

## **The Beast And The Blessed by Ashley Breanne**

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Ninety-One: Natalie

Natalie's P.O.V.

The heat radiating from his body increased as I pressed myself against him beneath

the blanket. His arm wrapped around my lower back, pulling me closer as I took his

lips. The way he responded was so pure, so instant... so delicious.

His hips pressed into mine, and I smiled against his lips when I felt he was already

hard and ready for me. He groaned as I flicked my tongue out and gently touched the

tip of his.

My hand slid along his firm chest, grabbing his muscular shoulders as I pushed myself

up, forcing him to roll onto his back. His hold on me tightened, taking me with him as

he moved.

Killian's hands slid under my shirt, resting on the bare skin of my waist as the blanket

fell from my back. The night's cold air made me shiver, and I pressed myself closer to

Killian as I kissed him deeper.

He groaned when I adjusted my hips to have his hard length between the lips of my

pussy as I ground against him. The noise sent a rush of pleasure through me, and I

felt myself growing wetter. Hearing him moan and groan beneath me always made

sex with him more enjoyable. I loved when he was vocal about what he liked.

His eyes glowed a bright red when he opened them and took my breath away. "I believe I still owe you an apology, my mate." I pushed myself up, lifting my arms as he pulled my shirt over my head. My eyebrows pressed together as I stared down at him with confusion. He had already apologized for what he had said. I couldn't think of anything else he may feel guilt or remorse for. "You don't owe me an apology, Killian. I promise. What was said was already forgiven. It wasn't even you saying it." I smirked when I saw his eyes drawn down to my bare breasts, and I reached up and cupped them, hiding them from his view. "Ah, uh! Eyes up on my face if you want to talk. Eyes down here if you want to play." A low, guttural growl filled the room, and I licked my lips as a shot of pleasure pulsed through my core. "You are mistaken, my love. I said I needed to apologize. I never said we needed to speak for me to do so." I gasped as he flipped me until he was on top, the cold metal of the pendant around his neck brushing my chest as he ripped my shorts from my body. "You see. What I said may have been forgiven, but it was not forgotten. So, I am going to spend as long as it takes to make you forget everything besides my name." My toes curled into the bed as he kicked off his boxers, leaving us both naked. I knew I was teasing and challenging him, but I enjoyed it. "And how do you plan to do that?" He grinned at me in a way I had never seen before. It was heart-stopping. He looked

so carefree and excited.

I let out a deep breath, my chest caving in as he made his way down my body, stopping at my breasts to take my nipple into the warmth of his mouth. "I think I will wear a purple dress to our next ball."

The sharp pain of Killian's teeth against my nipple made me giggle as I knew he was warning me just as I pushed him. I cried out from the pain and pleasure of the nibble, arching my back up to be closer to him.

He moved down my stomach, stopping to kiss and lick just above my belly button. My body relaxed again as I let out a sigh of pleasure. "Maybe I'll wear my hair down, so it would need to be an open back."

Killian looked up at me, seeming to enjoy the way I was teasing him as he reached down and lightly smacked my pussy. My eyes widened as I tried to jump from the bed in surprise, but he held me down. There was a light sting between my legs, but the pleasure that shot through me had my hands flying to his shoulders.

"What were you saying, my love?" Killian whispered against the skin of my hip before moving between my legs. His mouth closed over my clit as he began to roughly suck and lick it. "You're so fucking wet for me."

His moan of approval only made me want him more, and my hands moved to lace through his hair as his fingers danced in the wetness around my opening.

His head of dark brown hair between my legs was a sight to behold. I stared down the

valley of my breasts, enjoying how he was moaning as he pressed his face further against me with one arm wrapped under my thigh until his hand rested over my stomach.

My orgasm was building closer with every stroke of his tongue, and I closed my eyes as my head fell back against the pillow. "Maybe I'll wear a pair of silver heels with it."

My eyes shot open as he thrust two fingers into me, curling them to immediately find my g-spot. He pulled a loud moan out of me as my walls tightened around his fingers.

"Fuck, Killian!" I cried out as he pumped in and out of my wetness as his mouth ravaged my clit.

"Good girl. That's better," He gloated. But his response sent me over the edge. I

gripped his hair tighter as I came on his fingers, staring down into his red eyes.

He placed a final kiss on my clit before moving back up my body, trailing his lips over

my skin as he went. My muscles were limp as he continued to pump his fingers into me, allowing me to ride out every last wave of pleasure.

"What were you saying, my love?"

I shook my head as I caught my breath but smirked at the sight of my wetness on and

around his mouth. He pulled his fingers free from me, placing his hands on either side

of my head as I pushed myself up.

My fingers wiped around his lips, and I laughed as the loud popping sound of his nails

puncturing the mattress filled the room when I leaned up and flicked my tongue over

his lips once. "I was saying that I'll need to get my nails done too." He chuckled darkly as he reached down and grabbed my thigh. I moved willingly as he propped it onto his hip and lined himself up with my entrance. "Wrong answer."

My fingers dug into his back as he slammed into me. The sound of our bodies moving together in my wetness was incredible, and I gasped out a moan with every thrust. It was glorious and magnetic. I wanted to roll him onto his back and ride him until I couldn't move again, but I also wanted to tease him until he tied me to the bedframe and fucked me until I blacked out.

I knew we would have more time for that later. I settled with the former as I pushed my foot off the bed and rolled us over. Killian's looked surprised at my increased strength, and I placed my hands on the center of his chest as I adjusted myself to have my feet under his thighs.

The wide spread of my legs gave me just the right angle to pleasure myself on him. His eyes followed my hand as I reached down and spread my lips as I pressed my clit to his pelvis. He groaned, willingly giving up his control as I shamelessly ground my clit on him with each thrust and stroke.

"You're not playing fair, my love." He growled out, and I purred in pleasure as his grip on my hips tightened, sure to leave bruises for a few minutes when we were done.

I smiled at him as his eyes closed, and his jaw dropped open. "I disagree. I'm getting exactly what I want."

“Fuck, baby! That feels so good.” He groaned as he lifted his hips in time with my movements, pressing himself impossibly deeper into me. “Mh!” I tightened around him as I leaned down, pressing my breasts against his hot chest, my head falling next to his. There was no stopping the loud moans I let out by his ear, but he didn’t seem to mind. My cries of pleasure were joined by me slowing my movements as I rode out my orgasm, and he pushed my hips down to keep as deep in me as possible. “Don’t stop, baby!” He groaned, and I rocked my hips against his, sliding up and down his shaft this time instead of grinding on him. The additional wetness with my climax was a welcomed addition, adding even more pleasure as I took him as deep and hard as I could. I lifted myself up with my hands on the headboard, pushing off the wood as I slammed myself down onto his cock. His low groans made me go harder and faster with each movement until, finally, he pulled my hips up and freed himself from my hold, cumming on his stomach. “You’re too fucking good at that!” He growled as his head dropped back and his hands relaxed on my hips. But I was still enjoying myself and continued to slide against him as he came down from his orgasm. My clit was overly sensitive, and it only took a few minutes of me grinding against his cock for me to cum again. Killian stared at me, his red eyes melting to hazel as he smiled. “When this is all over,

there is nothing in this world that will prevent me from finally cumming inside you. I will fuck you so long and hard that you will be dripping from me for hours.” 1

I froze on top of him, staring down at the love of my life. “Are you saying you want a baby?”

His eyes scanned over my face as he seemed to ponder the idea. His smile was

gone, and he looked pensive before nodding. “Yes.”

My heart jumped to my throat, and I forced my excitement down. I hadn’t thought he

wanted one after everything that happened with his family. An heir was needed for the

royal line, but did he actually want a baby?

This was important to me as I had been dreaming of a real family for years, ever since

mine turned on me when I failed to shift. The idea of one day creating one with Killian

was a dream come true. I just didn’t know how excited I should be based on his

outlook on family and upbringing.

“Do you want a baby or an heir?”

He looked confused, staring at me almost as if I were crazy for asking such a stupid

question. “Are they not one and the same?”

I shook my head, knowing it had been too good to be true. “No.

No, they are not, but

we can come back to this once everything is over.”

I leaned down, placing one last and long kiss on his lips before sliding off of him and

walking toward the bathroom to rinse off so we could get some more sleep before

morning.

His voice called out to me, stopping me in my tracks, and a smile



came to my face. “I want to build a family with you, Natalie. Our children will be our heirs, but they will always be our children before anything else.” His voice was firm as if it were a command, and I couldn’t help the excited giggle that left my lips as I turned to face him. He was sitting up at the edge of the bed and rose with a serious look on his face. “That sounds perfect. Do you want to join me in the shower?”

Ninety-Two: Natalie  
Natalie’s P.O.V.

‘You seem disturbed.’ Aurora’s soft voice called out, and I glanced over at her with a forced smile.

I trained for hours with Tobias, exhausting myself as I learned new ways to fight against vampires and avoid getting bitten. He still wouldn’t talk to me, and I refused to pressure him into it. Whatever his reasons were, they were none of my business.

His silence only seemed to make him all the more terrifying. I closed the book I was studying as she approached me. She sat in the armchair to my left, staring into the fire.

“My people are about to go to war tomorrow. Many will die. That should disturb anyone.” My eyes raked over her features as I still failed to locate any apparent similarities between us. Even though Joslin never had the chance to test my blood with the council arriving, I knew Aurora was being truthful about our connection, but it was still unsettling.



“Yes, I suppose you are correct.” She sounded distracted, and I waited patiently for her to tell me why she had sought me out. I had my own questions, but I wasn’t in a hurry. I would be getting my answers from her sooner or later. “I’m afraid that I won’t be much help tomorrow.”

My eyes narrowed when the sudden fear of her leaving settled into my gut. Was this it? Was she going to abandon me again? “What makes you say that?”

She smiled sadly as she turned to face me, leaning her head against the chair. ‘You’re growing stronger every day.’

‘You’ve said that already, repeatedly.’ My annoyance must have been evident in my tone because her smile fell. Her look reminded me of when the mother who raised me would scold me for something.

I wasn’t going to apologize for my irritation when she crashed into my life and refused to give me anything other than vague statements that didn’t answer any of my questions.

‘We share in the Goddess’s gift.’ She stated as she pulled her eyes away from me, looking dejected. “But yours is unlike anything I have ever seen before. My mother

and every woman before her had it. We are at our strongest in The Sanctum. The longer we are away from it, the weaker we get. We didn’t know if the gift would die if we were away too long, so we were never gone for more than a few weeks. It is how we recharge.

Eventually, we stayed there, hiding from the people who wanted us dead. We were invincible there. No one could get to us.”

My fingers played with the pages of the elemental incantation book I had been reading. No matter how big and beautiful, I couldn’t imagine living in a cave. Hiding from the world sounded awful.

“But you only seem to grow stronger each day you are away. I have never seen anything like it in our family.” She cleared her throat, adjusting in her seat. It was the first time she had seemed uncomfortable since arriving here, instead of her usual elegant and confident self. “When I had the vision of you as a baby, I thought the Goddess was telling me you needed to be raised away from The Sanctum and among wolves. I left you right where she told me. I watched as they found you a few minutes later and took you away from me....”

Her voice cracked as she continued to stare into the fire. “I didn’t think you were born with the gift since the Goddess wanted you to be raised away from The Sanctum. I know I was wrong now, but I am still so proud of how strong you have become.”

I swallowed hard as I wondered what would have happened if I had been stuck in the cavern for my life. Would I have met Killian when he was playing there with Joselin as kids, or would I have been hidden in one of the caves and never experienced the true love of my mate?

“What about my dad? Who is he?” I gnawed on my lip while

waiting for the news of his death.

“Your father is a great man.” She smiled, discretely trying to wipe a tear from her cheek.

Is.

He must still be alive.

“I met him during one of my adventures out of the cave, and we instantly fell in love.

He was the next in line to become Alpha when I met him, and his elders were furious

when he introduced me. I wasn’t his fated mate, and they resented that I wasn’t like

them. They didn’t know of my

connection to Selene at the time. They thought he would produce stronger heirs with

his fated mate than he would if he marked me as his chosen.”

She took a deep breath and composed herself as she sat up straighter and turned to look at me.

“Your father doesn’t know about you. I found out about you during my return to The

Sanctum to recharge, and by the time I returned to him, his elders had set up their

own Offering with a few allied packs where he found his mate. He had already

claimed her by the time I got there. So, I went home and never went back. From what

I have heard, he is a great leader, and I know he is a good man.”

I could hear her heart pounding quickly and watched as her fingernail dug into the arm of the chair.

“You’re nervous,” I stated as I watched her fidget.

“He’s here, staying in the city as we speak. He came with the packs to fight tomorrow.”

I could admit that I was curious about the man, but I felt no urgency to run off before a war to meet him. I needed to continue to study so I could be as prepared as possible.

“And you don’t want to see him, or do you not want him to find out about me?”

“It’s not about him knowing you. I never stopped loving him. I never will. I can’t face the woman he chose over me.” She looked young and heartbroken. If I didn’t look closely to see the wrinkles around her eyes, I would have thought she was no more than 10 years older than me instead of the twenty I knew she would have been.

She was in pain at the idea of facing my father’s mate.

“Did you ever go searching for your mate?” My curiosity got the better of me, and I regretted asking immediately as she nodded.

“I looked. I wanted to move on from your father but never found my one. He is either hidden very well, further away from The Sanctum than I can travel, or....”

Dead.

I nodded in understanding as I adjusted in my seat.

“I can tell you where he is staying if you want... your father, or I can keep his identity to myself.” Her offer was thoughtful, but I wasn’t sure I wanted to know yet.

I looked away from her after a moment of silence. It was no longer her choice for him to know about me. When this was over, and if we both made it out alive, I would consider meeting him then. It didn’t make sense for me to completely disrupt a man’s life with the news that he had a daughter he didn’t know about.

He had a mate and probably other kids. It almost seemed cruel to appear out of nowhere and expect him and his potential family to want to know me or about me. Knowing I existed would only hurt his fated mate. I knew I would be devastated if Killian's ex showed up and claimed to have had his child. "You've barely taught me anything since you've been here," I muttered, sounding like a petulant child as I tried to change the subject. "I didn't want to overstep." She tucked her hair behind her ear, and I focused on the detailed work of the fireplace mantel. Everything about our interactions was uncomfortable. I knew it would take time to get to know her before the conversation would flow smoothly between us. "Can you teach me something now?" From the corner of my eye, I watched her turn to me with a large smile. I glanced from her back to the fireplace, and my hand tightened around the book's spine. "Absolutely. Have you had any time to apply what you've been reading?" I looked down at the worn cover in my hands. It must have been read hundreds of times in its life, but I was only on my third attempt. Wind and water hadn't been my friend. Earth was easy to do, but it liked to get away from me and caused more problems than I had time to fix. After my experience with the other three, I was terrified to practice with fire. "Not as much as I would have liked. I was practicing enchantments, and Agatha told

me the best way to master my powers was to start with the elements, but that hasn't gone very well." I didn't want to tell her that I had failed miserably and had flooded my bathroom on one occasion and caused a sinkhole in the training yard on another.

"Yes, she does have a point. She may be a stubborn old witch, but she knows how to get things done and how to do them correctly. The elements will affect everything you do. Even the smallest thing, like lifting your book. Things don't just levitate. You use the air to lift and move them. Learning to master the elements is crucial to your control." She turned in her chair to face me, and I sat up as a ball of fire flew from the burning logs and floated above her hand.

Aurora altered its shape and size, and I watched on mesmerized.

"Holding the flame is done with the mastery of fire, but altering the flame is done by air. It is done by removing the oxygen to make it smaller or adding it to feed it and encourage it to grow. With your strength, your biggest problem will be holding back your power and limiting it to a limited application. Let's start small."

She closed her fist, and the flame vanished with a small, white puff of smoke.

My glass of water was sitting half-empty on the table between us.

My mother pressed her fingers against the glass, and it spun rapidly into a whirlpool. My eyes widened as she then gestured for me to try it.

She gave me an encouraging nod as I reached forward. "I'll talk you through it."

Butterflies swarmed my stomach with excitement, but I couldn't

tell if it was because  
of what I was about to learn or the woman teaching me with a  
loving smile.

Ninety-Three: Killian  
Killian's P.O.V.

Camps were set up all around town. Anyone who could take  
someone in did. Houses  
were overflowing with creatures of all kinds.  
Even humans started showing up, much to my surprise. They had  
been quiet until  
recently when they began reporting mass amounts of missing  
people and deaths. I  
knew the vampires had to be feeding from somewhere to gear up  
for the war, but  
there were no reports until the past few months.  
Now, it seemed I was getting a new notice every hour of another  
collection of missing  
persons or bodies found void of blood. It wasn't just humans, but  
they seemed to be  
the most accessible food source and therefore were the vampire's  
primary target  
while they stocked up and prepared for battle.  
Around a hundred of them had shown up, and as terrified as they  
were of the rest of  
us, they did their best to participate in training.  
I watched as another one hit the ground, letting out a cry of pain  
before brushing her  
palms on her thighs and gesturing with her hand for the Lycan  
working with her to  
attack again.  
"I've seen enough. This isn't going to work." I called out, and the  
humans stopped  
training to watch me with wide eyes. We could have taught them  
ways to dodge and



fight had they shown up sooner. Still, with our limited time and their inability to move as quickly as our enemies, it was a waste of time. “We don’t have time to prepare them.”

“We can fight!” The female shouted angrily, but I ignored her as I turned to my lead commander, Braxton. He had been attached to me every chance he could since I spared his children. I held no ill feelings toward him for their despicable behavior. Still, he either didn’t seem to understand that or wanted to ensure he restored his position back in my good graces.

“I want all humans to gather in the gardens. Have all available doctors come down. I want them all to get a crash course in first aid. They will be carrying the injured back to medics.” A flash of my mate’s green eyes caught my attention as she walked through the humans toward me.

“We came here to fight! We will use our guns and knives!” The female human shouted again, and I growled at her disrespect. She moved to submit quickly, having realized her mistake. I didn’t need to kill her. She would die in the battle anyway based on her stubbornness and attitude.

“A lot of good that did your people during the last war.” I snapped back.

Natalie rushed up behind her. The human turned, having heard or sensed my mate, but she wasn’t fast enough.

Natalie laced her fingers through the girl’s hair with one hand while wrapping her arm

around the human's waist to hold her up. The woman struggled against Natalie's hold

as my mate pulled her head to the side and hovered her teeth over the human's neck.

"It would be so easy for a vampire to get you in this hold and suck you dry." Natalie

purred, and I watched with amusement as the goosebumps rose along the human's

skin as Natalie's lips brushed against it. Her teeth hovered over the trembling human's

neck as her canines extended, and I narrowed my eyes. "Or they could just rip your throat right out."

Her actions were threatening, but the dark look in her eye aroused me. A small part of

me was enjoying seeing her this way. The human wasn't unattractive, and seeing my

mate wrapped around her, even when threatening her, should have been more enjoyable.

It was arousing, but I was jealous. Violently and insanely jealous

My chest rose and fell quickly as I held my beast back. It was bad enough that the

human had disrespected me, but now I wanted her dead for being in my mate's arms.

'Oh, Goddess. You're actually enjoying this? You're turned on right now!' Natalie asked

through our mind link, genuinely surprised and a little curious. I quickly put my wall up

in our mate bond. I met her eyes, and they narrowed as she released the human.

Natalie's voice called out sharply, but she never broke my gaze.

"Your king has given you your assignment. Go!"

She dropped the human, who quickly scurried away with the

others until only a few of my men and women left waiting for orders. There were still several other groups that I wanted to check on before we left at sun up, but my mate had to come to visit me for a reason, and I was glad she did so.

“Make sure the vehicles are ready to go,” I said, looking over to the Lycans that were waiting for orders. We had a convoy of vehicles that would be following us in to take any critically injured back to safety, and I knew they were already prepared. But I wanted a minute alone with my mate. I need to have a private word with the queen.”

Natalie lifted one eyebrow at me with a smirk on her lips. “I came to see how I can help.”

Everyone dispersed, keeping their eyes down respectfully as they moved past Natalie.

She didn't move from her position, and I stormed toward her. A fire in her eyes made me halt before touching her. She was enjoying this, having power over me in my moment of weakness.

“You're playing a dangerous game, my love.” My whisper was met with a bright smile that made my control falter for a second. “Did you finish what you were practicing with your mother?”

Her smile grew wider, and I knew whatever she had been trying was a success. I had no doubt that she would excel at everything that she did. It was. I can't wait to show you.”

I looked up, seeing people conversing with those around them at

the yard's edge but still watching their king and queen. Natalie still wasn't ready or open to anything physical in public, and I wrapped my arm around her waist as I tried to decide where the nearest place I could take her was.

But everywhere was full.

Visiting cabins were all occupied, and so were the inns. There were faces and people everywhere I looked, and I knew Natalie wouldn't want me storming back through the city to take her to our bedroom.

"Count yourself fortunate. I did not appreciate you mocking the way you make me feel." I growled next to her ear, smiling when she shivered in response. "If you ever do it again, you will be punished."

Natalie let out a low and raspy laugh that made me grow harder. "And here I had hoped to be punished tonight."

I held her stare, unable to stop myself from admiring her beauty. My hand cupped her cheek as I rubbed my thumb over her smooth skin. I had indeed been blessed to have her, and I would fight until my last breath to keep her safe.

"No, my mate," I whispered before capturing her lips with mine. It didn't need to be said that our future was uncertain, and I was going to make sure if anything should happen, that we would get a proper goodbye." Tonight, I will make love to you."

Ninety-Four: Natalie

Natalie's P.O.V.

The sound of wolves and other creatures trampling through the

forest was oddly quiet.

The muffled and skilled footsteps of warriors quickly covering the distance to the mountains felt like the timer of a bomb slowly ticking down to zero.

The humans would be driven in with the other witches, the medical equipment, and the healers later that night. But those that could run did.

A fleet of wolves and Lycans sprinted through the trees like a tidal wave, ready to take

down anyone in its path. The council had teleported with Joselin and my mother to

their positions to block Talia and her coven of witches from being alerted of our

presence before we were ready for them to know of our arrival.

The plan to siphon their magic from them had long been thrown away as it wouldn't do

enough damage to be impactful with our limited time. Instead, they masked the

enemy, forcing them into a bubble to keep them blind to the outside world. We didn't

know how long it would hold, but we hoped it would last through our journey.

We would camp several miles south of them tonight while scouts surveyed the area.

At sun-up, we would attack.

My white fur rubbed against Killian's leg for only a moment as we ran before he

moved away again. It was like he was working on a timer to brush against me or to

have his knuckles touch my back or side every thirty minutes as if he wanted to

confirm that I was still here with him and that I hadn't fallen behind.

It was strangely quiet in the pack link. All of their emotions had

been pushed down.

Killian hadn't entirely placed the wall like he did the last time he was here, but it still

felt like there was a thick collection of water between us, muting everything.

I had tried not to focus on those around me. Still, every now and then, I would wonder

which one of the wolves running amongst the thousands was my father and if I would

even need to decide about meeting him when it was all over. We would both have to

survive for that.

A poisonous, almost sour smell made me slow, and the pack followed suit.

Killian let out a low guttural noise, and the surrounding Lycans responded in a sort. It

was an odd way of communicating. Their primal beasts were talking instead of their

humans through the link, and I was slightly jealous that I wouldn't understand him.

I wondered if even he knew what he was saying or if it was just their animals

communicating with each other.

'No fires. Keep the noise down.' Killian ordered through the pack link.

I watched with awe as the seasoned warriors began scouting a place to settle in for

the night while the newcomers like myself stood around with discomfort.

I stood by Killian's side, waiting for him to take the lead and choose where we would

sleep. I had never run so far or fast in my fur before, and my legs were ready to

shake.

With the large army and the fact that we had to run, it had taken

all day to get here,  
and night had fallen hours ago. The good news was that we were  
now prepared. We  
could rest tonight and be better prepared to fight in the morning.  
I had to admit that I was relieved that we had an extra day before  
the battle. It was  
worrisome that we were so close to our enemies, having no idea  
how many there  
were. Still, I would be grateful for every hour our people had  
before they had to  
fight...before some of them would die.  
Killian stood watch over his pack, and I could see in the way his  
eyes fogged over that  
he was giving orders through the pack link. I couldn't expect him  
to comfort me today.  
He had to be a leader, and from what I had been told, he was a  
cold and empty beast  
when he entered a battle.  
I sat a step behind him and to his left as I observed our people,  
taking in every face. It  
would be the first and last time I saw them for some.  
Most of the pack was solemn and on alert, but those that had  
shifted and changed  
into the clothes they had around their leg, were laughing and  
quietly joking.  
It was easy to see who had been in battle before, and it put me at  
ease knowing that  
they weren't concerned. They had either accepted their fate or  
trusted their king to  
lead them to victory.  
I scanned over a group of familiar barbarians. They wore their  
weapons with pride,  
and Charlie sat beside Damien as she chewed on a stick of dried  
meat with a smile as  
she chuckled with her team. I wondered what her life was like



when she was on her adventures, but seeing her now, she seemed more comfortable than ever.

This is what she preferred.

A lone man was standing behind them but wasn't watching the boisterous group. He was watching me. His dark brown hair was easy to see between the moonlight and the enhanced vision of my wolf, and I felt my heart drop as I saw the same green eyes that looked back at me in the mirror.

Could it be him?

I shook my head, looking away to find Killian's beast breathing deeply as he glared from me to the man. Whatever he saw, he didn't like. He moved quickly to stand between us, blocking me from the stranger's line of sight.

The sneaking suspicion in the back of my head told me it wasn't the last I would see

of the man. But I knew it was too easy. Too good to be true.

My birth father didn't even know about me. He would have no reason to come looking

for me. I mentally kicked myself for letting my subconscious get the best of me. It

wouldn't be surprising if I had even hallucinated the man's features, wanting to find my father.

I looked around Killian's back, wanting to see the man again to confirm, but he was gone.

'Do you know him?' Killian growled in a voice far deeper than I had ever heard. He

was unmoving as I began to look around, wanting to find a place to turn in for the

night. I spotted a large tree only a few feet behind me and figured

it had been left empty for us as I trotted toward it. 'No, I was just wondering why he was staring at me.' I muttered, not wanting to get into it and hoping he would understand that and let the subject drop. 'It is curious. He tends to keep to his own pack, but they are all further down.' Killian stepped in front of me, shifting into his full beast that dwarfed all the others, and lowered himself to the ground next to me. He didn't offer any more information, and I didn't ask. I didn't want to know. Not yet. Perhaps he was just some random wolf. 'Maybe he just wanted to see my fur.' I offered as Killian made himself comfortable. I placed my chin on my paws and sighed, content when he rested his neck and head over my side and back. 'Perhaps.' Killian lifted my fur twice before settling back down. 'Get some rest, my love.'

I closed my eyes, trying to force myself to sleep despite my anxiety and fear about the morning. My eyes cracked open as a shiver went down my spine, and I looked up to see the same man from before leaning against a tree as he openly watched me. I wanted to growl but didn't want to wake up Killian. Whoever he was, I wanted him to walk away. If he didn't, I would never get any sleep. My lips pulled back, exposing my teeth in a silent threat. But it was pointless as Tobias stepped between us, standing closer to the man than he was to me, and let out a low

growl.

Killian lifted his head from my back but lowered it back down when I curled mine against the side of his body.

It was hours of listening to the low murmur of voices. I even heard the vehicles pull up to drop off the humans, witches, and healers behind our army before I was able to fall asleep.

It was also only minutes later that I woke up to a loud explosion and opened my eyes to several of my pack burning alive as they were consumed by the fireball in their sleep.

Ninety-Five: Natalie

Natalie's P.O.V.

Killian was already standing in his Lycan form. His back was to me as he scanned the area.

A few of our pack members screamed and yelped in pain as they tossed their bodies into the dirt, trying their hardest to extinguish the fire. It was short lasting, but I knew they would have some serious injuries for a while.

I couldn't feel Killian in our bond. He had shut himself off but stayed close to me as I jumped to my feet and waited. The heat from the flames warmed my chilled fur, and I shuddered.

I had trained to fight but had no idea what to do when we couldn't see our enemies.

'They are still in the mountains. That was a warning shot.' A gravelly, deep unfamiliar voice stated, and I turned to look as Tobias stepped closer.

Thomas and George were on my other side, and I knew the sound of their voices. It hadn't been either of them.

It was Tobias.

The smell of burnt fur made my nose wrinkle, and I glanced around Killian as the last of the injured hobbled their way back toward the healers. Only one body remained limp on the dirt with smoke coming from them, and a group of humans sprinted through the crowd with a stretcher to grab him.

The pack was alert, all on their feet, shifting every few seconds as they waited for their orders. But they remained silent.

I examined the area for the first time since waking and found that the sun had barely started rising. The glow of light on the treetops would work to our advantage.

Vampires were fine in the sunlight as long as they had fed. Even if they didn't, they could still be in the sun. They would just burn quickly from the vitamin deficiency their diet caused.

From a distance, yelling could be heard, sending a shiver down my spine.

The echoing war cry coming from several hundreds of bodies was something I would hear when I closed my eyes years from now.

'Move in!' Killian ordered low and deadly. I expected everyone to sprint through the trees to find our enemy. Instead, we marched together at a steady pace forward. I

stayed just behind Killian as he stalked toward our enemies, looking every bit like the predator he was.

The others of his kind were up on two feet as their hulking beasts pressed in to surround their king. The animalistic sounds coming from them were lower than before.

Still, for the first time, I finally understood what they were saying. They were demanding blood. It excited them that they would spill it within the next few minutes.

"Aurora!" A voice called out as the man from last night sprinted toward me. "Are you alright?"

Killian let out a warning growl, and the man dropped his head in submission before moving to stand on the other side of Tobias.

He marched forward when I didn't acknowledge him but continued to spare me

glances. It wasn't lost on me that several other werewolves moved with him to provide yet another wall of guards around me.

It was proof... proof that I didn't need nor want right now that the stranger with the same color hair and eyes as me knew my mother. He knew her white fur and cared for her. He wanted to protect her. He had no idea who I was or what my relation to her was.

I refused to look his way, focusing on the more important task at hand as we reached a large clearing at the base of the mountain. It wouldn't be able to house both armies.

There would still be fighting within the trees, but it provided us with an opening large enough to see the wall of angry vampires on the other side.

There had to have been hundreds that had been hiding all these years, breeding and

turning more into their kind until they had created the thousands that now stood before us.

'Talialia!' Killian roared, but I felt the slightest falter in his voice when not one but two women stepped forward and into the clearing.

I would have recognized her anywhere, but the crown decorated with blood-red

rubies took my breath away. They had to have dug up Killian's father to get the crown,

and seeing it sitting on Lillian's head made me nauseous.

The woman next to her was a tall yet paunchy woman with pin-straight blonde hair

and a glare that could kill on its own. She had to be Talialia.

'Mom?' Charlie's voice cracked as she stared at the women. She had yet to shift and

held a long sword that dripped with a sickly-looking green slime.

'Your reign is over!' Lillian called out, and the vampires and witches hollered excitedly

behind her. The sound sent the last few brave birds up into the sky to hide from the

bloodshed that was about to be unleashed. 'You Lycans have poisoned our world!

You think you are a gift from the Goddess, but you are just a group of cursed dogs!

You steal and pillage, raping breeders, trapping them as prisoners to sire your lines.

Only for them to produce more of your evil, disgusting kind. You think you have the

right to decide who lives and dies, but not anymore. It ends now! Surrender!

Hand over your rule, or blood will be shed.'

I swallowed hard as I watched the crowd part behind her. The sound of chains rattling

reached me before I could see them.

The other council members were nowhere in sight, but Agatha and my mother hung limply as they were dragged to the front and forced to their knees next to Lillian. They were injured and struggling to stay awake based on their drooping eyelids and swaying bodies.

Agatha had a large patch of blood oozing from her stomach, staining her clothes.

While half of my mother's face had been smashed. The crimson liquid matted her hair against her cheek.

'I believe I found something that belongs to you,' Lillian called out as Agatha slumped forward, only to be caught by the chains.

The shine of the morning sun glinted off the metal of a blade.

Talia moved around

Lillian to stand behind my mother as she held her head up in defiance.

I looked back and forth between Lillian and Talia, knowing Talia was waiting for the

order to end my mother's life. I wasn't even sure if Agatha was still alive with how she

hung limply, only held up by the bloodsuckers holding her chains.

'The famous Descendant. It is a great joy that she gets to die first.' Lillian laughed, but

I couldn't tear my eyes away from Talia as she lifted the dagger in a dramatic show,

wanting everyone to witness the moment she sent the

Descendant back to the

Goddess.

I stepped forward, dodging Tobias and ducking under Killian's arm as I shifted into my skin.

Talia lowered the blade, pressing it against my mother's throat,



and I saw red. My hand lifted in her direction, and I could practically see the water in her body. I could feel the air going in and out of her lungs. As my fist closed, Talia let out a scream of horror, dropping the dagger. Her body convulsed as the liquid beneath her skin boiled. Lillian stepped forward, and my glare slid to her as my hand moved in her direction, sending her flying back into her waiting army. She gathered herself quickly as she scrambled to her feet and laughed amusedly. Both sides were getting anxious, waiting for the right time to attack. But as Lillian rushed forward, I fell to my knee, pressing my hands into the ground as I let out a war cry. The Earth rolled beneath us, each wave getting larger as it approached the enemy. I watched, amused, as the witches on the other side dropped to the Earth to try and counter my magic, but it was no use. While they were distracted, my mother twisted and pulled the chains from the vampires' hold. They had lost their balance during my attempt at an attack, making it easy for her to grab Agatha and drag her toward us. I knew she wasn't going to make it. There was too much ground to cover. My mother had been growing weaker every day that she was away from The Sanctum. I was almost positive Agatha was dead. The weight of her body slowed her down. Lillian let out a yell of anger as she lifted her hands toward the two escaping women.

And there it was. The bloodlust. The desperate need to spill the blood of my enemies.

It was stronger than anything I had ever felt before and now was my chance.

'You little bitch!' She screeched as Agatha and my mother were forced to the ground.

I momentarily gaped as the former queen displayed powers no one knew she had.

She had been a wolf. A regular wolf. She hadn't even come from Lycan blood. Yet, she wielded power.

The distance between the former queen and her two prisoners gave Joselin enough time to teleport to my mother and Agatha. She stood behind them, facing us as she grabbed each woman's arm.

If I had been more aware of my surroundings, I would have seen Talia struggle to her feet and throw the dagger before she collapsed forward again.

Instead, I watched as Joselin stumbled into the two women, her eyes wide with horror. She let out a silent scream as she disappeared, taking my mother and Agatha with her.

Tobias let out a sound of pain but remained still as Joselin vanished, leaving only the smell of her blood on the breeze.

I looked at Killian as he kept his glare on his mother. Charlie stepped forward in the

corner of my vision, and I tensed before returning to my fur.

As soon as my paws hit the ground, Killian released a snarl, and we charged forward.

Ninety-Six: Natalie

Natalie's P.O.V.

I had never been more in awe of my mate than I was at that moment. I had been ready to take on the world. The need to draw blood was primal, and while I was nervous about my first kill, I was also being spurred forward by my need to protect my mate and my newfound family.

I had no idea where Joselin had taken my mother, but with Killian leading the charge, I had no doubt they would be safe. He wouldn't let the bloodsuckers get through him. He was a force to be reckoned with, a vicious animal. As the walls from each side collided, he sliced them down quickly, taking on minimal damage. I kept glancing around, waiting for Lillian or Talia to appear. The witches seemed to have stayed back on their side, and I had the suspicion that they were letting the vampires thin themselves out and thin us out before the witches had to step forward and put in any effort. Either that or, based on the sounds, they were in their own battle.

If they needed to guarantee that their spot on the throne would be secure, they couldn't have an army of vampires there to threaten their rule. A small pale creature slid in between my occupied guards with a malicious smile. I saw Tobias send me a panicked look over his shoulder while he fought his own enemy, but I focused on the woman before me. My first kill.

'Focus, Tobias. I've got this.' I muttered to him through the pack link and could practically hear his eyes rolling in response. The beady black eyes of the woman were locked on me, and I

pulled back my lip to snarl at her. She didn't wait as she lunged at me, trying to get her arms around my neck. She was small and fast, but it also made it easy for me to overpower her. I slammed her down on the ground, holding her there with one paw on her chest before digging my teeth into her neck and ripping her throat out. It had been easier than I had expected. Still, she was also very young, more than likely a newly turned human from one of the cities that had reportedly vanished overnight. There was no doubt in my mind that she had less training than I did. If that were the case, I worried about the witches' real plan. Surely they didn't think they could win a war with a bunch of untrained bloodsuckers fighting against the Lycans, one of the strongest creatures on Earth. But if they needed us distracted, it was a good plan. My heart dropped when the three vampires fighting Killian got a grip on him, one biting into his flesh before ripping out a chunk of his arm. He spun out of their grasp, slicing his claw across the throat of one and shoving his hand through the chest of the next before ripping out the vampire's heart. The one who bit him was on his own and only lasted a second longer before Killian also ended his life. He was magnificent. But as soon as the three were down, four more surrounded him. Two more came at me, and I did my best to dodge, bite, and slice through our enemies.

It took a lot longer than it did with the first vampire I had ended, but soon the two bodies joined their fallen comrade, and I was left with only a small slice down my side from one of their nails.

I wanted to cut through the vampires so I could get to the source, the witches, and deal with them before the exhaustion hit, and it seemed Killian had the same idea.

Killian had stepped further forward, moving through the wall of vampires with ease, taking on a few scratches and a couple more bites that had blood dripping down several parts of his body. His skin was healing as fast as it could as he moved and cut down the threat to us.

I was almost positive that he didn't realize the distance he had placed between us, but I also knew I couldn't distract him while he was fighting so many. I moved to close the gap when another vampire stepped in my way.

The chaos around us was deafening, and seeing the giant man before me made my heart want to beat out of my chest in terror. The others had been small, young men and women. But he looked in his mid-thirties and was easily comparable to Tobias in size, just slightly smaller than Killian.

I was grateful that I had my wolf. I was larger in that form. Had I been fighting in my human form, I would have been in for a world of pain and would have likely met my

end. Yet, he ran at me with a smirk of premature victory. A laugh of surprise left me as a giant beast crashed into the vampire's side, knocking

him to the ground and tearing him to pieces. His muzzle was dripping with blood, and he looked thoroughly satisfied as he turned his head to look at me. His black eyes sparkled with excitement. I nodded at Damien in gratitude as he turned back and ripped out another chunk of the vampire's throat for good measure.

I raced forward, following after Killian, not wanting to be separated, but he was a good way ahead. He was closer to his smirking mother than he was to me, and that did not sit well with me. He was strong, but he had struggled with the idea of her death for years.

Plus, with Lillian's newfound powers, we had no idea what to expect from her. I didn't know if he could take her down on his own.

Another vampire launched from his right, wrapping their arms around him and trying to take him down. Her teeth sank into his shoulder, barely missing his neck as I raced toward them. It would be risky to turn back to my skin and use my magic, but I hadn't figured out how or if I could even use it when I was in my fur. Killian shook her off, but blood oozed from his injury. His body was working hard to repair itself, but I knew the exhaustion and strain it was under would delay his healing.

I stopped short as a battle between one of Charlie's team members and a vampire stumbled before me. A large smile was on his face as he sidestepped his attacker before slicing his blade across the vampire's stomach. My gaze went over him just as another group surrounded my

mate ahead. He was knocking them down one by one. I bit down on one of the leech's sides as I ran by, ripping the skin from his body. He let out a howl of pain before the wolf fighting him took his head clean off.

It was then that I felt the first emotion from Killian. It was similar to my dream. The stabbing pain in my ribs wasn't mine but felt just as real as any injury I had ever had. I bit back a whimper, knowing it would only distract those around me, especially Killian. He was injured. Injured enough to let his wall fall for a second, so I could feel it through our bond.

My paws pushed me faster, and I ducked and dodged the attacks. A fireball whirled through the air, skimming my back as I ran. The scorching pain made me let out a yowl before I could swallow it.

My heart dropped as Killian stood at the front of the battle with over a dozen vampires surrounding him. He was holding his own, but the blood loss and continuous damage to his body were taking its toll, and he seemed to be moving slower than before.

Lillian stood behind her people, watching with no emotion as her son was attacked. Her eyes met mine. She lifted her hand to her side, gesturing for someone to come closer.

I had expected to see Talia join her, but I couldn't as the wall of vampires surrounding Killian grew thicker. She had called reinforcements to take down her son, her firstborn



child.

Killian roared as he tossed another one off him, and I crashed into the vampire on his

left before the attacker could touch my mate.

The scent of their poisonous blood was everywhere, but the strongest smell in the

clearing was my mate's. By looking at him, I couldn't tell what blood was his and what

belonged to the dead he had left behind in his rage.

My jaw snapped wickedly at a threat as another lunged at me, but I disposed of him

quickly using a technique Tobias had taught me.

I could feel the pain still coming through the bond, but it gradually worsened. Killian's

body couldn't keep up to heal him fast enough, and I felt the pain as he received

another bite. The venom was coursing through his bloodstream, poisoning him on top

of the other injuries.

My legs shook beneath me as another landed on my back, trying to pin me down, and

latched her jaw around the skin on my shoulder blade.

It burned horribly, and I kicked and bucked to be free of her.

When she was ripped off,

I turned to see Killian stumbling back away from me as he was grabbed and dragged

by the vampires. There were too many, and they were all concentrated in this one

area at the command of their leader.

I could hear our side fighting to get through, to get closer to us, but they wouldn't

make it in time.

"Ah!" Killian roared out his anger as he was dragged further away, closer to his

mother.

My adrenaline pushed me further as I heard the pain in Killian's voice. His growl was lower than it should have been, and as I ripped another throat out, I saw Killian suffering another bite.

No.

He was in too much pain. I felt like I couldn't breathe as it passed through our mate bond, and I knew he was struggling to hold on. He would fight until his last breath if he had to, but I couldn't let it come to that. I wouldn't.

My body moved more fluidly and skillfully to avoid the vampires launching at me until I

finally reached my mate. One of the vampires had their hand above Killian's chest,

black nails extended to points, prepared to slice through the skin over his heart.

"No!" My cry broke free as I shifted to my skin. My naked and bleeding body fell over

Killian's as a protective barrier

Ninety-Seven: Killian

Killian's P.O.V.

My world stopped spinning momentarily as I felt her body collapse on top of mine,

shielding me from the inevitable blow that would end my life. I expected it to be cold

and dark as I entered the veil, but there was a sudden heat instead.

I opened my eyes and watched a large blue flame leave Natalie's body, rolling off her

like a wave. There was a loud collection of hissing and screams as the vampires

stumbled to the ground, trying to extinguish the flames, but it was useless.

I felt the warmth and the heat, but it didn't hurt me. The flames that would end the lives of so many were almost comforting and calming to me. Joselin had seen Natalie saving me in her vision months ago, but so many things had happened since then. There was no certainty of it coming to fruition. I had been encouraging Natalie to study and practice her magic. Still, she had only had a couple weeks between getting her powers and using them in battle. So, I fought. I fought tooth and nail, prepared to fight to my death to save my people and my mate. I knew I was going down, and I made it my mission to take down as many of them as possible. Natalie shouldn't have had to see it. I hated that she did. I had hoped she would be strong enough to save herself, but I hadn't expected her to save me... to save everyone. It took several minutes until the screaming stopped, and the field went silent. I could only see the blue. The blue of her flames. The blue of the sky above me. The poison was pumping through my veins rapidly, and I struggled to pull in my next breath. 'Your Majesty, we need to tend to the king!' A soft voice hesitantly whispered. Natalie was lifted from my body an inch before she scrambled to cover me again, holding me tighter than before. Her fear pulsed through our bond as her face remained tucked into my chest, shielding me protectively. I needed to get up. I needed to make sure she was safe. It was

only a few dozen bites and cuts. I had experienced worse. If I hadn't been outnumbered and held down, I could have easily taken a hundred more bites before letting their poisonous fucking saliva beat me.

I was positive I had a broken rib or two, but I had given better than I got. Undoubtedly, I had taken down a minimum of a hundred. I had been ready to slaughter them all to keep them from my mate.

The world began spinning around me again, and my head felt ready to explode from the movement as I tried to sit myself up too quickly. We weren't safe yet. This wasn't over.

The last thing I needed was my Healers running to the front line and risking their lives for mine when their kind was already on the edge of extinction, and I did not need them. But at least one of the doctors was already here by the sound of it.

I also didn't know what our situation looked like. How many were left? Was my mate still exposed to further danger?

My arm lifted and let it fall over Natalie's back as I forced myself to sit up again. She tried to pull away, staring at me with wide, water-filled eyes. My vision was blurry as I let out a groan of pain but pushed myself up further.

Where were my men when the vampires were swarming me? Were they injured...dead? They had a powerful force against us, but we should have easily matched them in number.

I clenched my teeth together as I forced myself to look around, terrified I would see my people dead around me. It was the outcome of war. Death. But I had never seen so much of it so fast.

The sun hadn't reached the sky's center, yet thousands of bodies were strewn across the ground, burned beyond recognition. All eyes were on us, and as I looked over the familiar faces, I met my mother's eyes. She stood in chains with the remaining standing council members watching her closely. I had no doubt they had injected my mother to limit her powers, and the other traitorous witches sat on their knees to the side, waiting to pay for their crimes.

"My apologies, your majesty." The voice came again, and I ignored them as I felt a slight pressure on my neck. I knew it was the antidote to help me heal from the vampire venom. The entire pack would need it, and we brought a few trucks of it just in case. The Healer pulled the needle out quickly before whispering softly. "May I examine your wounds?"

"No," I ordered, looking down at my mate. I was healing slowly but surely, and I didn't need to take any more of her time than I already had when others in my pack could be more seriously injured. "Tend to the others."

"Looks like you didn't even need us!" Charlie exclaimed as she stepped forward and held out a hand to me. I raised an eyebrow at her before getting to my feet and pulling Natalie up. I towered over both women in my Lycan form, and

Charlie's forced smile  
faltered as I clasped my hand on her shoulder and turned her as I  
looked her over for  
injury.

As I dropped my arm, Charlie reached up and touched Natalie's,  
who was staring  
blankly out at the field of corpses.

"Hey, that was incredible! I had no idea you could do something  
like that." Charlie  
stated, but Natalie seemed stunned.

"I didn't know I could." Natalie looked back to my chest, dropping  
her blood- covered  
hands as she stared at them. I grabbed both of her hands in mine  
and stared at her  
until she looked up at me.

My mate.

She went from being harmless, never having killed a day in her  
life, to ending  
thousands of lives.

"There was a light and a voice...."

One by one, the Lycans, wolves, and witches dropped to their  
knees, dipping their  
heads in submission. As she noticed, she fell silent.

A small stream of dark, thick blood trickled from her nose, but she  
didn't notice. I

couldn't tell if she was scared of what she experienced and did or  
if she was in awe.

My chest puffed out in pride, but I knew it wasn't for me. I had  
killed dozens and  
almost died in the process. She had slain hundreds without trying.  
She was their queen. My queen.

Ninety-Eight: Natalie

Natalie's P.O.V.

I could hear Her melodic voice on repeat, telling me to let go. She

wanted me to lose control, control I had tried so hard to maintain. But she had been right.

I had lost control. I had let my emotions rule my magic, and now thousands were dead. It didn't bother me that they were. They needed to die to save the lives of my people. I would do it again in a heartbeat if I needed to. But that was the problem. That was what I was scared of. What if I accidentally did it again?

How many of my own people would die because I got too angry, too scared, or too sad?

I wanted to celebrate with my pack as the city was alive with excitement. Bonfires were lit throughout the city, and people ate and drank to their hearts' content.

What we had anticipated being a long and drawn-out war, had ended in a matter of hours. We had lost so few that while they would be mourned and missed, the joy of so many returning home was something to celebrate.

Yet, I had difficulty enjoying myself when I felt like a ticking time bomb. I was too exhausted to think it would happen tonight, but what about tomorrow or next week?

My hands gripped the cold stone as I sat on the front steps of the castle, watching as Killian laughed and cheered with a drink in his hands. I had never seen him so carefree. It took almost an hour of me encouraging him to enjoy himself before he agreed to one celebratory drink.

He would be back at my side in a few minutes once his drink was



gone, caring for me.

He understood that I needed a minute alone, and he respected that. Still, his eyes never strayed from me for more than a few minutes as he watched me with concern.

'It gets easier.' The voice came through the pack link, startling me.

I glanced to my left as Tobias moved to sit on the step below me, close enough to reach out and touch him if I wanted to but far enough away that I still felt like I had the space I needed.

'What does? Killing someone?' I asked before biting my tongue as I felt the lump in my throat grow more prominent, making it hard to swallow.

'Living with the fear that your strength may one day rule you. That you may hurt those you love.' His quiet admission felt more personal than I had expected, and I glanced down at the back of his head as he stared out over the land straight ahead.

Past the courtyard, there were lines of bonfires through the streets, with children running wild and adults drinking and cheering. Yet, he looked lost... broken.

His shoulders were slumped slightly forward, and his hand was clenching and unclenching as it hung over the front of his knee.

He didn't have to vocalize it for me to know that the loved ones he was worried about hurting included Joselin.

She had been healed physically but was still recovering with several other wounded warriors in the infirmary. I knew it was her choice because when I visited, she did the

same thing I did and sent everyone away. She wanted to be alone.

No one knew what had happened on that mountain yet. Agatha had been lost to her injuries and Joselin...

I wasn't sure what Joselin had witnessed in those mountains or what it was like to be stabbed, but she was fighting her own demons.

'Why did you wait so long to talk to me?' I wondered, looking back to my mate.

Killian's eyebrows pinched together as he stared at my guard. I knew he was deciding if Tobias was bothering me. But I smiled as Killian looked at me for reassurance that I was okay.

There was a long silence, and I grumbled in annoyance when Tobias didn't respond.

Our conversation already had him saying more than I had expected him to say. Yet, I was still disappointed that it was over.

Killian took a sip of his drink, raising one eyebrow at me again as he impatiently

waited for me to be ready for him to come back. I winked with a small smile, and he immediately started back toward me.

He wasted no time sitting behind me with his knees on either side of me. I leaned against his stomach, and he wrapped his arms around me as he kissed my temple.

'Do you want to talk about it?' Killian asked quietly, but I shook my head right away.

"Would you like to go back to our room and sleep?" Concern was laced in his voice. I

knew he didn't like that I wasn't talking to him yet about what was on my mind. He was

worried about me, but he didn't need to be.  
I was just impatient for my mother to return home. With her here, I would get answers about my father, we could continue our training, and she could tell me about the voice.  
I never wanted to lose control again, even if it had worked out in our favor this time.  
What if the next time it didn't?  
I also wanted to know that my mother was okay and had made it to The Sanctum safe. The fact that she was with the man I suspected to be my father would make meeting him easier, or I would be in trouble for sending him after she said she hadn't wanted to see him. She loved him, and based on how he hovered over me when he thought I was her, he still had feelings for her as well.  
Killian twirled a piece of my hair between his fingers. The relaxing and gentle pulling sensation made me look up at him as my head fell back against his shoulder. "No, not yet. It is nice out here to see everyone celebrating."  
'We can stay as long as you would like.'" His lips pressed against the side of my head before we both looked back toward our people.  
Tobias stood up slowly and moved to stand guard to the side, and I felt guilty that he was here and not with the woman he so obviously loved.

Ninety-Nine: Killian  
Killian's P.O.V.

Natalie stood in the hallway that led to my office, staring at the glass mural for over an hour before George alerted me.  
I knew Tobias never would have told me. He had an extreme

loyalty to Natalie that I was impressed with, but I wanted to know things like this. How would I know if Natalie was not okay if they hid things like this from me? All I felt from her since the battle was numbness. It was almost draining to have that constant feeling in the back of my head, but I was determined to continue to support and love her for as long as she would let me.

“Were you coming to see me?” I asked softly as I walked up behind her and wrapped my arms around her waist. Her skin was cold, and I held her tightly to my body to share my warmth. Natalie sighed softly as she let her body fall back against mine.

“Yes, but I got distracted.”

I bit back a chuckle at her admission, pressing my face into her hair.

“Do you think She wanted me to kill so many of Her creatures, or is she angry that I abused Her gift for personal gain?” Natalie was staring at the final image of the full Lycan form on the far right of the window, and I followed her gaze. There was no doubt in my mind that our ability to shift into that state was indeed a gift. We were stronger, faster, and more capable than those stuck on four paws. “I think She is proud of you. She wouldn’t have given you the ability if she didn’t want it to happen. Everything happens for a reason, and I have no doubt in my mind that She could have stopped it from happening if She wanted to.”

Natalie gave an understanding nod, but I didn’t for a second believe it was agreement.

The feeling of numbness was still concerning, and I held her to me for another moment before pulling her back to my office. Everything she had felt from the war a few days ago had been locked inside her, and I didn't know how to help.

It was like she had shut herself off from feeling anything. She wasn't the same woman she was before, and I wasn't expecting her to be. She would have to accept what happened, and I would be there for her until she did.

The door closed softly behind me, and Natalie pulled away to stand with her back to the bookshelf.

'I don't think I can give you a baby right now.'" Her statement made my head move back in surprise. That was what was on her mind? The baby that we said we would eventually have together.

"We have all the time in the world, my love. I'm in no rush. Is that what you have been worried about?" Natalie's hands clasped in front of her, her knuckles turning white as she rung her fingers together.

I stepped forward slowly, not wanting to scare her away as I moved to stand in front of my seat behind my desk. Her shoulders fell when I moved to have something between us, and I bit back the growl of frustration that was caused by her relief to be away from me.

"No... Yes, but not really. I just don't think it is a good time until I can get myself under control." She pushed off the bookshelf and walked behind one of the visitor's chairs,

placing her hands on it. The backrest molded to her fingers as her grip tightened on the item.

Control?

She had been the perfect image of control since we got back. I hadn't even seen her

react when we buried our lost and sent them back to the Goddess. She had been expressionless, emotionless... numb.

"Do you feel like you are not in control?"

Her light green eyes held mine, and her walls started to crumble as water lined her

lids. This was it. This was what I had been waiting for since we got home. She needed

to mourn.

"The light was so bright, and She kept insisting that I let go. Then that flame came

from me and killed so many....' Natalie let out a bitter laugh as the first tears rolled

down her cheeks. "But I didn't even feel it happen. She insisted that I let go, and I

don't even know how I did what I did. What if it happens again?

What if I get mad or

scared, and I hurt someone?"

One Hundred: Natalie

Natalie's P.O.V

Joselin looked right over me. Her face looked gaunt, and what little color she had to

her skin had faded. I had wanted to speak with her to see if she was okay, but she

hadn't been around lately.

Since we came home, this was the first time I had seen her outside of my visit to the

infirmary days ago.

But I jumped at the chance when I saw her out and about. I hadn't

seen her teleporting recently, and I took advantage of the opportunity, following her on foot to Agatha's grave.

Joselin whispered an incantation softly as she lifted the soil and let it fall through her fingers. She was hurting, and in turn, so was Tobias. He couldn't take his eyes off her.

So I sat where he could see her as we waited. I found a bench and waited for her, keeping my eyes averted to give her privacy. But Tobias openly stared at her with longing. His hands clenched and unclenched as he stood guard several feet in front of me and to the side.

When she was done, she walked right past me, her eyes floating over me as if she hadn't recognized me. It was awful to see her in so much pain. She hadn't even stopped to acknowledge Tobias.

That had concerned me more than anything. Until now, the woman had been mad about wanting him to notice her. She was in it deep, and while I knew he was too, he had yet to cave into her.

"Joselin!" I called out, jumping to my feet and chasing after her. She stopped and turned, lowering her body into a curtsey, something I had never seen her do before when she didn't have to. My lips parted in surprise as I stared at her.

"Yes, your majesty?" Her reply was curt, short, and almost offensive. She was the one who had insisted on us being friends. Now, her sarcastic, quick, and witty attitude was gone. Her tone was void of any emotion.



I glanced around in confusion, but no one here could overhear her. Her respectful and reserved facade was usually only saved for public interactions. It was just my guards and us.

“What’s going on? What happened?” I wished I could see more in her white eyes, but she didn’t take her gaze away from my chin, refusing to meet my stare. I waited as

she pressed her lips together, but I grew frustrated when she refused to speak. “Did I do something to offend you?”

Her eyelids widened before lowering again, her chin tilting further down. “No, you didn’t.

We are fine. I just need time.”

“Are you leaving?” I was almost scared to ask. Our relationship had been rocky initially, but I had grown to care about Joselin. I didn’t want her to go. She had been

the only one here consistent in their treatment of me and everyone around me. She

may have been socially awkward, but she was funny and good.

“Of course not. I can’t leave you here with Rona roaming the halls. That bitch is up to

no good.” Joselin ground out from between her teeth, and I narrowed my eyes. I was

there when Rona had admitted to stealing her mother’s magic and killing her, so she

could take her place on the council. Nothing indicated Rona was doing it to Joselin

now, but I would be watching very closely.

I didn’t trust her at all.

To be fair, I didn’t trust anyone on the council, which was worrisome, but I had no

other choice. Killian had told me that they had been chosen because they were the

strongest of their kind and the most loyal to the throne. Joselin was the only one I trusted. But she was clearly hurting, and I wanted to show my support. I reached out, squeezing her arm gently.” Okay, but whatever it is, don’t let yourself sit on it for too long. I’m here for you when you’re ready to talk.”

She nodded, looking away from me to hide her emotions. “Don’t be so mushy. It’s annoying.”

I smiled when I saw the corner of her mouth twitch with amusement before she turned and stomped off. It reassured me that she would be fine, but when I turned to Tobias, the look in his eyes told me not to talk to him about her. Something might have happened between them, but it was not my place to press for information on their relationship.

I narrowed my eyes at him, but he held my stare unashamed, revealing no emotions.

There was no way that he would be giving me any information. He barely talked as it was. I doubted he would tell me what was happening in her head. If he knew.

The way she had blatantly ignored him wasn’t a good sign to me, but I needed to give her the space she asked for. I would be here when she was ready.

Thomas cleared his throat, making me look at him, but he stared straight ahead. If I had to guess, it was his attempt to spare his friend from my glare. But I gave up, turning to walk back into the castle.

The hot mid-day sun beat down on my shoulders with cruel intent, and I was eager to

get back inside.

Rona was smiling widely as she spoke to Lindsey, Killian's ex.

Lindsey's shoulders

tensed, and her eyes widened when she saw me enter the courtyard. Two powerhungry women becoming friends was never a good sign.

The bright red, curly hair was impossible to overlook in the sun, and I watched her

smile harden as she turned to look at me. It was incredible how malicious she looked

as she lifted her hand and waved her fingers in my direction. The long pointed grey

nails resembled claws so closely that I imagined she was just waiting for the chance

to sink them into someone's chest and rip out their heart.

Maybe she would eat it too. A woman willing to kill her own mother for power was a

woman I would never trust.

My groan of annoyance was caught in my throat, and I plastered a smile on my face

as Rona left Lindsey and jogged up to me.

"Natalie!" She exclaimed with feigned excitement, and I gritted my teeth.

"It's Your Majesty." Thomas corrected with a clipped tone.

"Hm, yes. It is." She hummed in agreement, falling in step with me as I climbed up the

castle's front entrance. Her failure to correct herself had my already thin patience

disappearing rapidly.

"Is there something you need, Rona?"

The witch's arm brushed against mine as she moved closer. "I thought that maybe we

could get to know each other. I can help you train until your mother comes back."