

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter,

Chapter 191: THE BLEAK MORNING

THE BLEAK MORNING

For whatever reason, Iris knew Cane felt comfortable in her presence, it was either him or the beast inside of him, since no matter what and how it happened, she still bore his mark and she was his mate. The bond had grown between them, and they could find solace in their other half, or else, he wouldn't hug her in his sleep, hold her tight and keep her close.

They had never talked about this thing and treated such acts as two separate worlds. The other world, where they were indeed mates without any complicated things between them.

Therefore, this time, it was Iris, who held him. She was the one who initiated this and hoped he wouldn't push her away. She could feel how stiff his body was when she hugged him and wrapped her arms around his neck.

But, even after a while, Cane didn't push her, he stayed still and gradually lowered his head, as he rested his forehead against her chest. He could clearly hear her heart beating rhythmically.

Cane was tired of being asked so many questions and appreciated this silence from Iris. He expected her to ask so many questions about what had happened when she was unconscious, especially after what he said, yet she didn't utter a single word.

Inside his mind, it was so crowded whenever someone came looking for him for answers. Even when he was unsure with his decision, he couldn't let it show and it was so tiring the moment everyone questioned your decision when at the same time, you have a lot of questions to yourself.

Amee even begged him to reconsider his decision over giving a death sentence to Aria, even though she knew her crime was unforgivable. It was compassion that the old woman had for the mistress, because she had known Aria since she was very young, from the very day she came with Leane to the pack.

However, compassion didn't work for Cane and the path that he was going to tread in the future wouldn't allow him to have any.

It was such a quiet and lonely walk that he had to tread alone. No one could understand the responsibility on his shoulders, nor would they know about it, since they relied on him so heavily to move forward, not allowing him to show any weakness.

For a long time, both Cane and Iris shared this comfort and silence through the night, as both of them laid down on the bed with Cane's arm wrapped around her hips, his eyes closed shut, but Iris was not sure whether he was asleep or not.

They stayed still like that until daybreak, when the execution would be held...

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"Aria still doesn't want to speak and only asks for Cane," Jace said grimly. He went to her cell this morning before her execution, but she kept repeating the same thing that she said to Ethan.

"What about the two women that suggested it?" Will asked. He felt unwell since he learned the Alpha had sacrificed himself to that extent in order to free the pack from the slavery. He had asked a lot of questions and Jace had answered them in detail.

And every detail of it only left Will dumbstruck, including the fact how Iris could help him through the new moon.

"Dalia and Bian were found dead yesterday. We didn't have a chance to ask them anything." Both of them were found dead in their cells, someone put poison in their food, which made them unable to breathe and when Grace arrived, they were no longer able to be saved.

"The King," Will muttered. They remembered the last information that Aderan gave to them before he went to the Celestial Moon pack; the King planted his man in this pack. "Do you think the King was involved in this?"

"Most likely," Jace replied.

That person must be the reason for the monster attack when they were still in the Blue Moon pack and now this. Who else would kill those two women who could lead them to the black magic user in the Riverside pack?

"This is so messed up..."

The King had made a move on the North pack and now he used the forbidden dark magic to bring Cane down. One look and you would know that Aria was an easy target to be manipulated. Her position as Cane's only mistress gave her free access to the Alpha.

"Ethan and Aderan will be with Aria during her execution. I will go find the Alpha," Will reported to Jace and the Beta only nodded.

Today was so gloomy and the announcement of Aria's execution shocked the whole members of the pack. They had complicated feelings when they learned the reason behind it.

Aria was guilty for the death of three innocent children in the orphanage and her attempt to use dark magic on the Alpha in order to break the mate bond between him and the luna.

The people had mixed feelings regarding this.

There was a reason why Cane mentioned the information about the black magic and this became part of his plan before he went to the capital city and met with the King to fight for Ethan's punishment.

It was not Cane's original plan to use Aria's demise, but he had to make use of what was there to counter the King.

Will was walking toward the west watchtower when he saw Hanna walk out of the bedroom, it seemed, she just delivered breakfast for both of them.

Abruptly, Will stopped walking, he held his breath when Hanna raised her head to look at him. She was surprised and felt awkward.

"Good morning," Hanna greeted him, but then she scurried away, as if she wanted to run away from Will.

Their last meeting when Will gave her the necklace didn't end well and she had been avoiding him since then.

"Hanna," Will called her, but she didn't stop walking away. Out of instinct, he rushed toward her and held her hand. "We need to talk," he said. He felt distressed.

Hanna turned around and her eyes were so red.

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HANNA

"Hanna, I am sorry, can we talk?" Will asked, he held her hand and when she turned around, her eyes were so red. She was fighting back her tears and the sight made Will's heart clench so tightly.

No one expected the thing that happened after Will gave the necklace to Hanna to happen, because everything started so perfectly, but he still ruined it in the end.

At that time, Hanna was so happy and she thought the feelings that she had for him were being reciprocated. If it was not, what was the necklace for? He remembered her on his long journey, which was a very sweet thing. Hanna also could feel it with the way Will looked at her differently. She was not so dense as to not see it, especially when she had the same feeling, thus she wanted to make it clear for him.

That night, her feelings overwhelmed her and the silence of the room only made her want to be a little bit bold, thus she thought an innocent peck on the cheek would be able to tell how she felt about him while the gift could relay the message about the thing that she and Will couldn't say out loud, because he was very nervous.

Hanna could feel how his hands were trembling when he clasped the necklace around her neck and that made her heart flutter.

However, things didn't end well, because when Hanna was about to kiss his cheek, Will pushed her so hard, her body flew across the room and hit the table. The collision of her body with the table broke it, which displayed how hard Will had pushed her.

For a second, both of them just stared at each other in silence, as if they were trying to comprehend what actually was happening, but the pain started to

register in Hanna's mind when she saw her arm bleeding profusely and Will only stood there, his face blanched.

Hanna didn't know what to do, she felt embarrassed and was in pain, the only thing in her mind was; to get out of there as soon as possible.

She was wrong, very wrong! How stupid she was to think that he had the same feelings?

"No, it is me who should apologize," Hanna said, as she tried to free herself from his tight grip. Will held her hand firmly, but it was not enough to hurt her. "I am sorry... I was too brazen."

However, Will didn't listen to what she was saying, instead, he folded her sleeve up to look at her arm, the same arm that had bled that night.

Hanna was a shifter and since a few days had passed, there was no way she had not yet healed, but Will wanted to make sure that she was really fine and it didn't leave any scars.

The sight of her with a bleeding arm had haunted him for days, became his new common nightmare. Even when he opened his eyes, the image kept floating in front of him

"What are you doing?" Hanna was flabbergasted when he folded up her sleeves. Her arm was thin and looked pale, but there was no wound there, which made Will feel relieved.

"I am sorry," Will muttered, as he unfolded her sleeve, but he didn't let go of her hand. "I didn't mean to harm you." His voice was so soft and remorseful. He didn't even have the courage to look her in the eyes, but at the same time, he couldn't let her go before he explained himself.

"It's okay," Hanna mumbled, but Will shook his head.

"No, it's not okay..." Will couldn't find the right words without sounding like he was looking for an excuse and he didn't know how to explain such a thing to her.

However, he knew that he would lose her if the misunderstanding was left unraveled.

Yet, he could only offer silence. This was the hardest thing that he had to talk about, as it had been a long time since they talked about their feelings.

As slaves, they had never talked about their feelings, because such a thing was useless, it wouldn't make them feel better, nor would it make their situation any more bearable than this.

They stopped talking about what they felt and explaining themselves. They buried their grievances deep down and never brought them up, talking about that would only make them recall all the bad memories and why would they want to suffer twice? Thus, Will didn't know where to start.

"It's okay... I understand..." Hanna wriggled her hand in his grip because Will didn't talk for a long time and she felt dejected.

"No, you don't understand." Once again Will shook his head, the words were on the tip of his tongue, but it was so hard to spit them out and the more he became frustrated with himself, the harder it was for him to be coherent.

People saw him as a cold headed person, but it was only an appearance that he tried to keep up, exactly how Ethan perceived himself as a goofy person or the Alpha, because their real faces were so ugly.

"You don't need to explain it if you don't want to," Hanna said softly, this time, she was genuinely worried when she saw how complicated his expression was, as if there were a myriad of thoughts in his mind.

Yet, Will shook his head again. "I am sorry." That was the only thing that he could utter and Hanna was very concerned, she no longer wanted an explanation. Whatever it was, it looked so hard for Will to say it.

"It's okay," Hanna said in a coaxing tone, she wanted to give him a hug, because he looked like he was going to cry, just like the first time she found him after being defiled by the savages and on the brink of death, but she held herself back, because the last time she initiated physical contact, it didn't end well. "It's okay..." She could only repeat the same thing.

"No, it's not okay... I hurt you." The sight of her in pain ripped his heart apart.

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WILL

The tension was so real for Will when he clasped the necklace around Hanna's neck. He didn't know whether it was enough to show his feelings for her, or if the message was delivered well. He mulled over a lot of possibilities and what he had to do to make it work.

However, that was also when he saw her coming closer, his mind froze and his first thought was; he was being attacked, thus his instinct told him to defend himself. Everything happened so fast. Even Will couldn't process the fact that Hanna was harmless. She was not an enemy and it was absolutely ridiculous and impossible for her to harm him.

Yet, his twisted mind read the whole thing differently because Hanna moved closer to him so abruptly.

The sight of her crowding him overlapped with another unpleasant memory and the next thing he knew; he had pushed her so hard, as if he was fighting for his life.

And when the murky clouds in his mind finally cleared up and he could see clearly, he knew what horrible thing that he had done, but his body couldn't move. He was shut down from reality and could only watch Hanna bleeding profusely before she fled the room without him getting to explain himself or trying to run after her.

It took him a long time before he could function properly again. He felt very horrible when he had to clean the broken table with Hanna's blood on the floor. He felt like crying, but there were no tears that he could shed.

People like him had stopped crying a long time ago.

"It's okay..." Hanna said gently.

"No, it's not okay... I hurt you." It would never be okay for him to hurt her. How could she still talk to him so softly? "It will never be okay. I am sorry..."

"You don't need to be sorry, it was me who misunderstood your intentions..." Hanna was embarrassed. She lowered her head. She really wanted to run away now, but Will still held her hand firmly and refused to let go.

Hearing that, Will felt uneasy. She misunderstood the whole situation. The sound of her voice as if she was being rejected pained him physically.

"Can I... can I hug you?" Will asked, he didn't dare to look Hanna in the eyes, as he waited for her answer. This came out of the blue, but he was so desperate to tell her how he felt, that he did not reject her feelings.

She was the reason why he was still alive today.

"Hm?" Hanna was caught off guard when she heard the question.

"Is it okay for me to hug you?" Will asked again, this time, he raised his head to look her in the eyes. He saw how confused she looked, but she eventually nodded her head.

With her permission, Will moved closer to her, he moved so slowly, as if giving her a chance to push him away, but Hanna wouldn't do that. She let him take his time and when, finally, she was in his embrace, she breathed a sigh of relief. She didn't even realize she had been holding her breath.

Hanna wrapped her arms around his body, at which he stiffened for a second, but then he relaxed again.

At this point, more or less, Hanna could understand what went wrong. She knew when it had gone wrong. Most people, who had gone through the same things like Will, would be very sensitive with physical contact. They would be constantly on guard and think they were in danger all the time. They were always in a fighting mode, especially a warrior like Will.

"I will ask your permission next time," Hanna said softly against his chest.

"Thank you," Will replied earnestly.

There was no need for an explanation when it turned into a tacit understanding between them, but one day, when Will had organized his thoughts and learned how to communicate better, he would let her know why he did what he had done.

"Can we skip this? I really need to talk with the Alpha," Redmond said with an irritated sigh. He had been waiting for them to wrap this up, but they kept hugging each other for so long, he felt like he was going to kick both of them for being lovey dovey in front of him.

The two of them were too immersed in their own world, until they didn't notice his existence. It seemed, their senses were not functioning at this moment.

Hearing Redmond's voice, both of them immediately broke apart. Hanna shrieked and hid behind Will's back, she felt so embarrassed, while Will turned around and glared at the warrior.

"What are you doing here?!" Will snapped, but it was more like he was awry to be caught red handed.

"I am going to meet Cane, people said he is here." Redmond nodded at the door next to him. He was around ten steps away from the couple.

"Since when were you here?"

"Since both of you kept apologizing to each other," Redmond replied casually, which meant, he had been listening to them from the beginning.

"I- I have to do something... I need to go. I will see you later." Hanna stuttered, as she scurried away from there. She was very embarrassed.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt, but I have very important things to discuss with your alpha." Redmond raised his shoulders nonchalantly, not looking like he was sorry at all. "Can you tell him that I want to have a talk with him?"

Will shot him a dagger look, but he knew what Redmond wanted to talk with the Alpha about was important. Because he had been bedridden before, Jace had not yet had any chance to explain about the lycan to him. He must have come here to discuss that.

"You can talk with Jace first," Will said, still unhappy because he had been interrupted earlier.

"I sneaked out of my room because I don't want to talk to him, I want to talk directly to Cane."

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 194: YOU WILL GO DOWN WITH HIM

Iris woke up when she felt someone enter the room and found it was Hanna. She brought her and Cane their breakfast and because she saw the two of

them were still sleeping, she didn't linger for long and left right away after she put the tray on the table beside the bed.

Hanna also checked the fireplace and added more firewood to it to keep the room warm, because it started to get cold nowadays.

But, because she didn't check on Iris again, she didn't know that she had woken up. She just stared at her the whole time, yet, she didn't make any sound because she didn't want to wake Cane up.

Currently, the Alpha was still in the same position, he was still hugging her hips with his face buried in the crook of her shoulder, he breathed evenly.

Usually, Cane would wake up at even a little bit of noise and he would be highly alerted if someone came close to him, since his slavery days taught him so hard that he couldn't have a good rest.

But right now, he let go of all the pain and worries. He put down his guard because it was so tiring and he didn't want to think of anything. He wanted to be oblivious to the whole world.

The decision to execute Aria was hard on him, he had warned her several times, because he didn't want to be forced into giving out that final verdict.

Not because Cane couldn't do it, the fact that he was more than able to issue this order made him try his hardest to put a distance from her, because their mutual consent and the agreement between them had turned into an obsession on her part.

It wouldn't do good to either of them.

On the other hand, Iris didn't know all of those thoughts, but she could understand why Cane looked distraught after he issued the order, because for whatever reason, Aria was one of the closest people that Cane had.

Though Cane didn't see her romantically, he must see her as a companion, just like how he saw his beta and gamma.

And to sever that tie and punish her severely, was not an easy decision.

Iris raised her hand and caressed Cane's head. Right now, the Alpha was oblivious to the whole world, of all people, he was the one who needed to rest the most and she wanted him to have it his way.

However, Iris had a lot of questions, which she couldn't ask him, thus the best way to figure out what had happened was to ask the Gamma or the Beta.

Did everyone know about Cane's lycan form? What was their reaction? How did they know it was Aria? How was Redmond now? The last time she saw him was when he fought the lycan and dropped to the ground, unable to move.

Slowly, Iris got off the bed and walked toward the door, but as soon as she opened it, she saw Redmond and Will standing right behind it.

They were startled to see Iris open the door. Apparently, they had been knocking for a minute before Iris appeared.

"Can you hear now?" Redmond blurted out.

"I just happened to come out," Iris replied, because the warrior thought she suddenly managed to cure her deafness. "Are you okay?" Her voice sounded worried now, as she scrutinized Redmond's body.

Shamelessly, Redmond raised his shirt to show his stomach before pointing at the spot that was attacked by the lycan. "It is not easy to kill me!" He declared, but he got a hit on his back by Will, as he forced him to put down his clothes.

Meanwhile, Iris was taken aback, as she took a step back because of the sudden display of Redmond's shamelessness.

"Have some decency," Will chided and Redmond simply glared at him.

"I want to talk with Cane," Redmond demanded, he cut straight to the point, brushing off Will's displeasure.

"He is sleeping."

"Wake him up."

Iris frowned when she read that. "No," she said shortly, unhappy. She wanted him to sleep a little bit longer.

"Why not? He has been sleeping for a whole night, it is time to wake up. He just ordered the death sentence of his mistress, how can he still sleep peacefully?" This time, it was Redmond who was frowning.

This warrior had proven it time and again that he was very poor at finding the right words to say, his choice of words was so brazen.

Iris didn't like it, so didn't Will, thus she stepped out of the room and closed the door behind her, as she faced the warrior glumly.

"What do you want?" Her little face was slightly hardened when she raised her head to look Redmond right in his eyes. It took a lot of effort for her to do that, since their height difference was not something to be overlooked.

However, her little boldness surprised the two warriors.

This was the first time for Redmond to see her standing up for something, but he was quite pleased by this, thus he intentionally straightened his back and folded his arms to intimidate her, as he spoke, "Tell me about the lycan. You know about it, right?" He was very blunt with his question. "Cane is a lycan, he is the cursed shifter. He used dark magic to take down the Blue Moon pack."

Iris knew what he would ask, but his candor still caught her off guard. She shifted her gaze to Will, because she was not sure how much they had learned about it. Did Jace and Ethan tell them about it? What did they say to them?

She didn't want to give out any information that the Beta and the Gamma didn't tell them.

"Did Jace say something to you?" Iris asked Redmond, but then directed her eyes at Will as well. "Have you met him?"

"Why should I meet with him when I can talk directly to Cane?" Redmond looked at Iris smugly. He didn't go easy on her.

Ignoring Redmond, Iris shifted her attention to Will. "Have you talked to Jace or Ethan about this?"

"Yes, I have," Will replied honestly. "Jace explained to me and Grace about what happened, aside from the three of us, there is no one who is aware of it."

"Why don't you call Jace here, so he could explain this matter to him?" Iris didn't want to explain this sensitive issue, thus it would be safe to let the Beta do the explanation.

"I will call him." Will immediately left to call for Jace, because he knew Redmond would be difficult to handle and if worse came to worst, they needed to execute another person today.

Yet, hearing that, Redmond was having none of it. "I want to talk to Cane now."

"Are you giving me an order?" Iris narrowed her eyes at him. She prayed that Will would return quickly with Jace, though facing Redmond was as not scary as the lycan, she didn't like this confrontation and this man was trying to intimidate her thoroughly.

If this was in the past, she would shrink back and lower her head timidly, but right now, she wouldn't allow anyone to disturb Cane. She would wake him up before the execution, if he was still sleeping, but absolutely not now.

"There is no way I can give you an order, you are my luna." Redmond looked docile, but the meaning of his words didn't erase the smugness in his face.

"I am glad you still remember that," Iris said, standing straight in front of the door, as if she was guarding it.

"Say." Redmond couldn't help but ask this very question. "Don't you think this is the right time for us to strike the Howling Wolf pack?" He lowered his voice, though it was only the two of them in this west tower. "The current number of the Blue Moon warriors is more than enough to overwhelm the Howling Wolf's and if this news reaches the King, he will be more than happy to lend a helping hand to destroy this pack."

Redmond was still harboring this intention and he would keep whispering this idea into her ear at any chance he got.

"The Howling Wolf pack only sucks our pack dry! Cane is using you to get the Blue Moon pack and the mines! You don't like this mate bond, he doesn't even like you, as you are a reminder of his slavery days and Alpha Gerald, sooner or later, when you are no longer useful to him, you will be discarded."

Redmond looked Iris right in her eyes when he spoke again, he could see how she was trying to process this.

"He is a lycan, he used dark magic. How long do you think he can keep it a secret? If you are still with him, once he starts going down, you will go down with him as well and when it happens, not only the Howling Wolf pack will be destroyed, but the Blue Moon pack will be as well. Think about that."

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WHO HAS NOT?

"Do you know how serious the crime of using dark magic is? And he is a lycan. A taboo for shifters. How long do you think he can keep it a secret? Can you guarantee something like that night will never happen again?" Redmond cornered her, but Iris was unwilling to budge. "If you are with him, once the king knows about this, not only him and his pack will go down, but you and the Blue Moon pack as well!"

Redmond couldn't care less about the Howling Wolf pack, that pack could be destroyed or even erased from this continent for all he cared, because his main focus was his own pack. He pledged his loyalty to Iris because she was a member of the Blue Moon pack. His loyalty was still with his pack.

On the other hand, Iris said nothing, she didn't retort his words, because she knew it was true. No matter how harshly Redmond phrased it, those were the facts. Once the truth of Cane's lycan form came to light, the whole pack and anyone involved would be doomed. Yet, she believed this was not the situation that you could see in black and white only.

"You fell for him?" Redmond narrowed his eyes intensely at her. "Did you really fall for him or is it because of the mate bond between the two of you?" He snickered when Iris still said nothing. "He doesn't know how to love, nor does he know how to receive love. He issued a death sentence for his mistress, the very woman, who stayed by his side through thick and thin without hesitation. What makes you think that he will not do the same to you in the future?"

At this point, Iris was still clueless about the crime that Aria had committed, thus she didn't know how to reply to such a question. She had her own guess

that the mistress had something to do with the dark magic, which caused Cane to shift into his lycan form, but she was still unclear about the details of it.

"He will hurt you." Redmond shook his head and scoffed. "He has already hurt you, right?"

With that question, Iris' eyes hardened, her clear blue eyes were slightly darker when she countered him with a question of her own. "Who has not?" In her twenty years of life, who had not yet hurt her? "Aside from Hanna, who has not hurt me?"

Redmond was slightly taken aback with that question, because he didn't expect such a comeback from her.

"Cane is using me, but do you really think your concern for me is genuine?" Iris balled her fists beside her body. "You caught me stealing food for the slaves and you reported it to Mason when you could have kept it to yourself. You told Mason about it, even though you know that he would whip me." Iris raised her head to look him dead in the eyes. "Do you really think separating the Howling Wolf pack and the Blue Moon pack with the help of the King will be the best choice?"

"At least the King will not dry out our pack!" Redmond hated the fact that the Howling Wolf pack leeches on the resources of the Blue Moon pack. "Cane and his people are moochers! They leech on our pack!"

"No, the King will not leech on our pack, but he will gobble up the two packs in whole. You are not that naïve to not see it, right?" Iris had not yet seen much, but at the very least, she understood this.

For a moment, the two of them stared at each other intensely, as if none of them would step back, but actually, Redmond relaxed his shoulders and a smirk appeared on the corner of his lips.

"Interesting..." He murmured, which made Iris narrow her eyes.

However, before Iris could ask further about what he meant by that, Will had returned with Jace. The Beta looked at the two of them and he could sense there was tension in the air.

"Are you feeling better now?" Jace asked Iris, his gaze stopped short on her shoulder. A patch of white bandage peeked out from her collar.

"Yes, I am fine now."

"Can I talk with Cane?"

Iris shook her head. "He is sleeping, let him sleep a little bit longer. I will wake him up before noon." Noon was the time of Aria's execution.

Jace nodded and then shifted his attention toward Redmond. "Come with me, I will answer all of your questions."

"No. I want Cane himself to answer my questions." Redmond was being difficult now.

However, instead of listening to him, Iris threw the warrior a dagger look and turned around. She opened the door and literally slammed it close right in front of Redmond, which made the three of them flinch.

Jace was there to explain things to Redmond, thus it would be fine to leave him to the Beta.

Once she was inside, Iris leaned her back against the door and slumped to the ground. She pulled her legs to her chest, as she rested her chin on her knees. She hugged herself. Earlier was the first time she had a confrontation with someone.

She could have pretended to be strong and bold in front of Redmond, but the moment no one saw her, she could feel the rush of adrenaline coursing through her veins disappear.

"I must be crazy..." She actually talked back to Redmond...

Iris closed her eyes and took a deep breath, the silence brought comfort to her, but then she felt someone touch her head, ruffling her hair.

And the first thing that she saw when she opened her eyes abruptly was; Cane. He was kneeling down in front of her with his hand on her head. He looked at her with his cold and dark eyes.

Iris was not sure how she should react, but then the Alpha retracted his hand and stood up.

"Get up, I need to go out."

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CAN'T YOU HANDLE ONE?

Cane woke up the moment Iris got off the bed and he watched how she put her cloak and clumsily neatened her messy curls, but in the end, she gave up and walked toward the door.

However, Redmond and Will had been knocking and calling for him since a few minutes ago.

He didn't want to meet with them and face their countless questions, especially when he had to deal with Redmond regarding the issue of the lycan. The warrior, absolutely, would give him a hard time.

Therefore, he didn't say anything, more so, he wanted to know what Iris was going to say to him and how she would handle the situation.

He didn't have high hopes for her, but what he heard was beyond his expectation. The woman actually stood up for him.

This room was not like the Alpha or the Luna's room, which was sound proof, thus he could hear their conversation clearly from behind the closed door.

He heard everything; how Redmond tried to persuade Iris to give up on him and report this to the King. If Cane was someone else, he would have agreed with what Redmond said, because that was true.

How long could he keep this secret? And what would happen if the secret ever came to light?

Iris got the perfect opportunity to save herself and turn her back against the man that had forced himself on her.

Yet, she was very naïve to turn it down and even get angry on his behalf.

Cane closed his eyes, listening to how Redmond tried to edge Iris over and how she defended him in the only way she knew.

He only got off the bed when he heard the door slammed close, Iris must not have realized the strength that she used.

And when Cane walked toward the door, he found her slumped down on the floor, hugging herself. Her curly, auburn hair looked messy, which made her look like she was wearing a big red cloak from this position.

Somehow, Cane couldn't resist the urge to touch her, to run his fingers through her curls, he wanted to be close to her.

What an irony...

He became infatuated with the only woman that he shouldn't. When did all of this start? Was it when he marked her in his lycan form? So, as long as the curse was on him, he would always feel this way toward her? What about the lycan and Iris?

There were so many unanswered questions.

Iris raised her head abruptly when she felt someone touched her, she was startled to see Cane and this made him retract his hand and stood up.

"Get up, I need to go out."

Iris was sitting right behind the door, thus Cane couldn't go if she didn't move away.

"Oh." Iris immediately stood up and stepped aside to let him walk out of the room, but before Cane left her, he turned around and put his finger under her chin to lift her head, so she could look at him.

"Redmond knows about the curse, do you think it is worth it to let him alive?"

Cane's intention was very clear. He was going to see Redmond and kill him, since he was not reliable with the secret, especially after what he suggested to Iris.

Keeping him would backfire at him someday if they couldn't control this warrior, but killing him had its own disadvantages as well. He led around a thousand former warriors of the Blue Moon pack, after all. They could revolt without Redmond controlling them and from what Cane learned, his second in

command, Lyle, was even worse than Redmond in terms of harboring hostility toward the Howling Wolf pack.

Therefore, he needed to tread this matter carefully.

"Can we... not kill him?" Iris asked carefully, because she was afraid that Cane would misunderstand her. "He has placed his loyalty in me, he will not betray me."

"Yes, but it is not about you." Cane wanted to see what Iris was going to do. This was why he waited until she regained consciousness to involve her in this matter.

The only solution in this sensitive matter was for Iris to step forward and assert herself as the Luna, as the person that Redmond had pledged his loyalty to. She needed to press him, but knowing her soft and gentle nature, it was not an easy task for her. It was actually something almost impossible.

Yet, seeing how Iris had stood up for him earlier made Cane realize she was not as timid as he thought she was.

"What do you want me to do?" Iris blinked her eyes, she was trying to read the situation and what he wanted from her, but she was not good at it.

"What do you think you should do?" Cane asked her back. He wanted Iris to really realize the gravity of this situation and make her own decision.

Iris furrowed her brows, a complicated look flashed in her blue eyes. "Cane, I can't do this. You can make the decision and I will agree with you."

Iris had been living quietly and was used to people not noticing her because her father didn't like it when she interacted with someone else, which made her become so passive.

Yet, only recently she figured out that she could be a chatterbox when she talked with someone that made her comfortable, or she was actually brave enough to stab the lycan because the situation required her to do so.

There were a lot of things that she figured out about herself, but still, it was still a long way to go before she could come out of her shell. Her brother always told her how useless she was and that was what she believed.

Right now, she was afraid to make such a big decision.

"Sure, I can do that." Cane nodded, which made Iris sigh in relief, but it didn't last, because what he said next left her completely stunned. "Until when will you rely on me? I have seven thousand people relying on me, can't you handle one?"

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 197: MY LOYALTY LAY IN HIM

Because of the battle and slavery, many people died and the members in two packs dwindled significantly.

Even though the number of warriors in the Howling Wolf pack was greater than the Blue Moon pack, it was because they trained at an early age, around twelve to thirteen.

In other packs, the age they would start training would be between fifteen to seventeen.

It was important for them to have enough manpower when your territory was within the scope of Goffa mountain. Though the monster attacks were not as crazy as in the North, they were still monsters in the end.

"Cane, I don't know what I have to say." Iris tugged at his sleeve, to make him stop walking.

Cane followed the scent of his beta and Will to know where they were taking Redmond to have a talk with him, which was not difficult for him to do because he was familiar with their scents.

"If this is too much for you, you can simply execute him."

Iris lowered her head. She didn't want to be the cause of someone else's death. The knowledge of it made her stomach churn. However, this was the world that she lived in. This was the world that she was not aware of, because her father didn't allow her to explore anything beyond what he approved of.

And in the future, it was impossible to keep her hands clean when she wanted to protect something that was dear to her. There would be more bloodshed than she could imagine. She would lose someone in order to protect the other.

However, it would be a story for another time...

Cane didn't wait, nor did he ask whether she was ready or not when he opened the door, behind which were Jace, Redmond and Will.

All of them turned their heads toward Cane upon hearing the creaking sound of the door.

"Cane," Jace greeted him, his face full of concern. It seemed he was in the middle of a bad argumentation with Redmond, since the warrior was very obstinate as he relentlessly threatened him with this secret.

The Beta was on the verge of ending this whole ordeal by killing him right there and then.

Cane nodded at Jace and Will, as he entered the room and took a seat at the table, his eyes fixed on Redmond, this time he didn't ignore him like he used to do.

"I heard you want to talk with me," Cane said, he didn't raise his voice, but it was laced with authority.

Meanwhile, Iris was standing next to him, she looked at Redmond and the other two. She knew that he had given the Beta and Will a hard time. The tension was rather thick inside this room.

"Finally, the lycan is here," Redmond sneered, which made Jace and Will let out a low, dangerous growl, warning him to watch what he said. "What? Did I say something wrong? You just admitted that he is indeed the lycan."

"Yes, you are right, I am." Cane didn't even bat an eye when he admitted to it, as he fixed his eyes on Redmond, which made the warrior glare at him, because once again, he failed to provoke the Alpha.

"Great! Now, we can talk about..."

"You can talk with her." Cane nodded at Iris beside him.

Along the way to this room, Cane had told Iris about the pros and cons of killing Redmond, about how the Blue Moon pack's warriors would lose their leader and their second in command was even worse than Redmond.

Therefore, it was up to her how she would handle this situation, since Redmond would only listen to her, technically, as she was the one he had pledged to.

Iris fiddled with her fingers, but when she felt all of their eyes on her, she gritted her teeth and lifted her head. She looked Redmond dead in the eyes. Thankfully, her voice was not shaking and she was not trembling when she delivered her first direct order to him.

"I want you to not say anything about this. Not even a single soul should know about the matter of the lycan." Iris heard about the Alpha and Luna's voice, where their words filled with authority, and a direct order would be very difficult to refuse, even if they didn't want to follow one.

This was the first time Iris felt this sensation. Unlike the Alpha's voice that sounded powerful, the Luna's voice sounded more gentle, but not less demanding for you to oblige.

You would be able to use it once the process of marking and mating had been done and it would come to you naturally.

Not to mention with the fact that Redmond gave his promise to Iris, to keep her safe and follow every word that she uttered without question, thus this order only sealed the deal.

"Ck, ck, ck..." Redmond clicked his tongue, annoyed. "I don't believe that you can pull such an order on me."

Iris then took something from her pocket and walked over toward Redmond. Jace and Will looked at her curiously and the thing in her hand.

Only when she was close enough that they could see it. It was a dagger, a silver dagger that Iris took from Redmond that night when she stabbed the lycan to pull the shard of the curse magic stone out.

Iris handed the dagger to Redmond.

"That, or you can end your life." Iris' voice was so callous when she said that. "Just like you said, if the secret is known, all of us will be doomed, I don't want to take that risk."

"Or we can do it my way and we will survive. I don't give a shit about the Howling Wolf pack."

Iris made Redmond take back his dagger and then she walked back toward Cane. "He is my mate, my loyalty lies in him. If you harm him... you harm me."

"Have you forgotten that he raped you? It's that easy for you to forget?"

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 198: BEING TOO KIND IS A SIN

Redmond scoffed when he heard Iris' naïve words. He had never thought that he would actually hear such cheesy words.

What Iris said sounded too 'gentle' for this harsh reality, she seemed to not understand the concept of how this world worked, such a naïve and sweet woman...

"Have you forgotten that he raped you? It's that easy for you to forget?" Redmond enunciated every word clearly, so Iris wouldn't miss a single word. He stared at her and watched how her expression changed when he reminded her again about it.

Will and Jace were seething when they heard what Redmond said, as they turned their attention toward Iris, whose face was blanched.

Jace couldn't help but revive the memory when he caught Iris and Cane in the library. He could see how much pain she was in, but the only thing that he could do was to leave the scene, so his presence wouldn't humiliate her further.

On another note, no one would be able to completely forget about such a dreadful experience. Of course, Iris remembered down to every detail of it now Redmond forced her to recall the memories that she tried so hard to bury deep in the back of her mind.

Iris took a step back. She was visibly trembling.

Even though it was not Redmond's intention to cause her pain, he wanted her to think about it again. He didn't want her to gloss over what Cane had done to her, although he treated her a little bit nice now.

Would it offset all those horrendous things that he had done to her? How weak her heart was to easily forget about it and pretend like it had never happened?

But, to think about it again, the Alpha only treated her nicely because he had a hidden agenda.

Cane was a lycan, he used dark magic, and for whatever reason, Jace said the cursed shifter was safe for Iris? What a ridiculous thing to say...! Yet, they seemed wanting to use Iris more, while this girl was too naïve and kind for her own good, as she let everything slide just like that.

A simple apology and treating her a little bit nicely were enough to make it up to her? They didn't even punish those imbeciles who tried to stone her to death! How shameless were they to think they could use Iris again?

However, the part that drove Redmond crazy was the fact that Iris was not even aware of a single thing of it! Sometimes, when you were too kind and naïve, you would appear so stupid!

On the other hand, Iris was trying so hard to regain her composure and school her expression, but Redmond always knew how to attack with his words. His choice of words would always be 'delicate', which could stir anyone around him, whoever heard it.

"I will take Luna Iris out," Will said. He took the initiative to get Iris out of this place, away from Redmond's vicious mouth. He was afraid Iris wouldn't be able to take it.

No one wanted to be reminded about such things. Inside this room, it was safe to say that it was only Redmond who had never gone through what they had experienced, thus he had close to zero empathy when he posted such a question to Iris.

Will walked closer to Iris and was about to take her hand, so he could get her out, but she took a step back and avoided him.

Seeing this, Will could understand what kind of turmoil she was in right now and he didn't move closer again, he stopped at a safe distance from her.

However, the problem was; she was staring at the floor, thus no matter what he said, she wouldn't know.

This time, it was Cane who approached her, but before he could go closer, Iris had raised her head and then looked at him briefly before she shifted her deep, blue eyes back to Redmond.

"Your question was irrelevant." Iris gritted her teeth, it was clear to see that she was trying her hardest to rein in her own emotions. "Will you or will you not take the secret to your grave? Or, I can command you to use the dagger in your hand and end your life."

This time, it was Redmond that looked restless because Iris had commanded him to take his own life. Of course, he could refuse the temptation to follow her order, but the feeling was not right. It almost felt like he was doing something wrong, but it would be very wrong of him to follow her command.

The longer he refused to speak, the worse his anxiety became, as the dagger in his hand felt so tempting.

This also surprised Redmond because he didn't know that the power that was held by the Vessel Bond over their blood could be this strong. When he pledged his loyalty to Gerald, he didn't feel such a strong urge to follow his command. It was insane!

How could she pull it off?!

"Fine!" Redmond barked. He didn't look happy at all. "I will keep it a secret, I will not tell a single soul about the cursed shifter!"

And when he finally promised to seal his mouth about this important secret, the urge to end his own life stopped as well.

"Now, can I leave? My people are still out there, inside the Goffa mountain, being a snack for the monsters there because you gave them a wrong lead and told them to keep looking for the lycan!" Redmond gave Cane a side eye disdainfully.

"Follow me," Jace said begrudgingly. He needed to take Redmond away from this place, before Cane lost his patience for him and things became even more complicated than they were already.

Will also followed the two of them, leaving Cane and Iris alone inside this room.

Iris thought Cane would leave as well, but he didn't budge and she could feel his intense gaze on her.

Slowly, she turned her head and clashed with his bottomless dark eyes, they were unreadable and the Alpha said nothing...

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 199: LIFE CAN BE VERY CRUEL

The silence between them was deafening and it almost felt like they had reverted back to the very beginning, to the time when Cane saw her as Gerald's daughter and himself as her master.

And just like what was expected of him, there was no explanation. He didn't reopen the conversation about what Redmond had said earlier, he just kept silent. He let the other person think whatever she wanted, without him giving any idea over what was in his mind.

What Redmond said had opened a can of worms and this made all the progress, even the mate bond between them, pale in comparison to the pain that they tried to forget.

What traversed before was a bunch of unspoken things, it fell into the same list of the things that they pretended had never happened, just like how Cane found comfort every night by holding Iris close to him or how they talked about pain and scars the other night.

They were forced to move forward by licking their own wounds while pushing the shameful past to the backs of their minds, but right now, the same past dragged them down and made the present become more difficult. The life they had could be very cruel.

"Redmond will not say anything about the secret," Iris finally said after a long moment of silence and she was sure, if she didn't say anything, they would stay like this for another hour, since Cane was very familiar with this silence.

"Mm," Cane intoned. "Thank you."

"I will go back to my room," Iris said again.

Right now, they were occupying the west watchtower, which required them to share the same small room and bed. Iris didn't think she could go back there

after Redmond burst the world that she created in her head, where she had never gone through such dreadful things before.

Iris was used to creating her own world inside her head, where she would deliberately forget things that bother and hurt her, that was how she survived all of her traumas.

"Mm."

Knowing Cane wouldn't say anything, Iris turned around and left the room.

This was the first time for her to be in the west watchtower, but thankfully, it was easy enough for Iris to find her way back to the pack house and return to her own bedroom.

This room was still dull like the first time she occupied it. Nothing had changed even after she returned from the Moon Dew pack. They just added rugs to cover the cold tiles, but aside from that this place was a far cry when you imagined a Luna's bedroom.

Yet, Iris couldn't care less about that, she wanted to lay down and close her eyes.

However, she couldn't do that, because before she closed the door, someone held it, which startled her, since she didn't see anyone coming, being too preoccupied with her own thoughts.

"Luna Iris."

"Kaz?" Iris was surprised to see the old steward. She rarely saw him before, but why was he looking for her now?

"Luna Iris, you need to help talk to the Alpha..." his expression looked very gloomy, he was clearly running out of options and only came to her as his last hope.

"What is it? I don't think I can help with anything if it is regarding the Alpha..." Recalling what had happened less than an hour earlier, Iris didn't think that she and Cane were on speaking terms right now.

"No, please try first, Luna Iris." Iris felt uncomfortable when he kept addressing her as the Luna, yet Kaz didn't pay attention to such details as he

pleaded with her again. "Please ask the Alpha to reconsider his punishment for Aria."

It was only three hours before Aria's execution and people became very restless to know the person that was close to them would be executed. This would be the first execution ever in this Howling Wolf pack under Cane's reign, after they were set free from the slavery.

Aria's figure was so close to them, because they spent a decade together under the same tyranny and shared the same pain.

Therefore, they glossed over her offense, especially when the three innocent children that had died because of the dark magic were children from the Blue Moon pack. They lost their parents during the attack, a few weeks before they moved back to their own land.

"The Alpha is fine now, this must be because of a moment of poor judgment on her part, there is no way she meant any harm to the Alpha. We all know how much she loves the Alpha," Kaz pleaded with Iris. "I know that you don't like her, but this punishment is too severe."

The way Kaz phrased his words, made it sound as if Iris held such power to make Cane change his decision. If anything, she must be the last person that could have such an impact on him.

However, for Kaz and a few people, there was a time when they saw Aria as their luna, because she was the only woman beside Cane before Iris came into the picture. Not even once did they imagine having Gerald's daughter as their luna instead.

"Please, Luna Iris, people said that you are different from your father," Kaz spoke again, using the same types of phrases to corner her. "Please talk to Alpha Cane, you are his Luna after all."

"It is the alpha's decision, if you want him to change it, you should look for him, not me." Iris felt like she was in a hard place. She didn't wish for Aria to be executed, but what could she say to make Cane change his mind? She didn't even know how to start a conversation with him at this moment.

"If I can, do you think I will come looking for you?" Kaz's words were a little bit harsh now and he realized it too late, he couldn't take back what he said.

After all, half the members of the Howling Wolf pack had moved back here when the truth of Iris' help during their slavery came to light and even fewer people were there to listen directly to what Hanna had said when they were still in the Blue Moon pack.

Thus, it was inevitable that some people were a little bit skeptical.

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 200: HIS TWISTED WAY

HIS TWISTED WAY

"If I can, do you think I will come looking for you?" Kaz immediately realized how harsh the words that he said were, but he couldn't take them back.

The truth about how Iris had helped them during their slavery days with the help of Hanna and some servants spread to the rest of the pack members in the Howling Wolf pack too after they arrived here.

Yet, some of them were still skeptical about Iris and only a few of them tried to have an amicable relationship with her if they really had to, just like Kaz.

The steward was not hostile toward Iris, but he wouldn't go out of his way to make her feel welcomed or comfortable in this pack either.

"I will look for Alpha Cane," Kaz murmured, as he backed away, knowing his chance to make Iris talk to the Alpha was close to zero.

And without waiting for Iris' response, Kaz walked away. He gave her a side look before he turned around, which made Iris feel a little bit uncomfortable and guilty.

After Kaz had left, Iris stayed there, staring into the distance, as her mind jumbled up with a lot of thoughts.

She thought she had made progress, but it seemed, the people in this pack would only see her with judgment in their eyes always.

Iris didn't think she would ever be a part of them...

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"Cane, have you reconsidered this decision?" Jace asked Cane after he found him in the east watchtower, the place where you could oversee the execution area. In the middle of the podium, you could see the gallows.

In less than an hour, Aria would be hung there and lose her life. This would be the first execution under Cane's order and who would have thought that the death sentence would befall upon the mistress?

"People are begging you to revoke the punishment because this is very cruel." Jace glanced through the window, where half of the pack members prostrated themselves in front of the podium, pleading for another punishment for Aria.

Meanwhile, Cane was leaning against the window frame, staring at the same scene. Yet, it was hard to tell what was in his mind right now. His dark eyes were bottomless.

"Do you also think it is cruel?" Cane asked Jace instead, but his eyes were still focused on those people.

"We can banish her from the pack," Jace suggested, he had suggested this idea as soon as he learnt about the punishment Cane gave to Aria.

"Where will she go?"

"We can send her to the neighboring pack or..."

"What about the information that she held?" Cane shifted his attention to his beta when he asked this question. "You guys often discussed confidential things in her presence. What about the secret information that she knew? Will she be able to keep it a secret?"

Jace was taken aback at that question, because it didn't cross his mind at all. Because of Aria's constant presence around Cane, they didn't see her as someone that they needed to take precaution against. As a result, they never hesitated to discuss confidential things in her presence, even though Cane was not there.

He really saw her as one of them and not even in their wildest dreams did they think something like this would happen.

"She..." Jace lowered his head.

"Will she?"

Jace didn't have the confidence to say that Aria would keep the secret. What if someone tempted her with Cane again? No matter how ridiculous it was, Aria saw a different goal from them. If she couldn't see the danger of using dark magic and what the King could do if he pinned the blame on this pack, then there was nothing that could make her see how her obsession could cost thousands of people's lives.

It was Aria's bad judgment and even Cane believed she didn't mean to kill those children or harm him. Yet, she would be a ticking bomb in the future for them. Someone could easily use her, especially with her unique status and how easy it was for her to come closer to the Alpha.

Thus, banishment was out of option.

"We can try house arrest..." Jace's voice was not as firm.

"Intentionally or not, killing three children, using dark magic and harming the alpha, will only be punished with house arrest?" Cane questioned his beta, he tilted his head, waiting for his response, but Jace knew how ridiculous the punishment he suggested was for the heavy crime that Aria had committed.

At this point, Jace stopped trying to persuade him and kept his mouth shut altogether. It was a tragic ending for Aria, but she really dug her own grave so deep, ignoring all the warnings that Cane gave to her.

Jace looked at the streets, as many people started to come out of their houses. Everyone stopped what they were doing to join the others, pleading for the Alpha to revoke the punishment.

It was a hard decision, it was not easy even for Cane to come to this conclusion. He had enough of Aria, because she could be a danger for them in the future, but when Jace looked at his face, his expression was devoid of all emotions, as if he had tuned out his feelings and right now there was nothing that could touch his numbness.

The Beta was standing two steps away from the Alpha, but Jace felt Cane was miles away, someone that he couldn't reach and this distant feeling that he felt scared him sometimes, he felt like he was going to lose him someday when he hardened his heart enough and hid his thoughts even deeper than this.

"Don't you want to see and talk with her for one last time?" Jace asked. "She only asked to see you for the last time." Aria refused to talk and only asked to see Cane.

"No." Cane furrowed his brows. "Let her hate me."

Cane knew hate intimately, so did Aria and it would be easy for that woman to hate than to love him. He wanted to make it easier for her in his own twisted way.