

Chapter 271 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Lila's POV

“They found somebody dead?” I asked in a hoarse whisper, turning to face Enzo who had a grave look on his face. I knew from his face alone that it was true and suddenly my heart hurt. I had to lean against him to support the weight of my body before I completely fell over.

I felt dizzy, like I wanted to pass out at any moment and my breathing became incredibly shallow.

Enzo didn't answer me at first; he only looked beyond the area and at the many police cars that were parked in the lot, along with the ambulance.

“Like a student?” I continued to ask, staring at him still and unable to look away.

“Yes; a student,” he finally answered, audibly swallowing.

“Who?”

I wasn't sure I wanted to know the answer, but the knot in my stomach wasn't going to leave this alone.

“I'm not sure,” he said shaking his head. “I should have reported it sooner.”

“You knew about it?” I asked, furrowing my brows together.

I stepped out of his strong embrace and peered up at him.

“I smelled something off earlier,” he admitted, meeting my eyes. “It smelled like rotting flesh; it was disgusting. Made me nearly throw up. But the scent faded after a little while.”

“What made it fade?”

“I don't know...” he said, and the look on his face, I knew he was telling me the truth. “But it was after I saw—”

His voice faded suddenly.

“After you saw what?” I pressed.

He met my eyes again and I saw that he was struggling with this next sentence; my stomach clenched at the very thought of what he was about to say.

“It was after I saw Rachel.”

I gasped at his words and stepped even further away as if he had just slapped me across the face.

“You think she did this?”

“I didn’t say that,” he said quickly.

“You didn’t have to. I can see it on your face,” I said, getting a bit worked up.

He grabbed my arms and held me in place, forcing me to look at him.

“I didn’t say that,” he said much slower as he looked into my eyes.

I felt my body calming slightly, but not by much.

“You said that she’s been acting strange lately,” I said, remembering his words from earlier during class. He was worried about her and now I was starting to understand why.

“She’s been acting strange; you’ve noticed it too,” he said in return, furrowing his brows together. “It doesn’t mean I think she killed someone.”

“Do we know how this person died?”

“No,” Enzo answered, looking back at the police who were speaking to a very distraught headmaster.

Alpha Jonathan was also there, and he was looking very grim at what the police were saying. Moments later the EMTs were emerging from the main doors of the academic center and carrying a stretcher. Whoever was on the stretcher was covered with a blanket and shielded from onlookers. There were a lot of students who were watching the events unfold before them, none of them daring to speak. Most of them hide in plain sight.

Headmaster Prescott had tears in her eyes, and she looked as if she was about to get sick. I was about to get sick as well and I needed to bury my face in Enzo’s chest to keep from losing control.

He wrapped his arms around me and held me tightly; not wanting to let me go.

I couldn't hear what they were saying, I didn't want to hear what they were saying. I purposely blocked them out, but I knew Enzo was listening to the whole thing. He grimaced as the cops continued to speak.

"Did they say the cause of death?" I found myself asking through my tear-filled eyes.

He held onto my trembling body even tighter.

"Yes," he answered. "But I don't think you should know about it."

"Tell me," I said, much more confidently than I felt.

He sighed but remained silent.

"Enzo..." I pushed, not sure what I was doing or why I wanted to know so badly.

"She was drained of her blood and suffered some heavy force to her head," Enzo answered.

I flinched at his words, but at the same time, I felt some sort of relief from hearing it. If she was drained from her blood, then the likelihood of Rachel doing that was slim. She was a bear; they weren't bloodsuckers or particularly violent like that. I don't think she would have drained this girl from her blood.

The thought was sickening.

"It couldn't have been Rachel," I murmured. "She wouldn't have done that."

"Maybe not," he agreed. "Sounds like it was a vampire."

I stared up at him with a gaping mouth, my heart nearly beating out of my chest.

"A vampire?"

"All of her blood was drained from her body," Enzo repeated. "So, yes."

"We have a vampire on the committee..." I breathed, unable to contain the tears any longer. They flowed down my features, and I let out a small sob. "Skylar didn't do this... she wouldn't have."

"Nobody is saying she did," Enzo said calmly. "There are other vampires here."

"Yes, but if one vampire did this, then everybody is going to stereotype them," I told him. "It's not fair to the rest of them."

He looked like he wanted to say something more, but then we both heard Headmaster Prescott loud and clear.

“A tragedy has happened today. All students need to return to their dorms as soon as possible.”

I wanted to go talk to Headmaster Prescott; I started to numbly move in her direction, but Enzo grabbed my arm, stopping me.

“Stay here and wait for me,” he told me firmly.

I wanted to protest, but the look on his face quickly shut me up. I watched as he walked over to Headmaster Prescott and Alpha Jonathan, both of whom were continuing their conversations with one of the police officers.

“Every student needs to be investigated,” I heard Alpha Jonathan saying to the officer; the officer was part of his pack, so it was only right that Alpha Jonathan was the one telling him what to do.

“Yes, Alpha,” the officer said. “We are collecting evidence as we speak and once we gather enough, we will pull students and speak with them individually.”

“Start with the wretched vampires,” Alpha Jonathan seethed, making me flinch.

“We can’t stereotype,” Prescott said calmly, clearly trying to keep herself calm. “There are a lot of students here and—”

“Her blood was drained,” Jonathan hissed. “We are starting with the vampires.”

“There weren’t any fang marks on her neck,” the officer said, staring down at his notes with a timid frown. “But it seemed as if her body was torn into.”

“So, what are you saying? A wolf did this?” Alpha Jonathan asked, narrowing his eyes.

“I’m not saying that either...” The officer began to say but was interrupted when Enzo approached, and Prescott took notice of him.

“Oh, good. Professor Enzo. As you can see, things are a bit messy tonight. I might need your help getting students back to their dorms safely. Whoever did this, is still out there and worried for the safety of everyone else.”

“I will,” Enzo assured her, nodding his head. “I just wanted to see if there was anything else I could do to help and find out a bit more information. Do we have any leads?”

“None of yet,” the officer said, still staring at his notes. “We are going to spend the night investigating and then pull students in for questioning. I think it’s wise if we cancel classes for the rest of the night and probably the next few days.”

“I agree,” Prescott said, glancing at Alpha Jonathan.

He looked questionable at first, but then eventually nodded as well.

“What student was it?” Enzo asked; I shouldn’t have been surprised by his boldness, but I was.

“Merida Scott,” Headmaster Prescott answered grimly.

My heart tugged painfully in my chest; I knew her. She was a wolf in my grade, and she was also in both my art and werewolf history classes. She was an incredible artist; she’s been contributing a lot to the mural with her share of pictures.

I couldn’t believe she was gone.

Hearing her name made me dizzy and I had to lean against the wall for support.

Alpha Enzo was quiet, obviously recognizing the name as well.

“Alpha Jonathan, will you be staying with me again tonight?” Enzo asked, his voice oddly calm.

“No. I need to return to my pack tonight. I have a business to take care of. But I’ll be back tomorrow to help with the investigation,” he answered.

Enzo nodded in response and turned to Headmaster Prescott, bowing his head slightly in respect and remorse.

“I’ll make sure students are back in their dorms and safe,” I assured her.

She looked grim but she nodded and gave him a small smile.

He said nothing more as he turned away and walked back to me. I was in an area where they couldn’t see me, not that they were paying attention anyway. They were quickly turning back to one another and speaking in low tones when Enzo reached me.

“I’m taking you back to my house,” he told me gently. “Then I’m going to make sure everyone else is back in their dorms.”

I nodded, feeling unwell.

“Can you make sure Rachel and Becca are safe?” I asked.

“Alex should be there with them, but yes. I’ll make sure they are safe as well,” he assured me.

I gave him a grateful smile and allowed him to lead me out of the dark corner of the building and toward the faculty housing. Most of the faculty were already inside; Enzo checked the perimeter before walking with me down the walkway and toward his house.

His house was the most hidden, so I wasn’t worried about anyone seeing me enter his house. But I was worried they’d see me walking toward it. But he checked the perimeter first and then walked in a way that I was covered as we walked down the walkway and into his house.

His house filled me with warmth and love when I picked up his scent, but it also filled me with a nauseated sense when I also picked up Alpha Jonathan's lingering scent. I felt my stomach clenching almost instantly.

He turned to me, giving me, a loving look and he wrapped me in his arms, holding me close.

"Lie down and I'll be back in a few," he assured me, bending down, and pressing his lips gently against mine, sending electric chills throughout my body. My entire body tingled at his touch as I breathed him in.

I nodded but just before he pulled away, I grabbed his arm.

"Enzo..." I said in a low tone. "Please be careful. Whoever did this... whatever monster killed Merida... they are still out there, and I have a feeling they will kill again."

Chapter 272 Lockdown

Chapter 272 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Enzo's POV

There were a few students still wandering the campus; they were looking at the cop car and ambulance with large, frightened eyes, whispering to one another about what was happening.

"I hear somebody died," one of the girls said.

"Do we know who it is?" Another girl asked.

One of the boys was about to answer, but I didn't give them to chance to speak.

"Everybody needs to get back to their dorms; right now," I ordered.

They all frowned and looked at one another.

"We are vampires; our curfew doesn't start until 7 am tomorrow," One of the boys complained.

"Do I look like I care?" I asked through my teeth; annoyed they were questioning me.

"Headmaster's orders."

They all sighed and started back towards the dormitory. I shook my head at them and started to patrol the campus, looking for any others that were wandering around. Besides the ambulance and cop cars, the campus was a ghost town. Only the sirens could be heard, which was a relief.

I went into the dining hall and saw a few students eating at the tables; I knew they were vampires as well.

“Bring that to your dorms; your classes have been canceled for today and everybody needs to report back to their dorms right away,” I told them, trying to keep my voice calm.

They looked at one another, frowning. Clearly oblivious to what was going on outside.

“What’s going on?” One of the girls with long blue hair and bright blue eyes had to be the perkier-looking vampire I’d ever seen.

“Everything will be explained later but Headmaster Prescott wants everyone in their dorms,” I told them.

“We aren’t done eating,” One of the guys said; he had a darker appearance with his jet-black hair that rested above his shoulders and tucked behind one of his ears and eyes that were so dark they nearly looked black.

He sat close to the girl, so it was clear they were together.

My annoyance level grew, and I decided to address the entire dining hall at once. There weren’t a lot of students in the dining hall, but there were a few scattered around that I knew were vampires. All other students were in their dorms because of curfew, most oblivious to what was happening outside the academic center.

Then again, there were a bunch of students who saw the chaos unfold before them and probably told their roommates and friends. I’m sure word had gotten around the dormitories quickly.

I stood on the table that these two were eating on, ignoring their frustrated grunts and complaints.

“Listen up!” I used my Alpha voice to boom across the dining hall, making everybody silent immediately. I loved that this voice worked on Vampires as well; it pleased me that they were all silent and looking at me now with large eyes. “Everybody needs to take their food back to the dorms. Your classes have been canceled for the rest of the day. Headmaster Prescott will explain everything else later, but she asked for you to report back to your dorms.”

They were all quiet for a moment, looking at one another with curious frowns. It only took one student to stand up, take her plate and beverage with her, and walk toward the dining hall exit.

Others stood as well, grabbing their things and scurrying out of the dining hall.

I stepped down from the table and watched as the boy and girl that just gave me attitude, grunted annoyance before taking their own food and beverages and stood as well. The guy looked like he wanted to say something more to me; his chest was puffed out like he was some kind of Alpha male, making me roll my eyes.

But he chose not to say anything.

“Smart,” Max muttered.

I silently agreed with my wolf.

He helped his girlfriend to her feet and she quickly grabbed her stuff before following him out of the dining hall. I just shook my head; God damn vampires, I thought to myself.

Now, I just needed to check the library and the student lounge. There probably wasn't anybody in the library at this hour, but I had to check anyway.

When I went into the library, I was relieved to see nobody there except for the night-shift librarian. On this campus, we had day shift workers and night shift workers. I knew this particular night shift worker not only from passing in the faculty neighborhood, which had a house for all full-time faculty members but also from sometimes I enjoy late night reading sessions and come to the library often to pick out new books.

“Hello Alpha,” she said, standing to her feet, bowing her head slightly in respect. She was part of Alpha Jonathan's pack and was trained to be respectful toward Alphas.

“I need you to make sure no student comes in here tonight,” I told her, without even greeting her, making her frown.

“I'm sorry?”

“Someone was found dead tonight, Stephanie,” I told her, making her jaw drop.

“What?” She croaked. “Who?”

“I can't disclose that right now, but with time I'm sure Headmaster Prescott will explain everything. She asked me to go around campus and make sure all students were back in their dorms. If you are staying here tonight, I suggest you lock the doors to the library. Or lock the doors and return to your faculty house. It's not safe out there.”

I could practically hear how quickly her heart was beating; she looked like she wanted to burst out crying. She was very familiar with almost every student at this school, including those who go to school at night. I'm sure the thought of one of them being dead broke her heart.

But she didn't say anything; she shakily nodded and leaned against her desk for support.

“I’m sorry I had to be the one to tell you,” I said solemnly.

“We need to hurry and get back to our mate,” Max whined.

I knew he was right, but I had a job to do as well. Without another word, I turned and left the library, silently sending a prayer to the goddess that she watched over Stephanie the librarian because she was going to need all the help she could get if she wanted to get through this without falling apart.

I went into the student lounge and only saw a couple of vampires sitting with one another. There was a girl amongst them that reeked of wolf. I recognized her as Lydia; one of my students.

“You all need to get back to your dorms. There’s been a tragedy that happened this evening and Headmaster Prescott is requesting everybody’s return,” I told them, but my eyes never left Lydia who stared back at me with a red face and large eyes.

She had a couple of puncture wounds on her neck and one of the tall muscular male vampires had his hand on her thin waist, keeping her close to him.

“Lydia, you shouldn’t have been here in the first place. It’s past curfew for you,” I told her firmly, raising my brows at her dazed look.

“She’s with us,” the vampire that held onto her waist said, pulling her even closer.

She willingly went with him, pressing her body against his.

“You know it’s against school law to feed off students,” I said, narrowing my eyes at him. “You could get expelled for this.”

“Relax, teach. She likes it,” he said, giving me a cocky side grin as he leaned into her ear and whispered, “Don’t you?”

“Yes, baby,” she purred in return. “I like it a lot.”

“That doesn’t matter,” I said, trying to keep my temper under control but they were really pissing me off. “It’s against school rules. Headmaster Prescott ordered everybody back to their dorms.” I paused as I looked at them. “Your assigned dorms,” I added through my teeth.

They rolled their eyes and stood to their feet, but the large jerk still had his hold on Lydia’s waist.

“I’ll make sure she gets back safely,” he said, but something about his tone, I didn’t trust.

I grabbed onto Lydia’s wrist, making her squeak in surprise.

“Try again,” I said as a low growl escaped my throat. “I’m heading in the direction of the dorms anyways, so I’ll take her back.”

He looked like he wanted to fight me and both Max and I almost dared him. I knew Max was on the edge of my mind, revealing himself through my eyes and making them glow like an ember. I watched as the vampire's jaw clenched and then unclenched.

He backed down.

“I’ll see you later, Lydia,” he muttered before following his friends out of the door.

I released Lydian’s wrist, and she pulled it away quickly, rubbing it gently.

“You didn’t have to be a dick,” she muttered. This surprised me because I was her professor and no student had ever spoken to me like that before. It was almost like she forgot who I was for a moment, but when she looked up at me, her entire body froze. “Sorry, I didn’t mean that.” “Let’s go,” I said through my teeth, not wanting to waste any more time with her.

She nodded and followed me out of the student lounge and toward the dorms. I walked with Lydia into the girl's section of the dorm.

“What dorm section are you?” I asked without looking at her.

“A,” she answered, staring at the ground shamefully.

That was the same section as Lila, which was good because I needed to check on her roommates anyway. I was still having strange feelings about Rachel, and I wanted to make sure she was in the dorm as well. Something about my encounter earlier didn’t feel right; especially because it was in the same area, I smelled that rancid flesh scent near the academic center.

I shuddered at the thought.

Just as we walked through the doors of Dormitory A, I was standing in the middle of a very clustered and frantic living area which had a few couches, a few televisions, a small kitchen, a community bathroom that only had a toilet and sinks because each dorm room had their own bathrooms with showers, and a couple of tables with puzzle pieces and gameboards scattered across them.

Students were everywhere though and they looked terrified.

The Dormitory advisor, Eileen Carter, was trying to get them to calm down. But it was hard when she had no answers. Before I could say anything to her, I heard the crackling of the loudspeakers. Each dorm room and dorm living space had a speaker, so students wouldn’t miss announcements.

Headmaster Prescott's voice was heard loud and clear, though it was obvious she was very upset by the strain in her voice, but as soon as she started speaking, everybody was silenced.

"Hello everybody; I know many are confused and I'm sorry to say that a student passed away earlier this evening. Her name and cause of death will not be disclosed at this time but rest assured that her family has been alerted and her close companions will be the next to know before the rest of the school does. The next several days are going to be very difficult, but I need everybody to be working together to make the best out of this situation. Nobody is to leave their dormitories unless it's an emergency. As of right now, this school is on official lockdown. Thank you and be safe."

Chapter 273 Head Count

Chapter 273 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Enzo's POV

With a shaky voice, Eileen Carter turned to the trembling and frightened students.

"Everybody, get to your dorms and get some rest. When I find out more information, I'll let you know," she said, trying to maintain her strong composure, but I could see her fear shining through and I'm sure the students could too. "I'll be going to your dorms and taking a head count," she added.

My heart fell into my stomach; if she went to Lila's dorm, she was going to see that Lila wasn't there. There was no way in hell I would have Lila stay in this dorm; I needed her with me where I knew for certain she was safe.

The thought of her being alone in my faculty house right now left me feeling uneasy and I needed to get back to her as soon as possible.

"I can help you with that," I told her. "I can take one section and you take the other. Just give me the list of students. There're how many rooms in this section?"

"30," she answered. "Dorm rooms are upstairs."

I knew Lila's dorm room number was room 112.

"I'll take rooms 100 – 115," I told her.

She nodded and gave me half the list.

“Thank you, professor,” she said.

I went up the curved stairs and reached the second floor. The doors were parallel to one another down a wide hallway. Students were walking into their dorms and keeping the doors open for the headcount.

All doors except for room 112; Lila’s room.

I knocked on the door at first and I heard scrambling around and whispering. I also heard Alex’s firm voice at the door, making me roll my eyes.

“Just open the door; they are going to see she’s missing regardless,” I heard him saying.

I heard other, softer, voices as well but I paid them no attention. I didn’t bother knocking again, I just opened the door and stepped inside; they went from terrified to relieved in seconds.

“Oh, thank goddess,” Becca breathed, sitting on the couch like she had just run a marathon. “I thought you were Miss Carter. Lila isn’t here—”

“I know, she’s with me,” I assured her. “I left her in my faculty house.”

“Is she okay?” Becca asked, peering up at me with a worried expression.

I nodded.

“She’s safe. But I’m keeping her there with me,” I told them.

“Look, if she’s going to be with you, then I’m going back to my pack. I don’t need to remain here and—”

“Nobody is leaving campus,” I said, glaring at Alex. “This is a serious situation.”

“My job is to protect Lila,” he said in return, folding his arms across his chest. “And do you see her here?”

“Your job is to do what your Alpha commanded and I’m sure if I called Bastien, he would tell you to remain here,” I said in return. “It’s not like you do much protecting of her anyway. Where were you earlier when Lila saw those ambulances and cops?”

“She saw them?” Becca asked with wide eyes. “She must have been so afraid...”

“She was,” I said, still glaring at Alex. “She shouldn’t have seen that, and you should have been there.”

He opened his mouth to say something, but I held up my hand to stop him. “Don’t bother. You’ll stay here and make sure the girls are safe. Alpha Jonathan is going to have his gamma’s patrolling the place but I’m sure Eileen will appreciate the extra help in this particular dorm.”

He scoffed but said nothing. He just grabbed his coat off the nearby chair and left the dorm. I shook my head at the closed door behind me before turning back to Becca.

“Where’s Rachel?”

“In her room,” she answered. “Is Miss Carter going to be doing a head count?”

“I’m doing this section so she won’t come here and find Lila is gone,” I replied; Becca sighed in relief.

“Oh, thank goddess,” she breathed.

I walked right to Rachel’s room and knocked on her door, loudly, rumbling the dorm room.

“What are you doing?” Becca aside, raising her brows.

“I need to speak with her,” I answered.

She opened her mouth to say something, but the door slowly crept open. Rachel stood before me in her very dark room, staring up at me.

“We need to talk,” I said without hesitation.

“Okay?” She said in return.

“When I saw you outside the academic center earlier, did you see anything strange?”

Her eyes widened at my question, but she shook her head quickly.

“No; what would I have seen?” She asked, raising her brows.

“I smelled something off earlier; it smelled like rotting flesh—”

I paused when Becca gasped loudly. I almost forgot she was standing nearby. I probably shouldn’t be having this conversation in front of her like this, but I didn’t want to delay this any further. I had to get back to Lila.

“Why would I know anything about that?” She asked, narrowing her dark eyes at me.

They haven’t always been this dark which worried me.

“I was mainly wondering if you smelled it too. Or maybe you saw something?”

“I didn’t see anything,” she said, her voice firm. “If that’s all you wanted, I’m very tired and would like to sleep now.”

Without another word, she shut the door in my face.

I looked at Becca who was pale in the face as she met my eyes.

“Something’s wrong...” she whispered, her voice trembling. “She’s never been like this before.”

I nodded; knowing exactly what she meant. From what I knew about Rachel, she was never this rude or closed off; she wasn’t a cold person.

“I would keep your distance for a bit,” I told Becca, turning away and walking toward the door. “Just stay in your room and if anything happens call me.”

“Okay...” she said, shakily. “I’m assuming we are going to be trapped in the dormitory for a while. Can you have Lila call me tomorrow?”

“Yeah, I’ll tell her,” I said. “Just be safe, Becca.”

“You too, Professor,” she said in return and then I left the door.

As promised to Eileen, I did a quick head count of the other students, allowing them each to shut the door after I was finished. I went back to Eileen who was speaking with Alex downstairs in the living space.

“I appreciate your help, Alexander,” she said to him, giving him a kind smile. “I’m not entirely sure what’s going on out there, but I feel safer knowing we have a Nova pack gamma here.”

He surprisingly smiled back and nodded at her.

“I’m happy to help. Just let me know if there’s anything else I can do for you. I rested plenty for today, so I’ll patrol around and make sure everyone remains in their dorms and is safe.”

I approached them, interrupting their conversation.

“I should get back to my house, but everyone in this section is accounted for,” I told her, handing her the list.

She smiled at me, but I saw the worry and fear still lingering on her face.

“Thank you, Professor,” she said, bowing her head. “If you find out any information, would you be able to come back and tell me? I just have this nasty feeling in the pit of my stomach that I can’t seem to shake.”

“I will,” I told her.

It was clear that Merida wasn't a part of this dormitory, thankfully. But whoever dorm she belonged to would notice her not being there; therefore, they would soon figure out she was the student who passed away.

My stomach clenched at the thought.

I nodded my head at Alex to thank him for sticking around; not that I gave him much of a choice. Then, I left and headed back to the police and Headmaster Prescott. Alpha Jonathan was also still with them.

"I'm taking my daughter home with me. I don't feel safe with her being here," Alpha Jonathan announced to them.

"That's fair," Prescott said. "I'll alert Eileen and have Sarah get her things."

"I was just there, Alexander offered to keep the students safe and patrol. I'm sure he will escort Sarah to you if you'd like," I said to them.

"Oh, yes. Thank you, Enzo," Headmaster Prescott said, nodding.

Alpha Jonathan just looked at me with a strange expression.

"Why were you in the girl's dorm, Professor?" He asked.

"I wanted to make sure every student was accounted for in case I missed any on my patrol. I spoke to each dorm advisor and got the report that their students are in fact present," I answered without missing a beat.

"And everyone is in their dorms?" Prescott asked.

I nodded.

"Yes," I answered.

"Oh, good. Thank you for your help. I might need your help again tomorrow during the investigation. But you can head back to your house and get some rest."

I nodded to them again before leaving and going back to my house where Lila remained. As soon as I opened the door, Lila appeared at the entrance of my bedroom. She wore one of my T-shirts that covered half her body and revealed her sexy bare legs. Her dark curls were tied up in a messy bun and she peered up at me with a small smile on her perfect lips.

"Welcome back, Professor," she said flirtatiously.

A low growl escaped and emerged from my throat as I fought to take control of my wolf who desperately wanted to have his way with our mate.

Goddess, she was beautiful.

Seeing the hungry and lustful look in my eyes, she bit her bottom lip to stifle a giggle, but it only made me want her more. I went toward her, but then the color drained from her face as her eyes shifted to behind me.

The stench of an Alpha was potent, and I froze as well. I turned and saw the doorknob turning and the shadow of Alpha Jonathan shined through the window.

Chapter 274 Suspicious

Chapter 274 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Enzo's POV

Lila met my eyes, and I knew I wouldn't have to say anything. She quickly rushed into my room and sealed the door behind her, turning off the light in the process.

That's my girl, I thought to myself.

She was just in time too because as soon as my bedroom door shut, the front door swung open and Alpha Jonathan came storming into my faculty house.

"Were you talking to somebody in here?" He asked, looking around with a suspicious look in his eyes.

"No," I said, furrowing my brows together. "Well, I mean yes. I was on the phone with my Beta, letting him know what was going on," I lied. "I thought you were returning to your pack tonight?"

"I am," he said, eyeing me carefully. "I came by to grab some of the stuff I left in the guest room while I waited for them to fetch my daughter."

"I see," I said, trying to remain as casual as possible. "Is there anything you'd like me to do for you?"

He looked me over once more before turning away and stalking toward the guest room, which was dangerously close to my bedroom. He paused before entering the room, but I noticed he was staring at my bedroom door with a quizzical look.

My heart weighed heavily in my chest, and I thought for a second that he could smell Lila lurking behind the door. Or maybe hear her breathing. I could feel her nervousness and the fact that she was struggling to keep her breathing light and non-existent.

“Do you usually keep your bedroom door closed when you aren’t inside of it?” He then asked, turning to me.

I raised my brows at his question; it was a strange question. I have been keeping my bedroom door closed a lot lately; especially since he’s been staying with me. So, I didn’t have to lie to answer him.

“Yes,” I said. “Usually.”

I didn’t think he was going to believe me at first, but then he turned back to the guest room and went inside. I let out a breath of air, wanting to lean against the wall to support my body but suddenly felt like it weighed a ton.

I could feel Lila’s relief as well. I wouldn’t be careless and mindlink her while Alpha Jonathan was here. Opening a link between the two of us could make him sense her and that wasn’t a risk I was willing to take. Alphas could usually sense when a mindlink conversation was going on around them.

I heard the faint sounds of a phone ringing inside the guest room and then Alpha’s Jonathan’s voice answering it.

“Yes?”

He paused, I tuned in with my Alpha hearing and could hear Gamma Alex on the other end.

“I was told to bring your daughter to you, Alpha. Did you still want me to do that?” He asked.

“Yes. Bring her to my limo in the front parking lot. My driver will assist her once you get her there. I need to speak once more with one of the officers and the headmaster and then I’ll be right there to bring her home.”

“She wants to know when she will be returning to the school,” Alex said, and I could hear the nervousness in his tone while speaking to Alpha Jonathan.

Jonathan was very intimidating, so I couldn’t blame the kid. But he was also not Alex’s Alpha, so he didn’t have much authority over him. There wasn’t much need for Alex to be too frightened; then again, Jonathan never cared about who was the Alpha of whom.

He always got what he wanted.

“Tell her we will discuss it once we are home,” Alpha Jonathan seethed through his teeth.

Then, he hung up without another word. Several long minutes later, Jonathan emerged from the room with a small bag.

“I’ll be returning tomorrow. I won’t be staying the night here for a while. But I’m helping in the investigation, so I’ll be on campus quite a bit,” he said, walking toward the door. “We might need some extra assistance in the unforeseen future, so keep your phone on. I’m sure Prescott will be in touch.”

“I’ll be here,” I said, keeping my voice even.

He paused at the front door and looked at me one last time. I stared back at him, unblinking.

“Was there something else?” I asked after a long stretch of silence.

Another heartbeat of silence and then he finally shook his head, turning back toward the door.

“No,” he said in a dark tone. “I’ll be seeing you, Alpha.”

He opened the door, stepped out into the cold air, and shut the door tightly behind him. I let out a long breath of air before rushing to the front door and locking it. Alpha Jonathan had a key to the house, but if he were to come back, I’d hear him trying to unlatch the door and hide Lila once again.

Once I was sure he was gone, I went to my bedroom door and quickly opened it. Flipping on the light, I saw Lila curled up on my bed. She still wore my T-shirt and had her dark hair pulled up into a messy bun. She sat on the top of my bed with her knees pressed against her chest and her eyes were filled with unshed tears.

It was obvious she was trying hard not to sob; her bottom lip was swollen from biting on it so hard.

“Hey,” I said softly, rushing toward her and sitting beside her. “Come here...”

I opened my arms out for her, and she threw herself into my embrace, letting out her desperate sobs. Her entire body trembled and shook in my embrace, and I felt her tears soaking through the thin cotton shirt I wore.

I rubbed her spine gently with the palm of my hand, trying to provide her with some kind of comfort and warmth.

“I can’t believe Merida is dead...” she whispered against me. “I can’t believe she’s gone...”

“I know...” I whispered in return. “I’m so sorry you had to be here for this.”

“She was such a sweet girl,” Lila whimpered. “She didn’t deserve to die. Especially brutally...”

“I’m sure she didn’t suffer for long,” I told her, trying to keep my voice calm, but I don’t think my words were helping.

She peered up at me and stared at me through her glossy eyes; her lips trembling as she struggled to speak.

“She lost all her blood and was hit in the head until she died...” Lila said, her voice almost cold with distaste, but I saw the pure pain on her face, and it broke my heart into a million pieces. “How could she not have suffered?”

Her last question came out barely audible as she broke off into another round of sobs.

I cupped her face in my hands and kept her head steady so I could look into her beautiful eyes.

“I know this situation is awful. But we are going to do everything in our power to make sure something like this doesn’t happen again. No other student is going to die like that again,” I assured her firmly.

Her sobs slowed and she sniffled.

“How can you be so sure?” She asked, swallowing hard. “We don’t even know who the killer is. They are still out there, Enzo.”

I nodded to her, understanding her worries and frustrations.

“I need you to trust me,” I said to her, dropping my voice to only a whisper. “Can you do that for me?”

She didn’t even hesitate; she nodded right away which made my heart skip a beat entirely.

“I trust you,” she whispered.

I used my thumbs to wipe away the tears that stained her pale cheeks.

“Good,” I said gently, watching as a small smile finally appeared on her lips.

Whether it was fake or not, it still appeased me. I leaned in and pressed my lips gently against her, tasting and concurring her sweet lips. Her lips formed perfectly against mine and she even opened her mouth slightly, granting me permission to deepen the kiss and explore her mouth with my tongue.

I bit onto her bottom lip, sucking, and tugging on it gently. She moaned at the sensation, and I noticed a little color returning to her features. Her cheeks were glowing pink and her eyes filled with lust and desire. Her honeysuckle scent grew potent, and my mouth watered.

She pulled back for a moment so she could remove the shirt and I was pleased to see that she was completely naked under the shirt. She gave me a coy smile as she leaned back on the bed, motioning for me to come with her.

I obliged immediately, crawling on top of her and taking control of her lips once again. She breathed me in as I kissed her. She wrapped her arms around my neck and pulled me closer to her perfect body. I could tell she wanted me to touch every inch of hers, just as I did.

I ran my fingers down the sides of her curvy waist, and she shuddered in delight at the sensation I brought her. She threw her head back as I ran my lips delicately down the nape of her neck and across her shoulders. Goosebumps formed on her arms and legs; I wanted to kiss every single one of them.

Continuing down the length of her body, down her torso, her juices ran down her inner thighs, begging for me to lick it up and taste her sweetness.

“Oh, Enzo,” she gasped, running her manicured nails through my hair and massaging my scalp. “I want you... please...”

Chapter 275 First on the list

Chapter 275 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Lila's POV

The thought of Merida suffering in the cold and wet basement of the academic center caused my heart to hurt worse than it ever has. I was glad I didn't see her body, but hearing the officers talking about her... I couldn't imagine what she must have gone through. I couldn't even imagine what kind of monster would do that to her.

I didn't want to believe that it was someone at this school. I couldn't believe such a thing.

I dreaded what they would find during the investigation tomorrow. There was a part of me that wasn't sure wanted to know, but I knew I had to if I wanted to keep myself and others safe.

There wasn't much for me to do right now, except try everything in my power to keep my mind off things. Thankfully, Enzo was the perfect distraction.

His touch alone put my mind at ease and sent a warm electric current throughout my entire body. His kisses and the way he ravished me brought me a sense of comfort. I desired him more than I had ever desired anyone in my entire life. I wanted him more than I could put into words.

He stood before me in all his glory; the wetness that pooled between my legs was all for him and telling from the lust and desires evident in his eyes, he knew it. I gasped as I felt his tongue pleasing my most sensitive areas; running my fingers through his thick dark hair, I whimpered his name, begging him for more.

I wanted him to take me every and any way he wanted.

The orgasm that arrived from just his tongue came quickly and was like a punch. I screamed out for him, just as he trailed his kisses back up my naked body and made them known to my lips again. I loved the taste of him and everything he had to offer me.

He placed his hands firmly on my hips and lifted me off the bed and onto his lap, so I was mounting him. I wrapped my legs around his waist, feeling his manhood begging for entrance to my inner core.

Entrance I would gladly give him. As he slid inside of me, I closed my eyes, feeling every incredible inch. I sighed as if it was an incredible massage or a long drink of water after I'd been deprived for days.

He wrapped his arms firmly around my body and kissed my neck gently as I glided myself up and down. I felt sweat dripping down the nape of my neck and tickling my shoulders.

Gripping my hips, he moved me quicker; I moaned loudly at the fast sensation. I threw my head back as he kissed my chest and ran his tongue across my hardened and pink nipples. He bit onto one of them, tugging it gently with his teeth. I heard a light growl emerging from the back of his throat and I knew he was struggling to keep his wolf under control.

I loved that I had this effect on both Enzo and his wolf. It made me desire him even more. I caught his lips with mine and deepened the kiss immediately. This time, it was me that explored his mouth with my tongue, tasting all of him. He breathed heavily against one another, struggling to catch our breath.

And then, our orgasms erupted around us, satisfying our hunger for one another and making me collapse tiredly against him.

He wrapped me in his arms, his breathing matched mine as we lay together. Neither of us wanted to let go of one another. I didn't feel the need to let him go; he was my mate. I needed him with me just as he needed me with him.

"I thank the goddess every day for giving me you," he whispered against my ear. I closed my eyes, listening to the steady beating of his heart. "I can't wait for the day that I can make you my wife and the Luna of my pack."

I lifted my head slightly so I could look at his face. He kept his hand on the back of my head, stroking his fingers through my hair gently.

“Does it bother you?” I found myself asking, unable to look away from him.

He looked down at me with a small frown, meeting my eyes.

“Does what bother me, my love?”

“That I won’t marry you until after graduation,” I said, my tone lowering slightly.

His expression softened and I saw a small smile dancing on his lips.

“I didn’t mean it like that,” he said softly, kissing the top of my head. “I mean, yes, if I had it my way, I’d marry you tomorrow. But I understand and respect your decision to wait. You are worth every second of that wait and once I’m able to finally make you mine, it’ll be the best day of my life.”

“But I already am yours,” I told him, giving him a small smile. “You have marked me and claimed me as such. It is you that will become mine in return. During our wedding, I’d like to leave my mark on you as well. So that our mate bond can be complete, and we will belong to each other.”

His smile was radiant as he flipped me onto my back and once again claimed my lips.

“I will be yours forever and always,” he whispered against my lips.

I smiled as I pressed my face against his chest, nuzzling into him. He held me tighter, kissing the top of my head gently.

“Now, you must rest. I have a feeling that tomorrow is going to be long and difficult for all of us.”

I nodded, hating that I had a feeling he was right. But I was too tired to think too much about it.

It didn’t take long for that exhaustion to take over and I soon drifted off to a dreamless sleep.

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I woke up early the next morning to an empty bed. Feeling a sense of loneliness, I slid out of bed and grabbed the T-shirt I wore yesterday. It belonged to Enzo, and it carried his scent. I found it comforting when he wasn’t with me yesterday and I wanted to feel that sense of comfort again.

When I slid it on, it rested just above my knees. It was the side of a dress on me, which I loved. My hair was still in its messy bun, but I had messy curly strands falling lazily over my features. I didn’t bother fixing it though as I left the bedroom and made my way into the living room.

His kitchen was open and attached to the living room. When I reached the living room, I was more than relieved to see that Enzo was inside the kitchen, cooking something.

When he saw me standing before him, his lips turned upward into a gentle and loving smile.

“I figured I’d make you some breakfast this morning,” he said, motioning for the pan that was currently sizzling some bacon. In his hands was a bowl and he was whisking together some pancake batter.

The entire house smelled of bacon grease and it smelled delicious.

“Seeming we can’t go to the dining hall for breakfast,” he continued, giving me a wary look when I hadn’t made any efforts to move toward him.

“What about the other students?” I asked, glancing out the window where I could see, through the thick layer of trees, the vacant campus.

“I’m sure Headmaster Prescott will get them food,” Enzo said, narrowing his eyes at me. “If that’s what you mean.”

I nodded, turning back to him.

“I guess I feel a little guilty for not being there with them,” I admitted, glancing down at my bare feet. “I’m the president of the student committee. I should be in the face of this danger, but instead, I’m hiding out here with my mate.”

“There isn’t anything you’d be able to do in that dorm,” Enzo reminded me. “There’s a lockdown; that includes the president of the student committee.”

“I know…” I breathed. “I just feel a little hopeless.”

He began to pour the pancake batter into medium-sized circles on a new frying pan.

“If there’s something for you to do, I’ll let you know,” he assured me. “I’m heading to the student lounge after breakfast to help with the investigation.”

I frowned at his words.

“Why the student lounge?” I asked.

“They are using the space for the investigation, and I believe they are planning on interrogating students today,” he answered.

My heart fell deep into my stomach.

“All of them?” I asked.

He nodded.

“It’s the best way to get leads,” he explained. “Even if they didn’t do anything personally, someone might have seen something strange. Anything helps.”

“Am I going to stay here for the day?” I asked him, sitting on the kitchen aisle stool as he put bacon and pancakes on a plate for me.

“It would be best,” he said in response, grabbing a mug and pouring some coffee in it. He then slid the plate and mug in my direction, and I thanked him with a kind smile before shoving the food in my mouth.

As worried as I was for today and all we were about to find out, I was still starving.

He made himself a plate and poured himself some coffee before sitting with me and eating.

“Do you have any suspicions on who could have killed her?” I found myself asking, peering up at him.

He froze mid-bite at my question. The look on his face told me all I needed to know, but he sighed and shook his head.

“No, I don’t,” he answered.

I wasn’t sure what I expected, but I gave him a small smile and continued to eat.

I nearly jumped out of my skin when my cellphone started ringing; since finding out that Merida was killed by someone at this school, I’ve been jumpy lately. I grabbed my phone off the kitchen counter and instantly recognized Headmaster Prescott’s personal phone number.

My heart raced in my chest.

“What is it?” Enzo asked.

I took a deep breath before answering the phone.

“Headmaster Prescott,” I greeted, meeting Enzo’s concerned eyes. “Hello.”

“Hey, Lila. I’m sorry to call so early. But I’m here in the student lounge with an officer and we are going to be interrogating some students today,” she said on the other end of the phone. “He has a list of students that they believe might know something about the tragedy that had happened here.”

“I see…” I said, unsure of where she was going with this.

Her next set of words chilled me to the bone, and I found myself frozen on the stool I sat upon.

“And Lila... you are the first person on the list,” she said slowly. “So, I’m calling to ask if you’d be able to come to the student lounge this morning so we can start the interrogation.”

Chapter 276 Interrogation

Chapter 276 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Lila’s POV

The walk from Enzo’s faculty house to the student lounge felt like an eternity long. Headmaster Prescott and the police thought it was a good idea to have a gamma warrior escort me; I quickly suggested that it was to be Alex who escorted me because he was the only gamma warrior who knew where I was.

Of course, I didn’t tell them the last part. I just told them I felt more comfortable with a gamma that I knew well, and that Alex was the closest one I had at this school. Headmaster Prescott thankfully didn’t argue.

Alex was at the door to Enzo’s house within 15 minutes. He didn’t look pleased to have to sneak over to the faculty housing and escort me to the student lounge, but I also wasn’t pleased to need an escort.

I wished Enzo could come with me, but I knew that he couldn’t.

I hugged him and kissed him goodbye before heading outside with Alex. He walked behind me while we went across the campus. I held my head down, feeling like a complete criminal even though I didn’t do anything wrong.

But I couldn’t help the knot that kept tightening in my stomach. They were going to be questioning me; I just hoped Enzo didn’t get brought up during this questioning. I’m not sure I’d be able to lie my way around my relationship with him.

It was weird walking across an empty campus. It was like a complete ghost town; it was depressing and unlike the school that I have come to know and love so dearly. Only a few gamma warriors patrolled the campus and when they looked at me, I saw a look of utter disapproval, like they had already convicted me of this crime.

After what felt like a lifetime, we reached the student lounge. It didn’t even look like it was open; typically, there would be lights on the door and in the windows; they were light-up signs that brought color and life to the lounge. But they were all turned off; it was dreary.

Alex was the one who opened the door for me and when I stepped inside, I saw that there were only a few lights on and it was completely quiet. A few cops were sitting at one of the tables and a man wasn't wearing a cop's uniform, but he was seated next to Headmaster Prescott, and they were murmuring to one another, looking over some notes it appeared.

They both paused and looked at me though as I walked into the lounge and toward them. The couple of cops that sat at a table beside one another were also looking up from their tablets to almost glare at me.

A chill went down my spine and I had to stifle a shiver.

As I got further into the room, Headmaster Prescott stood to her feet and gave me a kind smile while motioning to the seat in front of the table she sat at with that strange gentleman.

"Lila, this is Detective Sanchez," she introduced.

I forced a smile, hoping that it didn't seem too forced.

"Hello," I managed to say as I walked toward the waiting seat. "I just wanted to be clear, you are not in trouble," Prescott said, lowering herself into her seat as she eyed me carefully. "The Detective just wants to ask some questions."

"It's the procedure," Detective Sanchez said, agreeing. He didn't sound angry, just busy. He didn't bother looking at me; he was glaring at his notes.

"I know this is a lot to take in and we would like to go as gentle as possible," Prescott said softly, but she glanced at the detective while she said that last part.

He only grunted in response, making her press her lips firmly in a disapproving manner.

"Lila is your name?" The detective asked, finally looking at me.

I nodded my head once.

"Yes, sir," I answered, glad that my voice came out strong.

"I have here that you are the president of the student committee."

"She was just voted the president recently," Prescott answered before I could.

This resulted in an annoyed grunt as the detective glared at her.

"I can get through this a lot quicker if you allow me to do my job without interruption," he said through his teeth. "I need to hear the answers from the person in question."

She looked like she wanted to protest, but then closed her mouth and leaned back in her seat. Annoyance was clear on her face, but I tried not to pay attention to her.

The detective turned back to me, narrowing his eyes, waiting for my response.

“Yes, sir,” I answered. “As of recently, I am the president of the student committee.”

“And how’s that going for you?”

I was surprised by the question; I raised my brows at him. He just looked at me curiously, as if he genuinely wanted to know the answer.

“It’s going fine,” I told him. “I had my first meeting yesterday and it went well. Until afterwards...” My voice trailed off as I remembered the events that unfolded after the committee meeting.

The detective looked intrigued as he leaned across the table and closer toward me.

“And what happened afterward?”

I looked at him pointedly.

“I saw the cops and overheard them talking about a girl that died,” I said in a breath without missing a beat.

I watched as Detective Sanchez’s face fell in disappointment.

“You were close to the victim?” He asked, narrowing his eyes at me.

“Merida,” I corrected him, not liking that he wasn’t using her name and making her sound like an object. “She was in a couple of my classes, but I wouldn’t say we were close.”

“And how was Merida as a student?” He then asked, emphasizing her name.

“I’m not sure I understand the question,” I said after a short pause.

“Did she get good grades?” He asked. “Was she talkative? Did she answer a lot of questions? Was she active in class? Did teachers like her?”

His questions were almost overwhelming. I glanced at Headmaster Prescott, and she gave me an encouraging head nod and I took a deep breath before looking back at the detective.

“She didn’t stand out,” I admitted. “But yes, she answered questions when asked. She was polite to her classmates and teachers. As far as I knew, she got decent grades. But I didn’t talk to her that much, so I’m not sure.”

“Why didn’t you talk to her that much?”

For some reason, his question hurt. He made it sound like I purposely didn’t talk to or isolated her.

“We walked in different circles,” I shrugged, trying to remain as casual as possible. “We didn’t have the same friends. But I never minded her.”

“Did she have many friends?”

“I’m not sure,” I answered as honestly as I could. “I know she had a couple of girls she hung out with.”

“I have listed here that she was friends with an Alison and a Mary,” Detective Sanchez said, eyeing his paper carefully. “Do those names ring the bell?”

“I suppose so,” I said, shrugging again. “I saw them around campus.”

“Have you ever noticed the girls arguing?”

“Not that I recall,” I stated, trying my best to remember, but I couldn’t. I don’t think I’ve ever seen Merida get into any arguments.

“And you never had an issue with her yourself?” He asked, furrowing his brows together. “She never once made you mad or upset?”

I stared back at him in disbelief.

“No, detective,” I answered simply. “I never got into any arguments with her.”

“But you got into arguments before?”

“Excuse me, how is that relevant?” Headmaster Prescott interrupted.

“All my questions are relevant,” he answered, his jaw clenching.

“Lila is an 18-year-old girl; of course, she had gotten into arguments before. It doesn’t mean she’s killed anyone,” Prescott hissed, angrily.

“I didn’t say it did,” he said in return, not even giving her a second glance. “But there’s a connection everywhere we look. My job right now is to find the start of the connection.”

“Lila has never gotten into serious trouble before—”

“A student was killed by another student at your school, Headmaster. Werewolf or not, murder is murder. Lila was described as a popular girl who just won the election for president of the

student committee. She has connections and ties with most students on this campus; if I'm going to find a connection between the victim and her murderer, I'm going to start with this 18-year-old."

Prescott opened her mouth to say something in return; she was red in the face, and I couldn't tell if it was because of embarrassment or anger. But I spoke instead, stopping her from making the detective any angrier.

"I wouldn't consider myself popular. I'm liked amongst my peers because I always treat them with respect and I'm kind to them. I help them with their homework and tutor them when I can. I don't disinclude anyone and I'm always willing to listen to their complaints. That's what makes me a good president. I'm learning as I go, but I have a lot of ideas on how to make this school better and to make everyone's experience amazing. I'm well-trained in combat and yes, I'm a Volana. I'm learning to control my powers and I'm doing a better job at it than I did in the beginning. I use my powers and my combat abilities to help students. I break up fights when I see them and defend those in need. I never once hurt a student and I would certainly never kill anyone. So, if you are looking for a tie between me and Merida's murderer, you aren't going to find it with me. If I saw something, I would have done something. Not only because it's my duty as president, but because it's the right thing to do and I was raised to always do the right thing."

Detective Sanchez and Headmaster Prescott both stared at me with open mouths, processing my words.

Prescott was the first to recover.

"Well said, Lila," she said quickly, giving me a proud smile. She then looked at the detective with a pointed look. "Do you have more questions, Detective?"

He cleared his throat.

"Just one... where were you the night before last night," he asked, eyeing me carefully.

My heart fell into my stomach; I knew the answer right away, but it wasn't an answer I was able to share with him. Because if I did, my relationship with Enzo would be found out.

Chapter 277 She Craved Blood

Chapter 277 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Lila's POV

“I was with my mother,” I told him quickly, which wasn’t a lie. I was with my mother and a few others, including Enzo, doing the protection ritual and summoning the guardian of the earth. But I wasn’t going to say that to the detective and Headmaster Prescott.

“With your mother?” He asked, raising his brows.

I nodded my head, leaning back in my seat.

“Yes, sir,” I answered as confidently as I could. “I was with my mother. She was in town visiting and we enjoyed the day together.”

“Lila’s mother is a very powerful Luna for the Nova pack in Elysium,” Headmaster Prescott explained to him. “Her father is Alpha Bastien. He’s the leader of the Alpha Committee so he’s often traveling around and checking out neighboring packs. He’s very close allies with your Alpha as well, detective.”

Detective Sanchez tensed at the mention of his Alpha, whom I’m assuming was Alpha Jonathan. Most of the authorities and emergency services in Higala were from the Crescent Moon pack, which was Alpha Jonathan and Sarah’s pack.

“I see,” he said, clearing his throat. “Then I suppose that checks out.”

“If I need to call my mother, I would be happy to do so, Detective,” I said, giving him a coy smile.

“That won’t be necessary, Miss Lila. I appreciate your time. That’s all the questions I have for you.”

I nodded and stood to my feet.

“Gamma Alexander, would you please escort Lila back to her dorm?” Headmaster Prescott asked kindly.

I had almost forgotten that Alex was standing nearby; he was so quiet during all that questioning. I’m glad he didn’t scoff at my obvious lies or make any grunting sounds to show his disbelief and annoyance at my answers.

“Yes mam,” he said politely. “Should I return here once I’m done?”

“I’ll let you know the next student to escort here once we discuss it,” Headmaster Prescott informed him.

He nodded and turned toward the doorway; this time, he walked first and trailed after him.

Once we were outside, I noticed he was walking in the direction of the dorms.

“I have to go back to Enzo,” I told him.

“I’m not getting in trouble for you,” he muttered. “If you want to go back there, you have to sneak back yourself.”

I frowned at his back, but he did not attempt to stop or turn to look at me. I just rolled my eyes and turned in the opposite direction.

“Fine,” I muttered and then I walked further away until I reached the faculty housing.

If I was spotted on my way back, nobody made it known. But as soon as I got to Enzo’s house, the door swung open, and Enzo stood before me with a look of sincerity and worry. He looked very pleased to see me, but he also looked distressed and worried.

He sighed relief when he saw that I was unharmed and smiling up at him. I flew myself into his arms and he pulled me into his house, closing the door behind us.

“How was it?” He asked, kissing down my temples and across my cheekbones.

“Intense,” I admitted. “He was asking me how close I was to Merida and how she was as a student. I didn’t really know how to answer him. I wasn’t that close to Merida... but everything I said made it look like I was purposely shunning her.”

“If he knew anything about you, he’d know you’d never shun anyone,” Enzo said, peering down at me. “You are the most compassionate, caring, and loving person I know.”

I smiled up at him, standing on my toes and kissing him gently.

“I love you,” I said to him.

“And I love you,” he said in return, wrapping his arms around me and pulling me toward his chest.

His kisses trailed down the nape of my neck and across my shoulders. I closed my eyes, soaking him in and basking in his incredible scent. My heart was thudding rapidly against my chest to the point where I thought it was going to explode from my chest.

It was incredible the effects of a mate bond, well after it’s been established. Every time I’m with him is like the first time and it was a feeling I never wanted to go away.

I couldn’t fathom the thought of ever losing him; I’m fairly certain it would literally kill me and my wolf. We would never be able to recover if anything happened to our mate.

As he continued to kiss me and tear my clothes off my body, ravishing me in my true form and making love to the human outside the wolf, all I could think about was, “I will protect him until the day I die.”

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Third Person POV

Fear consumed Rachel as she barricaded herself in her room. Her entire body trembled as tears fell at a rapid speed down her pale features. She sat on the floor in the darkest corner of her room with her knees pressed to her chest and her head lowered.

Her windows and curtains were drawn, keeping out the sunlight that desperately wanted to seep into her room.

Her roommate and close friend, Becca, had knocked a few times to get her to come out and eat something. It was obvious that Becca was worried for her, but Rachel couldn't bring herself to get up or face reality.

She had killed someone.

She was the reason for this lockdown, and she was the reason for the interrogation. It would only be a matter of time before they realized this and imprisoned her.

She hadn't wanted to kill anyone; she could hardly even remember the events that led up to that poor girl's death. All she remembered was feeling ravenous and having such a strong craving.

The craving.

She craved blood.

Bears don't drink blood nor are they known for their brutality. But there was this thing inside of her that needed it; this darkness was what craved that blood and that darkness is what killed that girl.

Rachel shuddered at the imagery of that girl's dying face. She cried and begged Rachel to leave her alone; she begged for her life. But Rachel wasn't there; it was the darkness. All Rachel could do was watch from the farthest part of her mind as her body tore into that girl's chest and took out her beating heart. She was smashed against the wall, cracking her head, and making blood pour from her open wounds.

When Rachel got her control back, it was already too late. She was sitting in a pool of blood in the academic center and the girl was drained and dead in front of her. She didn't know what else to do so she locked the doors of the center.

Thankfully, it was after hours so there was nobody inside.

She quickly cleaned the mess as best as she could and hid the girl's body in the basement of the building. Nobody ever goes there; the likelihood of the girl being found was slim if Rachel hid

her properly. She tried to bury her in the dirt that the basement floor was made up of; I was unfinished, and they hadn't completed the flooring.

Once she was sure the body was hidden well enough, she went to her locker and changed into the extra clothes she had stored in there a while ago.

She hadn't expected to see Professor Enzo standing outside the academic center when she left. Her heart was nearly beating out of her chest as she looked into his curious and yet suspicious eyes. It was obvious that he knew something was up, but she couldn't tell him the truth.

She couldn't tell anybody.

All she could do was hide and hope that nobody ever found out the horrific and hideous truth.

"You should have hidden the body better," that voice returned to her; it was the voice of a woman, but she also sounded animalistic. Hearing the voice horrified Rachel to the bones; she knew something terrible was going to happen and she was once again going to lose control of her body.

"I'm sorry...." Rachel managed to sputter through her tears. "But I'm not a killer."

"Of course, you're not, darling. You are a survivor. You do what it takes to survive."

"But...but that girl... she was harmless," Rachel whimpered.

"But you needed her blood to live; without it, my pets would have died. If they die... so, do you."

"Your pets?" Rachel asked, lifting her head, and looking at nothing in particular. "You mean the darkness inside of me? The ones that take over my body and make me do awful things?"

"Some might call it darkness yes," she purred. "But they are what makes you strong. Nobody can tell you that a bear is weak again. Not with my pets living inside of you. You will be known as fierce. Nobody will mess with you again." She opened her mouth to protest, but she felt the claws of the darkness inside of her, once again, attacking her brain and forcing her to remain silent and obedient. She had lost the little control she had over her body, and she was now a vessel again.

"Now, we are in quite a predicament; are we not? A detective is trying to find who murdered that girl. We can't let them know that it was you, obviously."

Rachel lowered her head and let out a small whimper, but she was restricted from speaking.

"But lucky for you; I have a plan for that," the voice continued, much to Rachel's horror.

Rachel found herself standing on her feet; she was now shoved into the back of her mind; unable to control her movements, she went to the window and opened the curtains, and then she opened the window itself.

She was on the second story of the dormitory, and she worried about what was about to happen. But before she could fully grasp it, she was flinging herself out the window. She wanted to scream so badly but the darkness that took her over wouldn't allow her to.

When she landed, roughly, she heard a snapping in her leg, and then pain coursed through her leg and up her entire body. Her body shuddered and jolted, and Rachel gritted her teeth. She wanted to cry out and scream that her leg was broken and that she needed help, but the darkness wouldn't allow her to do that either.

It kept her still and pressed against the cold and hard wall of the building. Tears threatened Rachel's eyes; she stole a glance at her leg and saw that it was twisted in the wrong direction. It had to have been broken.

But then, to Rachel's utter terror, her leg automatically snapped back into place, sending a wave of pain around her body.

It took a couple of heartbeats, but she could finally move her leg again and once she did, she was standing and moving against the shadows of the building until she reached the front doors of the dormitory.

She watched as her body opened the doors of the boy's dorm and made its way inside. A few gamma warriors were standing by and when they saw Rachel, the darkness emerged from her, appearing to her like snakes, and slithered towards the warriors who stood frozen and in shock.

The snake-like creatures wrapped around their necks and choked them until they had passed out completely and bit into their flesh, tearing open their necks and drinking from their bodies.

The snakes returned to Rachel, slithering back into her body and nestling against her brain as they were before.

Rachel turned and walked toward one of the boy's sections of the dormitory. The living quarters were vacant thankfully; Rachel didn't want anyone else to die who got in her path.

She made her way up the stairs and knocked on one of the doors to the boy's dorm.

After a few minutes the door opened, slowly and hesitantly, and she came face to face with Scott.

Chapter 278 Confession

Chapter 278 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Lila's POV

“Did you see the body?” Brianna asked, curiously and also sounding horrified at the same time.

“No, of course not,” I answered, shuddering at the thought. “But I saw the gurney; her body was covered in a sheet.”

“I bet it was gruesome.”

“Bri!” I scolded.

“What?! I’m just saying that her heart was ripped out and she was drained of blood. It sounds gross.”

“I’m aware of that, Bri,” I said, rolling my eyes. “But she was a person like you and me. She deserved better than that.”

I felt drained and sad thinking about poor Merida.

“I’m not saying she didn’t,” Brianna said softly. “Have they looked into Alex?”

“He might be an asshole, but I don’t think he’d kill someone,” I told her, shaking my head. “At least not like that.”

“I thought I knew him too,” she murmured. “But he ended up being a fake.”

“How are you doing by the way?”

I sat curled up on Enzo’s couch, clutching the phone tightly in my hand and close to my ear. I called Brianna shortly after Enzo had left. It was now nightfall and Enzo left when Headmaster Prescott called him.

“I can finally get out of bed,” she said softly. “It doesn’t hurt as bad. My wolf is still sleeping though.”

“I’m so sorry,” I said to her, feeling my heart hurting for her. I couldn’t even imagine what she must have been going through.

“It’s not your fault,” she said a little bit lighter. “I also don’t want you to feel bad that Alex is your bodyguard.”

“If I had a choice—”

“I know,” she assured me, stopping my words suddenly. “Trust me, I get it.”

“Have you been eating?”

“Here and there,” she admitted. “My mother is practically forcing food down my throat.”

“I heard that it gets better,” I told her; which was the truth.

There were a couple of girls in the pack who were rejected by their mates and though it was difficult at first, over time things seemed to have gotten better for them. I hoped with all my heart that things would get better for Brianna.

“Thanks, Lila,” she said kindly.

I wanted to say something more to her, but the loud sounds of a police siren stopped me. My entire body froze as the blue lights of the cop car shined brightly in the night air. I quickly stood my feet with a pounding heart.

Enzo had a faint view of the parking lot from his house and when I looked out the window, I saw the cop cars pulling into view.

I furrowed my brows together, completely forgetting that I was on the phone with Brianna.

“Lila?” She said for the third time. “What’s going on? Is that a cop?”

“Bri...can I call you back later?” I asked, keeping my eyes fixed on the cop cars. “I think something is about to happen.”

“Yeah, keep me updated,” she said just before I hung up the phone.

I swallowed the lump in my throat as I tried to see what was happening. With my Volana abilities, it was easy to see in the night, but those bright siren lights made it difficult.

I imagined the lights on the sirens dimming and adjusting to benefit my sight instead of working against my sight. I felt my wolf illuminating her powers as those lights dimmed and my vision cleared.

I was able to see a couple of cops standing outside their cars as Detective Sanchez walked across the parking lot with Headmaster Prescott walking behind him. She looked grim and I couldn’t tell the expression she had on her face other than that.

Continuing to watch them, I saw the two officers that were with the detective, walking a distance behind them. They were each holding the arms of someone that I couldn't see clearly because the officers were blocking him from sight.

My first thought was, "Is it Enzo?" And that thought alone made it difficult to breathe.

But then Enzo came into view, and he was walking behind them; his expression was hard. I didn't like seeing him like that. Val wanted so desperately to go to our mate and comfort him, but I knew we couldn't do that. Not yet anyway.

When they reached the cop car, one of the newly arrived officers began speaking to the person I couldn't see. The officer had a pair of silver cuffs in his hands and motioned for the two officers to turn the person around.

As soon as they spun him around and started to cuff him, I saw his face clearly. My heart fell deep into my stomach, and I thought I was going to get sick at any moment.

It was Scott.

Why was Scott being arrested?

I felt a wave of dizziness wash over me and I found myself unable to stop my feet from moving in their direction. I ran toward the door and flung it open, allowing the cold night air to chill my body.

The shadows emerged from the ground and covered my body, allowing me to blend in with the night and hide me from any onlookers. I was sure that there were a bunch of students and faculty that were watching.

I ran toward the direction of the parking lot; tears threatening to spill from my eyes. Enzo came into view and as he continued walking in the direction of the police officers and Scott, he froze.

He knew I was approaching; he could feel me nearby. But I didn't stop near him; I ran past him and toward Scott who hadn't noticed me yet. I couldn't see his face, only the back of his head as the detective read him his rights and Headmaster Prescott stared down at him with such disappointment on her face.

It hurt my heart.

Scott might have done a lot of wrong in his life, but he wasn't capable of something like this. I knew in my heart that he wasn't.

"Lila!" I heard Enzo shouting as he ran after me.

Prescott turned her attention to me, and her eyes widened in shock.

“Lila, what are you doing—”

“Stop, you can’t arrest him,” I panted, stopping beside the cop who had his hold on Scott’s arms.

Scott turned to me and I saw this void in his eyes; it was a darkness that gave me a chill and made me freeze. It was unrecognizable and he looked back at me like he didn’t know who I was.

“Scott here just admitted to the murder of Merida,” Detective Sanchez told me; my heart fell deep into my stomach, and I suddenly felt like I was about to be sick.

I didn’t bother looking at Sanchez; my eyes remained on Scott.

“You didn’t kill anyone,” I told him, reaching my hand out to him, but he coiled away from me, making me drop my hand to my side. “Scott...”

“We need to take him to the station,” one of the officers said, opening the back waiting police car. “It’s not safe for him to be here. He’s a dangerous criminal.”

“No, he’s not,” I said through my teeth, glaring up at the officer. “He didn’t kill anybody.”

“Lila, he confessed—” Prescott tried to say.

“I don’t care; he’s lying,” I quipped.

“Let them take him,” Enzo said from behind me; I turned to look at him through my unshed tears.

He looked stern and very mature, but I couldn’t believe what he was saying right now. Was he really going to take their side over mine?

He kept his eyes locked on mine; unwilling to break the eye contact.

“I don’t know what’s going on, but I know in my heart that he didn’t do this to her. He wouldn’t have...” I said, hating that my tears were no longer hiding behind my eyes, but now spilling across my cheeks.

He opened his mouth to say something but then Scott spoke first.

“Let them take me,” Scott said through his teeth, making me turn to face him. “I’m a cold-blooded killer and I’ll do it again. I killed that girl, and I killed those gammas too.”

“What gammas?” I asked, furrowing my brows.

“There were a couple of gamma warriors found dead in the boy’s dormitory,” Detective Sanchez explained. “Scott confessed to killing them as well.”

“It’s a lie,” I said, shaking my head. “It has to be.”

“Why would he lie about something like that?” Headmaster Prescott asked; I could tell from her voice that she was trying to be reasonable. A growl escaped Scott as he struggled to break free from the cuffs that bound him; he was animalistic and unlike himself. Instinctly, Enzo grabbed my arm and pulled me toward him and away from Scott’s reach.

The officers surrounded him, trying to get him to calm down enough to get into the cop car. Detective Sanchez just shook his head while Headmaster Prescott looked remorseful.

Just as the door of the cop car opened, I stepped out of Enzo’s hold.

“Scott, wait,” I said, rushing toward him. They all froze, and Scott looked at me; he was breathing heavily through his nose like a bull. I stepped close to him and looked deep into his unnaturally dark eyes.

Something was seriously there. He wasn’t himself. He wasn’t there.

I remembered that Sarah had manipulated his mind in the past, but I had never seen him like this before.

The more I looked into his eyes, the more he seemed to have relaxed, and I saw a flash of his normal eye color as if he was fighting against whatever was claiming stake to his mind.

I whispered in a voice that only he could hear, “What has she done to you?”

Chapter 279 Accusation

Chapter 279 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Lila’s POV

“Enzo, can you take her back to her dorm room?” Headmaster Prescott asked as we watched the police car take Scott away.

I hadn’t realized I was standing frozen until Enzo took a gentle hold of my arm and pulled me along with him. My legs, at first, didn’t want to move. But then after the second gentle tug, they finally cooperated and went with him toward the dorms.

“Enzo...” I whispered hoarsely, grabbing his arm with my other hand. I couldn’t even look at him; I was a complete zombie with my eyes filled with tears.

“I know...” he whispered in return. “We will figure this out.”

I almost paused, but instead, I managed to look up at him. He looked concerned, but there was also a stern determination on his face.

“You believe me.”

It wasn’t a question, though he nodded once without hesitation.

“Of course, I do,” he answered. “I will always believe you.”

“You don’t think he killed Merida?”

“I don’t think he has it in him,” Enzo told me. “I think I will always trust your gut intuition as well and if you’re sure he didn’t kill him, then I don’t think he did.”

I felt like breathing out a breath of fresh air. My mate believed me. I wanted to throw myself into his arms and hug him tightly, but we were still out in the open and we couldn’t do that right here.

“Where are we going?” I asked, noticing that we were heading in the direction of the dorms.

“I’m taking you back to the dorm for tonight,” he said and though his voice sounded strained, his shoulders were squared. “I think you should rest in your bed and see your roommates. Also, I was thinking you’d want to ask around and do a little digging yourself in the dorms.”

I found myself beaming at him.

“I would,” I told him. “Thank you.”

He looked down at me and smiled at me.

When we got into the dormitory, Eileen Carter stood in the living quarters with Alexander, and they were talking intensely while glancing out the window at the bright sirens. Both their eyes widened when they saw me walking into the room.

“Lila?” Eileen gasped. “I thought you were upstairs. What are you doing?”

“She came running toward the police cars when she saw who was being arrested,” Enzo explained, shaking his head as if he was so disappointed in me. But I knew the truth.

“How did you get past us? We’ve been in here all night,” Eileen said, narrowing her eyes at me and folding her arms across her chest.

“The window,” I lied. “I snuck out the window.”

She pressed her lips firmly together and shook her head at me.

“We will discuss this tomorrow, Lila. Get back to your dorm right now.”

“Yes, mam,” I said, glancing at Enzo one last time.

He had to stifle a small smile; I could tell. I turned away and rushed toward the stairway.

“Thank you for bringing her back, Professor. I’m sorry for the trouble.”

“We really should look into window security,” I heard Enzo saying.

I went upstairs and toward my dorm room. My heart was heavy as I thought about Scott; I hated that he was getting in trouble again.

I knew exactly who was to blame for this; again.

Before I could stop myself, I knocked on Sarah’s door. Within a few minutes, the door was opening, and Kay stood before me with wide and worried eyes.

“Lila—”

“Where is she?” I said, stepping into the room and pushing Kay aside.

I hadn’t meant to push her, but she stumbled slightly and moved out of my way quickly as I rushed into the dorm room. Sarah was curled up on the couch and it seemed she was watching a movie when I entered. She looked up at me with furrowed brows and her lips were pressed together in a line.

“Um... rude,” she muttered. “How dare you barge in here when we were watching a movie.”

“Cut the act, Sarah,” I said through my teeth. “I know you did something to him, and you need to reverse it.”

“Did something to who?” She asked, narrowing her eyes at me.

“Lila, Sarah has been here all night—”

“I don’t believe that for a second,” I said, and I could feel my emotions getting the best of me. But I didn’t care; I needed answers. I needed to clear Scott’s name.

“Who are you even talking about?” Sarah asked, standing to her feet and folding her arms across her busty chest. “I haven’t spoken to anyone since yesterday.”

“You did something to Scott,” I said, shaking my head at her. “You did something to him and now he’s going to prison over something you did!!”

Sarah’s eyes grew large.

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Sarah asked. She genuinely seemed confused, which was throwing me off a bit but I knew what Sarah was capable of. I wasn’t going to let her get into my head like she does everyone else. “Scott’s going to prison?”

“Lila, what happened?” Kay asked, stepping toward me. “We heard sirens, but we didn’t know it had anything to do with Scott.”

“Did she get into your head too?” I asked, turning to Kay. “She has a habit of doing that.”

“One thing about fairies is we can’t be manipulated like normal beings,” she said, a concerned frown decorating her lips. “Can you at least explain why Scott is going to prison?”

“I’d like to know the answer to that question too,” Sarah said, her brows knitting together. “What the hell happened?”

“Like you don’t already know,” I said through my teeth, glaring at her before turning back to Kay. My expression softened and tears spilled from my eyes. “He confessed to murdering Merida,” I said in a low and defeated tone.

They both gasped loudly.

“What?!” Kay asked, her eyes wide with alarm.

“He confessed to murdering someone?” Sarah asked, equally shocked. My gut was telling me something was seriously off with my accusation. “Scott wouldn’t murder anybody.”

“That’s why you manipulated his mind into thinking he did,” I said to her pointedly.

The color of her face drained and she looked taken aback.

“That’s not a fair accusation,” Kay said, shaking her head at me. “I was with her all night. We’ve both been freaked out about this whole murder thing and kept our minds off the events by binge-watching corny movies. We haven’t left our dorm since yesterday.”

My heart fell into my stomach as I looked at Sarah; tears were in her eyes, and she wasn’t looking at me. She was looking out the window; the bright blue lights of the sirens were no longer shining through their window, and I could no longer hear the faint sounds of the sirens either.

Scott and the officers were gone.

“You didn’t manipulate his mind into thinking he killed her?” I asked, staring at her with dismay.

She remained still for a moment and then she looked at me through her unshed tears and shook her blonde head.

“No...” she murmured. “I didn’t. I wouldn’t actually kill anyone, and I certainly wouldn’t make anyone take the fall for me like that...”

Her words fell short, and her breathing grew thick. She was about to have a panic attack.

Kay could sense that as well because she rushed toward Sarah and wrapped her arm around her, helping her to her couch.

That’s when I realized just how wrong I truly was. I took a step back, unable to cope with what I had done and what I had accused her of.

“You didn’t do this...”

It wasn’t a question.

Sarah met my eyes and I saw the pure worry in them as she shook her head slowly.

“No,” she said, her voice breaking slightly. “I did not do this.”

“If you didn’t do this then who did?” I finally asked the question that’s been sitting between us. A question that none of us had the answers to.

“I don’t know,” she finally said, shaking her head. “I don’t fucking know.”

I didn’t stay much longer; I left and went back to my dorm to find Becca curled up on the couch. She looked as if she had been crying but she forced a bright smile when she saw me enter.

“I didn’t think you’d be back tonight,” she said, wiping at her tear-stained face.

“Scott confessed to murdering Merida,” I blurted, sitting down beside her; my entire body still felt so numb. I couldn’t believe what had happened. I was completely and utterly numb.

“What?!” She gasped. “He killed her?”

“No, Becca,” I said, shaking my head. “He didn’t kill her. He just said that he did.”

“Why would he say that if he didn’t kill her?”

“Something was wrong with him,” I said, remembering the dark look he had in his eyes. “It was like he wasn’t fully there.”

“I don’t understand...”

“He was under some kind of mind manipulation,” I blurted. “This time, it wasn’t Sarah.”

“Are you saying someone else at this school has the ability to control minds?”

I didn’t want to face that fact, but that was exactly what I was saying.

“Yes,” I finally said after a pause. “And whoever has that ability is who killed Merida and forced Scott to take the fall.”

/Chapter 280 Celeste

Chapter 280 - My Professor Is My Alpha Mate

Lila’s POV

“What are you talking about?” Rachel asked, emerging from her room and surprising us both.

“Rachel,” Becca greeted, giving her a faint smile. “It’s nice to see you. Feels like it’s been forever.”

“I was only in my bedroom,” she said with a shrug, plopping down on the couch beside her. “Why do you look so sad?”

She looked at me and we exchanged odd looks, but then I nodded to her, giving her permission to fill her in.

“We just found out that there’s someone else at this school that has the ability to manipulate minds,” Becca told her.

Her eyes widened at her words.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, someone, other than Sarah, can force people to do and say things,” she further explained, shuddering. “They forced Scott to take the fall for killing Merida.”

I watched as Rachel’s face fell in shock.

“Scott confessed?”

We both nodded.

“But it wasn’t a real confession,” I made sure to inform her. “He was forced to do it.”

“How do you know that?”

“I just know,” I said in return. “I could tell. Something was up with his eyes...”

“His eyes?” She asked, narrowing her eyes at me. “What do you mean?”

“They were all dark and weird. He also wasn’t acting like himself—”

“But wasn’t he like an asshole or something?” Rachel said quickly, keeping her eyes locked on mine.

“Well, yeah, I mean he was. But a lot of his doing was because of Sarah and the hold she had on him. He’s been trying to do good since they broke things off and he became aware of her,” I said in return. “He’s also not capable of murder.”

“Anyone is capable of murder if provoked,” she said with a shrug; her casual attitude was shocking to me.

“I doubt Merida provoked him into murdering her,” I said, shaking my head at her.

“You didn’t know her that well,” Rachel shrugged.

“Neither did you, apparently,” I said, furrowing my brows together.

Rachel looked at me a moment longer before standing.

“I want to make some popcorn; then maybe we can all watch a movie and just forget about this tragedy for the night.”

“That definitely sounds good,” Becca agreed. “My brain hurts from thinking about it.”

I wanted to agree with them and just forget about everything for the night as well, but thinking about Scott in prison taking the fall for something he didn’t do, something heinous. I knew I wasn’t going to be able to let it go that easily.

I already ruled Sarah out, which meant it could have been anyone. I can’t rest until I know for certain who killed Merida and clear Scott’s name.

“Extra butter?” Rachel asked from our mini kitchen as she grabbed the bags of popcorn.

“Definitely,” Becca said and then she looked at me. “I’m glad she came out of her room finally. I was really worried about her. We should enjoy tonight and worry about it tomorrow.”

“Don’t you think she’s acting a bit weird?”

Becca glanced in Rachel’s direction and then back at me.

“She’s been acting weird all week; tonight is the first night she’s semi-normal,” she answered.

I sighed; not wanting to argue.

Becca grabbed the remote and started searching for a movie on Netflix while Rachel finished with the popcorn. By the time Rachel joined us with the extra buttery popcorn, Becca found a cheesy romcom and was loading it.

As the movie played, my mind began to wander. That tightness in my stomach only grew more intense and uncomfortable. There was something unnatural in the air and I couldn’t figure out where it was coming from and what it wanted. But I knew something at this school wasn’t right.

The thought of Scott killing Merida just didn’t make sense to me; I knew in my gut that he didn’t do this, and I was going to prove his innocence and get him out of prison.

I stood up quickly, moving in a way that spilled some of the popcorn on Rachel’s lap.

“Hey!” She said, frowning and eating the fallen cornels.

“Sorry,” I murmured. “I’m just not in the mood to watch a movie tonight. I’m going to head to bed.”

“Okay, goodnight,” Becca said with a worried frown.

I said nothing more as I went into my room and sealed the door behind me. I grabbed my phone and thought about calling Enzo, but I knew he was probably busy with Headmaster Prescott, trying to figure out how to tell the students that the murderer had been captured and cleaning up the aftermath. There hasn’t been an announcement yet, but I’m sure that will be coming soon.

Though, it was kind of late, so maybe in the morning.

No; Enzo couldn’t help me with this, but I knew someone who might be able to. I scrolled through my contacts until the name I needed appeared on the screen, and then I pressed the call button.

“Lila Bean; is everything okay?” My mom said at the other end of the phone.

I sighed in relief hearing the comforting sounds of her voice.

“Not really,” I murmured, sitting on my bed. “Mom, something awful happened, and I don’t know what to do.”

“Your father told me that there’s been a murder at the school,” she breathed sadly. “Word had gotten around the packs quickly. Did you know the victim?”

“Merida...” I said, lowering my gaze to my hands. “Yes, I knew her. We weren’t friends. But we were in some classes together...” I paused as tears threatened the corners of my eyes. “She didn’t deserve what happened to her...”

“Of course, she didn’t,” my mother breathed. “We are sending her family a care package. I’m going to her pack personally to speak with her mother in a few days. I just wanted to give her some time first.”

“Scott confessed to the murder,” I blurted.

My mother was quiet for a heartbeat.

“Your ex-boyfriend?”

“Yes,” I answered quickly. “He confessed to killing her.”

“He’s Alpha Emmet’s son, right?” My mother asked. “In line to be the next Alpha of the Redstone Pack?”

“That’s him,” I murmured.

“I had no idea he was capable of such a terrible thing,” my mother dropped her voice to a mere whisper.

“He’s not, Mom,” I said, shaking my head even though I knew she couldn’t see me. “I don’t know why he confessed but when I looked in his eyes, something was off with him. His eyes were dark and he didn’t look like himself. It was like he didn’t know who I was or know the things he was saying.”

“You mean like his mind was being manipulated?” She asked.

“Yes; but it wasn’t by Sarah. I already talked to her, and I believe her when she says it wasn’t her,” I said quickly, making sure she knew that I ruled Sarah out.

“No, that doesn’t sound like Sarah’s magic,” my mother surprisingly agreed right away. It sounded as if she was lost in thought. “You said his eyes were dark?”

“Yes,” I answered. “His eyes are usually bright blue, but in this case, they looked almost black. It was strange.”

“That sounds like the work of dark magic,” my mother said, and I knew without looking at her that her face was scrunched up in confusion.

I frowned.

“How is that possible? The guardian was supposed to protect us from dark magic,” I said, standing to my feet and making my way to the window.

I looked outside and up at the sky where the light barrier still surrounded the campus.

“It’s still intact,” I added, still frowning deeply.

“Regular dark magic can’t get inside, but darkness can find a way in. Even the guardian of the earth said that they can’t always keep darkness out of the barrier and that it can only help keep those inside safe. But darkness is a powerful force and unless it’s defeated, it can always get inside.”

“You think it’s darkness? The one that Hazel was sensing. The one Jazzy conjured?” I asked, my heart beating painfully in my chest.

“I think the only way you can know for sure is by asking the guardian orb.”

“I can just ask the orb? Do you think it’ll talk to me?” I asked curiously, still staring up at the shining orb on top of the shield.

“The guardian said they are attached to your powers. So, yes, I believe if you ask, they will speak to you.”

I took a deep breath, trying to steady my rapid heartbeat.

“Thanks, mom,” I said softly. “I’ll give it a try.”

“Lila, promise me you will be careful,” she said quickly. “I have a feeling something big is approaching and this is only the beginning.”

Her warning left an unsettled feeling in the pit of my stomach.

“I promise,” I said, trying to sound more confident than I felt.

I hung up a moment later and threw my phone on my bed. I guess now was a better time than any. I stepped toward my window and opened it. I allowed the cold air into my warm room as I gazed up at the shining orb of light.

Clearing my throat, I said, “Hello orb of light. Can we talk for a minute? I need your assistance?”

I waited a moment, and when nothing happened, I frowned.

Trying again, I spoke a little louder, but not loud enough to alert my roommates.

“Guardian of light? Guardian of the earth? Guardian of the earth’s child? I really need to speak with you. I think darkness has returned and I need to know for sure if you sense it as well—”

Before I finished that sentence, I saw a sparkling dust surround the orb on top of the barrier and then the orb disappeared. However, the barrier remained. I took a step away from my window, startled.

Had I scared it away? Was the barrier going to stay if the orb was no longer there?

I turned toward my bed to grab my phone but froze when I saw that I was no longer alone in my room.

A small, childlike, girl, stood in front of me. Her eyes were glowing sky blue and her silky white hair was long, trailing down her backside and landing just above her tailbone. She wore a pure white dress like she was the flower girl at a wedding or something. The whiteness of her gown and hair brought out her porcelain white skin. I could also see her white aura as clear as day; she was practically glowing in a white essence.

“You have called, and I have come,” she said, bowing her head slightly at me.

“Y...you’re that orb of light?” I asked, my voice trembling slightly.

“My name is Celeste; I am not an orb, nor am I light,” she corrected. “But I am one-fourth of earth’s magic. I represent the water element.”

“Oh, I get it,” I breathed. “Each of you represents a specific element. So the other three must represent, air, fire, and—”

“Spirit,” she finished for me. “While our mother represents earth. Without us... Earth is just a rock.”

“That’s incredible,” I breathed, staring around her glowing and childlike features. “I didn’t expect you to be so young.”

“We appear in many forms; this is my most favorite,” she said proudly. Before I could respond to that, her blue eyes seemed to have darkened and turned into a dark ocean blue. “You have called for me for a reason and I am here to answer your question,” she said, lowering her voice slightly.

“Yes,” I said, sitting on my bed. “I need to know if I’m going crazy, or if darkness is truly here.”

“I assure you, you are not going crazy,” she said gravely. “I can sense darkness within the barrier. I can sense darkness is close.”

