pap, thank you for coming on short notice." Alexander gives his mother and father a brief hug.

"Your sister would have been here too if it weren't for the pack doctor telling her it wasn't good to fly in her condition."

Alexander laughs and leads them to the balcony. "Mam, Pap, this is my mate Hope and her parents Jim and Mirasol Alarie. Jim, Mirasol, my parents, Diane and Howard."

Diane was a soft-spoken stunning middle-aged woman. She was tall with dark hair that had wisps of white in them. She had crystal blue eyes that twinkled in the sun. Howard was still a muscular man. Good build runs in the family, she thought. Most of his hair was now silver with age just like her Dad's.

"Howard, how have you been? It's been some time since the last I saw you."

"Jim Alarie, you're Hope's father? Sonofagun. Jim and I are close friends. We were together during the alliance, between the Clan of Wolves and Humans."

"You knew about wolves Jim and you didn't tell me?!", my mom yells.

"Sorry Mirasol. I made a pact long ago to never speak of what I know."

"Just like Hope's family, my family was murdered too. Maybe since we've had similar experiences, I have always felt this bond with Hope."

"Mirasol, honey, it was forbidden to talk about wolves, the war. We went against The Rogue Lord years ago before I even met you. I joined the alliance to avenge my family. I know, I know...I look like I can't even hurt a fly. I confess, I have killed wolves, Rogue wolves. They were destroying lands, villages and towns. Kidnapping women, children, even men...human or wolf. The women they would rape. If the women became pregnant, they would lock them up in cages until they gave birth. If it were a boy, they would train him to be a warrior. If it were a girl, they would become slaves. I was the same age as Hope when they attacked Chelan. In the history books, it was called "The Fire of Apples Fields of '90. They burned all the apple trees for miles. My mother, they dragged her from the house and raped her while my father watched. Then when they were finished with my mother, they took father and brother and slashed them in half."

"I was about to get slashed in half too when I took this silver necklace I had and slashed the asshole in the face. He screamed in pain and I saw the smoke coming from his face. Silver burns their skin and it takes a good while for the burning to stop. I never took this ugly necklace off ever since that night. Reason why I gave Mirasol that silver watch of hers. For protection."

"Honestly, I never knew Hope was a wolf. You see, Hope would play with this necklace when she sat on my lap as a kid. She would never burn. So, my surprise when she shifted."

Howard extended his hand, "May I?", looking at the silver necklace.

"Sure. I know what you're thinking. Maybe it isn't silver or if it is, Hope may be immune to silver. Let's test the theory."

Howard moves and touches the necklace and yelps. A burn mark of my Dad's necklace is seen on his finger. The smell was horrible.

"That's silver all right. Look my finger is still hissing."

"Hope, your turn."

I walk to my Dad and suddenly feel panic. Judging by Howard's reaction, it looked painful and it took a while for the burning to stop. I inhaled deeply. Here goes nothing. I touch the necklace. Nothing. I wrap my hand around it. Nothing.

"A wolf immune to silver. Well, I'll be."

"You are definitely special," Alexander takes my hand and kisses my palm. "Now, let's all sit down and have breakfast before we get ready for the wedding."

Chapter 11 The Wedding

The phone rings in the suite. Alexander answers and we are told the dresses and suits are on their way up. The pastor and the venue were ready. We all just needed to get dressed and get there.

Alexander was ushered to his bedroom. Human tradition states the groom should not see the bride before the wedding. He tried to explain it didn't matter because we were wolves, but my mom gave him a "nice try" kind of look and told him for now we play like humans. He grumbled something under his breath and took his suit to change in the other room.

The seamstress helped me into my gown. It was beautiful backless creation. The long sleeves were made of lace, the skirt made of satin. My mom looked at me dreamily. She said she was looking at an angel. The seamstress agreed.

The white of my hair was put in a half bun. The black half cascaded on my back in curls. The make-up artist put minimal make-up on my face. She said I was beautiful even without it. She just made sure my hair gave me the effect she wanted people to see... A floating angel.

I heard a knock on the door. My mother answered it and ushered Alexander's mother inside.

"Ok. I know I'm not entirely human, but here." She put a beautiful tennis bracelet made of diamonds on my wrist. "This is your something borrowed."

"Oh dear me. I forgot. Something old, something new. Something borrowed, something blue," my mom screeched.

"Well my locket is old. My underwear is new. Now, I have something borrowed. All I need is something blue."

"Here, how about a blue rubberband."

"Mom, seriously. A blue rubberband? Anything else? I mean, something just a bit more wedding friendly?"

The make-up artist showed me a blue clip with a fake blue gem in it. Small and can be placed in my bun. I said thank you. Now, I felt ready to get married.

"They are all downstairs waiting. Shall we?," said Diane. I nodded. I stood up and walked out the door. My Dad and Howard were waiting in the hallway for us. My Dad took one arm and Howard took the other. They guided me down the grand staircase while my mom and Diane helped with my gown.

What was taking them so long? I was about to tell Oliver to phone the room when I saw her.

She looked like an angel floating down the staircase as she headed towards me. Her smell was intoxicating. Echo was running in circles trying to get me to go to her. "Echo, she has to do the bride march with her father. We have to wait for her father to hand her to us. That's how humans do it."

The violinists started playing "Here Comes the Bride" and she positioned herself at the end of the aisle with her father. The 2 mothers and my father came to the front where I, Oliver and David were standing.

They started to walk towards us. Her face was full of uncertainty as she started to walk. When her eyes locked with mine, the uncertainty was gone, replaced with a big smile that held trust.

Jim shakes my hand and tells me to take care of his daughter or he'll kill me. No doubt

about that. He confessed to killing rogues. He definitely has what it takes to kill me. Finally, here she is. The most beautiful woman on the planet: Mine. Damn, that walk seemed like it took forever. Well, good things come to those who wait. Oh, and how I've waited.

I take her hand and kiss it. I feel the electricity run through me. I will never tire of this feeling. I just loved it.

The Pastor starts talking about the union of 2 people blah, blah, blah. Can't we just go directly to the part "Til death do us part"? Echo was howling his impatience in my head. I know, boy, I'm getting impatient too.

· "Alexander Adolpha- Ulrich, do you take Hope Elizabeth Alarie as your lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold,

from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, until death do you part?"

"I do." I slip the wedding ring on Hope's dainty finger. Even her fingers are beautiful. Hope Elizabeth Alarie, do you take Alexander Adolpha-Ulrich as your lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, until death do you part?"

"I do." She slips the platinum band on my finger. I feel my skin tingle.

"I now pronounce you, husband and wife. You may now kiss the bride."

I lift her veil. Our eyes lock. Those beautiful gold eyes. I have never seen such a color. I am blessed to call her mine.

"I love you, Hope. You don't have to say I love you to me yet if you aren't ready. Just know I am truly and deeply in love with you. I can't wait for us to live our lives together. As mates."

"Alexander, you make me happy. I am looking forward to being with you forever."

I put my arms around her waist, closing the gap between us. I kiss her. I can feel her body melt in my arms. I try to deepen the kiss when I hear my father bellow, "Son, you can do that during the honeymoon!"

I peeled my lips away from hers and turned to glare at my father. They all start laughing and congratulating the both of us. My mother comes toward us and hugs Hope. "Oh, I have another daughter! That gown is just beautiful on you, Hope. You can wear this gown later for the mating ceremony tonight. You are just stunning in it."

"No party? Reception?"

"The party is later tonight after the mating ceremony. Right now, we drive to Crescent Moon territory. It's a 2 hour drive."

"What happens at a mating ceremony? Is it like a wedding?"

I laugh. "I'll tell you all about it during the drive to the territory. Now go get dressed. Be sure to put on something comfortable. It's a long drive there."

Chapter 12 Road Trip

I hurry back to the room. The seamstress was already there waiting to assist me. She helps me out of my gown and

· places the gown in a huge box and then gives it to Oliver and tells him to give it to Alexander's mother.

After she closed the door behind her, I put on one of my track suits. Well, Alexander did

say to dress comfortably for the trip.

He knocks on the adjoining door and walks in. He looks handsome in blue jeans and a black shirt. Well, he looks handsome in anything without even trying. How is that even possible? Ugh.

"Hope, you ready?" He gives me that smile of his. I feel my legs buckle underneath me. I check my bags and see if everything is there. "Sure. Let's go."

*Don't worry. If you forget anything, the staff will ship it to us. I own this hotel."

"You own the hotel?" I said shocked.

"WE own the hotel. What is mine is yours and what's yours is mine."

"Sorry. I didn't mean it that way. I just didn't know you own a hotel...ah...this hotel."

He takes my hand, "I know what you meant, my love. Come. The car is waiting. If you need to visit your former pack's lands, we need to do it when there is still daylight."

He puts a possessive arm around me and leads me out of the hotel to a Rolls-Royce. Oliver was already waiting with the door open.

"We are driving in a Rolls-Royce?" I squealed.

"Yes, my love. Why?"

"Can I drive? Please. Pretty please. I have never driven a luxury car. I'll be careful. I promise." I beg Alexander.

"Darling, you can drive all the luxury cars on the territory. Just not now. Stay with me in the back. Please. I still have to tell you about the mating ceremony." He gives me an "end of discussion" look.

I pout. I give Oliver a "I tried" look which makes him laugh, but he was immediately silenced by Alexander.

I get in the car. Even the interior smells like luxury. The leather was so smooth and soft. It was so spacious inside there was space to stretch my legs. I let out a whistle. My mate owns a Rolls-Royce. How rich is he?

It's not like we, the Alarie's, were poor. My parents could afford nice things once in a while but a Rolls-Royce? Not even close.

Alexander gets off his phone, steps inside the car. Oliver closes the door after.

Alexander then scoops me up to sit in the middle of the car while he sat near the window. He then put on my seatbelt as well as his. "Oliver, partition up please." "Yes, Alpha." A partition starts to slide down in the middle of the car, separating us from those at the front of the car.

"Alexander, I didn't see my parents."

"My love, they flew with my parents in the helicopter. They should be there at the Pack's lands within the hour."

"Thank you for flying them there."

"Of course. I want our parents to bond. We are all one big family now. Are you tired? Here, rest your head on me." He positions me with my head on his chest. Then he strokes my arm and kisses the top of my head.

"You always smell so good," I say aloud, gasping. How embarrassing! I actually said that out loud. Hope, dear, he feels the same way too," Opal said, reassuring me.

He smiled, "And you always smell so delicious. It's like I want to eat you."

"Really?" I look up at him, daring him to.

"Oh yes." He pulls me up and starts kissing me. Slowly, licking my lips, nibbling, teasing me. I whimper in protest, wanting more. I move my hands across his chest, feeling the

muscles tense underneath his shirt. I feel a surge of confidence from his reaction and move my hands down... past his stomach, towards his...

He suddenly pulls away and I feel embarrassed. Did I do something wrong? I have never done this before.

He sees the look on my face and starts to kiss away my fears. First, my forehead, then my cheeks, then my nose but not my lips.

"Hope, I'm not a saint. I can hardly resist you as it is. I want your, our first time to be perfect. Not at the back of a car."

"This isn't just any car. This is a Rolls-Royce. Imagine losing your virginity in a baby like this."

He laughed at my enthusiasm. "So you like cars. Any car in particular?"

"A cherry red Ferrari." It was the first car that popped into my mind.

"Ok. Your wish is my command."

"What do you mean? No. You aren't going to get me a Ferrari...right? Or are you?"

"You deserve a wedding gift."

"A wedding gift? Yeah, maybe a house, a TV or a refrigerator. You know. Something practical."

"A Ferrari can be practical. If you put it to good use." He argues.

"Only rich people talk the way you do. How rich are you? I should know. I am your wife, mate... You know what I mean."

He takes one of my hands, places his nose in my palms and inhales deeply. He rolls his eyes like he was on drugs are something. I giggle at his expression.

"My beautiful wife, my net worth is close to half a billion dollars. I have businesses here and abroad. I take care of the Pack. I build them houses, schools and a hospital. You will see what I have done over the years as Alpha to my pack and as a businessman. Whatever I have, my darling mate, half is now yours."

"You make me sound like a gold-digger."

"You aren't a gold-digger. I found you, remember?"

I looked into his eyes. His eyes twinkled with amusement.

"That doesn't sound too reassuring." I pouted.

"How about this, my love. There is no one else in the world I would rather be with than you."

Chapter 13 Barren Lands

Her golden eyes were staring into mine. I felt naked. Like she could see right through me.

I had to stop her hand from going down my navel. If her hands were able to, ah, travel further down my body, she would be straddling me with me inside her at the back seat of this car. Who cares if Oliver and David were with us in the car?

Just thinking of her on top of me naked has gotten me hard. Damn, I need to stay the perfect gentleman just a while longer.

I pull her to me and place her back against my chest. While humans use rings to symbolize a union, we wolves mark our mates."

"Mark? Like a tattoo?"

"Not quite like a tattoo." I make her sit properly facing me and I look into those gold eyes. I move her hair and expose her beautiful neck. I run my fingers down her neck to

where it meets her clavicle: "I have to bite you here."

"Next you're going to suck my blood."

"I'm not a vampire."

"Oooooohhhh, do vampires exist?"

"Maybe. You have to find out for yourself."

"Awww. No fun." She wrinkles her nose into a pout. So adorable. Ok. You bite me and that's it?"

"That's it. I mark you and you become Luna."

"Luna? Am I like the queen of the pack?"

I laugh. So innocent. "Kind of like that. You rule by my side. Our bond will make me stronger, our pack stronger. And because you're so special, I know we will become stronger than ever." I kiss her nose.

"Now you sound like a gold-digger."

"I'm guilty as charge. I have no shame," she laughs and rests her head on my chest, snuggling as close as she could. I felt my pants tighten. Mating ceremony please come. David was driving fast to get to the barren lands as soon as possible. I don't know what Hope knows about the lands of her former pack, but for 18 years, the land has been nothing but a barren waste land. All dark, damp, everything in it...dead. No one dare travel near the barren lands at dark. It is said many of those who did, committed suicide. The Dark Moon Pack territory was separated from the barren lands by a creek that comes from the mountains. The water of the creek has 2 colors. One half is blue, the other half black.

Before the famed Priestess Adella and Alpha Davis were murdered, the 2 packs were strong allies and trade partners. My father told me, it came as a shock to hear the Rogue Lord had found Priestess Adella. She was the favorite of the Moon Goddess and communed with her regularly. Adella was also the wisest and most knowledgeable of all the Priestesses – she knew what runes, spells and incantations to use to make her invisible to her enemies. When Crescent Moon was attacked by the Rogue Army, the warriors of the Dark Moon Pack came to their aid through the creek that separates our 2 boundaries, however as hard as they tried, they couldn't get past the creek. My father believes someone in the Crescent Moon Pack betrayed Adella and Davis and to cover it up, had all the members killed during the onslaught.

When the rain stopped the night of the attack, the land that once was green, had turned black and a wall of thorns, which grew overnight, surrounded it.

When the rain stopped the night of the attack, the land that once was green, had turned black and a wall of thorns, which grew overnight, surrounded it.

"Alpha, we're here." David stops the car. Oliver steps out, motions to our entourage to wait near the boundaries of our lands and opens the door on my side. I step out. I catch a whiff of the putrid smell of the barren lands and pray to the Goddess we won't be staying long.

Hope comes out of the car and I expect her to wrinkle her nose from the smell. Instead, she opens her purse, takes a small safety pin, cleans it with an alcohol wipe and pricks her finger. Crouching down, she places a drop of her blood on the dirt of the barren lands.

A wailing sound from deep within the ground pierced the air, steam billowed out like clouds, the earth started to shake and the tall wall of thorns started collapsing. I

hurriedly brought Hope back into the car. Oliver jumped inside and told David to drive. David floored the car to put some distance between us and the territory. We could feel the earth move as we drove off. We reached the entourage when Hope motioned to David to park the car.

“David park over there please. Blood sacrificed forgives bloodshed. The Moon Goddess said that. My blood is suppose to heal the land. Look, it’s working.”

We all look outside. The collapsed wall of thorns was now sinking into the ground. The dark clouds that hovered constantly above the land were now slowly moving away letting the sunshine in. Wherever the light of the sun hit on the black land, the black melted away to show green. The dead trees and shrubs started to bloom. The Goddess has blessed this land once more.

Oliver gave out a sigh of relief. “I thought the ground was going to open up and swallow us whole. I’m not used to this magic stuff. Neither is David. Is it too much to ask we get a heads up before doing something like that again?”

“Oliver.” Alexander growled.

“I mean that respectfully, Luna.” He bows his head.

“I’m sorry, Oliver. You’re right. I’m not used to this magic stuff either. I didn’t know that was going to happen. I’m usually very careful. Next time, we treat it like a science project. Goggles, lab coat and all. Ok?”

“Yes, Luna.”

“Wow. It’s beautiful here. My Dad is going to want to plant apples here.”

“You are the firstborn and only heir to the Crescent Moon Pack. That makes you Alpha. What would you want to do with the lands?”

“Merge territories with yours and give some land to my Dad to plant apples.

“So be it. I’ll get the paperwork done so we can sign a merging of territories. Would you like to build a house here?”

“Now that’s a wedding gift I want. Make it 2 houses. The other for my parents. And..”

“Yes, my love?”

“I want that cherry red Ferrari and this Rolls parked in our garage.”

“I like the sound of OUR.”

“You do...hmmmm.” She crawls onto my lap and starts to kiss me.

Oliver coughs. We both break apart from our kiss. “Alpha, Luna. The transformation is complete.”

“David, let’s go home. Tomorrow we will inspect these lands.”

She tries to get off my lap. “Oliver, partition please.”

“Where are you going, my sweet? I’m not finished with you yet.” He grabs my hand and kisses the finger 1 pricked earlier. I felt all the hurt fade away.

Chapter 14 My New Home

I tried to get off his lap, but he was too strong. He unzipped the hoodie of my track suit. All I had underneath was

- a sports bra. He pulled down a part of my sports bra to reveal one of breasts.

“No one else will ever touch you. You are mine. If anyone does, I will kill them.”

He touched my nipple and I melted. I couldn’t move. I just waited there in anticipation. I wanted him to do whatever he wanted to do with me.

“So beautiful. Look how it responds to my touch. Your breast is quivering.”

“Alexander, please.”

“Oh yes. Say my name Hope.”

“Alexander. Darling. I want you.”

He growled. It was what he was waiting to hear. For me to say I want him.

He cupped my breast with his hand and kissed me. It was a kiss full of longing. I could feel his hand going down, pulling down the pants of my track suit.

His hand was outside my panties, stroking. “You’re wet. Let me...”

He whipped my panties to the side. His fingers went through the folds, probing, finding my core.

I had no idea what was happening. I felt this painful need for release where he was stroking. I could feel the heat building between my legs and I just wanted him to continue rubbing it until I found what I was looking for.

“Uhm, my fingers are drenched.” He showed me his fingers. They were wet. My eyes widened as I watched him lick my juices from his fingers. “So terribly sweet.” His fingers went back to stroke me and once again he lifted his fingers and tasted me. He growled with satisfaction.

“Alexander, I need you to...”

“I know, baby. I know what you want.”

He stroked my core and he watched me writhed in pleasure. Faster and faster he stroked. His fingers slipping inside of me, caressing me from within. I almost screamed with pleasure. Then, he went back to my core and stroked, playing with the engorged nub until I begged him for release. “Yes, Hope. Say my name.”

“Alexander, yes please...” He stroked faster while kissing my neck. I felt myself reaching my climax, I arched my back, and gave into the waves of ecstasy. I was quivering from the release. I let out a jagged breathe. It was my first time and it was amazing.

He looked into my eyes as I came back to earth. “Your eyes are a color of the red-orange sky during sunset. Those eyes are only for me.”

I nodded weakly. I couldn’t believe I could be this sexual. I always thought I was frigid.

“Let me fix you up. We are almost home. Later, we finish our unfinished business.”

“We aren’t done?”

“Far from it. You won’t sleep tonight darling. “ He zips my track suit and fixes my hair.

“Beautiful, but I prefer you naked.”

The middle partition moves as we enter Dark Moon Pack territory. Oliver coughs to grab our attention. “Alpha, we are going through the gates.”

“Thank you Oliver. Go through the back part of the house.”

“Alpha, your mother and sister has an entourage waiting for you at the front of the mansion.”

“Damn. I don’t want everyone fawning over my mate.”

“Alpha, they’ll fawn whether you like it or not.”

David stops the car in front of a beautiful mansion. At the steps were a bunch of people waiting in anticipation. Oliver jumps out and opens the door. Alexander walks out and I follow suit.

Everyone gasps at the sight of me. Then silence. Someone asks, “Priestess Adèlla? Is that you?”

The door of the mansion suddenly opens and out comes a young woman who looks like Alexander – same dark hair and blue-black eyes- waddling as much as her pregnant

body can allow her.

“Alex, dear brother, you’re here. I thought you were going to take the back entrance.”

“There seems to be a miscommunication between my Beta and I.”

“Gotcha. I knew you were going to take the back entrance. Nope, I won’t let you hide our future Luna.”

“I’m not hiding her. I’m protecting her.”

“Nice try. But I know you. You’re a jealous sonofagun. You can’t lie to me.” She turns to me. “Mama was right. You are a beauty. I’m Amanda, this brat’s baby sister. Come now, give me a hug.” I give her a hug and tell her I love her accent.

“I grew up in Alabama. Nana and I, we were sent there during the War. Had a happy childhood even if I was away from home.” She stops like she forgot to tell us something.

“By the way, if you’re gonna look for mama and papa, they are busy with the venue, the catering, plus helping Hope’s folks into their new home. While I have to make sure your gown is perfect for tonight.”

“I thought I was going to wear my wedding gown tonight.”

“Sure, honey, just need a few alterations here and there.”

“Wait, I know you. Amanda Ulrich-Hemming? The famous fashion designer?”

“Oh, blessed me. Someone who knows the designer and not the models. I already love you.” She turns to the people. “Thank you for welcoming our new Luna. Now, let’s get ready for the ceremony. Go on.”

Everyone started moving except for one. “Emily, you ok sugar?”

“I saw Priestess Adella die. She can’t be her.”

“This is Hope. Rumor has it she’s Adella’s daughter. You know, the one who got away.”

Emily’s eyes widened in fear. “Oh Emily, scoot. No need to be afraid.” I

“Brother, by the way, wipe that lipstick off your face before you go see the folks,”

Amanda laughs. I blush to the roots of my hair. Alexander takes a hanky from his pocket and wipes off the lipstick. “I’m keeping this as a souvenir. I’ll never have it washed.” I blush again. He laughs. “I love it when I make you blush.”

I walked into the pack mansion. It was huge. 4 stories. Pictures were hanging on the wall. I saw a picture of the Ulrichs with a woman who had my eyes and white hair. She was standing beside a big man with jet black hair and green eyes. They were both smiling. The woman had her arms on her stomach in a protective manner and then I saw the locket.

“Alexander, is that who I think it is?”

“Yes, that is Priestess Adella. One of her last photos. She was pregnant at the time with you.”

“I have her eyes. Her honey colored eyes.”

“Gold darling. You have gold eyes. Red-orange when your…”

I slap him on his arm. He laughs. “Well, I’ll lead you to our room. I haven’t started building our home yet. So, we stay here for now.”

We climb the grand staircase to the 2nd floor and head to the East wing. There were only 2 doors on the floor.

“On the left is our room and on the right is my office. So, it won’t be hard for you to find me if you need me.” He works and wiggles his eyebrows. Opal, gives an enthusiastic bark. If we keep thinking like that, we won’t get any work done.

I open the door on the left and I gasp. The room was huge. It had a walk-in closet. Half

was occupied by Alexander's things while the other half was empty. "I told you I have been waiting for you. This space is yours."

I turn to open the double doors at the other end and find a bathroom bigger than my old room at home. His and her vanity. A huge bath tub, a separate shower and a small room with a toilet.

I walk back to the room pull away the curtains. Double doors leading to a balcony! Equipped with a breakfast table, lounge chairs and a sofa. Yes, I can chill here, read a book and watch the sunset. And I did just that, I sat down and looked into the horizon.

Chapter 15 Mind Link

(Alexander POV)

It was refreshing to see a she-wolf walk around my room, well, other than my mother or sister. She wasn't exactly poor, but was amazed how extravagant the room was. My long line of ancestors had invested money well in their days which had made the Ulrich family very rich.

"She would have been rich on her own if her pack wasn't murdered," I hear Echo speak the truth.

"But would she still be this kind and helpful person I am with now?" I ask him.

"She would. It is in her nature. See. Look at her staring into the horizon. She sees pleasure in the simple things in life. Although, I believe the people who raised her did a good job." My wolf says matter-of-factly.

I walk out into the balcony and see her smiling. Oh, she was so precious. "I love watching the sun set. It's my favorite time of the day."

I kiss her on the top of her head. "I asked the staff to bring us some food. They'll set it up here on the balcony so you can enjoy your first sunset here. I just need to check on some things in the office. You'll be ok here on your own?"

"Sure. I want to change into my PJ's and rest until the ceremony. I'm a bit tired. This morning I got married. Then, I restored my territory and now, a mating ceremony. My birthday is a day full of surprises I will never forget."

"All your bags are already in the closet. Just tell me if you need anything." I kiss her. Damn, I don't want to leave her, but I have to finish some paper work. "I'll have your mother come over when they are done moving in." I tell her before I leave the room.

(Hope POV)

When he leaves, I fill the tub with water and put some bubbles in. Chamomile. It's been a long day and I need to relax; I still have the mating ceremony to do. I strip off my clothes and soak in the tub. The water was starting to become cold when I heard the door open and someone come in. Must be Alexander or the food he had sent up.

"You must leave!"

I turn around and see the woman named Emily with a knife in her hand. I try to reach for a towel so I can get out of the tub. "Emily, no need to be scared. I won't hurt you. I'm just a nobody." I try to distract her with my words. I finally grab a big towel and wrap myself in it without taking my eyes off of her. I get out of the tub and dry my feet quickly on the mat near the tub. I don't want to slip if I need to make a run for it.

"You will bring destruction and despair to this pack. The Crescent Moon Pack is evidence of this. I will not watch my family die because of you, daughter of Adella! If you

will not leave, then you must die!”

She swings the knife in her hands and tries to cut me. I move away. “Opal, what do I do?”

“Mind link with Alexander. Tell him you are in trouble. Focus.”

“Can’t I just scream instead?”

“Hope, focus! Tell Alexander you are in trouble.”

“How can I focus when there’s a crazy lady trying to gut me?!”

Emily lunges forward again, but misses me. I try moving closer to the doorway of the bathroom. She laughs knowing what I’m trying to do and blocks me.

– “Hope Alarie-Ulrich, focus and send a message to our mate!”

Ok. Focus, focus, focus.

“Alexander, I’m in trouble. Someone is trying to kill me. Help!”

The door suddenly bursts open and in two paces, Alexander corners Emily and wrenches the knife from out of her hands. The knife falls on the floor. Oliver bursts into the room too with David not too far behind.

“Oliver take her to the dungeons and call all wolves who had merged with us after the War. It seems we have wolves who would want to avenge their families. Tell them if they try to kill Hope, I will kill them and lock up the remaining members of their family.”

David coughs. He had his back towards us since I was only wrapped in a towel. “Alpha, I will double the security and will only allow trusted wolves in the packhouse for now.”

He follows Oliver.

“Don’t tell my parents please. I don’t want them to worry.” I tell them.

David nods his head and closes the door behind him.

I sat down on the edge of the tub. I can’t believe people want to kill me. I have only been here for an hour. I start crying. I think we should build a house on my territory and move out. Why would they want to kill me?

“I’m sorry Hope. I have failed you. I should have doubled security. I had a feeling we had wolves who still had a vendetta. I just thought after 18 long years, everyone would forget. Don’t worry. I’ll get this under control.” He rubs my back and I feel my skin tingle at his touch.

“It’s not your fault. It’s people...or wolves who want to kill. That’s not right. This is why I want to be a doctor. I want to heal not hurt.”

“Well, your mother was a Priestess. She had the gift of life. She could make a barren women conceive, a dead tree blossom. She was known for her gift. During the War, she healed every wolf. She was instrumental in our victory. Then she became pregnant and the prophecy of “The Destined One” was rekindled.”

I saw the knife, walked over to it and picked it up. It was mostly covered in cloth. What a strange thing to do.

“Why is this covered in cloth?” I ask Alexander.

“Because it’s made of silver.”

Chapter 16 The Other with the Crescent Moon and Star Symbol

Oliver and David guided Emily to the path of the dungeons at the edge of the property. Whispers started as the other wolves watched a frightened Emily being brought to her cell.

A man hurried back to his hut to look for his mate.

“Cecilia! There is something happening within the pack.”

A middle-aged woman with streaks of white in her brown hair walked out to the living room of their small hut. “What do you mean?”

“A woman and her family has arrived. There are whispers she is Adella’s long lost daughter. She has her golden eyes.”

“My niece is here? How can that be? We left her with humans.”

“She is the fated mate of Alpha Alexander, our new Luna. A mating ceremony will be happening soon. How he found her, I do not know.”

Cecilia sighed. She watched her niece grow up hidden in the shadows. As often as she could, she would visit the red farmhouse with white shutters and say an incantation and place protection charms to keep her safe. Cecilia would wait for Amanda or her mother to make a trip to Chelan. Amanda would usually bring the big truck for her furniture and clothing deliveries and she would hide in the truck to and from Chelan.

About 3 months ago, before she made her way to the big truck full of deliveries, she heard a voice saying, “Stop. It is time.” The voice was unfamiliar. Surely, it wasn’t her wolf. She decided not to listen to the voice and was about to sneak in the truck when she saw one of Alexander’s men enter the truck. That’s a complication. Even if I were invisible, my scent would surely be picked up in the enclosed space. Now, Stella is here. Soon to be Luna to this pack.

The Rogue Lord will know of this soon. He has spies here that lurk in the shadows. I need to get to my niece soon. I need to help her. Tomorrow, I will slip her a note when I come to take her laundry.

Cecilia looked at her right arm where her Crescent Moon and Star symbol was located. She knew something was happening when her mark started to darken. In the moonlight, the symbol would glisten, a sign her niece was becoming stronger. And tonight under the full moon of the Summer Solstice, she will be marked by Alpha Alexander making her his mate and Luna of the Dark Moon Pack.

She knew The Rogue Lord was looking for her, for them. Just to be safe, she put a spell on Bruno that doesn’t allow him to speak of her to anyone. She would exit the territory from time to time and spread out her scent to throw them off. However, now Stella will become Luna, she can no longer hide. She must train her niece against a mighty foe who is hellbent in killing them all.

I put on my scruffy PJ’s I wear when I just want to chill at home and do nothing. I see the food was already on the table. I look out and see the venue of our mating ceremony has been covered with rose petals. The trees were adorned with capiz lights. A trellis with flowers stood at the spot where Alexander and I will be standing. Spotlights surrounded the area. It was just perfect.

I look beyond the venue and see a Magnolia tree with honeysuckles all around it. I remember what the Moon Goddess told me. Look for the one who carries the symbol of the Crescent Moon and Star.

I put on some sneakers and sneak my way out of the house. Everyone was busy taking care of the preparations so, they didn’t notice me.

I walk past the venue and the trees towards the direction of the Magnolia tree. The honeysuckles smelled so good. When I reached the tree, I see a small hut to the side. On the roof of the hut is a crescent moon and beside it, a

star. Well, I hope this person doesn't hurt me. I lift my hands and knock. A man opens the door, he gasps with the same frightened look Emily gave me. I turn around to leave, panic taking over me. "Stella? Are you Stella Coeli Brandt?" A woman comes out from behind the man. She is small, with white in her brown hair. "Stella was the name my biological parents gave me. I, now, go by the name of Hope." "Hope. Oh, my dear child, let me take a look at you. Oh, you have your mother's gold eyes. Your hair seems to be half hers and half your father's. You have grown up to be a beautiful woman."

"Do you happen to have a symbol of the Crescent moon and star on you?"

"Yes, here on my arm. Yours, on your hip."

"Then it's really you? My aunt. My mother's sister?"

The woman gasped. "How did you know?"

"The Moon Goddess instructed me to find you. She says you can help me."

"Just turned 18 and are already communing with the Goddess. This is a happy day indeed."

"Can you come with me to the mansion? Alexander is going to go ballistic when he finds out I left the room. I had an earlier run in with this woman Emily. She tried to kill me." Her and the man gasped. The woman took off her apron and fixed her hair. "Sure. I will come with you."

I smiled. "What do I call you? Aunt, Auntie?"

"Aunt Cecilia. And this is your uncle, my mate, Bruno."

"HOPE! WHERE IN THE BLAZES ARE YOU?! I TURN MY BACK FOR 1 SECOND AND YOU'RE GONE!"

"Alexander, coming. I'm bringing my aunt with me."

"AUNT?! WOMAN, YOU ARE GOING TO GIVE ME A HEART ATTACK!"

I laugh. "Come on. I have an angry Alpha I need to pacify." I grab my aunt's hand and we walk toward the mansion.

I was thanking my aunt for leaving me with the Alarie's when all of a sudden the back door of the mansion opens with a bang.

"Hope, you have some explaining to do. Someone attacked you while you were in bathroom and then you run off without even telling anyone."

"Ok. Ok. Chill. The Moon Goddess told me to go look for my aunt. She's been living with you. Here. All this time."

"Cecilia is your aunt?! How do you know for sure? I want the both of you to prove it."

"We both have the same mark."

My mother, perfect timing as always, come and says, "Ah, is it that little birthmark on your hip, Hope?"

"BIRTHMARK?!"

"Alexander Ulrich! Lower your tone this instant. Enough of the yelling!" I growled at him. My golden eyes turning green.

He stopped with a frightened look on his face. "Your eyes! They turned green!"

I laugh. At least I can scare the pants off of him. "Yes, I have a birthmark on my hip. See, Mom? He hasn't seen me naked. He's been a perfect gentleman."

· Oliver and David both cough "Bullshit!" Alexander and I glare at them. They tried really hard not to laugh.

"Here, this is my mark. Aunt Cecilia, show them yours."

My aunt shows them her right arm and puts close to my hip for a comparison.

"Yup, same mark," Oliver said.

"Did you just look at my mate's hip?"

"Alpha, just for a second to see if they have the same mark." Oliver bows his head in respect.

"I told ya so. Dear brother has always been the jealous type. Let me take a look at that."

She takes a photo with her camera. "Alright now, you can cover yourself up, Hope.

Yeah, same mark. I guess they put Hope's mark on her hip to keep it hidden."

"Mom, this is my Aunt Cecilia. She left me with you."

My mom hugs her. "You gave me a chance to be a mama. Thank you."

"No thank you. For taking care of her all these years." Cecilia hugged my mother back.

They laughed like they were sisters.

"Alexander honey, I need better accommodations for my aunt. She lives at the edge of the property in a small hut. She will be training me."

"You are a Priestess?"

"I WAS a Priestess, Alpha. Stopped the night my sister died. My specialty is invisibility. My sister had the gift also but her specialty was the gift of life."

"Hope, sugar, you need to get ready. Alexander, brother, help Hope's aunt please, or there won't be a mating ceremony."

"Ok, ok, ok. Oliver, David, you two clowns help Aunt Cecilia move to that house. When you are done, come to the ceremony."

"Thank you Alpha." Cecilia bowed.

"Now, let me please get ready. Anyone else who stands in the way of me and my mating ceremony will have his or her head ripped off!" Alexander storms back into the mansion.

"Someone needs to get laid." David gives Oliver a knowing look. Oliver laughs.

"Mrs. Alarie, Cecilia, let's get Ms. Cecilia situated."

In the shadows, a figure watches. The Rogue Lord will be most pleased with this bit of information. Hopefully, it will please him immensely, enough to get a reward.

Chapter 17 The Mating Ceremony with My Perfect Little Virgin

(Alexander POV)

Wolves have started to congregate at the venue where Hope and I are to be mated. The Council Elders in their robes were in attendance. The Alpha's and Luna's from various packs who were able to attend on such short notice. I fix my coat. I want this to be over soon so I can spend time with my Luna.

After the ceremony, I plan to fly Hope and myself to Lake Tahoe. I have a small cabin there. We will have the place to ourselves and can make any noise, any mess we want.

Just for 2 days. Two days of total bliss.

The High Elder was already at the podium. Oliver mind linked me to say everything was ready. I raced down the stairs and out to the venue. I shook hands with our allies, the council elders and some friends. As I engaged in small talk, Amanda mind linked me and said Hope was ready. I walked up to the podium, shook hands with the High Elder and waited for my mate.

She came out, with her father and mother. Her father was in uniform. Jim Alarie was one of the generals during the Rogue War. He had the respect of the Clan of Wolves

even the High Elder.

Hope was stunning. Amanda took off the long tulle and left the satin skirt. It made it easy for Hope to walk in. Her hair was loose and curled around her face and a little tiara was nestled on the top of her head.

As she walked towards me, everyone bowed. They knew who she was, an Alpha in her own right.

After a few words to the audience in attendance, the High Elder took a dagger, made a small cut on one of our palms, pressed those palms together to create the blood pact union and “sealed” our hands together by tying a piece of cloth from the old wolves of the past.

Hands bound together, he then turned us around, Hope in front with her back towards me. Finally! It is time to mark my mate.

I slowly kiss her neck, go down to lick her pulse and with canines drawn out, I bite into her, making her mine.,

(Hope)

I thought it would hurt but it felt electrifying. A current passed through the both of us making us both stronger and better than our individual selves. I closed my eyes as the wind around us swirled. “Open your eyes, Hope.” I opened my eyes and looked up. The Moon and a star merged as one and shimmered their light us on. The crowd gasped as a flash of light from the sky travelled towards us as Alexander finished. .

“Are you ok Hope?”

“Yes. You?”

I turned around to face him and see something glistening on his neck.

“You have a mark.”

*You too.”

The High Elder looked at the both of us with a huge smile on his face.

“The Moon Goddess has blessed your union.”

(Jim POV)

I felt the hairs on my neck stand up before I saw them.

“Hope honey, come down quick. There are rogues.”

I check my pistol. Good. Loaded with silver bullets. No one is hurting my daughter. They have to go through me first.

“Mirasol, head towards the mansion. Go. I don’t want them to hurt you.”

All the guests start running or shifting. Alexander himself had already shifted to huge black wolf.

“Dad, come on. Let’s go.”

“No. This is my fight. You go. Keep your mother safe.”

“Then, I will fight with you Dad. Your fight is my fight.”

Hope shifts into a wolf. She’s a huge white wolf with black claws.

“I hear the daughter of Adella is alive. Where is she? Still the coward?” The Rogue Lord laughs.

“I heard she has a human father. I can already see him. Tiny with an even smaller gun.”

The Rogue Lord snarls and advances towards me. He’s an ugly bastard, smells like a rotting corpse. Huge though. Over 8 ft. tall. I hold my ground, point my gun at him. The silver bullet barely penetrates his skin. It sizzles but it doesn’t even bother the bastard.

He was about to pounce on me when Hope jumped from behind and bit his back. He

yelled in pain. Hope then growled at him and I saw it. Silver fangs with bits of silver in her saliva. She was about to pounce again when the Rogue Lord yelled retreat. He ran screaming in pain.

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As they retreated, some of the pack wolves chased after them. One dead rogue is better than nothing. When I thought everything was ok, I heard it, an arrow. It went straight to my chest.

(Hope POV)

“Dad! No! No! No! Someone help him. Please.” I was naked, but I didn’t care. My Dad was hurt.

Alexander shifted back. He put a Shirt around me. I’ll call for the doctor.

“Hope, honey. It’s ok. Take care of your mother for me.”

“No! You aren’t going to die!”

“Hope! I can help you but you need to focus.” Cecilia was suddenly beside me.

“What has happened to my Jim?” I heard my mother crying. Diane held her and was trying to soothe her.

“Hope, we need to take the arrow out first. We need cloth to stop the bleeding. Looks like the arrow is a through and through.” Cecilia cut off the arrow head.

“Alexander, your strong. At the count of 3 take the arrow out.” Alexander took the arrow out and blood started gushing out. Cecilia put some pressure on the wound to stop it from bleeding.

“Now, Hope, focus. Harvest the light of the moon to heal your father.”

“Raise your hand to the moonlight, grab the light in your hands and place it on your father’s wound.”

“Moon Goddess please, help me heal my father.” I raised my hand to take the moonlight and directed it to my father’s chest.

“That’s it. The light is following you. Place the light on his wound and concentrate its energy on the wound.

Focus, Hope.”

I blocked out all the noise and focused on closing the wound up. I could feel the surge of energy. It was warm at first then it became hotter and hotter. My head started to hurt. My arms started to shake. Then a bright light flashed from my hands and I blacked out.

(Hope POV)

I wake up. It’s morning. I sit up. Oh my Goddess, my Dad. I frantically look for someone in the house I can speak to. When I find no one I know of, I run outside. I see Oliver and I run towards him.

“Oliver, my father where is he? How is he?”

“He’s at the hospital recovering, Luna.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. You healed him.”

“I did? I mean, I did.” I give a sigh of relief. “Oh my gosh. I thought I was going to have a panic attack. And Alexander? Where is he?”

“He’s in his office.”

“I’m sorry Oliver. I know I sound like an idiot but I don’t know what happened after I passed out and I forgot Alexander’s office is right beside our room. Man, I’m so out of it.”

“No problem Luna. There’s Alpha right now.” He points behind me, bows and quickly walks away.

I turn around and see Alexander walking towards me. My heart skips a beat. He’s so breathtaking! Speaking of breath... I breathe out into my palm. Ew, I forgot to brush my teeth and what is that awful smell on me. Smells like roadkill.

Alexander walks towards me with a blanket and covers me with it. Talk about possessive. We definitely need to talk about this. Well, at least I can hide my smell under the blanket.

“Hope, you have to stop running off like that. You can mind link me if you need me.”

“I’m sorry. All I remember is my Dad and I panicked. How is he?”

“He’s recovering nicely. Come, let’s give them a call.” He puts his arm around me and leads me back inside the mansion.

“Ok. I need to take a shower. The smell of that thing. It’s on me. Ew.” I wrinkle my nose in disgust.

We walk up to our room and he calls my Dad.

“Hey Ji-Dad! Someone just woke up and is in a panic.” Alexander hands me his phone.

“Dad, you ok? A second there I thought I had lost you.”

“I’m fine. Just a little sore. What about you? You scared the hell out of us again. Good thing Cecilia was able to explain that it’s common for rookies.”

“Rookies?”

“Yeah. You’re a rookie healer, Priestess... You know.”

“Good to know you’re ok. I’ll visit you later then. I need to take a bath. I smell like a decaying corpse. The Rogue Lord is the nastiest thing to bite into.”

My Dad laughs, * Yeah, his smell is horrible. You better take a bath and brush your teeth.”

“Ok. Bye Dad. I love you. Say Hi to Mom!”

I give Alexander back his phone. I start stripping down to my underwear like it’s normal. I walk into the bathroom, grab my toothbrush and start brushing, when I look up at the mirror, I see Alexander staring. I finish brushing my teeth.

“Well, do you want to take a shower with me or not?”

Alexander comes towards me.” You don’t have to ask me twice.” He looks down at my body. “I want to see all of you.”

I unhook my bra and I let it drop on the floor. I take off my panties and kick them away. I prop myself up of the marble vanity and spread my legs.

Alexander takes off his shirt and slides between my legs. One hand on my breast the other between my legs.

“You are so beautiful, Hope. You are mine. I want you to say it.”

“I’m yours, Alexander. Forever.”

I run my hands down his chest. I feel his abdominal muscles stiffen as I slide down further to unzip and unbutton his pants.

“Look at me Hope.” He takes off his pants and I see his erection. It was throbbing, pulsating from want.

“Do you like what you see?”

“Yes. I want you Alexander.” I blush when I say it.

“Why are you blushing, my love?”

"This is my first time... to...' He puts a finger on my lips.

"My perfect virgin. I will be the only man you will ever know, my love."

He kisses me. His lips travel down my neck, to his mark, to my erect nipples, down my stomach. Holding my buttocks, he pushes my mound to his mouth. I giggle at first, but his tongue licks open the folds, touching my core, and I scream in delight spreading my legs further, opening up to him. He looks up to me. "More, my love?"

"Yes, please Alexander!"

"Open yourself to me!"

I spread my legs even further and he inserts his finger while his tongue continued to probe my core. In and out, swiss and lick, over and over, until I couldn't handle it anymore. I gave in to the waves of pleasure, my body shaking.

Alexander gave out a growl of satisfaction for pleasing me. He lifted me up from the vanity and placed me on the rug of the bathroom floor.

He positioned himself on top of me, kissing me.

"Are you ready, my love?"

"Yes!"

He kissed me and rolled me over. Me on top. I was straddling him. My breasts were near his face as he propped himself up on his elbows. He looked at them as if they were apples ready to be eaten.

"Easy, love. Just take it a little bit at a time. Just rock back and forth as you take me in."

I moved down. It felt so good. I lifted up and pushed down further. Alexander let out a groan. I lifted up and went down even further this time, then I felt pain, I stopped for a moment, moved up his shaft and this time took all of him. He growled with pleasure. He sat up, held on to my buttocks, I started riding him, slowly at first, then faster and harder...

"My love, look into my eyes and cum with me..."

"Yes, Alexander, now..."

It was like a warm light exploded over us as we reached the brink of ecstasy. Waves of waves of pleasure. I was shaking while Alexander shook at the force as his poured his seed into me.

I looked at him. His breathing labored. "I wonder how it is if we do it in the shower."

"Woman, let me catch my breath."

I laughed.

Chapter 18 Happy

I asked my beautiful mate what she wanted to do and she said she wanted to see the village and do some shopping. We both went downstairs light on our feet. The horrible things that happened the night before now a mere memory. Hope was wearing skin tight jeans and a white T shirt paired with white sneakers. She had her long hair in a messy bun on the top of her head and wore sunglasses. Simple attire which made her natural beauty shine. I sighed. Even her track suit couldn't make her less desirable. Made me wonder what the human boys thought of her when she was still in school.

She wants to go to University. She'd be a target for all those hormonal young adults.

How in the world could I let her go off to University?

"She has a good head on her shoulders, Alex. She would never be like those hormonal kids. Like you were in University," Echo said.

"Don't remind me. Makes me panic even more. It's not her I don't trust. It's the boys in school."

"She's a wolf. She can tear them apart if she wanted to. Or even say an incantation for them to grow pimples overnight."

"You're right. She's scary when she gets angry. Didn't you see her eyes turn green?"

"Nah, I can only remember those red-orange eyes."

"Echo, down boy." I laugh. Anyway, if I need to, I'll just buy a house or a nice penthouse suite and move with her on campus. Just as long as I have an office with a computer and a phone, I can work anywhere. What I can't do is live without her.

"Alpha, we found the traitor. We have already put him in the dungeons." Oliver through mind-link.

"Good. Who is it?"

"His name is Bruno. The mate of Luna Hope's Aunt Cecilia."

"Do you suspect Cecilia to be part of this?"

"No, Bruno said he was mad at his mate for putting Hope under an invisibility spell. He was the one who suggested the Alarie's, but after they dropped off Hope, he could never find her. He kept coming to Chelan to look for her and kept on coming up empty-handed."

"What deal did he strike with The Rogue Lord?"

"He was to be Alpha of Crescent Moon. He just had to deliver Hope to him...dead or alive."

"Thanks Oliver. Keep me posted."

An invisibility spell. Cecilia did mention her specialty was invisibility. No wonder no one knew of Hope when she was growing up. No one ever saw her. I don't remember ever seeing her with the Alarie's when I went to Chelan. Fine, I never mingled or made myself known to them, but I would have noticed a beautiful young lady like Hope if she were with them. I think I did hear her name once. Hope Alarie. She was the Student Body President and I was donating computers to the school. But I don't remember ever seeing her then. Maybe I can ask Cecilia to put an invisibility spell on Hope when she goes to University. Keep her invisible to the boys in school. "That's a good idea," Echo says.

I see my mother with her back to the mansion. I wonder what she's doing.

"Hey Mama. What you doing?"

"Oh hi Alex! I'm covering the territory with protection spells again. After the breach last night, I need stronger spells."

"Why don't you ask Cecilia? She put Hope under an invisibility spell when she was growing up so no one could find her."

I saw my mother's eyes flicker with sadness for a second, "Of course, Cecilia. She has the gift of invisibility."

"You think? To tell you honestly, Mama, I rarely noticed Cecilia."

"YOU, my darling boy, only notice either the pretty ones or hot ones. So, it's not a shock you wouldn't notice Cecilia. Cecilia does our laundry." She gives me a teasing smile. "And her invisibility spells do work. You just said you never noticed her."

"You make me sound like a playboy."

"You were until you met Hope. Now, you only have eyes for one woman." She laughs.

"Speaking of Hope, Hope and I are going to the hospital to visit her father then I'm

taking her to the village. She wants to do some shopping.”

“Ok, darling. Good she’s feeling better. Bring all the people you need. Keep safe.” She kisses me on the cheek.

I see Hope chatting with my sister. She’s laughing and blushing like she’s embarrassed about something. Wonder what my sister is saying.

“Hope, you’ll be perfect on the catwalk. Look at those long legs. Please, model for me.”

“Ahem. Model?” I give Amanda a “you are not going to get my mate to model for you” look, but she ignores me.

“Yes, dear brother. Look at her. She’s absolutely perfect.”

“She doesn’t need to model. She’s better off being a doctor.”

“Is that the mate talking or is that brotherly advice?”

“Mate talking. And I can buy her anything she wants to wear. Couture or not. I can take her to Paris Fashion Week and she can buy all the couture she wants without gracing the catwalk.

Amanda gives me a “I’ll let you win this time” look. “Hope, sugar, you change your mind, you know where to find me. You’d be my most exquisite piece of artwork.”

“She’s not art. She’s my mate.”

“But she is. She’s like a Mona Lisa. Perfect.”

Hope laughs and blushes again. I guess that invisibility spell made her invisible to the human kids too. I think she thinks we’re just being nice to her when we tell her she’s beautiful.

“Then you’ll have to tell her every minute of every day then.”

“You’re right Echo. I will.”

“Baby Sis, Hope and I have a date. Our first date as mates. It is our honeymoon after all.” I kiss my sister on the forehead and wrap Hope’s hand in my arm leading her towards the garage.

Chapter 19 Our First Date as Mates

We took the truck. Hope was eyeing the Range Rover, but I told her we were going to the village not Seattle. She pouted. She said tomorrow she’ll be taking the cars out for a spin. I told her sure, just as long as she took Oliver or David with her. They looked at me like I gave them the day off.

We stopped by the hospital. Hope was happy to see her father recovering. Her mother though had puffy eyes from crying. Hope came to her, put her cheek on her mother’s head and I saw the stress leave Mirasol’s body. She hugged Hope and thanked her for saving her father. Hope promised them she’d pick them up tomorrow when Jim gets discharged from the hospital. She had that evil twinkle in her eye. I knew she’d be taking the Range Rover.

We say good-bye to Hope’s parents and head towards the various shops in the village. It was a nice sunny day, so we decided to walk around...with Oliver and David behind us.

I apologized for not being able to take her to Lake Tahoe for our honeymoon. She said she wouldn’t go anyway, knowing her Dad was at the hospital.

She bought some flimsy underwear, sorry, lingerie. She said she wanted to feel sexy when we go to bed. I told her that’s easy...just go to bed naked. She slapped me on the arm. Next, she went to the herb store and took out this long list. Apparently, her aunt

wanted to start teaching her how to make potions, ointments and elixirs. No one told me dried leaves and petals were expensive. I should open a store of my own. Dry a bunch of weeds and say it's herbs. She also bought some seeds and said we had to start our own herb garden. I'll have Oliver and David and their group of men help her set it up. At the hardware, the son of the owner of the store lit up like a light bulb when he saw Hope. Hope needed some things to start her garden. He immediately appeared at her side and started helping her choose the things she needed. I was about to get jealous when he mentioned he didn't have many friends. "Yeah? I know the feeling. Me too," Hope answered and let out a sigh. "We can be friends. Is that ok?" She asked with so much sincerity that even Oliver said, "I wanna be part of this group." They all laughed and started exchanging numbers, talking about the 4th of July Festival and what time they can all meet up.

Hope went peeking through the windows of all the stores she passed by. People would make a double take when they saw her and stare at her smiling face. One guy almost hit the post walking while staring at her if it weren't for one of my men. He was so embarrassed and said, "She's so pretty." I smiled. That's my Hope.

She then went into some of the boutique shops. The owners fawned over her like she was a real life mannequin. They wanted her to try all their clothes. She begged off and promised all of them she would be back to try anything they wanted her to try on. She bought some trendier clothes just in case she needs to be more Luna-like. She said Amanda promised her some business suits so that's taken care of. Finally, she felt hungry and decided it was time to eat. All of us, including Oliver and David and their men walked into Angela's Diner.

Hope immediately took one of the menus and plopped her bags and herself onto a booth. I keep forgetting she's still a teenager. Her youth is refreshing. 1

"Alpha Ulrich, welcome." The server bowed. She followed Hope to her seat. "Hi! I'm Elle and I'll be serving you today."

"Oooooohhhh... Hi Elle! I want a cheeseburger, fries, Cherry Coke and a slice of apple pie," Hope said her eyes on the menu.

I sit opposite Hope. Looking at her youthful energy, I look more like an uncle than her mate. Elle gives me a surprised look as I sit down. "That sounds good. Make that 2 orders."

"Yes Alpha Alexander. Uhm..by the way, I end my shift soon." Elle licks her lips.

I could feel Hope's eyes burning through my very body. There was a lump in my throat and I started coughing.

"Alpha Alexander seems lost for words Elle," Hope's words were laced with venom. Her smile looked innocent, but her eyes! I was looking at the eyes of The Hulk! I averted my eyes to Oliver and David, who was seated at the counter next to our booth. They were trying not to laugh.

I suddenly hear thunder from the distance. Thunder? There wasn't a cloud in sight while we were shopping.

Oliver steps in with a "I feel so sorry for you look" and leads Elle towards the other hungry wolves so she could take their orders.

I looked out the window. The wind started howling and the sky started to go dark. I look over at Hope. The weather was a reflection of her face.

The orders of food came and Hope ate quietly. I tried looking into her eyes, but I saw

the scary green color and decided not to say anything. The weather though was starting to ease up and her face wasn't scrunched up as much. I think the food was making her feel better. Thank you, cheeseburger!

Elle came by the table and asked if we wanted anything else.

"Your Luna and I are quite satisfied. We're good. Thank you." Damage control. I hope this works.

"Luna?"

"Yes. I would like you to meet Hope Alarie-Ulrich, your Luna.

"I beg your pardon, Luna. Please forgive me. I meant no disrespect." Elle bows her head in respect.

"That's ok Elle. I understand." Hope smiles and looks at me with her gold eyes. Phew! I thought I wasn't going to be able to get out of the diner alive! Elle bows one last time and excused herself.

"Alpha Alex, just a suggestion, you better tell ALL your previous girlfriends you are now mated. Luna Hope looked like she was about to rip your head off a while ago." Oliver through mind-link.

"You're right. Spread the word about our new Luna."

"Copy."

"Alexander, honey, I have to use the restroom before we go." The sun was out shining again just like the shine I see in her eyes.

She stands up. Oliver follows. One of the men at the end of the diner let out a low whistle when Hope passed. I was about to go over there and teach the guy some manners when Oliver grabbed the man's shoulder and squeezed it so hard, he screamed his apologies to Hope when she walked out.

She picked up her bags and before leaving told the owner her apple pie was to die for. The owner beamed with pride.

"Hope, how about we hold your things?"

"It's ok. The least I can do is carry them after you paid for them. Hmm... Come to think of it, I should get a job."

"You have a job. Being Luna."

"I mean a paying job. Pays money."

"Half of what I own is yours so why would you need to have a "paying job"?"

"I what?"

"Remember you own-half of everything that's mine? I'll get you your own credit card and bank account tomorrow. Plus, an extra card for your parents. Hope, my love, you don't need to work."

"But I need to go to school though. University starts in fall."

"Ok. You go to college. I'll move on campus with you."

"Really? You'd do that for me."

"Yes. I won't last a day without you."

"Carpenters." She laughs. "Oliver, how about you and I go to university together?"

"Me too. I wanna go too." David and Oliver, hard to separate the two.

"Oliver and David have graduated college already at the local pack community college. Plus, University is expensive."

"It would be nice if I had some people I know on campus. They can take their Master's while I finish undergrad."

“Well, let me think about it.” I’ll have to send 3 wolves to university? Boy.

“Let’s go home boys. I’m pretty tired.” Hope happily skips in front of us towards the direction of the truck. I brush my hands in my hair. Her bouncing around has gotten me hard. I just love watching her.

Chapter 20 Pain

The Rogue Lord was in so much pain. The silver in his back was hissing deep inside. He needed someone to take it out before it killed him.

*Sire, hold still. I will make an incision to make the puncture wound bigger so I can find the piece of silver lodged in your back. I will give you an anesthetic to dull the pain.”

“Make it quick! It burns!”

Damn you to the burning gates of hell, daughter of Adella. Moon Goddess, you are one sick bitch. I have to live as a monster and now this?! A wolf with silver teeth! He groaned! He had never felt such pain before. Only when Julia died. It was like someone took his heart and squeezed it in his chest.

Julia was the perfect mate. Small and quiet. Content with what she had. I was Beta to Alpha Brandt. Davis and I grew up together. Did everything together. There was no one in the pack who could separate us. His parents were my parents and my parents were his. We even wore the same shoes, used the same backpacks for school. The only time we were separated was when he went to University and I stayed and went to the local community college. Even then, every time Davis came home, we were inseparable. Like 2 peas in a pod.

After we graduated, his father sent him to Canada to form an alliance with the packs in that region. He was a new Alpha and wanted to make his father proud. He made me stay in the territory to keep watch over the lands while he was gone. I was good friends with Alpha Howard Ulrich of the neighboring pack. They were a strong pack, made of well trained warriors. They were also the richest pack in the state. Alpha Howard had made it his priority to create business opportunities for our pack so we could be self-sufficient.

When Davis returned home from Canada, he came with 4 women. Adella, his fated mate and 3 other young Priestesses. Adella was beautiful. She was a tall woman, with pearl-like skin and pale blonde, almost white, long hair that flowed as she moved. She moved with grace and walked like she was floating on air. When she spoke, her voice was like a lullaby. Her golden eyes would calm anyone who stared into them. When she was presented as our new Luna, I saw the desire and jealousy of the men in the pack. I knew what most of them were thinking...Such a beautiful creature was mated to a spoiled brat of an Alpha. I would know. I was his bestfriend.

Her sister, Cecilia, was the direct opposite, still a beauty in her own right. She was a short woman with brown hair and chestnut colored eyes. She was more serious. Spoke like she meant business and was always, always saying “never to waste time.” I rarely saw her but, when I did, it was because of something important. She had a way of turning up at the perfect time when you needed her most. She mated with one of my men, Bruno, who also liked to make himself scarce when it was convenient.

Diane, she was the shy one. She was orphaned at a young age when her parents were killed by rogues, Dark hair and crystal blue eyes. She would always stay in the back. She didn’t like any of the attention. Well, until she met Howard. Adella was so pleased

with their union. This merged the 2 packs in an unspoken alliance.

And there was my Julia. The first time I saw her, I knew, she was mine. She had golden blonde hair that sparkled in the sun. She had eyes that changed depending on her mood- blue eyes when she was happy, green eyes when she was mad. She had the gift of the elements just like Adella. Unlike my Julia, Adella had already mastered to control the elements with a swish of her hand.

Julia and I mated on the Autumn Equinox. She, the sun. I, the moon. Equals. It was a simple ceremony. Davis was happy with our union. Adella, on the other hand, I could sense she didn't feel as strongly as Davis. Her golden eyes would flicker with pain when she looked at Julia and I.

Adella and Davis, as time passed became stronger, as well as our pack. Davis, with the help of Howard, was learning how to invest money so the generations of Brandt's to come would live comfortably and the future of our pack would be secured. Adella, because of her control of the elements and her gift of life, made trees and shrubs bear fruit all year round. She could help animals and people with injuries. Conjure a ravaging storm if she wanted with a flick of her wrist.

When Diane gave birth to her 2 pups, Alexander and Amanda, I felt I was ready to make a family. I asked Julia to come have a picnic with me in our favorite spot in the meadow and asked her if we could start a family. She looked at me with those happy dark blue eyes of hers and said yes. We mated under the sun, then again under the moon. As we lay down, naked underneath the night sky, I looked up at the moon and whispered to the Moon Goddess to bless us with child.

The Moon Goddess heard my prayer. We were pregnant. All throughout her pregnancy, Julia's eyes stayed dark blue. She had this calmness around her like having a pup was the most natural thing to be doing. I showered her with gifts making sure she had everything she wanted. I finished the construction of our new home and we moved in delighted we can start furnishing the nursery together. It was suppose to be the beginning of our happy family life.

Adella would come visit Julia often during her pregnancy and leave with sadness in her eyes. I think Adella was jealous we were pregnant while she had problems conceiving. Davis was already being asked to provide an heir by his father. Adella with her many gifts and she couldn't do one thing...conceive.

I close my eyes as I feel the forceps try to dig out the silver from my back. The silver was still sizzling inside me. If he isn't able to extract the silver out, it will burn through my lungs and I will surely die. I will not let the Moon Goddess or Adella win!

I growled. I thought time heals all wounds. Why not mine? The hole Julia left in the middle of my chest when she died is still there. Why did you have to take Julia from me, Moon Goodess? Why did it have to be through my son?

Julia was in labor for 8 hours. Her screams as each contraction came was killing me inside. Why did it have to be so painful for her? I mind-linked Davis and asked for the Pack Doctor and Adella to come see Julia. I said there's something wrong.

"Ethan, darling, it is time. Please, take care of our son. Promise me." I wiped the sweat from her face.

"What do you mean, love? WE'RE going to take care of our son. It will be ok. Adella and the doctor are coming to help you."

"The Moon Goddess has whispered to me my love. I knew even before you asked me if

I wanted to have a family. I just want you to be happy Ethan. Don't cry my love. When you look at our son, you will see me."

Adella comes barging in with the doctor. Julia smiles at them weakly with tears in her eyes. Adella holds her hand while the doctor instructs her to push. Julia with all her might gives out one massive push. The doctor cuts the umbilical cord, cleans him up and we hear the cry of our son. Julia smiles one last time then her head drops on the bed. Adella rushes to the side of her friend, raises her hand in the sky and tries to harvest the moonlight for Julia. Nothing happens. She does it again. Same, nothing happens. She wails to the sky, "Moon Goddess, let me heal my friend." She stops for a moment, listening to the silence. She turns to me, "I'm so sorry, Ethan. Julia sends her goodbyes." She starts crying. I couldn't move. The pain in my chest was paralyzing. The doctor wraps my son in a blanket and hands him to me. I look down at him. I see his dark blue eyes. I feel the grip in my chest. Julia is gone and it's all your fault!

I run out with my son in my arms to our favorite spot in the meadows. I looked up to the Moon, "This pup is not a blessing, but a CURSE! He is the reason my mate is dead! I SENTENCE HIM TO DEATH!" I shifted into my wolf form, took my son, in between my teeth, and bit through him, tearing him apart.

I can still taste of his rotting blood in my mouth. The Moon Goddess made sure I would remember that day for the rest of my miserable-life.

"Sire, I have pulled it out. It's a silver fang."

"Stitch me up and leave me."

I am coming for you, daughter of Adella. Not even your Alpha mate will keep me from killing you.

Chapter 215 Trying To Clear Her Name

Natalie tapped on the first hashtag and found pictures and videos of the game.

"She danced so well! My heart broke when she collapsed on the drum."

"The game developer has found the right person to play the role!"

"I look forward to seeing her performance in the future!"

"Me too! I hope she can star in historical films in the future! I could totally picture her as an ancient beauty!"

Natalie was delighted to read all the positive comments from Wendy's fans.

Despite being a newbie, Wendy had secured a role in Nation Glory and expanded her network in the industry. As her boss, Natalie was proud of her achievement.

With the resources available to her, Natalie believed she could take Wendy up to the next level. I'm pretty sure Hans can't do what I did.

Wendy was no doubt gifted in dancing, but the fact that she had suffered injuries on her waist meant that her career as a dancer would, unfortunately, be a short-lived one.

Based on Wendy's ability to internalize a character, Natalie believed Wendy could become a good actress.

She also believed that the press conference marked not the peak but the beginning of Wendy's career.

Natalie then clicked on the second hashtag and scrolled through all the posts.

It was a highly discussed topic.

Yara posted three photos on her Twitter but did not caption them.

The first photo showed a thermometer that recorded 38.9°C, whereas the second one showed IV drip on a hand.

The last photo was a card that contained these handwritten words: I'm sorry! I couldn't perform because I wasn't feeling well. I should've informed the organizer instead of making an appearance in such a manner. It's all my fault! Once again, I'm sorry to all the gamers and my fans!

Netizens all went crazy in the comment section.

"Stop lying! We would still be in the dark had the string in the piano didn't snap!"

"Can you all stop being so harsh on Yara? She forced herself to perform even when she had a high fever. Just give her a break!"

"Poor Yara. She has to perform even when she's sick!"

"What is this? Stop trying to justify your action!"

"Yara has already apologized. Can't you all just let her off? Don't cross the line, or else we, her fans, will take you down!"

Natalie let out a cold snort. Is Yara still trying to clear her name?

By playing the sympathy card and issuing a timely apology, she had successfully gotten her fans to stand by her side. What an excellent public relations move! All she needs to do next is to lay low for a period. When other scandals began to make headlines in the coming weeks, people would eventually forget about her fake live performance.

Well played, Yara. Well played.

Natalie still held grudges against Yara for what the latter had done to her when she was still a country bumpkin six years ago.

But time had passed, and Natalie had changed too.

It had never crossed Yara's mind that it was Natalie, the sister whom she had tried to burn to death, who set up the trap to expose her fake live performance.

Meanwhile, Yara locked herself in the hotel room during the day. The curtains were tightly drawn, and the room reeked of alcohol.

A few empty wine bottles lay around Yara's feet, and she swirled and sipped the wine from the glass in her hand.

After Mona had ended her call, she turned to Yara and said, "Take a short break. You don't have to go to the film studio either. I'll make the necessary arrangement with the film crew."

Upon hearing that, Yara smashed the partially-filled wine glass to the floor.

Startled by the sound of the broken glass, Mona shrieked at the top of her lungs.

Yara went up and strangled Mona. "It's all your fault! All this wouldn't have happened had you not suggested that idea!"