

Mia

Omg. Did you guys hear?

Erica



Erica

Sooooooooooooo sad

Mia

Nobody deserves that.

Mia

Especially not Sienna.



Michelle
wait what

Michelle
whats going on?

Michelle
what happened to si???

Erica

Oh shit

Erica

I forgot your away, Mich

Mia

😞 You mean no one told you yet?

Michelle

TOLD ME WHAT?!?!

Michelle

will someone please just spit it out?

Mia

Mich.

Mia

Sienna lost the baby.

Michelle

I couldn't believe what I'd just read. There was no way. Sienna was the most powerful woman I knew. If anyone was built to be a mother, it was her.

How could she of all people...

Tears sprang to my eyes as Josh looked over, hands on the wheel, still driving us down the



tears sprang to my eyes as Josh looked over, hands on the wheel, still driving us down the highway.

“What is it, what’s wrong?” he asked.

“It’s...Si. She...oh my God. I can’t believe this. We need to turn around.”

“What?” Josh asked, confused. “What are you talking about? After everything we just learned about Konstantin? After we’ve come this far, we can’t—”

“JOSH! STOP THE FUCKING CAR!”

Josh hit the brakes and skidded to the curb as cars whooshed by us on the highway. He looked panicked all of a sudden. My hands were clasped around my belly.

“Are you okay?” he asked. “Is it the...baby?”

“Ours is okay, Josh. It’s nothing to do with that.”

“Then what?”

“Sienna. She lost hers.”

Josh looked down, aghast. I looked up, trying to hold back the tears. Neither of us could look at each other, feeling the strangest sense of guilt. Knowing our baby still had a future while Sienna and Aiden’s...

“Sienna? What?” Josh said. “We have to go—”



Especially not my best friend.

“Josh, go as fast as you can,” I said. “She can’t be alone right now.”

“I know.”

With that, Josh waited until no cars were behind us then pulled an illegal U-turn and sped us as fast he could back toward home.

Stopping Konstantin would have to wait.

Being there for Sienna was all that mattered right now.

Jocelyn

“I failed her.”

I was pacing in my old bedroom in the pack house. I’d left the hospital after breaking the news to Sienna. There was no way I could go back and face her now.

I couldn’t get the sound of her scream, her never-ending wail, out of my head.

Nina sat on my bed, looking more broken up than I’d ever seen her.

“I failed her, Nina,” I repeated. “I can’t believe I let this happen. If I hadn’t been so focused on myself, on healing *myself*, maybe—”

“Stop it,” Nina said. “Jocelyn, sit down.”

But I couldn't. If I stayed still, that meant I would have to let it all sink in. Motion kept the worst emotions at bay.

“Don't you get it?” I asked. “She came to me first when she thought she was pregnant. And I didn't come back with her. I stayed at the Retreat. I let this all—”

“NO!” Nina shouted, standing up. “Jocelyn, you sound like a broken record and a bad one. Like soft rock or something.”

“This isn't the time to try and be funny, Nina.”

“I'm not *trying* to be anything. It's a defense mechanism, okay? Some people cry. Some people laugh. If I didn't laugh, I'd probably kill myself. Tie myself to some train tracks and honk along as the train smattered me to pieces all over the state.”

“Will you stop?!”

“No, Jocelyn,” Nina said, grabbing my hands. “Because you don't get to be the one who's guilty this time. I'm the reason this happened. It's because I came back and provoked Aiden. It's on me. Not you.”

“That's ridiculous. Nina.”

“No, if we're playing the blame game, I get the medal this time, okay? You did everything

you could. You're too damn good. I..."

Nina was at a loss for words, spinning out. I'd never seen her this emotional. I didn't know what else to do, so I threw my arms around her, holding her tight. Tears flowed freely down my cheeks onto her sweater.

"You're ruining the cashmere," she said under her breath.

"It's my sweater," I reminded her.

She lightly chuckled, but it wasn't a happy laugh at all. Even now, Nina held on to humor to keep the pain at bay. I could tell she was torturing herself.

"We're going to get through this," I said. "For Sienna. We have to."

Nina nodded but said nothing. I held her in my arms for what felt like hours, gently rocking back and forth. The rogue, once again, had been made the enemy by circumstance.

She wasn't to blame, as I wasn't, as Sienna wasn't, as no one was.

Sometimes life was just inexplicably cruel.

Unless there was another reason. If so, I vowed, for Sienna, that I would find out.

Sienna



“Who am I? Really?”

I waited for Charlotte to respond, growing restless. She clearly had some answers. Why she was holding them back was of no significance to me.

I needed to know the truth about my past, my present, my unborn child.

“After Daniel and I met you for the first time,” Charlotte began, “we were left with a...certain taste in our mouth. As you can recall, it was not the best first impression.”

“On either side,” I said, reminding Charlotte she’d been equally rude.

“Fair enough,” she replied with a shrug. “The point is we wanted to know more about who exactly had mated our son. We’d heard that you were adopted, and given the strange circumstances surrounding your birth, we decided to do some digging.”

I felt the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end.

After three years of being mated to Charlotte’s son, I still hardly knew a thing about my own past. To think, Aiden’s mother had known all along.

For a second, I remembered what I’d seen in Konstantin’s sessions. How he’d slit my biological mother’s throat in front of my



father's eyes.

Vanessa. My poor mother. What else was there to the story?

“We found out who they were. How powerful they were. And, to be honest, we were quite impressed. For some little red-headed nobody, you came from quite the strong gene pool...No offense, of course.”

I didn't have it in me to take offense right now. I wanted answers and nothing more.

“And?”

“And...well, we found out about that man. The one we sold the house in the Hamptons to, as it turns out. That Konstantin fellow.”

“The vampyre, you mean.”

“Yes, just the one. He was after you as a child for a reason. And, the more we researched, the more we began to realize...that reason...might affect your own ability to have children.”

“What are you saying?”

“Sienna,” Charlotte said, and for the first time, I saw genuine pity in my mother-in-law's eyes. “I think you already know what I'm about to tell you...”

Aiden



I waited outside the hospital room, sitting beside my father and across from Sienna's parents. Melissa and Robert were by no means friendly with my parents. But right now none of that seemed to matter.

We'd been united by grief.

"Son," my father said, patting my knee, "whatever happens, know that Sienna will always love you."

"How do you know that?" I spat. "It was my fault."

My father took a deep breath then began. "When we lost your brother, Aaron, I wasn't sure if Charlotte would ever forgive me. It wasn't on me that his mate had died. But when you lose a child, none of that matters. Common sense goes out the window."

I turned to look at him. I'd forgotten somehow that I was speaking to a man not unlike myself right now. A man who had lost a child.

But for my father, it was a living, breathing child. Not a fetus.

"We were never the same after that. We began to travel. Began to...enjoy more, what you might consider, frivolous activities. But they occupied us. Took our minds off the loss. And, after a while, they became our new normal. It took some time, but we had a life again."

I'd never understood why they'd left and



I'd never understood why they'd left and seemingly abandoned me until now.

It finally made sense.

I looked at my father with new understanding, overcome with emotion.

"You and Sienna will make it through this too. You'll find a new normal. You'll see."

I was about to hug my dad when the door opened and my mother stepped out.

"Go in, Aiden," she said. "Your mate needs you."

I stepped slowly into the room. It'd been difficult for me to spend time here, to look into Sienna's eyes, and she'd noticed. My mate knew me better than anyone.

She recognized that I was terrified and heartbroken just like her and I had no idea how to deal with it.

"Hey," I said. "Are you okay?"

"No," she answered simply.

At least, she was answering me now when I spoke. I walked over to her bed. I gently laid down beside her, cupping her face in my hand.



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“Me neither,” I admitted.

No other words were necessary. Sienna pressed her face against mine, and we held each other for dear life, lying together on the hospital bed.

I thought of what my father had told me, that we would find a *new normal* someday.

It sounded impossible right now, like a fanciful dream. The idea that this wound would ever heal seemed unimaginable...

But as long as I had my mate, I was determined to try.

We would heal. One day at a time. Together.

I love you, Sienna, I thought. And even though I didn't say the words out loud, I knew she heard me.

Next Chapter

