"I hate this game," I said while leaning my head on my hand.

**CHAPTER 21** 

Sozin chuckles, "That's just because you suck." a "No! You just cheat!" I argue back, "I would've won already if you didn't suddenly change the rules." Sozin laughs, "I didn't change the rules! You just never knew all of them and I just informed you of the ones you didn't know." I stared at him unconvinced, "You only began to inform me when you started to win!" Sozin moves his piece and says, "Check mate." a I groan in annoyance, "I don't want to play anymore." He snickers, "That's okay. I've already won anyways." Sozin said with a smug look on his face. a I felt my wolf surge forward in a challenge, "I wanna play again." I said with my evil eyes. "I don't want to embarrass you again, Lil." He said cheekily. I smile politely, "I am about to destroy you in this game." "You know Lily," Donny said from the couch, "I think it's time for you to accept that you just suck at it." I glare at his head, "You're not the one playing this game, Donny so stay out of it!" Donny raises his hands, "Just stating facts, little girl." "If I throw a bone, will you chase it and go away?" I growled. å His head whips around and he scowls. "I am not a dog! I am a Wolf! And so are you!" I roll my eyes, "Don't get your balls in a twist, Donny!" 'Will you both please shut up!" Sozin growls, "I am too sober to be winning at this game and listening to you two bickering." "She's the troublemaker!" Donny exclaims pointing at me while standing up on the couch. a "We're not five anymore, Donny. And get down from the couch...dogs sit on the floor." I said through laughing. Donny's eyes bung out of his head, "You're a bloody dog too!" "Shut up!" Sozin shouts. Donny glares at me and to it back. He mouthed to me, 'you're going to get it!' I shook my head, and mouth, 'try me.' I stood up from the chair and went to the window. The moon was still shining to my convenience. I felt my legs become fidgety. I couldn't exactly go out for a run anymore because of what happened last time. "I'm gonna go for a little big of a wonder around the castle." "Okay," Donny said while gaming on his Xbox. "Be careful still." Sozin said, "You're a target now so just be aware." I smiled and nodded my head. I walked out of the drawing room, leaving the boys doing whatever they were gonna do. My mind were drawn to the memories of last night. Last night, Zeus had not gotten angry at the fact I was literally going through his personal things. He has gotten more kind towards me...not as cold. And though I didn't want to admit it... I liked it. I turned a corner and kept walking down this random hall. My eyes admired the small details designs and accent on the walls and ceilings. It held a lot of history. A history that I felt somehow connected to. Maybe it's because I'm Zeus's mate? And he's as ancient as ever. "With NIkolai out for you, you shouldn't be wondering these halls alone." Speak of the devil. I turned around and saw Zeus standing there with his hands behind his back. He's always randomly appearing when I'm alone. STORY CONTINUES BELOW "Is it not safe in your own home?" I asked "Nikolai has been inside here before. He knows these halls. I would feel better knowing that you have one of the others with you at all times." I took a step forward and said in a grumbling voice, "Because I am your precious curse breaker, right?" I expect Zeus to say a snarky comment, agreeing that I am nothing but a means. But he stood there silent which has not gone unnoticed. He casually walks toward me, stopping very close. I bite my lower lip, feeling a bit awkward. Zeus's eyes catch the action and he gulps and looks back at my eyes, "Actually I'm glad I bumped into you. A er I break your curse...I know you will probably say no, but can I please go back to my pack?" I glanced up at Zeus and see he was staring a head, with his jaw tightening by the second. His eyes icing over in a cold shell...but not before I saw something...a hint...a slight reflection of sadness. His nose flared, "Of course. I won't have any use of you a erwards." He stares down at me. Then suddenly, out of the blue. He cups my face and brings it near his. His eyes widen slightly in shock and worry as he stared into my eyes. "What?!" I exclaimed. Zeus snarls, "Your eyes....they're flickering back from blue to yellow." My eyes widen in a panic, "What? Why! what's going on?" Zeus growls, "Did he bite you?" I didn't answer straight away, he jerks my head and shouts "Nikolai, did he bite you?!" a<sup>3</sup> I raised my hand and felt two punctured holes. What the hell, "Th-they weren't there before! I th-thought it didn't happen!" Zeus growled, "It's not your fault, it's an old vampire magic. Once they bite you or feed o of you, at the same time it erases memories attached to that moment, Or makes it di icult to remember. I guess my power didn't fully cleanse your mind of it's sorcery." I felt my heart beat fast, "I don't know that much about vampire, is it venomous?" "Of course it's venomous!" Zeus grabs my hand and drags me down the halls, "We need to see Ozai quickly." He kept dragging me down random hallways. "Wait, Zeus!" I shouted. But he ignored me, "Zeus I feel okay, right? Doesn't that mean I'll be okay? Maybe Nikoali-" Zeus stopped abruptly and turns to me sharply and raises his voice, "Are you stupid? Do you realise how serious this is? You could die, or worse...you could become like one of them." I shove him o and shouted, "Stop yelling at me! I didn't even know Vampires freaking existed till yesterday! I don't know what's true and what's not!" Zeus grips his hair as he growls, "Damn it!" His yell echoes out into the hallways, making flinch at the sudden loud voice. đ He grabs my wrist and starts dragging me down the hall fast. It was hard to keep up with him with my smaller legs. "Hold on! Wait! Tell me what's going on!" a Zeus did not answer. He just kept walking till he opens the door to Ozai's o ice. Ozai raises his head from his book and frowns at the sight of us. "What's going on?" He asks in concern Zeus pulls me in front of him, "Lily's been bitten." Ozai's eyes widen. He immediately stood from his chair and walked around his desk to come toward me. Seeing him be so quick to my side did not comfort me at all. I didn't know what was going! đ "Can someone please explain what this means!" I yelled a Ozai has a look at my eyes and he looked anxious. Which again did notcalm my nerves at all. "If Nikolai does not withdraw his poison from your body...you will o icially be in transition." Zeus said. My heart stopped, "Wait, WHAT? You mean I could become a vampire?!" a Zeus pinches the bridge of his nose and takes a deep breath. Ozai answers me, "Yes. You could." "Well how long do I have? What will happen?" "Did he take any blood? Or did he just bite?" Ozai asked as if he were a doctor in the ER. "H-He just bit me. Th-That's it," I said in a shaky voice. Ozai grins at me comfortingly, "Alright, that's good news then. If he had taken your blood, replacing it with his venom, you could've been a vampire already. But seeing as the venom will need time to process, we may have a chance to try and extract it." "B-But...is there like a way to just get it OUT!" I began to hyperventilate, "I dd-don't want to be a vampire. I d-don't...I c-c-can't-" a Zeus was right in front of me. He didn't touch me, but he stood pretty close, "You need to calm down, Lily." I shook my head and felt myself getting a little dizzy, "I can't, I didn't even know vampires were real. I thought they were extinct. I've never been taught anything about them! I c-c-can't. I d-d-don't know if I can get through this. It's just s-s-so much to t-t-take in! I feel like I'm gonna...I'm gonna-" Zeus tucks a hair behind my ear, "Tell me about your family," He says in a levelled voice. "What?" I said confused. His eyes were locked on mines, "Look at me, Lily. Now tell me about your family. What is your mother like?" "Ummm.....uuhhhh...sh-she h-has black h-hair. She always gave me good advice and good hugs...sh-she was always there wh-when I was going through stu because of m-my blindne-ness." My messy mind raking through the memories. Zeus nods encouragingly, "She sounds lovely. Now tell me about your father." Tears built in my eyes, but I noticed my breathing has gotten better, "He's very strong. He always p-p-protected me. He a-always comforted me. He...He always treated me like I was made out o-of gl-glass. He always wanted me to st-stay with him and mother." Zeus smirks, "Yeah he sure did. He didn't like me taking you away, did he?" Though I was panicking, I laughed a little. I felt my legs go weak, I reached my hand out, "I need to sit down." I felt Zeus lightly hold my waist in case I fell. I landed on the chair heavily. I didn't want to become a vampire. I hold my head in my hands and I try to take deep breathes. I glanced up. Zeus was staring at me intensely while clenching his jaw. He turns to Ozai and says in a hard voice, "What's the fastest way to get the bloody poison out of her?" Ozai sighs and rubs his eyes in stress, "I need to research this. I've never encountered something so severe. Vampires rarely interact with werewolves." Zeus snarls and slams his hand on the table, "That's not good enough! Help her NOW! There must be something that will give more time." a Ozai goes around the room, picking up books and finding papers as he said, "You could do the ritual," Zeus's scowls at Ozai in disagreement. å He stops what he was doing, holding books in his hand as he said seriously, "The rate the poison travels through the system is determined by how strong the werewolf gene is. If her genes are weak...then there won't be much time." With a glare, Zeus says, "Then HOW do we fixit!" "The only way to fix something like that is if the wolf has a strong mate...a powerful mate." á Zeus stills. His back was to me as he was facing Ozai, "Marking." He said quietly to himself. Zeus turns around, "I'll mark you." ä My eyes widen in shock but was then transitioning into a scowl, "No! Marking is a sacred part of mating...I won't do it so lightly." a "This is not a lightsituation, Lily." Zeus says in a dark and low voice. "I don't care. If anyone is to mark me...it will be the person that loves me. So no." a Zeus appears in front of me and shouts, "Just let me save you, Lillian!" All of us were silenced. Zeus was right in front of me with an intense expression. He closes his eyes to get a hold of himself, "Just let me do it." He opens eyes, but I did not budge no matter how pained I felt for him, "No." He stands to his feet and turns around. He kicks one of the co ee tables down and yells in frustration. I flinch as I heard his violent voice. a I stand up and turn to Ozai, "Please try to research as much as you can. If I cannot be saved...then I want someone to kill me." a I could see Ozai's face falters slightly at my request. But he nods his head in respect, "I will get it out of you, Lily." He goes back to looking through some books. I walked out of the room, still shaken by the news that poison was in my veins. I heard footsteps walk quickly behind me. I frowned turned around. Zeus was marching towards me. "Zeus? What're you-" But I was at a loss for words when he pulls me in. I screamed for him to stop when I saw his fangs elongate as he plunges them into my neck. I squeeze my eyes shut and I grip onto his shoulders for support. He pull me tightly against him as I felt my legs weaken. a<sup>8</sup> It was a sort of transferring sensation pouring out of his fangs. I felt something inside of me...as if my very soul was being energised...a rejuvenating experience. It felt like a thick rope tying our hearts together. With that tying, I also felt a pool of lustful desire creep into my core. I suddenly felt every nerve of ours touching each other as I growled in the pleasure that clouded my mind. a He withdraws as my mind clears from the haze and I see his eyes glow brightly and his mouth stained with my blood. "I'm not sorry." He said with no remorse, "I will do what I must to keep you safe." đ As I processed what just happened I was completely enraged. I felt as if something pure from me was stolen by a monster. I push him o me and yell, "You disgusting bastard! How could you steal such a sacred thing from me! This was supposed to be a precious act! Not one of necessity or carelessness!" I scream. Tears ran down my face. å In the werewolf world, especially, Arcanus, marking is extremely sacred. It is closely equivalent to losing your innocence...it is the expected step toward the physical act of deflowering...and he just stole it from me. I held my hand on my wound to stop the bleeding, "How could you?" He just stands there, not e ected by my emotional pain, "I don't care. You're safe...you can hate me if you want, but as long as you're alive...then I'm not sorry." I stumbled backwards, "Safe...I am nothing to you! I am marked by a man that doesn't see me beyond his curse." Zeus's stance is still straight and tense. His eyes glowing as bright as the moon as he said, "Well maybe I do." đ My mind had gone hazy. My vision had gone blurry as my head began to spin. The last thing I felt was myself falling. ð \*\*\* I opened my eyes to see I was in a bedroom. No mine. I took a deep breath and smelt only Zeus. I felt myself become fully awake as I realised I was in his room. I sat up. Oh yes...this is definitely his room. There was a very bold design carved into the marble roof. A black chandelier with candles lit. The fire was not on. His bed was massive and dark. It was a Navy blue mixed

with silver and a black canopy hanging. I turn my gaze to two giant glass doors where Zeus was standing, looking up at the moon. I got out of bed, feeling fine. I went and lean against the door. "I don't forgive you." I said in a cold voice. I wanted him to know that he has no place in my life even if our bond is now unbreakable. "And I don't expect you to." He immediately said without turning around. We stood in silence. I didn't know what to feel or what to think. Before...there was a thin string that was our mate bond. A very very thin thread that could snap at any moment. But now that he had marked me...no matter how thin or how thick that thread may be...it is permanent. It won't snap...it won't break. It may weaken...but it will never detach from the either of us. a And I hated it. I hated that I feel such a desire to rip his clothes o . I hate that I want to desperately feel his touch on my naked skin. I hated this bond. "You lied to me," I said to him, "Nikolai told me that we only had to do a ritual to break the spell. Your curse." I saw Zeus's shoulders rise and fall calmly. He didn't respond to me. I gently kicked o the door and stood straight, "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you break the curse as soon as we got here? It's been months now...why have you not done anything? Is this you punishing me? Have I done something to o end the oh so great Zeus?" My voice drenched in disdain and sarcasm. I raised my arms incredulously as I said, "We wouldn't be in this mess if you had just done it then and there! I could've gone home! I could've been with my family! I wouldn't be a vampire! I could be away from you!" a "I know." He says calmly and silently as If I had no just exploded... I hate how he answered so simply, "You know? That's it? You withheld that information from me by purpose! Did you just want to see me su er? See me crumble? Did you want to torment me for a little while longer for your own amusement? Why would you not do the ritual right then and there when you came to my pack?!" a Zeus continued to look up at the moon, "Because I wanted to know what would happen to you a erwards." a I didn't understand. My brows furrowed in slight bewilderment, "What?" "I didn't know whether you would live or die a er we did the ritual...so I went away. I went away to try find help. To try and see if there was a way where I could break the curse without involving you." That's why he le? He le to...to ensure that I will be okay a er the ritual? "Why?" I asked in total puzzlement, "Why would you do that? You don't care about mates. You told me yourself. You told me that I was nothing...that my purpose was to break your curse and that's it. I don't understand, Zeus. Why would-" a "When I found you fi een years ago. I was shocked...and then I was angry," He said with a hard voice, "I was angry that I had a mate. I had been married before and experienced the loss, it changed me. It made me weak. Made me vulnerable. I have centuries worth of enemies, why would the moon goddess be cruel to have me as a mate to someone like you. Someone so gentle." Gentle? Me? He's saying that about me? a "I never wanted a mate. I didn't want you, Lily" He grumbles. a<sup>8</sup> Even though I hated what he did, I still flinched at his words. I dropped my gaze to the ground in hopes he doesn't see the disappointment in my eyes. I guess I was still right. He didn't want me, I wasn't good enough. "If I ever were to get a mate, my plan was to reject her and find a dierent way to break the curse. I thought I could do it. That I could reject the one person that I was supposed spend the rest of my life with." He turns around and looks at me intensely. a As much as this information was shocking me. Hearing his words only hurt me more. I wish he would get on with it, reject me! I was sick of beating around the bush, I was sick of the confusion. I just wanted him to rip the band-aid o so than I can heal and try to move on and be better. He didn't want me...maybe I was never meant for him? He turns around and licked his beautiful lips and said in a husky tone, "But then I saw you...the little flower. I saw you...and I questioned everything I had planned. Whatever angry and cold walls I would try to build around myself...you could make them crumble like sand just with one look...and it frustrated me. Because a er so long...I wanted to give into it again, to the pull. To you." a I saw the guilt. He clenched his jaw as he said, "A er my last wife...Lillian. She died because I couldn't save her. I went down an even darker path if that's possible and I didn't care. I had no feeling of the sins I've done. I had lost the ability to have compassion and mercy many years ago. Killing was as easy as breathing, no matter who it was, or how young." He still stared at me so direct. So piercing. He was engaged with me, I felt uncomfortable, but then I was also interested in what he was saying. I didn't know what to feel about this or how to feel. It was all such overwhelmingly new information. "I felt deeply unworthy of you," His confession surprised me. I shi ed my weight around, trying to do something to ease the fidgeting feeling I felt about what he was saying, "I had done too much. My soul is stained with the blood of my victims...I felt too evil to even be in your presence. I am no good man, Lily. But when I found that there could be a chance that you could die from performing the ritual...I realised that I didn't want to take that risk." **4**5 My eyes snapped up to his in complete shock. Was he feeling okay? I was expecting this to be some cruel joke, "B-But I am weak to you. I'm not your equal. I am nothing compared to your past wives." Repeating the words he said to me. "You are mymate," He said calmly yet firmly, "Myequal. I am weak where you are strong...and you are weak where I am strong. We fit. We are the same." I stood there breathing deeply, my heart beating fast and my mouth slightly agape. We stood there staring at each other. The moon shining over us. "I wanted to give you a reason as to why I will do everything I can to make sure you're kept alive. Whether you like it or not, whether with your permission or not. I don't care if you hate me or wish me dead. If you are

alive...then that is all that matters." He says firmly.

he was exactly like the rumours had said.

You will be staying in my room from now on."

you nor forgive you."

I stood there in shock of Zeus's confession. I was so cautious of this. I'm

trying to squash my hope that this was true. I cannot let myself be vulnerable

to him yet. I was afraid that this would be some kind of hoax. That at the end,

"B-But it doesn't change the fact what you did was wrong. And I don't trust

He smirks, "I never expected you to. I only wanted to inform you of my

reasons." Then he turns around and looks back up at the moon, "Rest Lily.

I cross my arms defiantly, "No. I feel much more comfortable in my own bed."

I see his shoulder shake of a dark laughter, He looks over his shoulder, a

mischievous glint reflecting in his eyes, "I wasn't asking, Flower."

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