

Chapter 61 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

I'm deeply worried and fueled by panic for my little girl. After considerable effort trying to wake her, she still doesn't show any signs of consciousness. Knowing the person I could count on I rush to Marco's door. I bet his lycan senses could smell my severe fear, because before I can even make my way up the steps, he swings his door open with a fierce gaze. "What's wrong?"

"It's Claire. She won't wake up. I- I don't know what's wrong," I don't have to say much more, as we rush back to my place. Marco understandably checks for her pulse, and when he confirms she's still breathing he looks acutely puzzled.

"Let's just get her to the hospital," I nod in response to his words, and I watch silently horrified as he gently lifts Claire's limp and unresponsive body into his arms.

But when he turns to me, his focused gaze forces me to sink into their depths, silently reminding me that I needed to stay strong. I move quickly to grab my things and we rush out the door. Course, my original plan to tell Marco the truth is pushed back due to Claire's sudden coma.

Upon reaching the hospital and getting her situated into a room, the doctor finally appears, checking her vitals and determining that Claire was poisoned. I'm completely at a loss for words, unsure of how this could've happened.

But soon, Claire isn't the only one. As the hours tick by, more and more of the pack's residents pour into the small hospital building, all displaying different variations of some form of poisoning. Some are completely unconscious, while others are awake but terribly sick, continuously vomiting with skin that's pale and discolored.

Because of the growing impact of the situation Caspian eventually appears looking incredibly stressed and he goes over to initially talk to the various doctors on the matter. Although I'm very aware of the incident between the two of us yesterday, none of that matters right now, not when my daughter looks so lifeless as she lays asleep on the hospital bed. I'm sitting beside her, holding her hand in upmost sorrow, while Marco paces the room to contain his fears.

While I didn't expect him too, Caspian eventually does enter the room, stopping Marco in his tracks. They respectfully acknowledge each other with a nod as if both silently agree that now is not the time to engage in a clash of masculinity when I am so close to the edge. Caspian turns to

me solemnly, coming to stand at the end of the bed. His gaze flickers to Claire before returning to me.

“How’s she doing?”

I squeeze Claire’s fingers repeatedly, with tears threatening to spill down my cheeks. “She um, she still hasn’t woken up. The doctor says she’s been poisoned.”

Caspian’s eyes droop with acknowledgement and Marco seems to realize the Alpha knows more than we do. “What’s going on out there? Everyone is getting ill,” says the prince. Although not brash, he’s still firm with his questions.

Caspian sighs, rubbing a tired hand across his face. “The doctors agreed that it’s some form of poisoning. But they can’t pinpoint what. It’s obviously been something that a majority in the pack have been exposed to. But the randomness is confusing. They don’t understand why some are ill and why others aren’t.”

Marco then adds to the conversation. “But the disease isn’t airborne, and it also isn’t infectious?”

Caspian nods. “Yes, but it still doesn’t explain why none of the lab tests can prove what it actually is. None of the tests are coming back positive. And if we don’t know what this is, then we can’t work on an antidote.”

For the majority of their deciphering, I stay quiet, fragmented from reality as I watch my little girl. But I know, if we don’t find out what this is sooner or later, Claire may never wake up. And I couldn’t live with that. The men quiet down as I finally rise from my seat, I lean down to press a desperate kiss against my little girl’s forehead before turning back to the males.

Despite the disarray of my thoughts, one thing stands out clearly in my mind. “I don’t think the illness is random,” I say before elaborating. “With this many people ill, it must’ve been something the patients ingested while those of us that aren’t ill did not. If we can find the source, I’m sure we can figure out what the disease is.”

The men nod in agreement. “I want to help figure out what’s caused this Caspian.”

“Me too,” says Marco.

I watch Caspian look to the both of us, slightly surprise at our willingness. But I think we all silently agree that we need to put aside yesterday’s events and whatever embarrassment that follows. This problem is greater than all of us, it is threatening the life of the pack, and my baby, and we need to find a solution as soon as possible.

Finally, Caspian nods his head curtly. “Alright. Let’s do it,” no matter how eccentric and playful he appears in his social life, Caspian is an Alpha for a reason. He is a leader, maybe not always able to put aside his emotions. But he does know how to get things done and rally those around him to his cause.

“We need to first question the patients and their family members. A lot of people were at the banquet yesterday, I wouldn’t be surprised if something there may have caused everyone to become ill. We need to find out what they ate and when did they start to feel sick,” both me and Marco nod, before the three of us depart from Claire’s room, spreading out to different ends of the hospital.

But after talking to a couple of patients, we come to realize that the poison couldn’t have been ingested at the banquet, since some of the patients weren’t even there and still fell ill. So, we then go through what each patient ate in comparison to their family members. But still no pattern reveals itself. At the present time, I’m talking with Lisa and her father whose awake but incredibly ill.

“So, you both had the same dinner too?”

Lisa nods her head. “Yeah, I made spaghetti last night, it always tastes great with a glass of wine. Course, dad can’t have wine with his meds, so he’s got to have boring water,” the two of them chuckle together despite the bleak situation.

Until. Something dawns on me, all this time I have been focusing on food I haven’t even thought about consumable liquids. “Wait Lisa, you didn’t have any water last night?”

She shakes her head. “Not a sip.”

My eyes widen, excusing myself to rush off, I quickly find Marco and Caspian. “The water. Find out if any of the patients drank water in comparison to their relatives,” the men don’t question me and hurry off. Soon we return from questioning and come to realize the notable pattern, all the patients, including Claire have drunk water last night.

To confirm our fears the three of us as well as some of the other pack members that aren’t sick head to the river that is the pack’s main water source. It’s also the place where Caspian found me the day I jumped off the cliff.

I haven’t returned since then, the memory still hauntingly fresh in my mind as I approach the unruly water that channels its way through the forest. Marco comes to stand beside me, before crouching down near the water edging. Using a glass, he brought with him, he fills it with the liquid before lifting it up and swirling the glass to see if there is anything noticeable.

We watch as the water swirls and soon, a dark cloud swirls within it, tinting the water a dark sickening grey. It also smells slightly off. However, the moment the water stills, the dark smoke vanishes, disappearing as if it was never there to begin with.

“Black magic...” Marco mutters angrily.

Caspian’s eyes widen. “Someone used black magic to tamper the water? But- but why... it’s our only water source and all of our residents drink...” he trails off in dreaded realization of the motive.

It's only Marco that has the courage to admit the truth. "Someone wanted to poison your Pack..."

Many of the pack members around us gasp at this realization, but it's only me that notices Barlow standing off to the side. His eyes gloss over in some form of recognition that I couldn't understand.

With the situation looking bleak I return back to the hospital, helping out where I could due to the low number of staff and facilities. Eventually however I am pulled away by one of the doctors that wishes to speak to me about Claire's condition.

"So, we concluded that the mildly ill patients will eventually recover. However, those that are unconscious are less likely to wake up due to the severity."

A pit of dread suddenly rests uncomfortably in my stomach. "What does this mean for Claire?" I ask, despite somewhat already knowing.

"Because your home is so close to where the concentration of the poison in the river was at its highest, Claire ingested a much higher dosage of the black magic. There was no time to counteract the symptoms that escalated much faster than normal. And being so young, her body is just not strong enough to fight off the disease. I'm sorry Tanya, but Claire won't survive longer than three days."

Chapter 63 Margaret's Notebook

Chapter 62 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

I force myself to maintain composure despite the pain and anguish that writhe inside of me like a furious monster eating my insides. "Um, thanks. Thank you doctor for letting me know."

The doctor tries to show some sympathy, but I understand he has other patients and family members to deliver similar bad news to. Plus. I don't want sympathy. I couldn't take it, cause if I did, I would've crumpled down right then and there.

So, I focus on work, pulling myself together and submerging myself in helping other patients at the hospital. But I'm only further surrounded by more pain and suffering as the patients keep trickling in, some sicker than others.

However, despite the bleakness of the situation, the atmosphere within the hospital remains warm. There was a reason I chose to stay in the Blue Moon Pack. And I can't help but compare it to the capital and the palace. No matter how beautiful and grandiose the palace appeared, no matter how much wealth was poured into the architecture the luxurious furniture and decorative paintings. No matter how impressive it was. The palace felt immensely cold and unwelcoming, distant and unnerving.

I may have never been born into the Blue Moon Pack, but I was still welcomed here as one of their own. Its people are kind and selfless, and even now, through a difficult situation that is taking lives, they remain somber yet hopeful, doing their best to lift each other's spirits.

I witness Lisa comforting her father, fixing the blanket so it laid atop him comfortably, and adjusting his pillow, the two of them smiling and laughing as I overhear their conversation.

"Well kiddo, looks like you won't need to worry about lying anymore," says the father.

Lisa looks at him, slightly confused. "What you on about?"

"Well, now you actually need the money to buy me a tombstone," he chuckles light-heartedly, and while Lisa is shocked at first, she begins to laugh along to her father's silly humor. Course eventually, tears spill from her eyes, and Lisa's laughter turns into sad sobs as she lays down beside her father, holding him in her arms.

"You will get better dad. You will," she says sadly.

I turn away from them not to seem like I'm listening in, but also to shove away the heart-wrenching pain it was causing me. I wish I could talk to Claire. Just one last time...

My eyes turn to the rest of my surroundings to see men and women holding each other close, and the sick children being occupied and distracted by their parents. Due to its poor economy, the Blue Moon pack is also short on medical supplies.

I watch through glossy lenses as residents bring their own medical supplies to donate to the sick. People don't have much here, and medical tools and equipment as well as the medicines themselves are scarce. And yet people are more than willing to depart with those belongings to benefit the sick children and the elderly.

I even watch Raphael, the notorious bully, with a sad smile as with a fierce expression he hands his medical materials to the parents of one of the children. He looks to the child as he says. "You use these well, alright kid. They're expensive stuff. Hard to come by. You use them well," I sense his harsh demeanor isn't truly what it seems, he clearly was trying to hide whatever emotion that lay beneath through his strong exterior.

Course it still does the job, the kid in the hospital bed nods curtly, like a young soldier following the orders of a general.

“I don’t need these you see. I’ve used them for so long that now I’m big and strong. See my muscles?”

The little boy’s eyes grow wide, in clear admiration for Raphael’s physic as he continues speaking. “So, you- you better use them, use them properly boy so you can become big and strong. We need more men protecting this pack...”

I desperately try to wipe my tears at the touching moment. Even if Raphael is trying to seem strong, he too was desperate to have these kids feel better soon.

“Right, I have to go continue protecting this pack. I expect to see you out there alongside me soon. Got it boy?” in response to Raphael’s words, the boy puffs his chest in growing pride, now nodding his head fiercely.

And then, the notorious bully of the pack nods curtly, repeating the same action to the parents who are now crying, before marching out of the room, almost as if he’s rushing to maintain his walls of strength.

Throughout the day, I keep experiencing these brief moments of tenderness between loved ones as I fight off the pain inside me. But eventually, as the night rolls in and I have fewer and fewer patients to attend to, I lose all sense of control over my emotions.

I find a particular room that’s empty. And before I know it, tears are running down my face in continuous streams. My knees buckle beneath me and I collapse to the floor while trying to suppress my sobs.

What hurt the most was feeling so helpless. If the enemy that chose to attack Claire was physical, I could protect her, I could fight off the opponent. I could tell her to run, to hide and escape. I could distract whoever it was that was trying to hurt my little girl, and give her a fighting chance.

But this enemy was internal. There is absolutely nothing I can do but watch as my little Claire slips deeper and deeper into the space between life and death. I would give everything to exchange my life with hers, and I couldn’t even manage that.

I am a hopeless mother.

And my daughter would be lost forever.

It feels like I’ve been sitting for hours within the darkness of my own thoughts, till I feel strong hands pull me to the surface. My vision clears as I turn to see Marco’s arms wrap around my shivering frame, pressing me into his warmth.

“She’s- Claire’s gone- she’s gone,” my voice cracks in admission as I break down into sobs again.

He rocks me in his embrace, trying to soothe me. “No, we will find a solution to this. Claire will be okay. I know it. We will find a way to save her.”

I shake my head, unable to see the light at the end of this dark tunnel. The doctors have all said the same thing. That my little girl isn’t going to make it.

Marco straightens me, holding me back slightly so I’m forced to look at him. “You need to be strong Tanya. Be strong for her. You’re a mother,” in gentle movements his hand smooths away the tears that stain my cheeks. “Claire would want you to be strong for her, she wouldn’t want you to give up, now would she?”

I take in a deep breath, trying to clear the fog in my mind as I think for a moment. He is right... despite how much pain I was in, and no matter how helpless I felt, I was still more useless like this. I couldn’t give up hope. That would be an injustice to Claire. I am her mother, and my little girl deserves to be fought for.

That’s when Marco speaks again. “Barlow told me how great you were at making perfumes, and that you can make perfumes with special functions, like curing people from illnesses?”

I understand what he’s trying to say, but I shake my head and explain. “My perfumes have only cured minor sicknesses; the black magic is very severe. I doubt I could make a perfume to combat that.”

“Yes, you can!” it’s Caspian, and he suddenly appears with a sense of zest in his eyes. “Once, one of Lily family’s predecessors traveled to the Blue Moon Pack. She left behind a notebook detailing special perfumes that can cure black magic!”

My eyes grow with anticipation as Caspian continues. “But so many years have passed, and no one has the abilities that you do. So, the book has been lost. But I’m sure it’s somewhere in the library. If we hurry, we can surely find it!”

Without a moment to lose, Marco and I get to our feet. “Take us to the library,” I say to Caspian, a newfound fire brewing within me, as hope grows further in reach.

We rush off, and Dylan eventually joins us at the local library. We all search desperately through the night, each of us in different corners of the building as we scour the books for the one was looking for.

Eventually, it’s the early hours of the morning, and still no luck. And we all begin to wonder if the book wasn’t in the library to begin with. Just then, due to my exhaustion, I bump into a stack of books, toppling one off the top that drops to the ground. I turn round to see Dylan calmly picking it up, about to put it back, when I notice the name on the front.

Margaret

My throat hitches. “Wait! I know that name,” I eagerly take the book as he passes it to me, and soon Marco and Caspian join us. I remember that the name is of one of the predecessors of Lily’s family, and I remember vividly the perfume exhibition at Eau de Lune Parfumerie company, where many of the special perfumes were created by Margaret.

I open the book and flip through the pages in utter disbelief. It has many handwritten notes on how to make special perfumes that can cure black magic!

Chapter 64 Barlow’s Help

Chapter 63 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya’s POV

I’m over the moon that we’ve found the notebook, but as I’m flicking through, my smile slowly starts to dwindle down into a straight line. Marco notices this.

“What’s wrong?”

I sigh. “Each perfume in here cures a different type of black magic.”

Caspian’s brows crease in confusion. “But isn’t that a good thing?”

My chest deflates. “We don’t know what black magic was used to contaminate the water. I don’t have time to make and try each perfume in here.”

The men around me mirror my unsettled expression. We have no way of knowing which perfume is the right one, and some of these perfumes take ages to curate, let alone try and perfect on the first try. None of us have much knowledge on black magic to begin with, and the task is now seeming to be impossible.

“I don’t understand. Who would want to poison my pack? We aren’t hostile to any witches, and we live such a simple life. We have no enemies,” says Caspian with tremendous uncertainty.

As we all stand together, I notice the sun’s rays begin to trickle into the cold and dark library, reminding us of how little time with hands. The sun almost mocks our failure. That is until another male voice that separates from the men standing beside me, speaks up to the rest of us.

“I can probably figure out what type of dark magic was used.”

All of us turn to face Mr. Barlow, who drifts out from the shadows of one of the book aisles, his gaze somber and firm with his belief. I can't help but once again recall the incident between him and Raphael, and how Barlow's hands were encased with a dark mist when threatened. I grow more skeptical about who he really is and wonder what connection he may have had to Dorian.

However, Caspian doesn't hesitate upon gaining this spark of hope. "You can?" Barlow nods. "Then please help us, we need to know quickly."

Barlow steps closer to me, staring deeply into my eyes with his elderly optics that appear sound and wise despite the wrinkles that encompass the surrounding skin. "Whoever did this is exceptionally strong, and an expert in the art of magic," his gaze flickers back to the Alpha. "I'll need a glass of water where the concentration of poison is the strongest. I'll need to drink it so I can decipher its type."

Caspian only nods quickly, and he and Dylan rush up to retrieve the sample. I on the other hand grow worried, and frown as Mr. Barlow turns back to me. He seems almost prepared to hear my protests. "What if you die from ingesting the poison?"

He pats my arm trying to comfort me. "Don't worry dear, my immune system has anti-bodies different to a normal werewolf. My body can combat the poison. It will take much longer for my body to succumb to the symptoms," this of course doesn't reassure me at all, still frowning as he continues. "But once you create the perfume with the antidote, I'll be all better. Don't worry, all will turn out alright."

I hate that we must risk his life trying to produce a perfume that may not work in the end. The pressure on me is overwhelming, and I internally pray to the Moon Goddess that I would be able to do it. For the sake of Mr. Barlow, the people of the Blue Moon pack, and most importantly, my daughter.

Eventually, Dylan and Caspian return with a glass containing the poisoned water. Mr. Barlow drinks it as my uneasiness grows. And soon he begins to cough uncontrollably. He stumbles, and Marco has to catch him, holding him up right as his body weakens.

"Barlow. Barlow steady, you alright," says Caspian.

The elderly man nods his head with closed eyes, trying to focus despite his body succumbing to the infection. But before he can fall too weak to the poison he relays to me exactly the type of black magic used to contaminate the water.

Third POV

Although the werewolves now know which strand of black magic has poisoned the pack's water source, there is another problem. Tanya would flick furiously through the notebook, setting down the open page onto one of the tables for the rest to see.

Her eyes scan the page and list of ingredients, before huffing as another obstacle soon comes forth. “We don’t have this.” She points to an ingredient listed as a ‘Ghost Orchid’. “This is such a rare flower, it’s only present in the capital, and is only available to the royal family that grows it in an extremely controlled environment,” her eyes inadvertently turn to Marco who reads the name.

“We’re doomed.” Says Dylan, pulling at the strands of his hair. “The capital is a long way from here, we will never get the ingredient in time.”

Marco shakes his head furiously. “No. Not on my watch. I can get it and get back here in time.”

Tanya snaps her gaze to him, with intense worry in expression. “Marco, the journey will put incredible strain on your body.”

Marco offers her a small gentle smile. “There is a reason I’m known as the strongest lycan in the kingdom. Trust me. I’ll be alright. You just work on making that perfume, I’ll get you what you need,” he gently brushes a hand across her cheek despite the uncertainty in her face before moving away and heading out the library, calling his friend Oliver in the process telling him to know he is coming.

As Marco steps out into the cold night, his body transforms, limbs shifting, extending into long lanky and muscular structures that increase Marco’s height exponentially. Sharp claws manifest from his fingertips and dark fur encompasses his skin. Marco grunts through this process, although he isn’t in any intense pain.

Finally, his snout protrudes, and menacing canines are revealed before the man now lycan drops down onto his fours. Whilst he could run on two legs, he’d be much faster this way. And so, Marco shoots off with incredible speed into the forestry, determined to retrieve the perfume ingredient.

As Marco furiously gallops towards the capital, Tanya has stationed herself in one of the hospital’s medical labs. But she’s having trouble reading through Margaret’s notebook. Since it’s Margaret’s own personal journal, the language is understandably vague and tailored to the predecessor’s thought process. Tanya has to interpret where needed and try and read the handwriting as best she could. But because of the time pressure, Tanya grows more and more anxious as the hours pass.

She encounters many failures in the process. Some of the equipment Margaret used is terribly old and obviously out of use in the modern age. So, Tanya has to substitute what she has in the medical lab. If that doesn’t come with its own problems, Margaret’s methods are extensive, and intensely methodical, and therefore, extremely slow. Tanya must find ways to shortcut and speed up the process of some of the steps, which of course leads to a couple of mishaps.

She grows frustrated as each second ticks by, and feels no closer to creating the perfume needed to save the people of the blue moon pack. She wants this to work so desperately, but she fears

she is incapable. Tanya sighs as she stirs the mixture and once again the solution doesn't turn out right. She tosses her ladle, the metal spoon clattering onto the table out of frustration.

The female runs her hands through greasy, unwashed hair and rubs her eyes that are darkened beneath from the lack of sleep. It is infuriating. She feels so incapable, she knows she's competent at perfumery, so why then does the talent desert her when she really needs it most.

The pack is relying on her. The patients are relying on her. Caspian is relying on her. And most of all, Claire is relying on her. The image of Tanya's little girl lying motionless in the hospital med causes tears to streak down her cheeks in continuous upset.

But then her thoughts trickle to Marco, and his words of encouragement he left her with the day he headed off to the capital. She imagines him in his lycan form, galloping with fierce intensity through the woods, going as fast he possible good for her, for them, for the Blue moon pack.

She knows Marco is trusting her to have this perfume ready for when he gets back. With a rough shake of her head, Tanya recenters herself, releasing a long exhale of breath before getting back to work, working furiously to achieve the desired creation.

Again, and again, and again Tanya works away, and with each time, her technique and application of Margret's methods improving, and slowly her hope begins to rise.

A day passes, and Tanya believes she finally has the solution at the right consistently, now all that is left is to add the final ingredient. Tension rises in the atmosphere as she waits on Marco, and she worries something may have happened to him on his way to and from the capital.

But as she slumps down against one of the wall, she suddenly hears footsteps. Marco rushes into the lab, that jolts her upright. And he hands her the final ingredient she needs to complete the perfume.

Chapter 65 Can You Be My Groom?

Chapter 64 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

I'm tremendously relieved to see Marco, although I'm ever aware of the sweat that douses his body, and the tired look in his eyes. But he remains strong, handing me the ingredient with confidence. He has fulfilled his end of the task, now it is time for me to complete mine.

I take another glance at the notebook situated on the table, ensuring I have followed every step, including dripping in my blood, before reaching the stage that describes how to use the ghost orchid. I cut off the leaves, petals and stem and grind the rest into a powdery substance, before sprinkling it into my solution.

I watch in anticipation. At first the solution remains murky to my disappointment, swirling in a dark grey to purplish hue, leaving my heart to hammer against my chest in growing worried. But eventually, the solution swirls into a clear state, reflecting my eyes that sparkle with excitement as I release a breath of relief. We did it!

My shaky hands carefully pour the mixture into a number of small little bottles, before Caspian and Dylan help the doctors and nurses distribute the perfume among the various patients. However, Marco and I go over to Claire's room, and the doctor goes ahead and sprays my creation onto my little girl.

Moments tick past and I feel Marco grip my shoulders to help calm me as we wait. Until finally, Claire's bright blue eyes flicker open curiously, and I can't help but laugh as she bares a knowing smile to the two of us as we stand together.

I rush over to her bedside in excitement, lifting her hand into mine and kissing the top of it in show of affection. Although still tired, she cracks me a genuine smile, although her eyes then trickle to her surroundings. "Why am I at the hospital mommy?" she asks curiously.

"Don't worry too much about it darling, I'll explain everything soon," I say to reassure her, well aware of how weak she still is. At least she has awoken, and that is a very good sign.

Eventually, my little girl's eyes slowly slip shut again, as she falls back asleep. The doctor steps beside me, before saying that all her vitals are restored, and that she just needs to rest her body since she is still a little weak. I'm overjoyed by the news. My gaze flickers to Marco as I mouth a 'thank you', he smiles back before I return my focus to my sleeping child.

That's until I feel myself sway. I shake my head in slight confusion, but the world doesn't stop spinning. I feel hot and uncomfortable before my vision blurs out of focus. Soon darkness encompasses me, and I lose consciousness.

Bright lights invade my vision as I open my eyes. Wary of where I am with the sound of hospital monitors beeping and communicating in their foreign language. I feel the softness of a bed beneath me and eventually I pull myself awake.

I turn to see the incredible mass that is Marco, quietly sits gazing at the door as if guarding me beside. And I grow soft to witness this. "Hey..." I mutter through sore and tired vocal cords.

He snaps his head to look in surprise, before easing the tension in his body upon seeing I'm awake. "What happened?" I ask.

He pulls himself closer, checking me over once before speaking. “Your body gave out, which is understandable. You worked on that perfume two straight nights in a row. Plus, you lost a lot of blood when using it to create the perfume. The doctors said you’ll be fine; you just needed the rest and some fluids.”

It did make sense. Even after the rest, I still feel extremely tired. “Are the patients? Claire?”

He smiles. “They’re okay, and Claire is doing much better. Except ...”

Just then, I see my little girl standing at the door. Her eyes grow wide in excitement upon seeing me awake, and she rushes over. Despite Marco’s grumpy protests worrying about my soreness, she clamors over my body and onto my bed with adorable giggles and I embrace her in a deep hug, just grateful to have my little girl awake and happy again.

The rest of the day I’m distracted as person after person from the pack comes in to thank me. Because of working at the hospital, I remember each and every one of them, and I’m so glad to see that they’re all better. They come to express their gratitude and how the perfume saves them.

When I’m finally alone with Marco again, I turn to him. “Where’s Mr. Barlow?” This is when I notice the slight slip in his expression as he doesn’t reply to me straight away. I snap upright in my bed. “Marco, where is Mr. Barlow?”

He sighs. “His health hasn’t improved, even with your perfume. He’s just getting weaker and weaker.”

My eyes widen in disbelief. I pull back the blanket and push his hand away as he tries to protest that I am still weak. “I need to see him,” I say firmly, getting up from my bed and hurrying to Mr. Barlow’s room, in the process I snatch my perfume creation and take it with me.

Upon approaching the room, I hear Mr. Barlow’s uncomfortable coughs, and as I step into the room, he tries to give me a weak knowing smile. “Glad you’re feeling better kiddo.”

My fear for his health leads me to not return his smile, and instead, I begin dousing him in my perfume.

“Tanya. Tanya stop.” I don’t listen, and I continue to spray him.

“Tanya! It’s not going to work,” as I draw closer to his bed, the elderly man grabs my wrist firmly, and twists the bottle out of my grip. “Enough girl!”

I freeze, tears spilling out of my eyes as I’m left distraught. “Why isn’t it working Barlow? Why?”

He sighs, gently holding my hand in an attempt to soothe me as he explains. “I drank a sample where the concentration of poison was at its highest. There was no coming back from that... and I knew that.”

My eyes grow wide, and feel so naïve, how could I have let him do this to himself? How could I have believed his lie so easily?

“But at least your perfume let me live for a few more days. That’s got to be a good thing ya know?” he jokes, trying to get a laugh out of me. He sighs again when he sees I don’t respond to his joke. “I’m sorry I lied to you Tanya. But I said I owed you once, remember? And this is how I’m paying you back for getting my badge returned to me.”

I sniffle with a light smile. “I don’t think you really needed my help. I saw the strands of black magic coming from your hands.”

He smiles back at me. “Ah, so my secret has been discovered!” I playfully roll my eyes as I sit myself down on the edge of the bed as Mr. Barlow explains. “You see, I was meant to die three years ago, but you saved me and the Blue Moon Pack gave me a place to stay,” he falls into a coughing fit, and I pass him a glass of water. After he quenches his thirst, he then continues. “And in all honesty, this whole water poisoning incident was probably caused by me, so of course I should be responsible for this.”

I shake my head firmly, unable to believe or understand why anyone would target Mr. Barlow. But before I can question his assumption, the man speaks once more. “But if you’ll humor me dear Tanya, I do have one last dying wish.”

I don’t want to consider the fact Mr. Barlow is dying, but anything that makes him feel more comfortable, I would do. “Of course, what is it?”

“Claire deserves a father, and you deserve a good husband, Tanya. And I want to be there for your wedding ceremony, before I pass. Please Tanya.”

I don’t know how to respond. But when I leave the hospital room, I realize that Mr. Barlow deserves his wish to be fulfilled because of the sacrifice he made.

So, with that in mind, I know what I have to do. I walk over to Marco, looking at him in the eyes. “Could you be my groom for a day?”

Chapter 66 Mark On Tanya’s Neck

Chapter 65 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya’s POV

I can tell Marco's incredibly confused, and I don't blame him for being so. From his point of view, we are just good friends, it is highly strange that I'd suddenly be asking him to marry me, for just a day in fact.

"Mr. Barlow's dying wish is for me to get married," I say solemnly, watching the gears in Marco's head turn in slow understanding. "So even if it's fake, at least I can fulfill his wish, you know."

"Oh," says Marco quietly. "I understand now. You want me to pretend to be the groom?"

Pretend sounds so wrong in my mind, but of course I can't say otherwise. It is the reality after all.

"Yes, just for the day. We complete the ceremony so Mr. Barlow can die in peace. Would you be okay with that? I understand if it would make you feel uncomfortable."

Marco nods his head slowly. "No, of course I'd be okay with that. Mr. Barlow deserves to have his final wish fulfilled. Let's do it," he smiles, unknowing of the true irony of the situation. Funnily enough, Marco and I never did have a wedding ceremony, it was only ever a legal contract written on paper. I wonder if the universe is trying to fix that small hiccup in the strangest of ways.

Marco's POV

On the night before our fake wedding ceremony, my dreams are relentless. I'm left subconsciously tossing and turning as images flash through my mind in a haze. But the dreams don't feel like dreams. They are so vivid and so clear they feel like memories that have been left tucked away.

I think I smell the fragrant scent of grilled cheese and tomato soup, as I find myself stirring the pot of soup for my wife. My dreams then cut to another scene as we celebrate my birthday, I slide my finger through the cream of the cake before dabbing it on her nose.

I even see us dancing at the royal banquet, holding her graciously as we sway and glide across the ballroom floor. Again, the scene changes, and we are standing together underneath the Blue Moon Tree, saying a prayer for our child that my wife is pregnant with. And finally, I'm making love to my wife, and I draw blood from her as I mark her as mine.

But the trouble is, despite perceiving them as some form of distant memories, I can never see my wife's face. She's turned away from me, so I don't get a clear view. Or if I do, her face is blurred out.

Without warning, I snap out of my dream, and jolt upright in a sweat. It's not that the dreams are bad, it's the familiar feeling concerning them that have me so unnerved. Dreams aren't this vivid.

And it feels like I know this woman, that she is truly my wife. Yet why don't I know her name, or her face? Why aren't those images in my memory, when I feel like I've experienced these moments before?

I feel Manuel stir within me, and he too agrees that something just feels so familiar. And neither of us can pinpoint what it is. And before we can come to a conclusion, I see the rays of light begin to filter in underneath my curtains and I realize it's now the day of the wedding. Unable to rest my eyes any longer I decide to get up and get ready.

I'm silent in the shower, and silent as I get dressed. This isn't an actual 'wedding', so I don't understand why I'm feeling so nervous. But something within me is immensely restless, and I feel at a complete loss. I grab my phone and call someone I'd never expect to call.

"Hello?"

"Yeah Caspian, it's me Marco. Mind meeting me for a chat?"

I can sense he's slightly surprised I call him, as I hear him pause over the phone. But eventually he responds. "Yeah, sure man, I've got a meeting that finishes in two hours, if you meet me at the pack headquarters after then, we can chat."

"Perfect," is all I say before ending the call. I finish with getting ready and try to pass the time in the best way I can despite how on edge I feel.

But eventually, the time comes, and I leave the house, and now I stand out in front of the main offices of the Blue Moon Pack. Caspian finally joins me, walking down the steps to greet me before we walk along the garden that surrounds the building.

The time by myself gave me the time to think about what I was going to say and going to do. There is a reason why I want to talk to Caspian, I need to confirm a suspicion. But I must do so tactfully, and so I choose my words carefully. "I wanted to meet because I need to ask you a couple of questions."

Caspian nods in understanding. "Sure, go ahead."

"I just want to get a better understanding of Tanya's background. Like, has Tanya grown up in the Blue Moon pack all her life? And who was her husband?"

I can tell that Caspian is slightly thrown off guard by my questions, and it takes him some time to come up with a response. It makes me wonder what he's thinking and makes me all the more suspicious of who Tanya really was to me.

I also acknowledge the fact that Caspian and I had a pretty rough relationship throughout my time here in the Blue Moon Pack. I knew he had a considerable liking towards Tanya, and something told me I threatened the balance of his relationship with her. But I didn't know why. And I now more than ever I needed to figure out what continuously drew me to her.

Also, since working alongside Caspian during the poisoning incident, we seemed to have grown a sense of respect between one another. I just hope he could do me some decency and reply to me truthfully.

“In all honesty Marco, I don’t think it’s right for me to disclose Tanya’s past, or her personal life. I know you deserve to know the truth, but I think Tanya needs to tell you that herself when she’s ready.”

My shoulders sag upon hearing the news, and although I understand his reasoning, it only intensifies my curiosity. I watch as Caspian kicks a pebble on the ground with his foot, hands in his pockets while clearly debating something in his head. I remain quiet, hoping he’d at least give me some clue.

He eventually sighs. “But I can point you in the right direction. I would take a look at the mark on Tanya’s neck if I were you. You’ll get all the answers you need from that.”

All day I’m entirely dumbfounded by Caspian’s hint. If you could even call it that. But I appreciate his help and thank him for speaking with me. Now hours later, I’m standing outside the changing room waiting for Tanya to be ready for our fake wedding ceremony.

I start to think she’s ready now when I see the door crack open, but it only opens just enough for her to poke her head through, looking mildly embarrassed as she explains. “I’m sorry, I can’t reach the back, and Lisa’s busy helping set up the ceremony. Would you mind just zipping up the back of the dress for me?”

She gives me an apologetic smile, but I nod. “Yeah, no problem.” She backs away from the door and I step through into the small little changing room. A mounted mirror stands at the end which she faces, and it reflects her image back to me.

I won’t deny how stunning Tanya looks. It’s a mermaid style wedding dress that hugs her body in all the right ways. Silver glitter shines against the white gown and decorates the heart shaped front and the off the sleeves shoulders, and flows down and out in a sleek fashion. It’s elegant and pure and compliments the lusher long black locks of her hair and makes the emerald hue of her eyes stand out brilliantly.

“Marco?”

I must snap myself out of the allure, shooting my gaze back up to the undone zipper that leaves a plunging v shape that cascades down to the middle of her back. I step closer and hold the zipper, and a strange silence settles into the atmosphere around us as I draw the zipper upwards and close the exposed gap of her dress.

At that moment, I recall Caspian’s words. Trying to maintain a casual air, as I reach the top of the dress with the zipper, I then swoop my hand up her neck, gently brushing away the strands of

her hair. Not expecting to see it, my eyes grow wide as I see a clear mark of a wolf bite etched into Tanya's skin. A mark that is immensely familiar to me.

Chapter 67 Wedding Ceremony

Chapter 66 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

My skin can't help but tingle to Marco's touch, and I wonder why Marco chooses to brush my hair away from my neck. Was there something wrong with it?

"Were you able to get it?" I ask.

"Yeah, it's zipped up," he replies, and upon feeling the dress is now secured, I turn round to face him. It feels strange to be in the wedding gown, and I try to hide the insecurity from the dress that shows off my small curves and cups my breasts nicely.

"Do I- do I look okay?" I can't help but ask. Marco physically takes a step back, taking in all the fine details of my gown, before returning to gaze into my eyes.

"I think you look beautiful," I can't help the light flush that I feel rise upon my cheeks in reaction to his words. However, I still wonder if something is on his mind, and Marco seems somewhat preoccupied with his thoughts.

Despite my assumption, a second later whatever I thought I saw in his expression disappears entirely, and Marco returns to look at me with a neutral disposition. Maybe it was just my imagination, and the growing nervousness in my stomach for what we were about to do.

Since this wedding is obviously last minute, the reception is small. But Caspian helped put it together in one of the forest clearings, setting up chairs, laying a carpet down for the aisle, and assembling with members a beautiful flower altar shaped in an arch. Everyone knew why we were doing this; they knew of Barlow's last wish.

And I wasn't surprised to hear that Mr. Barlow would be officiating the wedding, that man truly was a jack of all trades. Although untraditional, Marco and I had decided we'd simply walk down the aisle together, since my father wasn't around. And in all honesty, even if this was real, I still didn't think I would want my family here.

With all these thoughts swaying around my mind, I finally hear the music begin. Marco comes to stand beside me, lifting his arm to me. “Shall we?”

I inhale a deep breath of air, giving him a nod as I link my arm with his. We step out the changing room I have been in and make our way through the forest. The sun sits high in the sky today, its rays glittering down and sparkling the trees and flowers with its magical dust that gives the forest a lively glow.

The identifiable scent of blue moon flowers encompasses us as we slowly step towards the start of the aisle. It is a small crowd, Caspian, Dylan, Lisa and little Claire. They now stand upon seeing us.

Marco and I walk together down the aisle in beat to the soft elegant music that’s being played. And waiting for us at the end is Mr. Barlow. He’s in a wheelchair, and I can’t help but notice the paleness of his skin as he grows weaker. But what draws me away from all the real issues is the smile that’s on his lips, so broad and so proud, my eyes can’t help but gloss over upon seeing his happiness.

This is for him after all, and if I could give him one last happy memory. Then that’s what I’ll do.

When Marco and I reach him, he begins the ceremony as normal, speaking as loud as he can despite his gravelly voice. “Dearly beloved and honored guests. We are gathered here today to join Marco and Tanya in the union of marriage. This contract is not to be entered into lightly, but thoughtfully and seriously, and with a deep realization of its obligations and responsibilities.”

He smiles up to us before continuing. “I have come to witness, that these two individuals, are destined to be one. They complement each other in various ways that emanates flow, beauty and grace. They lean on each other in difficult times, strengthen one another when they must fight, and uplift each other in moments of joy. Their souls dance to the beat of their own drum, as both are loyal and compassionate beings that I’ve grown to love. They both somehow put up with me and I will forever cherish how they’ve taken care of this old man.”

Our small crowd, and ourselves laugh and giggle to Mr. Barlow’s words, but he continues with a smile. “And I’m forever grateful I’ve gotten the chance to witness this union and see it through as I soon enter into the afterlife... now enough about me, the bride and groom have each prepared vows.”

Both me and Marco take turns saying our vows, both in different ways expressing our willingness to take care of each other for the rest of our lives. And then finally, Mr. Barlow says. “Tanya, do you take Marco to be your husband? Do you promise to love, honor, cherish, and protect him, forsaking all others, and holding only unto him forevermore?”

I smile and say. “I do.”

“And Marco, do you take Tanya to be your wife? Do you promise to love, honor, cherish, and protect her, forsaking all others, and holding only unto her forevermore?”

“I do,” says Marco, surprising me slightly. As I didn’t expect the raw emotion to drip through into his words. It is puzzling, since Marco doesn’t have to be sincere about any of this. And yet he is. He looks deep into my eyes, as if this was all real.

But I don’t have time to process Marco’s vows or his tone of voice. Instead, I notice Mr. Barlow leaning over uncomfortably, his head sagging so far forward that I have to kneel down and catch him, gently pressing his back into the chair.

“Someone get me water!”

Seconds pass, and Caspian rushes over, and hands me a glass that I offer to the elderly man. He gulps down the liquid, before chuckling whilst continuing to cough. How he remains so light-hearted in such a serious situation, I’d never understand.

“Well, it’s about time. Tanya. I’d like to speak with you alone please.”

I nod in understanding and get behind his wheelchair to roll him over away from everyone else. I pull him into the sunniest part of the clearing, the rays of light shining onto his face as I set out one of the chairs so I can sit beside him. Our surroundings are now entirely quiet, and it feels like, it’s only the trees that are listening in on our conversation.

“Marco is Claire’s father. Correct?” I snap my head to him in surprise before he elaborates. “I see the way you look at him Tanya. The way you both move in sync with one another. And that’s why I asked to be a witness to your union. I knew you’d ask Marco to pretend to be your groom.”

My shoulders sag in defeat as Mr. Barlow reveals the truth, but he continues. “But I hope you can find the courage to tell him the truth yourself one day. You deserve that happiness Tanya, so does Claire. And I know you’ll be brave enough to one day reunite with Marco once more,” he smiles at me. “Don’t waste time on things that don’t matter. You gotta chase after your own happiness Tanya. Chase after it with all your heart.”

I’m utterly touched by his words. “You may not understand it, but you’ve been like a father to me. Truly.”

He chuckles. “I’ve never had a biological daughter in this life. But I understand, I do see you as my daughter. And I only want what’s best for you... I did have an adopted son though.”

I notice that as he reveals this information to me, something stirs within him. He pauses as he debates something in his head, before finally choosing to tell me. “I think as my daughter, you should know the truth. At least before I pass,” he chuckles. “I’m actually a wizard and werewolf hybrid. When I was young, and stupid, I was a terrible person. I was cruel and ruthless to anyone that opposed me. And because no pack wanted me because of what I was, I decided to create a pack of my own, made of up rogues who were of mixed bloods.”

My brows raise, slowly putting the pieces together as he elaborates. “I found a boy, abandoned during a harsh winter. He was just like me. So, I adopted him and taught him much of the black magic I had mastered,” he scoffs. “But, you know, people with our personalities are not so gentle.”

He continues with a sad smile. “My boy’s powers grew stronger each day, and so did his ambition. And eventually, he decided to challenge me for my position... I lost. Course, as ruthless as he was, he was going to kill me. But I escaped, and that’s when you found me.”

He takes my hand in his now, holding it close as he looks up at me. “So, you see, I was going to die three years ago. You’ve given me another three years of life. My death was only inevitable. My adopted son must’ve known I was here, and that’s why he chose to poison the Blue Moon Pack’s water. I’m responsible for this. You helped me escape my fate for a little while. But it’s now time. I know it’s time.”

He gently wipes away my tears, before fishing for something out his pocket and placing the small object in my hand. I look down to see it is his badge. “I originally had two,” he says, “One I gave to my son. And the second I wish to give to you, my daughter.”

I’m distraught as I feel Mr. Barlow slipping away. He’s still smiling as I slowly watch him close his eyes as he tilts his head to face the sun. And then, he utters a final sentence before he finally stops breathing. “You should know, my adopted son’s name is Dorian.”

Chapter 68 Marco’s Memory Comes Back

Chapter 67 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Third POV

Mr. Barlow’s burial is a quiet one, but the old man has wanted it that way, and it seems to suit him. After his many years on earth, living two very different lives. It made sense that he was surrounded by those that were a part of the latter end of his timeline.

Even being the recluse alcoholic that he was, Mr. Barlow was known as the wise drunkard of the pack. Not everyone got along with him, but everyone did heed his advice when he chose to give it.

Even now, Tanya smiles at the thought as she stands beside Marco. Watching solemnly as the coffin is slowly lowered into the ground. It reminds her that life is short, and at any moment it

can be taken away from anyone. There is no escaping death. Mr. Barlow's words ring through her mind.

"Don't waste time on things that don't matter. You gotta chase after your own happiness Tanya. Chase after it with all your heart."

At that moment, she decides she's going to finally tell Marco the truth. Both good and bad. She had intended to tell Marco the truth, but was interrupted by an accident. This time, she is going to tell him everything no matter the consequences. Even if she somehow dies soon, it means she has gotten everything off her chest, and he would know the truth about who she really was.

After Mr. Barlow's funeral, Tanya asks Marco if he's willing to meet for a conversation under the Blue Moon tree, to which he agrees. Little does she know he is coming across some of the truth on his own.

Back at the capital, Lily is reminiscing over past five years. Despite her plans with Marco initially going well, Joseph suddenly fainting before declaring Marco as the next heir, disrupted everything. Eric became the temporary ruler, and Lily could only continue being his fiancé.

Much to her bewilderment and humiliation, Eric has yet to consummate their wedding ceremony, leaving Lily to befall victim to ruthless rumors over why. She couldn't understand it herself. Why not just make her his wife already?

And with regards to Marco. Although he was no longer hostile and defensive towards her after losing his memories. When finding out she was Eric's fiancé, he once again put some distance between them, only angering Lily further.

The only good thing that had come out of this, was getting rid of Tanya. Joseph was at least able to cover up Lily's plagiarism of Tanya's work, as another requirement for Lily to cure Marco's curse. Of course, since people in the royal family knew the truth, Lily was no longer allowed to work as a perfume designer.

The public were made to believe that her sense of smell was so damaged that she could no longer work. This at least meant her reputation was preserved, and Lily of course, took the opportunity to deceive Marco into thinking that Tanya had been the one to destroy her sense of smell.

However, Lily hasn't been too keen on Marco's trip to the Blue Moon Pack. And he has been there for a while now, only to reappear for a moment to retrieve a special ingredient, before rushing back without a word. It is strange to her, to say the least.

She now plays with her crystal necklace, twisting it round with her fingers as she tries to understand her upset. And choosing to trust her instincts, she decides to call Marco.

"Hey, is everything okay?"

She's slightly surprised by the calmness of his voice. "Yeah, I'm well, why? What's wrong?"

“Oh, nothing. I just wanted to check in, see if you were all okay.”

“Yeah, don’t worry. I’m alright. Nice to hear from you Lily. I’ve got to go. But will talk another time, okay?”

Lily smiles, now completely at ease. “Yeah, definitely.”

Little does she know, this is simply an act, and all is not okay in Marco’s world. Despite the tone of his, his expression is blank and cold. He stands beneath the Blue Moon tree when he hangs up the phone.

Somehow, somehow, he has finally strung together all his lost memories. His gaze befalls on a ribbon that hangs on one of the branches. And he goes to gently untie it and pull it down. The ribbon is so familiar, and he soon understands why as he extends it to reveal his and Tanya’s recognizable initials.

Just then, lightning flashes across the night sky and rain pummels down hard. A clap of thunder splits the fog like a knife, and inevitably uplifts the final veil that suppressed Marco’s memories. He sees clearly now. Sees that woman in his dreams, who is in fact: Tanya.

Tanya’s POV

My hand swirls the sponge over the plate, cleansing the dishes of the evening. The sink backs against the window, so I’m given clear visual of the rain that hammers down relentlessly against the glass pane. I don’t know if it’s the weather, or just a fleeting thought that stirs something within, but a pang of panic sparks somewhere beneath.

In response to this feeling, my fingers go to feel the strands of my hair. I reassure myself that there is nothing to panic about, till my wet fingers drift down to the uneven skin on my neck. I trail the pattern, recognizing the mark on my skin.

Marco’s mark...

I’m now given a valid reason to panic, I haven’t even thought about it before. But I now understand why Marco brushed my hair aside on the day of the wedding. Why he was taking so long, why he was intensely focusing on my neck.

I couldn’t believe it. But could have Marco regained his memories?

I can’t wait until morning to confirm this revelation. I need to speak to him now. I leave the dishes in the sink and rush out into the pouring rain. I knock at his door desperately, but there’s no answer. The rain drenches my clothes and my hair as I stand waiting, hoping. But Marco clearly isn’t home.

So, I go in search of him, but I don't find him anywhere. The last place I look is the Blue Moon tree, it's hard to see in the dark, and I'm left slightly lost amongst the overflow of forestry. I suddenly hear footsteps from behind me. And I spin around to face the towering and intimidating form of Marco.

He too, is drenched from the downpour; his normally angelic hues of blue have darkened likening them to rough stormy waves. His lowered brow bone hardens his gaze, whilst his jaw clenches firmly. With him brings a chill, and my body shivers as the previous adrenalin is washed away by the rain.

"You remember?"

He nods, tilting his head unnervingly. "And if I didn't remember, were you even going to bother to tell me?" I flinch at the sickening sarcasm that laces his tone.

I shake my head, panic-stricken by his accusation. "No, I was going to tell you."

But Marco interrupts me. "You were going to tell me tomorrow, weren't you?" I can only nod weakly. "Then what about five years ago? Were you going to tell me about how you left me five years ago? Or were you going to hide that from me too?" The iciness in his tone is incrementally soul destroying.

"Or were you even going to tell me you had some other reason that you left me five years ago? Well, I'm sorry Ms. Tanya, I don't believe that! All I know is that you are a woman who chose to abandon me for money when I was going through the most difficult time of my life!"

I shrink away as he dominantly steps closer, his anger dispelling off him in waves of rage. "I'm so sorry Marco. I'm sorry."

But he barely reacts or acknowledges my sincerity. "Does it even matter anymore if you apologize? No. I want you to pay for what you did!" I back away as he begins to encroach on my space.

"She's my child, isn't she? That's how we can communicate through the mind link. Claire's my daughter!" he scoffs. "At least you have some conscience in that cruel and despicable heart of yours not to abort your child. But she's mine. And I will take her away now, so you can also experience the pain of losing someone so precious to you. It's exactly what you deserve."

My breathing escalates as I comprehend the words coming out of his mouth. My eyes widen in panic. "What? No. Marco no, please. Please don't take Claire away. She's all I have!" But Marco doesn't care to hear my pleas, he's already made up his mind.

Just then, before I can react, his arms shoot out at me, and his hands suddenly wrap coldly round my neck. I can't bear to fathom the thought that Marco would want to kill me. But I couldn't see any form of empathy from his eyes that look fiercely into mine.

However, he holds me like that for a couple of minutes, and I can feel his hesitation as barely any pressure is applied to my neck. I even feel the slight tremble of his fingers. He scoffs. “You deserve something worse than death. I’ll take everything you cherish most. One by one. And I’ll start with your necklace.”

He then drops his grip around my neck, letting a shaky breath burst from my lungs. But his arm shoots up to snag my necklace and wrenches it away from my body violently. As the chain snaps and Marco snatches the pendant, a crisp clang emits at that very moment. We both follow the sound, gazing down into the soaked blades of grass. And there lies my wedding ring, glinting its silver hue back at me and Marco.

Chapter 69 Another Marriage Contract

Chapter 68 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Third POV

The sound of the ring catches the attention of both Marco and Tanya, and their heads snap down to look at it. It sits eerily amongst the grass, the glint of its silver plating calling for attention. Tanya goes to pick it up hurriedly, but Marco is quicker, snatching it up in his grasp. There’s a discernable frown on his lips as he stares at it with intensity, and hidden disbelief.

The cobalt daggers that are his eyes, flit back and forth between Tanya and the piece of jewelry in his hand. This is far from what Marco expected, unable to understand why she would keep the ring with her for all these years. Couple of seconds pass by and Marco’s expression still doesn’t ease up. Finally, without another word, Marco takes both her ring, and her ruby necklace and storms off, leaving Tanya in the rain to drown in her own thoughts.

Marco returns home, and throughout his entire nighttime routine, he is consistently thinking about Tanya and her wedding ring. As he’s taking a shower, when having dinner, whilst making a cup of tea. And now, as he sits by his window, looking out into the night sky whilst it drowns the world in its tears. Marco wonders why she has kept the ring all this time.

The way she behaved the day she left him, the heartlessness and brutality of her mannerisms that made him believe she no longer loved him, contradict with keeping this ring. He rolls the piece of jewelry between his fingers, glaring fiercely at the silver ring as if it could easily answer his questions for him.

‘She did say she would abort the baby. But she didn’t.’

Amid Marco's confusion, his wolf Manuel decides to speak up. And for some reason or another, pertains a soft spot for Tanya. 'She gave birth to Claire and then worked very hard these past five years to look after her and make a decent living in the Blue Moon pack. That's gotta mean something... right?'

Marco only lets out a gruff huff in response, Manuel just assumes he's free to continue with his chatter. 'I don't know, I just feel even closer and more drawn to Tanya than I did five years ago. What if there's a valid reason for leaving us then? Marco... just give her a chance. Please.'

The Lycan doesn't directly respond to his inner wolf. He remains staring out of the window as if he is struggling fiercely inside. But finally, it's clear he's made up his mind on the situation. He picks up his phone and calls his friend Oliver.

"Hey Marco, what's up?"

"Why didn't you tell me about Tanya?"

There's a sudden and frigid pause over the phone before Oliver stutters to answer the direct question. "You- you remember?"

"Yes, I remember. Why didn't you tell me about Tanya?" the brashness of Marco's tone leaves Oliver stunned and ultimately submissive with his reply to the Lycan.

"Lily told us that your memory loss would be a side effect of curing your curse. And since Tanya abandoned you, we thought it would be better that you didn't remember her at all. So, we agreed to keep her existence a secret. We didn't want to cause you anymore pain Marco."

Marco can only scoff in response, before stating. "Well, nevermind that now, I'm coming back to capital, and I need you to prepare a document for me."

Tanya's POV

The piercing howl of a wolf rings through my ears. I can't see it; all I hear is the wolf's long and drawn-out wolfish cry that sounds like a melody that bellows in the distance.

I snap upright in bed. My hand instinctively goes to hold my ruby pendant as a form of comfort. But I find that it's not there, my neck and collar bone lay bare of its existence, and that's when I remember who has taken it.

The rest of the morning I get ready silently, my mind trying to piece together my dream over and over again. But none of the pieces fit, and I can't remember anything, nor gain a visual of what I was dreaming of. All I can remember is the howl that I can recall so vividly.

It's then that I hear a knock on the door, and Claire's eating her breakfast in the kitchen when I go to open it. In an instant, fear erupts within me as Marco stands out-front, his cold and calculating expression knotting my stomach.

Claire's innocence is only a small problem in the scheme of things, but as she attempts to say hello to Marco, I push her back, forcing her to remain behind me, not ready to face the confusion that she has towards my gesture.

"You can't take her. You just can't. I won't let you!"

His silence is extremely unnerving. And he doesn't even bother to explain himself, he steps through the doorway, eyes flickering methodically between me and my daughter.

"If you hate me, that's fine. But please don't take her away Marco. She's all I have!"

Again, no response. He now tries to move past me, trying to shove me lightly out the way with his sheer size and bodily strength. Normally, he would have, but something burns inside me today. Someone that would do anything to protect my daughter.

In one swift movement I step back and block his path again. And when he tries to shove past me again, my hand press against his chest and roughly shoves him backwards with much more force than what I'm normally capable of. Not enough to topple him, but definitely enough to make him stumble back a couple of steps.

My eyes grow wide. He too tilts his head in slight confusion. My gaze drops to the palm of my hands, twisting them to see if anything's changed. And in the midst of my puzzlement, Marco crouches down to Claire's height.

"Come here darling."

Obviously as a child, she's unaware that he is taking her away for good. She just assumes I'm stopping her from going off to do something exciting. In rebellion towards my authority she runs into Marco's arms, and he picks her up, turning round to walk towards the car.

"No! Maroc please," I rush after the two of them. "Please don't do this. I'm begging you!" I'm desperate now, willing to say anything to get my little girl back, as tears stream down my face.

After he puts Claire in the car, the prince straightens, turning towards me. "Aren't you going to get in?"

His nonchalance is what confuses me first, but when I suddenly comprehend his statement, I look at him, baffled, as Marco continues to speak. "I just need Claire to come with me to the capital. I never said you couldn't come too."

I'm absolutely stunned, although I don't take too long, not wishing to give Marco more time to debate his decision over allowing me to come along. I hurry into the car, and into the back seat, where I cradle my daughter in my arms despite her childish protests over the strange affection.

Little did she know I thought I would be losing her forever.

It feels like ages, but we do finally arrive at the capital. And I'm not surprised to see Lily standing at the entrance, excitement glinting in her eyes to see Marco. But when I step out of the car with Claire's hand in mine, the princess's expression shifts, obviously trying to mask whatever emotion writhes beneath.

As we walk up to the entrance, Lily immediately blocks my path. Marco turns to look at her coldly. "What's the matter Lily?" sarcasm laces his words poisonously, making her squirm under his glare.

"She- she's an omega, she's not a noble and she shouldn't be allowed to enter the palace."

He scoffs, and to my surprise, in clear view, he draws a hand round my waist, pulling me close to him. "Tanya's my wife, of course she's allowed to enter the palace."

There's little for Lily to say. She only stands with a look of astonishment on her face as we walk past her together, as if she can't understand how Marco could say something like that after he lost his memory.

Marco takes me to his room and a piece of paper sits eerily on his desk. I approach and he slides the document towards me.

My gaze drops down to it, reading the familiar words 'marriage contract'.

Chapter 70 Save The Blue Moon Tree

Chapter 69 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

Surprise and astonishment cross my face as I stare down at the document in utter confusion. Why would he want to marry me again if he was so upset with me? I look at him curiously. "But why?"

I watch the prince cough, somewhat trying to per long the answer to my expression, as he wipes his face clean of all emotional response. A cold, blunt tone implies he does not feel anything towards me. “Don’t think much of it,” he says. “I don’t love you. Love doesn’t coexist between us from now on since I cannot forgive you.”

Marco talks about love like it’s a logical expression, a switch that can be turned off and on with a quick flick of the wrist. He then explains. “If I don’t act quickly, the Blue Moon Tree is facing possible destruction but putting a dam in its place due to the Blue Moon Pack’s poor economy. Yes, Eric has made the proposal again, and there’s only half a month left before the deadline. So, I’ve come up with a solution. Princess Isabella of the neighboring kingdom, known as the Fauna Kingdom, has a younger sister, Princess Peyton, whose been very sick for a long time.”

I remain silent as he continues to explain. “Isabella has been seeking doctors from far and wide, but Peyton still has yet to be cured from her illness. So, Princess Isabella has issued a royal decree. Anyone who is able to cure her sister will be granted a reward of their choice. Whatever they desire.... The Blue Moon Pack has an abundance of good natural raw materials, they just lack the communication channels and stable buyers from beyond the pack in order to generate profit. And so, this is where you come in.”

Marco appears methodical in his thought process, like he’s really planned this out well, down to the details. He goes on to say. “If you can cure princess Peyton’s disease, then Isabella will be willing to connect the Blue Moon Pack to good buyers and may even provide the initial funding, giving the pack a long-term source of economic growth, solving the problem and in turn protecting the Blue Moon Tree.”

Now this all seems to make sense, except the part of which he wants me to be his wife, to which I ask. “But what does us being married have to do with this?” he raises a hand, signaling me to stop, as if saying he is about to get to that point.

“You aren’t a doctor, so I need a reason to introduce you to the princess. Plus, you need to make a good first impression on her before she allows you anywhere near her sister. Isabella is a woman whose highly devoted to her family, and particularly allured by love and loyalty. She has a fondness towards happy couples, and so I want you to marry temporarily to use that to our advantage.”

I blink at him; somewhat stunned at how strange the idea is. Yet it does somehow make sense. “I know you care about the Blue Moon Tree Tanya, and so do I. We have the same goal, and this contract is simply a method towards achieving it. It’s as simple as that. Nothing about love. So please don’t take too long considering this. Make your decision now, we need to do this as soon as possible.

“And Claire?” I say in a hesitant whisper.

“I brought Claire back to register her under my name. Oliver will sort through the relevant procedures so she can be recognized as my daughter. But for the time being, whilst we’re away at the neighboring kingdom, she’ll stay safe and be taken care of by Oliver and Cathy.”

It doesn't take me long to decide what I am going to do. I sign the contract and say goodbye to Claire before we head off early the next morning to the Fauna Kingdom. Marco invites Caspian, the Alpha of the Blue Moon Pack, to come along as well.

We arrive by dusk, the sky a mellow pink as the sun begins to set behind the castle. The palace is magnificent, not as grand as the capital palace, but still large and spacious. Its thematic colors are of a sage green and a mauve pink as the flag waves at us from high up above, a deer with antlers painted in gold as the symbol.

Marco has already told Princess Isabella that we were coming, and she eagerly meets us at the entrance, before ushering us inside to join her for dinner. The dining room takes on a rustic appearance, with a wooden table and wooden chairs that have patterns carved into their wood pieces. A green silk cloth rest upon the table, as food galore lays atop.

The dinner first starts with formalities, with Marco introducing himself, Caspian, and me. The two royals talk politics for a bit and how each of their families are doing as well as the economy of the differing kingdoms. But I watch that throughout this conversation Isabella's eyes consistently drift to Caspian. Curiosity sparking beneath her gaze, as he too sneaks small looks in her direction.

"So um, you're the Alpha of the Blue Moon Pack?" she finally addresses Caspian directly. With the attention on him, he immediately straightens his posture.

"Yes, I'm Caspian."

The princess giggles playfully. "I already know your name silly?" her giggling continues, and I watch as Caspian remains stiff in his posture, which is very uncharacteristic of his more relaxed and animated nature.

"I've always been so fascinated by the Blue Moon Tree. Do you have to tend to it often to keep it healthy?"

I see Caspian's eyes light up with excitement, not many people outside of the Mador Kingdom show interest in the Blue Moon Tree. His chest puffs out slightly in growing pride. "Actually, the tree barely needs any maintenance, the forest of our pack flourish so well, our soil is fresh and untampered with chemicals. And we ever rarely experience drought. The tree thrives in our sanctuary."

Isabella smiles broadly. "Wow! That's brilliant! I've never met an Alpha so well versed with the necessities of nature. Usually, others are interested in politics or the economy and other trades. I think it's wonderful you care so much about the forest."

Caspian's pride grows by the second as she continues. "Have you seen my garden? I love tending to it. I'd be happy to show you around tomorrow morning!"

“Of course!” Then he finally seems to realize that the cordial conversation between him and Isabella has made him forget his initial restraint. He coughs and reverts back to his initial formality. “I mean, yes I’d love to see your garden princess.”

“Please, call me Isabella.”

I’m almost in awe of the ease of conversation between the princess and Caspian, that I forget why I’m here in the first place. I need to show her that I am truly in love with Marco and we’re a happy couple.

Although when I later look back at my performance on this day, I realize I have gone overboard with my acting methods.

“Marco...” I purr, turning to him as I flutter my eyelids obnoxiously in his direction. My arms go to link itself round his, tugging him closer. “You’re not looking at those other girls, sweetie?”

I feel his body stiffen momentarily, confusion crossing his face as I continue. “I’m the only girl that matters to you, aren’t I? Aren’t I baby?”

“Ye-yes.”

As Marco clearly tries to comprehend what’s going on, I turn to my meal, making weak whiny noises as I pretend to struggle with cutting the slab of steak on my plate. “Marco...” I drawl out again. “Honey... I need you to cut this for me. I don’t have the strength.”

I pout my lip at him, again flashing my lashes in his direction. And once again I’m met with a curious glance. “Pretty please.” I add.

To which even now Caspian snaps his head in my direction, bewildered by my actions that appear from usual. Both men knew me to be soft spoken and reserved, conservative in my affections towards those I cared about. I’d never be so brash about it in front of others, and yet here I am, doing so because I have to.

I see recognition spark behind Marco’s eyes, as he finally realizes what I’ve been attempting to do. And an unannounced chuckle eventually disperses from his lips. “Course,” he takes his knife and fork and begins cutting away at my steak, before dipping a piece in the sauce and lifting it up to my mouth.

I try not to hesitate, opening my mouth as he feeds me the piece of food. He’s smiling, almost humored by my predicament. And I can’t help but smile back, giggling pretentiously.

Isabella loudly clears her throat. And both our heads snap in her direction. “I understand you both are very much in love,” she says. “But I’d rather not be drowning in the dramatics if that’s alright?”

She's not trying to be rude, but I can tell she's somehow bored of our display, which confuses me. I duck my head sheepishly as I say. "I'm sorry. It's just that. I heard you were very fond of couples that display a lot of affection. That you like marriages that are full of devotion?"

Isabella blinks, and then blinks again, a puzzled look cascading across her features that surprises me, as well as feeling Marco stiffen beside me. "Where on earth did you hear that?"

I look surprised, mirroring her confusion as I stutter, trying to formulate a response, when Marco suddenly rises from his chair. "Oh, why don't we all go see the garden now!" abruptly ending our conversation.

Chapter 71 Kiss

Chapter 70 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

Through the conversations between the princess and Caspian as we walk around her garden, I come to find out that although she's a princess, she does basically run the kingdom. Her father was the former Alpha, but due to old age and a myocardial infarction, he passed away a year ago.

Marco mentions to me that the former Alpha was well liked by many, both by the royals and the residents of the kingdom. He was a noble man, majestic in nature, with a charismatic flare. He was the reason the Fauna kingdom's economy thrived and had an abundance of connections.

And now I can see that same trait in Isabella. She is highly intelligent, and well capable of holding her own in a conversation. She has her father's charming mannerisms. But what Marco also discloses to me quietly, was that the King had died on the day of the younger sister's wedding. Peyton was getting married to her fated mate. However, thirty minutes before the ceremony was set to begin, the King collapsed and could not be revived.

Isabella does mention that Peyton and the King were very close. And after his death, Peyton grew increasingly ill. Many doctors attempted to solve her mystery illness, but none were successful. And none of the treatments they suggested were working. Additionally, she had no symptoms other than weakness, and so a diagnosis couldn't be given, and hence the right method of treatment couldn't be established. All they could do was provide her with medication that eased the pain of her illness.

Eventually, Isabella invites us to meet her sister and takes us to her room. And while all other aspects of my wolfish abilities are particularly weak, my sense of smell never fails me. As I step into the room, the scent of decay hits my nose.

My nostrils flare, and the bridge of my nose wrinkles as the smell hits me. I can smell the infection, notes of mold and mildew compounded on top of one another to strengthen the scent of disease. It reminds me of how Mr. Barlow smelt before his passing. The infection isn't of the same sort, but something similar tickles beneath my nostrils. The smell of death. She is indeed dying...

My eyes are somber as they rest upon the princess. It's almost darkly comical of how small she looks beneath the mass of blankets and pillows that surround her dainty figure. The brightness of her pinkish and cream colored room, contrasts with the dim paleness of her skin that has a greenish hue. I take the initiative to walk up to her, watching her weakly smile in my direction as I approach.

"Hello Princess Peyton, I'm Tanya."

There's clear curiosity in her eyes. I'm not some famous doctor, nor am I a well-known royal. And I can tell she is searching my gaze for some form of familiarity. Nevertheless, she still offers me a warm smile. "Hello Tanya, nice to meet you."

She tries to sit up, but I can tell she is struggling too. Her eyelids look like they weigh a ton as she's slow in her movements. I quickly touch her arm to stop her. "Please, it's pretty late. I'll leave you to rest. I'll come to see you in the morning?"

She chuckles sadly. "That might be a good idea. I'm feeling rather sleepy," I nod my head in understanding, and in response she lays back down, resting her head against the pillow, and her eyes somehow instinctually shut, as if simply talking is enough to justify rest.

My eyes cascade down the parts of her body I can see, noticing how other than her paleness, there are no other physical symptoms, no other visible signs. No rash markings, or redness in her eyes. She just appears frail and weak, which is very odd indeed.

But as promised, I let princess Peyton sleep, and the rest of us shuffle out of her chambers. However, Caspian doesn't follow me and Marco to our quarters. I realize Isabella has discreetly called him over. "Caspian, may I speak with you for a moment? Alone."

Up until now, I have noticed the strange atmosphere between them. Where Isabella is increasingly trying to find ways to talk to Caspian. And despite knowing it is wrong of me to spy, I couldn't help but be immensely curious and want to find out what is going on.

Marco doesn't initially notice as I hang back. I round a corner and press myself against the wall, peering over its edge to listen in. Isabella speaks first rather softly, her tone cradling disbelief. "You felt it?"

“Course I felt it,” says Caspian, his hand rubbing at the nape of his neck as if trying to ease the tension in his back. “We’re fated mates. Aren’t we?”

“Yes...” I can almost feel the smile in Isabella’s voice.

My mouth drops in utter surprise. No wonder Caspian has been acting so strange and restrained earlier on during dinner. They must’ve felt it from the moment they locked eyes.

“What are you doing?”

The voice is neither Caspian’s nor Isabella’s. I jolt with a gasp as Marco appears to stand behind me, and inventively also draws the attention of the fated mates. I swirl round in a hurry, my hand rushing upwards to clasp around Marco’s mouth to stop him from saying anything else.

My heart hammers furiously against my chest, since it would ultimately be tremendously embarrassing if I am to be discovered eavesdropping on a conversation I haven’t been a part of. My eyes flit desperately to our surroundings as I hear the two edging closer to our location. His mouth is still pressed against by my fingertips, I feel his lips twist upwards into a smile. And I look at him slightly confused.

But before I can react, Marco grabs my hand, and pulls me through double doors not away from us that lead out onto a balcony. He then wraps an arm round my waist and with agile speed he hauls us over the railing into a crevice of the outside walls. We’re basically standing on a ledge, with a massive drop below us. Because of both logic and fear my arms wrap round Marco fiercely.

I’m clinging to his body, and his hand is placed just by my waist to cup me against him. My head lifts up, staring into his eyes as we breathe the same air. Although my breath is mostly caught in my throat as I look into his dashing blue gaze. There’s complete silence between us. I don’t know I feel awkward or at ease, but I have little time to think on it.

I hear Caspian and Isabella make their way out onto the balcony, both expressing confusion to the noise that they heard, and why the doors are open. Nevertheless, they fail to see us, and leave to continue having their conversation elsewhere.

Marco quietly shifts us, so we edge back to the railing. He helps me over first before climbing back onto the platform. I breathe a sigh of relief, still unable to find the words to speak to Marco directly after having stood so close to him on the ledge.

Although, my thoughts about Marco are disturbed, as a flicker of light catches my attention. The balcony is situated in parallel to a window. The curtains aren’t drawn as the light in the room illuminates the individual. I then recognize the woman to be Peyton. And I watch in confusion as she empties a vial into the bin. I recall the vial contained a tonic Isabella had given her sister to soothe her illness. Hence my utter confusion as I watch Peyton empty the contents.

With little to no conversation during the walk back, Marco and I head back to the residence that has been provided to us by Princess Isabella. Obviously, we are playing the role of a happy couple, and we are technically married. So naturally Isabella gave us a house where we could stay together. And despite my love for Marco, it feels completely wrong to sleep beside him when I know he wants nothing to do with me.

It hurts. Deeply. But I still don't want to make this anymore uncomfortable than it already was. As we step into the house, I turn to face him. "I'll make this easier for the both of us. Since I know we're only married by contract. I'll sleep in the smaller room, and you sleep in the bigger room. And let's just leave it at that," I say, trying to not appear as awkward as I feel, before taking my luggage and disappearing into the room I designated for myself.

Marco's POV

The clock by my bedside tells me it is midnight, and I still haven't found the ability to fall asleep. Tanya's words are playing through my mind over and over again. Deciding that a glass of water would probably help, I step out of my room and into the kitchen.

It's only a couple of minutes later that I notice Tanya's door suddenly open, and she steps out looking somewhat dazed. Despite my puzzlement, I intend to ask what she is up to, so I move quickly, blocking her path.

But before I can even say a word, Tanya steps towards me. She strains onto her tip toes and cups my face in her hands suddenly. And without warning, pressing her lips against mine in a deep, passionate kiss. I stiffen in utter surprise.