

His Moonlight

Chapter 1: The Cursed Wolf

Nerina's POV

"Seriously, could this day get any worse?" I mumbled, annoyed at myself, as I pushed through the Grey Wolf High school doors.

I was already late, knowing that Jack and Dustin wouldn't be too pleased with me.

I let out an unwilling breath when I noticed the parking lot was basically deserted. "Sh*t," I cursed under my breath. "Is it that late already?" I hurried down the few steps into the lot.

Only one vehicle stood in the school's parking lot, taunting me to move my ass and get into it.

I let out a breath I didn't know I was holding and walked towards the new black pickup truck, knowing what would come next.

"What took you so long?" Jack yelled. "We should have been home an hour ago!" He growled at me and started the truck's engine.

He shouldn't have been angry at me for waiting. If he knew what had just happened, he would have been more compassionate towards me. But no!

Being the pack's cursed wolf had everyone against me, even my brother.

It was only my family that showed some form of warmth, and some days, it felt like they only did it because they felt sorry for me.

I let out another uneasy breath, forcing myself not to get angry. I knew what I was capable of doing when I lost control over my emotions.

Why couldn't Jack just be a good brother and ask nicely why I was late and stand up for me?

Wasn't it his brotherly duty?

I gave him a warning growl to back off and opened the back door, dumping my bag in the backseat.

I hesitated for a second, holding onto the door, weighing my options.

Did I really want to go home then?

Was I ready to face my parents?

I was already in trouble. Would it make things worse if I took a run first?

Did I really have the energy to listen to Jack's b*tching all the way home?

I shook my head and closed the door.

"What's taking so long?" Jack yelled at me when he saw me not getting into the truck.

"Go home, I'll see you later," I said coldly, and shifted into my wolf Zira.

"Where the f*ck do you think you're going?" Jack yelled after me.

I ignored him and shot forward towards the forest, leaving the boys behind.

They wouldn't be able to follow or catch me, as both of them hadn't yet received their wolves.

They would have no other choice but to go back home and explain to my parents why they were late in the first place. And to top it off, the reason why I hadn't returned home with them. Suited Jack right for being a lousy brother.

I knew I wasn't allowed to shift without my father's permission, but who gave a flying f*ck?

No one cared about me anyway.

The pack members usually ignored my existence or treated me like crap, even though I was the daughter of Alpha Zander from the Silver Moonvalley Pack and descended from the Royal Family.

The only one who almost treated me normal was Dustin, but even he needed to put up a front before my brother and the pack.

Dustin was my father, Alpha Zander, and my Aunt Rosalie's younger brother.

Even though he was rightfully my uncle, he was barely a few weeks older than Jack and I, and he refused to be called uncle.

I sighed, knowing that Dustin would try and mind-link me soon. He was just waiting for the opportunity to be alone.

It was on days like those that I wished I could just go rogue and live the glam life of being wild and free.

I let out a frustrated breath, knowing that I couldn't leave on my own, and that was because of my wolf. Zira was too loyal to my family and she would drag my sorry excuse of an ass back against my will.

The only way I could willingly leave the pack was by finding my mate. Which, for obvious reasons, was just out of my reach. By two f*cking years!

I growled, annoyed, knowing that I had to be seventeen before I could start searching for my mate.

Two! More! *Fcking! Years! What the fck!*

"So where to?" Zira asked, breaking my hissy fit, with her happy-go-lucky attitude.

It was because of Zira that the pack saw me as a cursed wolf, because my first shift happened unwillingly and at the age of five, which so happened to be at a f*cking kindergarten party! But yet again, she was also the reason why I was alive today.

I was born prematurely at the time of the great war and my mother was held captive by some lunatic she-wolf. My grandmother, Queen Luna Elizabeth, had called my wolf and asked her to save me. Zira accepted but cursed me in the process.

"Let's go down to the coffee shop," I answered, knowing that it would make her uneasy.

The little coffee shop I was referring to had the most delicious muffins and milkshakes, and my mouth watered just thinking of them.

Ms. Davies could bake the most delightful pastries, and I knew that one of her famous chocolate chip muffins would sweeten the anger right out of me.

The shop was just outside our pack's border, built in a close-by town, and was quick and easy to reach.

"The one in the human town?" She asked carefully. She wasn't too fond of the idea, but I didn't care.

"Yes," I answered, and rolled my eyes at her. I wasn't breaking any laws. The town itself belonged to my grandfather, Alpha Alexander, and it wasn't like we never left our pack lands. Once in a while, we did go over the borders and into town to get supplies.

"Your father..." Zira started but I cut her short.

"He will not be angry," I answered. I knew it would be my mother Jessica who would be the one to get upset and angry when I crossed the border without her permission.

If my mother could have her way, she would have magically put a collar on my neck to keep me housebound, but because she wasn't allowed to do magic on pack grounds, she had no magical control over me.

Yes, my mother happened to be a half-breed, which made Jack and I half-breeds too. The only difference was that Jack and I didn't share the same mother.

My father was mated to two half-breed sisters — my mother, Jessica, being his true mate, and my second mom, Leah, his chosen mate.

My mind raced back to the end of the school day and the reason why I was late and upset.

I had English last period, and like always, after my class was over, I would go down to my locker and get all my books to do homework.

Sam, one of the warrior's sons and one of Jack's best friends, had been at me again.

He had been in my face constantly the last couple of weeks, making annoying jokes, p*ssing me off by teasing me and saying uncomfortable things, and now, in the most recent event, he found a way to force me into the boy's locker room, trying his luck with me.

I was used to being bullied, teased, and threatened — the list went on and on. But there was one small thing I didn't allow, and that was that no one should ever dare to touch me.

"We are here," Zira said nervously, breaking my chain of thought.

Zira stood a couple of feet from the pack border, hesitating about whether we should cross.

I took a whiff of the air and found no smell of any guards or warriors close by, and we quickly crossed the border.

I knew very well that a couple of feet further down, the forest would end, and the small town would be revealed between all the tall trees.

Zira sprinted towards the town, came to a stop, and shifted back to her human behind an old tree.

I quickly and swiftly pulled an old tree stump over and removed the hidden treasures from its trunk.

I smiled when I opened the box, seeing that my clothes were still there, and got dressed.

It was at that exact moment, when I bent over to pick up my purse, that the most intoxicating smell of sweet dark caramel hit my nose.

"Mate!" Zira howled excitedly in my mind.

Chapter 2: Sweet Dark Caramel

Nerina's POV

"Mate?" I whispered, testing the single word on my lips, not believing what Zira had just uttered to me.

She was joking, right?

Right?

I took another whiff of the dark caramel scent and closed my eyes, tasting the sweet fragrance as it danced on my tongue, waking all my senses with its intoxicating taste.

Oh my. Every cell in my body felt alive, burning hot with desire, urging me to be touched by the owner of the scent.

I could just imagine how heavenly sweet my mate must have been, and I secretly hoped he looked and tasted as delicious as his intoxicating smell suggested.

My heart suddenly raced, and my hands had become hot, sweaty, and sticky. Bloody hell, what the f*ck was happening? Why was I suddenly feeling like I was going to hyperventilate?

I took a slow, even breath, trying to calm my racing heart, and then I tried to make sense of the situation.

Okay. Let us try this again.

Had I found my mate?

It couldn't be, could it?

Was it even possible?

I had just turned fifteen. I wasn't due.

"Our mate is standing behind us — have a look if you don't believe me!" Zira urged, rolling her eyes at me, annoyed.

I ignored her. I was too bewildered at the idea that he was standing right behind me to actually find the courage to turn around and meet him.

Okay. I found my mate?

It still sounded surreal in my own mind. It couldn't be. There was no way. I shook my head, still in denial.

But why was I so drawn to such a simple smell? Why was it driving my insides crazy?

My eyes grew wide when the realization finally kicked in.

I had found my mate!

I had found my mate, and at fifteen!

"Oh, Mother Moon, you heard my prayers! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" I praised her.

Chills ran down my body out of excitement, knowing that soon I would be in strong arms that would love and cherish me!

I always wanted a mate.

I always wanted my true and fated one.

I always wanted someone who would love and hold me.

I always wanted someone who didn't care that I was cursed.

I always wanted someone who would love me even with all my temper tantrums and imperfections.

I always wanted someone who would love me unconditionally.

I always believed that my mate would sweep me off my feet and we would ride off into the sunset, leaving everything bad behind us. That my mate would be my prince charming, giving me the kind of love my grandparents and parents had.

I always believed in fated love. It was the most perfect love in existence, and here I stood, finding my mate early to have him even longer.

I sighed happily, suddenly feeling content at the idea.

Finally, someone other than my family would be able to love me.

Finally, someone else would be able to talk to me.

Finally, I would be free from a pack who didn't understand or appreciate me.

Excitement pushed up inside me and started to bubble over.

Love was at my fingertips and I just needed to grab hold of it.

"We found our mate, and we will finally be loved and happy!" I shouted excitedly to Zira as I did a happy dance in my mind.

"Here goes nothing," I said nervously, as I opened my eyes and turned them towards the ground.

I turned around slowly, unsure what to expect.

I could feel his gaze on me as I shyly started to move my eyes from the ground upwards.

His black trainers caught my attention first, then his fitted navy blue jeans. As I moved along, I blushed when I reached his crotch.

"Oh," I gasped, seeing the bulge in the front, but I quickly moved my gaze upwards, trying not to look down at it again.

When I reached his center, I got sucked in too deep, fantasizing over his perfectly crafted golden body.

"Oh, Goddess. Wow! You surely did not disappoint!" I licked my lips unconsciously, wishing I could run my hands over his rock-hard body, feeling and counting each and every block of his perfectly crafted eight pack, over and over again.

I was still admiring his perfect body when I took a chance and met his gaze, hoping that what I was feeling and smelling would be returned.

It was not what I expected.

Not at all.

On the contrary, it was the total opposite of what I had hoped.

His clear blue eyes looked at me in anger and disappointment, and his perfectly straight nose was scrunched up like he was smelling the most revolting smell ever. His perfectly crafted angel face held the coldest, hardest, and most hostile expression I had ever seen.

"F*ck!" I gasped out at the turn of events and froze at my spot, unable to move.

I had never felt this uncomfortable and unwanted before. Never in my wildest dreams had I ever expected my mate would be this displeased with me.

I shivered as cold waves ran down my body.

Why did I feel so cold and alone in his presence? Shouldn't it have been the other way around?

Had he just dropped the temperature around us?

The sudden long and painful howl from Zira startled me and indicated that everything about that meeting was wrong.

He was obviously not very happy or excited about finding me.

His gaze softened for a second as it moved towards my shivering hands, and he scrunched his eyebrows together, confused.

I reverted my eyes toward my hands, seeing the dry blood coloring them. Most of my wounds had healed, thanks to Zira, but the evidence of that day's events was still highly visible.

F*ck! He must have been able to smell another wolf on me. The fight in the boy's locker room had angered my mate.

"Are you okay?" His husky voice rang in my ears, and he almost sounded concerned.

His clear blue eyes were still hard and ice-cold, but his posture had relaxed.

"Yes," I whispered. "This is nothing," I gestured to the dry blood on my hands.

He gave a noticeable nod of his head in return, but his eyes revealed that he didn't believe a word I had just spoken.

When he suddenly dragged his hands through his thick dark brown hair, he let out a hearable breath, and his posture changed back to stiff and uneasy.

Why was he giving me the idea that he was about to reject me?

"Zira? What's happening?" I asked, but she had disappeared into the depths of my mind.

"Liam..." he suddenly spoke, startling me as he said only his first name.

"I... I... I'm... Nerina..." I struggled to say.

Regret flashed in his eyes as he heard my name.

"Nerina, you must take a chosen mate," he said coldly and started to turn, walking away as if nothing had happened.

"Why?" I called behind him, my voice uneven and anxious. "Don't you want me?"

He stopped in his tracks, and his shoulders dropped.

For a second I believed that he had reconsidered, but when he turned, pure rage covered his face and he stormed towards me.

Chapter 3: Dark Caramel Eyes

Liam's POV

"I made it!" I shouted out, pleased with myself, wishing I could tell every living soul that I had escaped my pack's powerful claws and was free. Well, as free as I could be, until they found me.

I had headed north that time, hoping to take my sweet revenge — the only thing on my mind and the only thing I was living for.

I took a turn off from the highway, driving towards a small town called Devil's Hills, which was hidden at the foot of tall mountains and green forest.

The small town was centered in the middle of the forest and was a human town. It belonged to an Alpha close by, even though it was outside the boundaries of his pack land.

I had been there before, only once, but hadn't gotten any further than that.

It was just a matter of time until the council and warriors would stop and drag my sorry ass back to our pack lands, hoping they would find a way to make me stay.

I let out an uneasy breath.

It had been like that for years — me running away, them finding me. Our cat and mouse game had become a regular item on the agenda, and the longer we played the game, the smarter I had become and the longer they took to find me.

I smiled, pleased with myself. That time it would give me enough time to find the Dark Prince and Moon Blessed Wolf and take my revenge.

You see, I had made a promise to my father to avenge him someday, and I fully intended to do so.

I turned my wrist, checking the time, and was surprised to see that it was already long after two.

Well, they should have noticed that I was gone by now.

Lana, a witch and my substitute mother, would be p*ssed. Like always. Nothing new in my boring and dull life.

Lana was always getting on my nerves and in the way of my plans, but that time I had made sure she couldn't get a whiff of what I was planning.

I had to do some crazy sh*t to pass our pack's border security that time. It was hard, but not impossible, and everything went smoothly. I had passed the warriors undetected.

I came to a stop at a diner close to the center of the small town, and got out, stretching my long legs after the long drive.

The town was quiet but beautiful. The fragrance of the forest around me filled my lungs and made me feel relaxed.

"Well, let's get something to eat first," I uttered to myself, and Douglas, my wolf, seconded that. He was just as excited as me to be free of our pack — a pack so dark and evil that there was only one like it in existence in the world. A half-breed pack consisting of a mixture of wolves and witches.

The small bell on the diner door signaled my arrival as I walked in, and the server came around from the counter with a menu.

I took a seat at the far end of the diner, read through the menu the server gave me, and gave her my order.

I scanned the diner while waiting patiently for the server to bring my order.

The place was small but clean and cozy. Photo frames of the river and waterfall that ran close by hung on the walls.

I was surprised to see how many wolves came in and out of the diner while I ate.

I was glad that they hadn't given me a whiff or a glance, which kept me at ease. I guessed the potion hadn't worn off yet, which played in my favor. I seriously didn't need the neighboring pack to know I was there.

When I was done with my food, I paid my bill and drove a couple of feet down the road, finding the only motel the small town had to offer. It wasn't very luxurious, but it would have to do.

The rooms were small but held the basics. I dropped my bag on the bed and walked into the bathroom to freshen up.

When done, I got dressed and took a look at the time.

It was still early.

"You in the mood for a long-deserved run?" I asked Douglas.

"I wouldn't mind," he answered, and we took off towards the forest, searching for a good and safe place to shift without anyone seeing us.

We were already about half a mile into the forest when the most intoxicating smell of wildflowers hit my nose.

Never in my wildest dreams had I ever thought of finding a smell so potent that I couldn't revert myself from it.

I stalked deeper into the forest, like a wild animal going rabid, searching for the potent scent. It didn't take me long to find the owner of the smell, and I froze.

A couple of feet deeper into the forest, a young girl, around fifteen or sixteen, with the most perfect raven hair was busy getting dressed. Her long hair was covering her whole back and hanging like a curtain around her small frame.

She had dressed in a long loose white shirt and shorts that were too short. She wasn't taller than 5'7 and my 6'4 would easily tower over hers.

"Mate!" Douglas purred, thrilled at our find.

"No, no, no, no. This isn't happening!" I growled at Douglas's claims. "We can't find our mate now, it will ruin our plans."

"Look at her," he urged, and I couldn't help but take a peek at the small frame before us. I slowly moved closer, ensuring that I didn't startle her.

When I was close enough, her scent not only drove me wild but also told me two other things. One, she was from a pack, and my guess was from the one close by. And two, she was a half-breed as well.

Wait. What?

I took another whiff of her scent, but the conclusion was the same. She wasn't just a normal wolf, but one like me.

"F*ck!" I whispered to myself. The magic around her smelled raw and potent. It was still not fully set, but it would be one day.

A scene flashed before my eyes, startling me, as I saw us together. She would have to choose between us and her family, between the darkness and the light.

"No!" I shook my head. "I will never allow it! I will never let such a pure, innocent creature be influenced by dark magic! I will fight against it with all my power to ensure she will be saved, even if it means..."

"You can't be serious!" Douglas growled.

"I am," I said. "I will not let our pack corrupt her. Look at her!" I demanded. "We will destroy her! She is too pure!"

"What are you planning?" He asked, worried, his heart already broken at my sudden decision.

"We need to reject her!" I didn't hesitate to say the words, but they burned like hot silver on my tongue.

"You know what it would do to us!" He howled in my mind.

"I'll take my chances! At least it will keep her safe!" I said, knowing very well what it meant.

Rejecting one's mate wasn't something that could just be turned around and done. There were rules to follow. Should I reject my mate without following the rules, Douglas might go crazy and I would be lost to the world forever. But it was a chance I would take.

The girl before me suddenly became still, like she was sensing my presence and wasn't sure what to make of it. Slowly but surely, her still posture started swaying from side to side like she was drugged by my scent.

I suddenly wondered what I smelled to her, but the thought was cut short when she hesitated before she turned around, revealing the most flawless female creature I had ever come face to face with.

My nostrils flared at her intense scent, making my mouth water, and my manhood was suddenly alive in my pants.

"Oh, my f*ck. What was this she-wolf doing to me!" I whispered to Douglas in my head.

The girl's eyes were directed at my shoes and were slowly moving upwards. I didn't move my gaze from her, watching every second of that beautiful creature before me. I was taking mental pictures, saving them for my lonely years to come.

"F*ck!" I growled internally. The pull towards her had become even more powerful than seconds ago, and I had to fight with everything inside me not to sweep her off her feet and claim her as mine.

My mind went into overdrive, thinking of ways to take her and disappear without anyone finding us, but my conclusion ended at the same thing. They would find us some way or another.

I let out a heartbreaking breath, knowing there was no hope, and trembled at the piercing ache that pulled at my heart.

The sudden blush coloring my mate's perfect angelic face caught my attention, and I had to restrain myself not to let the bulge grow any further.

I knew very well where her eyes had landed. I could taste her arousal, pretty sweet on my tongue.

Douglas howled appreciatively in my mind and I had to restrain myself not to burst out laughing at her innocence.

"F*ck!" I swore again. It was getting harder and harder to contain myself against the pull.

Her tongue suddenly wet her lips, and I wished I could taste those sweet pink lips on mine.

I shook my head, forcing the lustful images from my mind. "No!" I reprimanded myself and anger flared up in me. I balled my fist out of frustration.

Her perfect forest green eyes caught mine, and she unwillingly took a step back, seeing the anger in mine.

"F*ck!" She gasped out and froze, her eyes widening at the sudden turn of events.

Her magical voice was still ringing in my ears and I fought hard against her enchantment. I could feel the muscles in my face jumping out of anger, and my magic unnoticeably spiraling out of control, dropping the temperature.

"Her wolf is trying to connect with me," Douglas purred like a cat.

"Stop her! Stop her now!" I ordered. "Do not give in!"

Douglas whimpered and retreated to the deeper ends of my mind. He would listen. I knew he would. He saw what I saw. There was no way to save her except this way.

The shivering of my mate, like she was cold, drew my attention, and my gaze ended on her hands. Her sun-kissed skin was soiled with blood.

What the hell had happened?

Was she hurt?

Had someone tried to hurt her?

"Sh*t!" Another word left her lips, and my insides burned.

"Are you okay?" I asked, forcing my feelings aside.

I needed to know if she was okay.

"Yes," she whispered shyly. "This is nothing," she gestured to the dry blood on her hands.

It didn't look like f*cking nothing to me. I growled internally but gave her a nod of the head instead.

I unintentionally dragged my hands through my hair and let out a breath. I had better get it over and done with and move on.

"Liam," I introduced myself, startling my mate. I suddenly wondered why she was so jumpy. Did I look as cold as her dreamy green eyes betrayed? There was worry in her eyes, but it wasn't just because of me. There was more to it.

Why was she wandering off alone?

Where were her friends?

Why could she shift so young? And why was that question bugging me so much?

"I... I... I'm... Nerina," she struggled, and my heart pinched, knowing I was the cause of her struggles.

"Nerina, you must take a chosen mate," I struggled to say and turned around, knowing that should I see the pain in her face, she would soften me up and I wouldn't be able to stand against the pull towards her.

"Why?" She asked as her voice quivered and broke. "Don't you want me?"

I stopped in my tracks, fighting against the unwanted feelings of the mate's pull, and before I could manage to understand what I was doing, I found myself standing before her, shaking out of pure rage.

Chapter 4: Running

Nerina's POV

"I am already mated..." he paused a second before he continued. "To a human, and she is having my pup. I can't be with you. I will not leave my unborn pup for you. I refuse to have my pup grow up without a father..." he sneered through gritted teeth. "I, Liam..."

"No!" I screamed and covered my ears. I refused to hear the rest of his rejection. He stopped, bewildered at my outburst, unsure what to do next. He watched me with hard cold eyes, while conflict crossed his face unwillingly.

"Don't say those words. Please," I begged, shaking violently.

I knew very well what it meant to be rejected. His reason would destroy both of us.

"What do you suggest we do?" He challenged me and had become anxious to hear my answer.

"I'll ask my grandmother to dismantle our bond. Please, just don't say those words," I begged. "I will find a way to break our bond and stay clear from you! I promise."

I didn't wait for his answer and turned around, running as fast as I could, leaving him standing dumbstruck and shaken at his spot.

I had never been this hurt and humiliated in my life.

I ran, crossing the border, not caring if anyone saw me.

I ran as fast as I possibly could.

Back to the miserable pack that didn't appreciate or care for me.

Back to my home and my family, who felt sorry for me.

Back to my cursed life where everyone ignored me.

Back to a life of only having scattered dreams of ever having a true mate.

My uncontrollable tears blinded my sight, making me fall to the ground continuously.

My white shirt was ripped and dirty, my hands and knees bruised and cut, but I didn't stop running.

I had welcomed the sharp burning feeling inflicted on my body, hoping that it would ease the pain from my breaking heart.

I was unable to shift into my wolf to run faster due to all the pain and agony I was living through.

Zira had drowned herself in sorrow in the depths of my mind.

I could feel how heartbroken she was, and I was too, but she didn't even attempt to ease the run home. I didn't care.

I kept running.

I refused to stop.

I ran even though my body and legs were painfully cramping. They gave in now and then, making me eat dirt and debris.

I ran even though my lungs were burning and my heart scrunched in pain with every breath I took.

I ran even though I felt tired, and then I ran some more, never stopping.

The excruciating pain in my chest didn't leave me. It was burning a hole where my heart was supposed to be, leaving me feeling empty and dead inside.

I was trying to run from the intensity of the agony of rejection my mate had just bestowed on me.

I was trying to run from the agony of knowing that my mate didn't wait for me.

I was trying to run from the thought of knowing that my mate had chosen a human to be his mate and they were having a pup together.

My heart pinched, and my mind angrily rehearsed every word he uttered over and over again.

He chose a human mate instead of his true and fated mate.

He was having a pup with her. Not with me. But with her.

He chose her and rejected me.

I broke down in another set of uncontrollable sobs as I went at a slower pace, reaching the packhouse.

Mom was standing at the door waiting, her arms crossed and her mouth in a thin line. She was p*ssed, but I didn't care.

"Where the hell have you been?" She yelled when she saw me coming through the thick overgrowth, but her posture changed when she saw my face, changing to pure horror and concern.

"What happened?" She called behind me when I ran past her, shaking my head violently.

"I need to call Gran," I answered through my intense sobs. "I need to get her to help me."

Mom pulled me into her arms, trying to cradle me, but I pushed her away, shaking my head violently, gesturing for her to let me go.

"I need to talk to Gran," I cried. "I need to talk to Gran and ask her to dismantle the bond between Liam and I," I sobbed uncontrollably.

She shook her head, not understanding. "What are you talking about?" She asked, her eyes wide with shock.

She had never seen me like that before. Broken beyond repair.

I was now exhausted trying to hold myself together and was crying uncontrollably, sobbing wildly, and I gave in to the hurt of my broken heart.

I couldn't control the sorrow and agony I was in.

"He... he... he... rej...ct... me..." I sobbed, unable to make full sentences.

It was dad's strong and warm arms that pulled me into his chest and then lifted me into his arms.

"There, there," he tried to soothe, walking us up the stairs towards my room.

I heard mother ordering the rest of the pack members to return to their duties, then she raced up the stairs behind us.

Dad carried me to my bed and laid me on it.

I curled myself into a ball, trying to control the pain, but soon let the overwhelming feeling consume me.

I had never cried that much before.

Mom pulled a blanket over me and the room had become quiet. Only my uncontrollable sobbing was hearable, but I could feel her presence still lingering beside me. She had refused to leave my side.

My mind raced back to Liam, standing before me with so much rage, uttering words I would never forget.

"I am already mated to a human and she is having my pup. I, Liam..."

I suddenly felt tired, my eyes heavy, and I watched as the darkness consumed the last light around me.

Chapter 5: Seventeen

Nerina's POV

(2 Years Later)

"Happy birthday Rina!" Mom's voice rang in my ears. I knew she was standing at the door, waiting for the rest of the family to join her.

I let out a moan and a soft groan, then turned around trying to ignore her, pretending to be asleep.

I could feel her gaze on me and her motherly aura filled every inch of my room, stretching its warm and safe arms around me, providing me with a comfortable soft hug. Yes, I could feel her emotions.

And she was definitely smiling. She was happy and excited.

I let out a yawn, knowing that if mom was standing at the door, it would be only minutes before the rest of the family would enter my room and wish me a happy birthday.

It was our little family routine to wake up the birthday girl or boy together.

I pulled the comforter over my head, hoping that by some miracle today would be different and I could sleep in late.

Yeah right. Wishful thinking!

Just before I could let out another yawn, Jack and Dustin decided to jump on top of me without any warning, and I yelled out surprised!

"Happy birthday Nerd!" Jack screamed at me and pulled the comforter from me.

I flinched at the stupid nickname he had given me years ago and wished that he could just drop it now that we were on good terms.

Jack had changed a lot after Liam rejected me almost two years ago.

He had become the brother I always wanted and needed, but it was almost too late.

My parents never told him the full story of what had truly happened to me, and I was too embarrassed to share it with the boys, but he got a glimpse of how bad the situation was when he found me.

Something inside him snapped, and he had been by my side defending and protecting me ever since.

"Urgh! F*ck!" I swore as both Jack and Dustin pinned me down laughing.

My birthday didn't keep me from getting scolded by mom. She gave me a death glare for my swearing.

"Sorry!" I apologized as I tried to push the two knuckle heads off me. Not that it helped.

The two were larger than my 5'7 frame and their bodies were a dead weight on top of me.

Jack and Dustin were not the smallest guys around. Having Alpha and Royal blood running in both their veins, they were incredibly big and masculine. Dustin was the eldest and tallest of the two, standing at 6'4, and Jack at 6'2.

"Get off!" I tried to wiggle and fight myself out of their strong grip, but it was all in vain.

Mom watched the interaction between us, not saying a word. She just giggled behind her hand like it was the funniest thing she had ever seen.

She was used to us getting into one another's faces and spaces, especially on days like those.

I finally gave in, sighed, and stopped wiggling.

I was supposed to be used to it already. They did it constantly!

I gave the boys a growl out of annoyance and both of them snickered at my expense. They were enjoying every second of it.

I knew what would come next.

I concentrated, hoping for some miracle that I could withstand them tickling me.

At least the horrible pranks had stopped, due to Jack finding his mate recently — to Dustin's annoyance — which meant Dustin was on his own to try to set proper pranks, which most of the time failed miserably and got him into trouble.

I just wished I could find a way to overpower both of them when they teamed up against me.

I let out a frustrated breath. Soon, I promised myself. Soon I would be the strongest warrior Silver Moonvally had ever seen or had.

In the last two years, I had grown in all the right places.

I didn't look like a skinny, neglected teenager anymore, but more like an adult she-wolf my age should look like.

My curves had set in and my human strength had multiplied, if not tripled.

I was now fitter, stronger, and faster.

By the end of that night, I would know if I had been blessed with any magical powers from my mom's side and would most probably choose which one I would like to keep.

Zira already had her abilities and we had both learned how to use and control them.

I was also combat smarter now. After my rejection, daddy had arranged for special and extra training for me with Beta Emanuel.

Dad trusted his old friend to have me in top shape in no time.

Not that I hadn't trained before. On the contrary, every pack member was trained from a very young age to be able to defend themselves from any attack attempts. The difference was that my father wanted me to focus on something other than my broken heart.

It was hard work, but it eventually paid off.

Even though I had become stronger physically and emotionally, I could still read the worry in my father's eyes.

I guessed he believed that I would never find myself a mate or that I would end up alone and lonely.

I didn't know, but whatever it was, I had the feeling that my father saw me as something broken, which hurt me on a different level.

The first couple of days after Liam's rejection were the worst.

I fell into depression.

I refused to eat or drink. It was hard to get out of bed, and I cried and sobbed whenever I tried to talk, which I gave up on after a while.

The nightmares were the worst. I couldn't stop dreaming of him. I couldn't stop dreaming of his cold blue eyes, and I couldn't stop dreaming of him telling me the reason, which made me scream out of agony in my sleep.

I was anxious, short-tempered, and crying nonstop.

The darkness had crept in so deep that I couldn't find my way back to the light. I had lost all will to keep going.

Jack found me days later in the roaring ice-cold water under the waterfall, barely breathing. He saw me and rushed to save me.

He told me later that he had a voice in his mind, which he believed was the wolf that had been driving him to get to me and check up on me. When he couldn't find me in my room, he became anxious and followed my scent until he found me.

It had taken losing almost everything for my brother to find his way back to me.

While I was in the infirmary, Jack called our gran and told her what had happened. He begged her to come and see me.

Two days later, Gran sat at my bedside.

I remembered the concern in her silver eyes. She didn't say a word while moving her hands over me, trying to heal me.

When a kind smile reached her face, seeing that I was awake, I couldn't help but break down and cry.

"My dear girl, it's not impossible to break the mate bond. You should have come to me first," she sighed, and continued. "You shouldn't have kept it all bundled inside yourself. It would poison your soul and your wolf's. So tell me, what was his reason for not wanting you?"

"He had taken a chosen human mate," I answered.

"Oh? And that was his full reason?" She asked skeptically, raising an eyebrow at me.

"His mate was with pup, and he refused to let her raise the pup alone," I answered, and tears streamed down my face.

"Okay," she said, smiling, but something in her liquid silver eyes told me she didn't believe a word I was saying.

"I can try my best to dismantle the bond between you and..."

"Liam." His name left a bitter taste on my tongue and a sharp pinch in my heart.

"Liam?" She asked.

"Yes," I answered, knowing that I didn't know his last name.

"Okay," she nodded her head. "It will only work if one of you truly wants the mate bond broken and if the reason you provide me with is true. If not, there might be some consequences."

"Well, Gran, I would rather live with the consequences than be bound to someone who never wanted me in the first place," I answered, sure of myself.

When Gran did the ritual to break the mate bond between Liam and me, she gave me another warning.

"Nerina, keep in mind that you are a half-breed. I might be able to break the bond between Liam's wolf and your wolf, but I can't be sure if there is a magical bond that

would bind you two together. Another issue I am facing is that you only know Liam's first name. It can influence the breaking of the mate bond."

I accepted the warnings and understood the consequences. After the ritual was done, I felt better, but Zira was still miserable. It took her months to fully recover from the break of the bond.

While I took the journey to recover, I put all my focus into training, deciding that I wanted to be the best there was.

In any case, my father made sure that I was properly trained and would be able to defend myself should anything ever happen.

I didn't need the intense training anymore. Last week I put Beta Emanuel on his back. Yesterday, I beat both Jack and Dustin in the ring.

I had become somewhat obsessed with the idea of becoming the best there could be.

Dad was next. Well, him and Luna Rosalie. I needed to prove to myself that I didn't need anyone anymore. I didn't need a mate to rely on to defend me. I would be good enough to do it myself.

Father wanted to know how far my strength could go and I promised him I would show him soon.

"Happy 17th birthday kid," my father's voice pulled me back from my little combat world of kicking my brother and uncle's butts.

Yes, I was finally at the legal age of finding a mate. I sighed, irritated at myself, knowing it was a bad joke, even making it to myself. But on the bright side, it was also the day where I would find out which would be my strongest trait.

"Thank you, dad!" I gasped out in hysterical laughter as he pulled me from the boys' torture into a hug, throwing them off the bed.

"Really dad?" Jack complained.

"Seriously?" Dustin growled.

I shook my head at the boys as dad let me go. Mom was second in line for a hug. When my parents eventually left, the boys were still lying lazily on the floor.

I looked at them, annoyed, using my aura to try and chase them out, but that never helped. Their auras were just as strong as mine.

"Okay dip-sh*ts, get out of my room. I need to get ready for school," I finally complained.

Both of them rolled their eyes at me, refusing to get their arses out of my room.

"Guess Rina wants to find her mate as soon as possible!" Dustin complained, dragging the words out as he rolled his eyes.

I shook my head at him. "Nope," I answered as I grabbed my towel. "I have better things to do with my time than waste it on finding a mate."

One that doesn't want me.
