A Blutbad Claims His Mate

by KTT2123

Summary

The first time Monroe smells Nick he knows, Nick is his true mate. The one every Blutbad waits their whole lives for. Nick may be with Juliette but he is Monroe's mate and Monroe isn't going to wait to make his claim.

Notes

WARNING: it is possible that this could be viewed as dub con or non con. I don't see it that way because Nick is completely consenting, even if it isn't discussed explicitly. If this is a trigger, carefully consider before reading.

As a new fan of Grimm, I kept getting drawn to Monroe and Nick. I say screw Juliette, she doesn't deserve Nick. This is a bit of Nick/Monroe smut (my first!) that I wrote on the fly (to get my muse back) and posted to tumblr but edited before posting here. I'm new to the fandom and will be taking liberties, so expect AU-ishness.

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A Blutbad Claims His Mate

The moment the stranger tackles him, his wolf rejoices. Monroe doesn't fight despite the violence and anger the stranger is projecting toward him. The man smells delicious, of the woods: cedar and grass. Monroe breathes deep; the man smells like *home*. That he is a Grimm makes no nevermind to him. His wolf sniffs contently and lets the man drag him down to the police station. Monroe cooperates and does his best to help out his mate, who he discovers is named Nick.

The close quarters makes it easy for him to smell a woman on his Nick. Monroe feels a slight twinge of regret but the overwhelming feeling of joy quickly overrides it. The woman will soon be gone. Taken or single, Grimm or not, Monroe will not allow his mate to remain unclaimed. Nick is his and soon Nick will realize that.

After he is released, Monroe quickly plans. Nick will be claimed. He smiles wickedly, exposing his fangs.

Monroe and his wolf rejoice every time Nick comes to him for help. It takes very little for the Grimm to trust Monroe, even if he doesn't know why. The mate smell never leaves Nick, although surprisingly the woman's smell seems to diminish as they spend more time together. Nick is pulling away from her and Monroe's wolf howls in happiness. The Grimm may not be conscious of why he is doing so but a part of him must recognize that Monroe is his mate, not the woman. Every moment they spend together makes it harder and harder for Monroe to hold back. Both he and his wolf want to claim Nick and *now*.

Unable to wait any longer, Monroe trots over to Nick's house under the cover of night. His supplies are in the messenger bag across his body. He reaches in the bag and grabs the red sweatshirt. His wolf is frantic to be let free, to chase and claim his mate. A feral grin stretches over his face, it is time.

Monroe makes a rustling noise sure to bring out the paranoid cop and Grimm. Sure enough, Nick comes out with gun in hand. Monroe easily skirts around and grabs him from behind. Startled, Nick tries to get loose. But Monroe is prepared and strips the gun and throws it away. He holds Nick tightly and leans in close. Breathing that heavenly scent in deeply, Monroe murmurs with his lips touching his mate's skin, "It is time, my little mate." Nick easily recognizes Monroe's voice, his body trembles under the Blutbad's touch.

Nick may not have had Monroe's instant recognition but he had known something was different with Monroe. From almost the beginning, he had felt something he didn't understand when near him. He felt safe and loved. Monroe's brief touches had made him shake with want. Nick has never been attracted to a man before but he wants Monroe...and with a desperation he doesn't understand. Since meeting Monroe, Juliette’s touch had made him recoil. He tried to fight it but tonight, they'd broken up. He pushed her away and couldn't explain why.

Nick shudders as Monroe laps at his neck, scraping his fangs lightly across his skin. He tilts his head, baring his neck fully to the Monroe without really knowing why.

Monroe smiles at the submissive gesture, "Soon, my mate. Soon, I will claim you. But first..."
Monroe pulls off Nick's sweatshirt and replaces it with the red one he brought. "Run, my little mate. Run, so I can claim you properly." When Nick doesn't move, Monroe growls "Run!"

Startled, Nick starts running instinctively toward the woods. His thoughts spin and twirl erratically. *I am Monroe's mate!* He should be terrified but something in him says this is right. Nick runs harder, somehow knowing that he must prove himself worthy of the chase, just as Monroe has to prove
himself worthy to catch him.

Monroe growls, proud of his little mate. Nick is leading him on a merry little chase. He trots behind him, letting Nick run wildly. His Grimm will soon run out of stamina and won't be able to run any longer. As Nick starts to slow and stumble, Monroe ends the chase. He tackles Nick to the ground. "Mine!" Monroe growls as he tears off the sweatshirt and yanks down Nick's pants. "Oh, God!" Nick cries. Nick trembles as he supports his weight on his hands and knees, his pants tangled at his ankles. His cock is hard and dripping and he shivers in anticipation. Monroe is hard and huge against his ass. But Nick wants him inside of him, so fucking badly. When Monroe thrusts again, Nick whines and pushes back. Monroe grins wickedly; his little mate wants to be claimed.

Monroe raises his hand and opens his bag, grabbing the lube and slicking up his fingers. Without hesitation, he thrusts a finger into Nick's virgin hole. "AHH!" Nick shouts. It feels foreign to have something of Monroe inside of him. Monroe carefully stretches Nick, not wanting to hurt his mate unnecessarily. The first touch of Monroe's fingers makes Nick scream but they are deep enough into the woods that no one will ever hear Nick's cries, no matter how loud he gets. By the time Monroe has three fingers inside of him, Nick has lost the weird feeling and is desperate for more. He pushes himself into Monroe's fingers, trying to get them deeper. Monroe presses into Nick's fingers, trying to get them deeper. Nick whimpers as Monroe pulls out his fingers, his muscles clenching. He feels empty and needs to be filled. "Please. Fuck, please! Monroe! I need you!" Nick begs.

Monroe shoves down his sweats and slicks up his dick. He slowly eases inside, his thick cock splitting Nick open. Nick whines at the burning stretch, feeling every inch of Monroe's cock sinking inside of him. Monroe stills, allowing his mate to adjust. Nick feels so fucking full. He clenches around the huge cock inside him. Monroe groans as Nick's passage squeezes impossibly tight around him. He wants to simply hold himself within Nick, to fill him so completely that his Grimm will never feel whole without his cock inside of him. He lies across Nick's back, sniffing and licking his neck. Monroe searches for the perfect spot to mark his little mate forever. Finding it, he whispers "Mine," before sinking his fangs into Nick's neck. Nick screams, his body tensing from the unexpected bite even as his dick twitches violently with pleasure. Monroe grumbles pleasantly as he licks up the blood from the bonding bite. "My mate, my beautiful little mate," he croons as he thrusts lazily. Nick is his now and no one can ever refute his claim. His wolf is satisfied and smug at the claim.

The pain of the bite mark is vying with the slow glide of Monroe's cock and Nick is getting frantic for more. The adrenaline from the chase is still thrumming through his body. "Please, Monroe, please. Claim me. Make me yours."

Monroe grins, "You are already mine, my mate, and every Wesen will know it." He lifts off Nick’s back. His large hands grip his mate’s hips tightly. Monroe pulls almost all the way out before slamming forward. Nick yells, "Oh fuck!" Monroe does it again. Nick whines, he’s never felt anything like this; Monroe’s thick cock filling his insides, the powerful thrusts making his body sway from the impact. He feels dominated and possessed. Nick hangs his head, his fingers digging into the grass and dirt as his body is rocked forward and back by Monroe’s superior strength. Monroe thrusts forward and hits a spot inside Nick that had never before been touched by a cock before. Nick shrieks in surprise and pure pleasure spreads through his body. Monroe grins triumphantly and hits the spot over and over. Nick can only mewl weakly, the fullness of his mate’s cock filling him and each thrust stabbing his pleasure spot is completely overwhelming. Monroe encourages Nick to sink to his elbows by pushing down on his back, forcing his back to arch and his ass up. He fucked him harder and deeper, knowing his mate can take it. Nick trembles with fatigue and pleasure. He teeters on the brink, one last deep thrust and Nick pulses without a single touch, his seed covering the ground underneath him. He goes boneless; his upper body lying limply on the ground, only Monroe’s strength keeps his ass up.
Monroe spreads Nick’s thighs wider, letting him thrust even deeper inside him. He growls as his knot begins to swell. Nick grunts confusedly as he feels something catching on his rim. It gets bigger and bigger as Monroe continues to piston in and out of him. Before he can ask, Monroe pushes deep and his knot locks them together. He rocks carefully inside of Nick until he starts to cum. He howls as load after load fills Nick’s insides. “Gonna breed you so good, my mate. Fill you with my pups,” Monroe roars. If Nick thought he felt full before, it is nothing like he feels now. Not even realizing that he has hardened to fullness again, Nick whimpers as he cums untouched a second time simply from the hot, wet pulse of Monroe’s semen shooting inside him. Nick touches his abdomen; it feels distended from the amount of cum inside him. He keens softly as Monroe pulses one last time.

Monroe carefully eases them both on their sides and wraps his arms around Nick. “Sleep,” he orders, “you’re going to need it.” Exhausted, Nick can’t fight the demand and unfazed by the warning, quickly falls asleep. They will have much to talk about when they awake. Monroe grumbles happily. Despite his mate’s ignorance to Blutbaden mating habits, Nick had responded beautifully. His Grimm had cum untouched twice; Monroe’s wolf couldn’t be more pleased that Nick had cum because of his knot. Monroe lays his head down to rest; a few hours of sleep and he’ll wake his mate up and claim him all over again. He grins, life is good.
Pre-heat

Chapter Notes

I really don't know how this keeps happening to me but here's some more porn. Enjoy!

As in all my stories, character thoughts are italicized and set between asterisks.

Please take note of the tags.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Monroe wakes up a little over an hour later. He smiles at the sight of his naked mate. His gorgeous little mate, who despite apparently not having any knowledge of Blutbaden mating had responded beautifully to his every touch. His Nicky had taken his knot effortlessly and came untouched when Monroe filled him. He gives a feral grin, his eyes red and his fangs visible. *My mate is perfect.* He kisses the bonding mark gently, satisfied at the claim. At the kiss, Nick mumbles his name and snuggles back into the Blutbad. Monroe cannot help feeling smug at hearing his name on Nick’s lips. Nick is his and even in his sleep, his mate knows that. Monroe tugs off Nick’s shoes, socks, and pants and admires his mate’s naked form. He strips off his own sweatpants and shoes.

Monroe runs his hand down Nick’s chest to his cock; a smug grin stretching over his face as his mate’s dick twitches and thickens obediently in his hand. He grants Nick a few strokes before lifts his mate’s leg up to expose that beautiful pink rosebud. Monroe sinks two fingers into Nick’s passage; Nick is still delightfully wet and loose. Pulling his fingers out, Monroe replaces them with his cock. Nick mewls as his insides are filled with Monroe’s impressive length but he doesn’t wake up. Monroe plunges in and out of his mate lazily. He’s never felt anything like being inside of Nick. He and Angelina had wild, admittedly violent sex but it cannot compare to Nick. Enveloped by his little mate is the hottest and most satisfying feeling imaginable. Monroe is happy to continue the easy pace until his mate wakes up.

When Nick comes to, he is completely disoriented. He doesn’t know where he is or how he got here. His thoughts are sluggish as he struggles for awareness. Without opening his eyes, Nick notes that he’s naked and lying on his side on the grass. *I’m in the woods? Why am I NAKED in the woods?* A second later, Nick realizes that something, no one, is thrusting into his ass! He is about a panic when a pair of lips presses a kiss to the bite mark on his neck that he didn’t remember he had. The pleasure overrides the panic and the murmured “Mate” brings everything flooding back. He mated with Monroe! Fucking hell, he’s a Grimm mated to a Blutbad! Monroe doesn’t give him time to drown in his frantic thoughts; the pleasurable slide of that big cock inside of him quickly overrides his frenzied thoughts.

Now that Nick is awake, Monroe abandons his unhurried pace and starts fucking his mate in earnest. His big hand hikes Nick’s leg higher, forcing his mate open and he thrusts hard and deep. Nick whimpers as he mate’s dick twitches and thickens obediently in his hand. He grants Nick a few strokes before lifts his mate’s leg up to expose that beautiful pink rosebud. Monroe sinks two fingers into Nick’s passage; Nick is still delightfully wet and loose. Pulling his fingers out, Monroe replaces them with his cock. Nick mewls as his insides are filled with Monroe’s impressive length but he doesn’t wake up. Monroe plunges in and out of his mate lazily. He’s never felt anything like being inside of Nick. He and Angelina had wild, admittedly violent sex but it cannot compare to Nick. Enveloped by his little mate is the hottest and most satisfying feeling imaginable. Monroe is happy to continue the easy pace until his mate wakes up.

Now that Nick is awake, Monroe abandons his unhurried pace and starts fucking his mate in earnest. His big hand hikes Nick’s leg higher, forcing his mate open and he thrusts hard and deep. Nick whimpers as the head of Monroe’s dick stabs his prostate with unerring accuracy. His eyes roll at the overwhelming sensations. His cock is so hard it’s painful, he needs to cum and now. Nick isn’t even aware he’s desperately begging Monroe to fuck him harder and deeper, to make him cum. Monroe snaps his hips forward with inhuman power and Nick screams. He cums so hard he sees stars. Monroe doesn’t slow or soften his thrusts with Nick’s orgasm, fucking him straight through it. Nick is baffled as his dick hardens again; it shouldn’t be possible, especially considering he’s already cum
three times in like an hour. Monroe slams into Nick over and over before plunging deep one last time and holding himself there. Nick moans as he feels something expand, locking the Blutbad inside him. The second his knot ties, Monroe cums, filling his little mate’s insides for the second time. Again, Nick helplessly cums the moment Monroe’s seed fills him, the knot keeping it all inside him. He mewls softly as pulse after pulse of cum fills him even as his cock twitches at the wet, pleasurable feeling. Damn but he feels full with two huge loads of cum trapped within him.

Monroe juts his hips forward in precise little stabs, not wanting to pull too hard on the tie and cause Nick any pain. Nick groans as the pleasure of those careful thrusts makes his dick fill up, as if he hadn’t already cum untouched four fucking times. “This cannot be natural,” Nick mutters under his breath.

Monroe chuckles in his ear, declaring “Au contraire, my little mate, this is completely natural for Blutbaden mating.” His hips never stop moving, forcing Nick’s cock to stiffen to full hardness yet again.

“I’m not a fucking Blutbad!” Nick growls. Despite his protests, his body welcomes Monroe, his every touch sending flares of fire running through his veins. *Fuck, he feels so good! How can he feel this good?* Nick doesn’t understand how his body can respond so eagerly after coming four times; this is ridiculous, he’s not a teenager!

“No, but you are a Blutbad’s mate,” Monroe drawls, amused by his little mate. His mouth may be complaining but his body is telling a whole different story. His pretty cock is once again dripping just for him. Nick might not have known Monroe was his mate but his body must have. Monroe knows Nick would never have responded as he has if his body hadn’t readied itself for him, for their mating. “You gonna cum untouched once more for me, Nicky?”

“Fuck.” Nick shudders and pushes frantically back into Monroe’s thrusts. He feels like a bitch in heat, ever ready to be fucked again and again. It’s so wrong but it feels so fucking good. “Please,” he begs.

Monroe stops abruptly, holding Nick tight enough he can’t rock backwards. His mate whines in protest, “Please Monroe! I need you!”

There is only one thing that will make Monroe move. “Who do you belong to?”

Nick doesn’t hesitate, “You. I belong to you. ’m yours.”


Nick rocks back into Monroe eagerly, the full feeling and the sharp tugging on Monroe’s knot pushes him over the edge a few minutes later. Nick’s seed is splattered on his chest and all over the grass. It shouldn’t be possible to expel that much semen in less than two hours, it’s utterly insane.

Monroe rolls onto his back, taking his mate with him. He spreads his legs and plants his feet, carefully cradling his mate with his body. Monroe runs his fingers through the cum on Nick’s stomach and chest. He brings those cum covered fingers to his mate’s mouth, who opens obediently and licks them clean. Monroe dips his fingers again but bypasses Nick’s open mouth and sucks the seed off his own fingers. Nick moans at the sounds Monroe makes as he devours his cum.

Nick doesn’t notice that Monroe’s knot is shrinking until it slips out of him. He can feel the cum dripping out of him. Monroe wastes no time rolling him over and parting his cheeks. The first touch of Monroe’s tongue on his hole and his beard scratching against his ass makes Nick keen. Monroe
laps and licks up the seed that has leaked out of his mate. Nick whines and moans as Monroe enthusiastically eats out his ass, dropping his head to the grass and spreading his legs wide. *Monroe has turned me into a fucking whore, a goddamn cum slut. But fuck, it feels good. It feels right.* Nick pushes back into Monroe’s bearded face as he fucks him with his tongue. He is fucking hard, again. Dear god, Monroe might just kill him with sex.

Nick’s body is leaps and bounds ahead of his mind. It has been two months since their initial meeting and his body has been slowly readying itself for his mate, for Monroe. Exactly as Monroe had concluded, Nick’s body accepted Monroe as his mate long ago and prepared itself for their mating. His body is in a kind of pre-heat; his body craves Monroe and only him insatiably. It is also why he grew repulsed by Juliette’s touch. Why he soon couldn’t bear Juliette’s touch or to touch her in return.

Their mating is foretold and there is a reason their instincts and fate brought them together.

Monroe turns him over and cleans his chest and stomach. He laps at Nick’s inner thighs, sucking on his balls before swallowing his cock to the root. “Monroe!” Nick screams. He looks down and watches his mate’s mouth slide up and down his length. “That’s fucking hot, Monroe.”

Monroe grins around the cock in his mouth. He allows a little red to show in his eyes and his fangs peek out, showing Nick a taste of the real him. Monroe can smell the spike of lust from Nick when their eyes meet. His Grimm is turned on by his Blutbad traits. Monroe is careful not to hurt Nick with his teeth as he deep throats his mate. Nick’s eyes roll back and he grabs Monroe’s head. He can feel his fangs against his skin; the danger of it makes it all the more thrilling. Nick thrusts into that welcoming mouth twice before spilling down Monroe’s throat.

Monroe drinks down every drop before easing back. He surges forward and claims Nick’s lips for their first kiss. Nick doesn’t hesitate to return the kiss, eagerly sharing the taste of his own cum with his mate. It’s odd to feel the scruff of Monroe’s beard against his face, his lips, but he can’t deny it feels good. Monroe dives into the Nick’s mouth, his big tongue mapping every inch of his sweet mouth. Nick submits beautifully under his dominance, unreservedly open and eager. Their tongues dance as Monroe rocks his straining cock against Nick’s thigh.

Nick pushes against Monroe’s shoulders, who willingly turns onto his back. His eyes immediately stare at Monroe’s enormous cock; he doesn’t know how that fits inside of him but damn he wants feel that monster fill him again. Monroe is quiet as Nick straddles his hips and grabs onto his thick length. Nick holds it still and slowly sinks down, shuddering as he is filled so sweetly, feeling complete with his mate filling him. He lifts hesitantly before sinking down again. Monroe’s hands support his hips as he lifts up and back down again. Nick leans back, loving how deep he can take Monroe. He bounces experimentally on Monroe’s dick, finding out what works best. Monroe is endlessly patient; how can he deny his mate time to explore? It doesn’t hurt that watching his Grimm bounce happily on his cock is insanely hot. But far too soon the playful pace is abandoned.

Nick rides Monroe determinedly, hard and fast. He is a faster learner and rides him like a pro. Being ridden skillfully and having to watch the pleasurable expressions flash on his mate’s face is too much for Monroe. He feels his knot start to expand and flips them around. He folds Nick in half and plunges deep. The forceful thrusts build as his knot catches on Nick’s rim. Monroe pulls out once more before shoving forward, knotting them together once more. He devours Nick’s mouth as his hips piston and he fills his mate with his seed. Nick groans and his own release splatters between their bodies, passing out. The first round of his pre-heat has finally been fucked out of him and exhaustion overpowers him.

Monroe is still pulsing as he cradles his mate, carefully unfolding Nick before he rolls them. Nick is
sprawled limply across his chest. Knowing that the mating pre-heat is finished for now, Monroe holds his mate tightly against him. This time when they both awake, they will need to talk. Nick is his mate and now Nicky knows it, which is the only thing that matters. The rest they can figure out together.

Chapter End Notes

If I haven't said so already, I do not own Grimm or its characters. I am paid only in reader's comments, which I willingly devour like potato chips!
The Talk Part One

Chapter Notes

For any of my Criminal Minds readers that are reading this and are not fans of Grimm: woge is a term that basically means the Wesen (aka creature) shows their creature face. Monroe's woge translates to red eyes, more werewolf-type hair on face and head, and pointed ears. Blutbaden is the plural, while Blutbad is singular.

Several hours later…

When Monroe awakens, his wolf is practically purring with the delicious weight of his mate still blissfully sprawled atop him. His large hand strokes his mate’s hair, who nuzzles Monroe’s neck contently in his sleep. Unable to help it, Monroe’s other hand strokes down Nick’s pale, naked back. Nick snuffles nosily, shifting his body in his slumber. The slide of their naked bodies is delicious, Monroe had cleaned them up before he went to sleep or otherwise they’d be a bit uncomfortable right now.

Monroe knows immediately when his mate awakens. Nick’s body stiffens and Monroe can smell the blush that spreads over Nick’s pale face and chest. Nick is frozen, unsure what to do. He is completely naked, lying atop an equally naked Monroe, with whom he had shockingly intense sex with numerous times during the night. *How the hell am I supposed to react without screwing things up? This is going to get really awkward and uncomfortable! Am I gay now?* Nick wonders to himself. *You had very enthusiastic sex with a guy, MULTIPLE times! You fucking begged for it! Face it Nick, that’s pretty gay. Oh my god, I’m totally gay for Monroe. I’m gay for Monroe. I’m gay for Monroe.*

Monroe is silent during Nick’s inner freak out, his large hand caressing up and down his mate’s bare back in soothing strokes. The touch loosens Nick’s tense muscles and quiets his frantic thoughts. “Nick,” Monroe rumbles.

Nick lifts his uncertain eyes to Monroe’s confident ones. He feels Monroe’s hand cup his cheek, his thumb brushing over his pale cheek with affection. “You are mine, Nick. Always. I’ll take care of you,” Monroe promises. There is love written clearly in his eyes and it settles something within Nick. This may not be what he expected, in no way did he anticipate this happening but he cannot deny this, whatever this is, feels right. “Kiss me?” Nick pleads softly. Monroe smiles gently and guides his mate’s head down until their lips meet. The kiss is tender, a slow meeting of lips with a glimpse of tongue. Nick melts into it, sighing quietly when it ends.

As much as Monroe wants to cradle his mate, their talk cannot be postponed any longer. With care, he sits up, disregarding Nick’s protests as he pulls his mate with him.

Nick blushed when the movement brings attention to the ache in his backside. He can’t help but squirm a bit, feeling the unfamiliar looseness of his well-used hole and the surprisingly delicious feeling of the slick wetness of Monroe’s cum still deep inside him.

“Let’s dress and then we will talk, okay?”

Nick covers his privates, suddenly feeling shy about his nudity. Monroe has no such issues; growing
up as in a Blutbaden pack, he is entirely comfortable with his nakedness. He pulls on fresh boxers from his bag and tugs on his sweatpants. When Nick makes no move to dress, Monroe decides to do it for him. Nick squeaks, which he will deny with his last breath, when Monroe grabs him. “What are you doing?!” Nick yells in outrage. Monroe smirks but pays his protests no mind. With regret, he pulls out the other set of boxers he packed from his bag. As much as he doesn’t want to cover Nick’s beautiful body, he’ll have to if they are actually going to talk instead of just fuck. Monroe tugs them up Nick’s legs with a regretful sigh, having his mate’s beautiful cock and perfect ass covered is a tragedy. If he could get away with it, Nick would never wear clothes…at least not around him. Nick continues to splutter as he is dressed like an invalid.

Finally dressed, Nick is feeling less exposed, although still not his usual confident self. “So…I guess we should talk about this.” His expressive gray eyes flick to Monroe’s before he lowers his gaze.

Monroe smiles at the submissive behavior. He is sure Nick isn’t even aware of it. “We should.”

Feeling awkward, Nick blurts, “So, I’m your mate?”

Laughing, Monroe answers, “Yes, you are my mate.”

“Blutbaden have mates? Like wolves or…?”

“Like wolves, yes. We mate for life.”

“Oh.” Nick blushes, embarrassed at the bubble of warmth that answer brings. “How do you know that I am your mate?”

“Scent. I knew the moment you tackled me, the moment I smelled you.”

Nick asks, “You’ve known all this time and never told me?!”

“I told you last night,” Monroe admits.

“And then told me to run! That’s the best you could do? A little warning would have been nice!”

Monroe shrugs. “You had to be ready and you were ready.”

“I had no idea what the hell was going on! I sure in hell wasn’t ready for anything!”

“Your body was,” he says nonchalantly. Monroe snickers as Nick flushes darkly. Before Nick can get angry and lash out, he pulls Nick into his arms. “Your body accepted that you are my mate long ago. You were in pre-heat. I could smell it.”

“What?!” Nick screeches. “Pre-heat! Humans don’t go into heat! Am I going into heat?!” Nick is freaking out.

Monroe clutches him tight, stroking Nick’s back comfortingly. “Shh, I promise to answer all your questions. Come on, Nicky, take some deep breaths for me, okay?!” Nick’s panicked breathing is halted as Monroe encourages him to take deep, calming breaths. “Better?” At Nick’s jerky nod, Monroe starts explaining. “Mates are important to Blutbaden; it is what every Blutbad searches for. There is nothing more important to a Blutbad than his or her mate. Nothing.” Nick smiles shyly at the vehemence in Monroe’s voice. Juliette had loved him but he had never felt like she couldn’t live without him. If what Monroe is saying is true, he is the most important person in the his life. “As I said, we mate for life. I will be very possessive of you.”

Nick jokes, “Right, so keep the kissing to a minimum.”
The joke falls flat when Monroe roars, “YOU ARE MINE NICHOLAS BURKHARDT! NO ONE ELSE’S!” He is in full woge.

Nick grimaces; clearly the joke was a big mistake. Not knowing how to apologize, he goes with his instinct and vows, “I am yours. Only yours.”

Monroe shudders, his Blutbad face bleeding away. Needing the reassurance, he caresses the bond mark he created on Nick’s neck. The claim, his claim on Nick helps to settle his wolf down a little but not enough to stop Monroe from yanking Nick into a dominating kiss. Nick has no choice but to surrender under the assault. His wolf practically purrs at his mate’s willing surrender. When Monroe finally pulls back Nick looks completely debauched.

Nick is afraid he is going to swoon like some goddamned woman in one of those romance novels. “Okay,” he says, dazed.

Monroe knows how the dangerous his wolf’s possessiveness can be. He needs Nick to understand the serious consequences of threatening his wolf’s claim of his mate. “Nick, there is next to nothing I can do to stop the possessive instincts of my wolf. Provoking them is dangerous, not to you but to others. I could never hurt you and neither could my wolf. You are precious to me, so very precious,” Monroe finishes with a whisper.

Nick’s gray eyes soften, “Monroe, this is all new to me.” His hands wave back and forth between them. “I’ve never…um, been with a man before. It’s a lot to take in, you know?”

Monroe’s wolf grumbles unhappily, Nick’s words sounding far too much like a rejection.

Nick sighs. “I’ll be straight with you. I don’t have the benefit of Blutbad scent recognition. I didn’t know the moment I sensed you that we’d be together. I felt something but I had no idea what it was. I couldn’t explain it, much less understand it. I didn’t have a clue what it meant, not for weeks. Do you how shocking it is to wake up from a wet dream and realize that you were dreaming about getting fucked by a dude for first time in your life? I am almost thirty years old!”

Monroe smirks wickedly, “You had wet dreams about me?”

Nick quirks an eyebrow as if to say ‘Really?’

“Sorry, sorry. Back to your big gay freakout.”

Nick’s eyes narrow. “Oh, so you want to sleep alone, do you?”

Monroe looks startled and immediately apologetic, practically stumbling all over himself in his haste, “Of course not, Nicky! I was only kidding!”

Nick is feeling smug at how quickly the tides have turned. One little threat and Monroe is jumping all over himself to apologize. He may not have knowledge of how this is supposed to work but he definitely has some power. “That’s what I thought. Now as I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, my life was pretty much a mess: the whole wet dream situation and trying to cope with being a new Grimm. It didn’t help that I felt like I had to keep everything happening a secret from Juliette.”

Monroe growls at the woman’s name.

“She’s gone you know; we broke up tonight or I guess last night. The more time I spent with you, the more my feelings grew. I only thought about you, not Juliette. She felt me pulling away and I couldn’t even tell her why. How could I explain? I didn’t even know how to explain it to myself.”
And it didn’t take long before her touch disgusted me. At the end, her touch actually *hurt*. Is that a Blutbad mate thing?*

“Yes. The longer the bond is—er—unconsummated, the more the bond pushes the two mates together. The bond can make the touch of a rival unpleasant, sometimes even painful.” Monroe’s wolf is happy that their bond had protected his mate from the woman.

“Now that the bond is…” Nick blushes, “you know, *complete*, will it still hurt?” Seeing the possessive fire in Monroe’s eyes, Nick rushes to explain himself. “I don’t want anyone else, Monroe. I promise. I just don’t know how this thing works. All I want is to understand.”

Monroe settles at the Nick’s reassurances, feeling a bit embarrassed by his jealousy and possessiveness. Yet, he knows this is a part of their bond and it always will be. He’s a Blutbad and Nick is his mate, his instincts will constantly be on the care and comfort of his mate, as well as protecting their bond above all else. “Our bond has been consummated and it should no longer hurt should a rival touch you. Typically, both mates can bear the touch of others without harm but the feelings of disgust at the touch of a rival may continue even after the bond is completed. Although threats to our bond are dangerous to whoever or whatever threatens it. I’m not sure how our bond will be different, considering you are not only human but a Grimm. My sole focus will be to take care of you, it is my role.”

“Your role? Then what’s my role?” Nick asks confused.

Not sure how to break this to his mate, Monroe stumbles over his words, “Well, you are—er—and I am—um…”

“Spit it out, Monroe,” Nick barks out with impatience.

“Well, Blutbaden mates, they have—”

“Monroe, just tell me!”

Monroe blurts out so quickly his words run together, “Onemateisdominantandtheotherissubmissive.”

“What?”

Mumbling quietly and much slower this time, “One mate is dominant and the other is submissive.”

Nick looks shocked, “Are you kidding me?! I’m not submissive!”

“With me, you are.”

Nick snarls at Monroe but the second Monroe looks at him with that Alpha power lighting his eyes, he instinctively lowers his eyes and bares his neck. “Shit.”

Monroe lifts Nick’s face, “Being submissive to me doesn’t make you weak, Nick. You’re not weak.”

“I’m a Grimm, as much of a predator as you are, and with one look, I submit. How is that not weak?” Nick asks wearily.

“But only to me. Do you know how powerful that is? It is a gift, Nicky. Your submission is a gift; it shows me and my wolf how much you trust *us*. All your power and strength, you trust me with it all. It takes strength to submit, to completely trust another to submit so easily. You are my equal, Nick, my mate.”
Nick isn’t completely comfortable with the idea of submitting to someone else but he does trust Monroe with his life. He responds, “Okay.” His brain is overloaded. Too much has happened, too much is new. He just needs some time to absorb what’s happened and what he has learned. “Can we stop now? I know there is more I need to know and more I don’t yet understand. But I’m tired.”

Monroe can see Nick is tired in both body and mind. “Sure, Nicky. Let’s go home.” He gathers their things and takes Nick’s hand, leading his mate to his home. There is no chance of Monroe leading Nick to the house he shared with that woman. Nick is his and they will stay in his territory. Nick is a bit stunned to be holding hands with Monroe but doesn’t protest. The walk to Monroe’s is quiet and comfortable. The moment they enter his home, Nick relaxes. It feels more like home than the house he’d shared with Juliette ever did. The familiar ticking of Monroe’s beloved clocks is soothing. Monroe leads Nick to the bathroom, stripping him and guiding him under the hot spray. He strips himself and gets in behind his mate. Nick is unresisting, letting Monroe scrub and wash him with loving care. Once they are clean, Monroe dries them both off.

Nick is dead on his feet and he leans heavily on his mate, more than willing to let Monroe to pull a pair of boxers on him. The minute he is guided onto Monroe’s huge bed, Nick falls asleep. Monroe dons his own boxers and gets into the bed beside Nick. His mate seeks Monroe’s warmth immediately, tucking himself firmly against him. Monroe has never been so content. He’s found his mate and their bond is strong already. A couple of pups and his life will be complete.

The thought of pups reminds Monroe of all the things he has yet to talk to Nick about. Like the knotting thing, Nick obviously didn’t know Blutbaden have knots. Plus, the whole pre-heat and heat thing and the fact that female Blutbaden aren’t the only ones able to get pregnant. Males are just as capable of carrying pups. Monroe isn’t sure what this will mean for Nick. He’s not a Blutbad or even another type of Wesen. Although the fact that he went into pre-heat is telling and Monroe is positive Nick was in pre-heat. His scent alone made that clear and him having orgasm after orgasm is also a signature of Blutbad mating pre-heat. Monroe thinks it is very likely that Nick will go into full heat and soon. Whether or not he’ll be fertile and able to be impregnated is a mystery. Either way, Monroe will have to tell Nick. Male pregnancy isn’t something he can just neglect to tell his mate, especially with a heat coming.
The Talk: Part Two

Chapter Notes

Thanks to both my dear and fabulous friend Gia, and allcmsue on fanfiction.net for pre-reading this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Nick wakes up groggy and confused. Through blurred vision, he looks around the room and doesn’t recognize it. *Where the hell am I?* As the sleep clears from his brain, he realizes that he’s being spooned by a large man. “Shit,” Nick mutters as remembers what happened the night before and well into the morning. His body tenses as Nick decides whether to sneak out of the bed and run screaming home or to continue to lie there being spooned by the large Blutbad that has claimed him as his mate. Monroe somehow seems to realize his distress and his big hand rubs soothing circles on his lower belly.

*You’ve got to be kidding me!* The simple caress makes Nick’s dick twitch and thicken.

Even in his sleep, Monroe can smell the scent of his mate’s arousal. His hand sneaks under the waistband of Nick’s boxers. He wraps his fingers around Nick and strokes him slowly. Nick closes his eyes and hisses quietly. Any thoughts of running away evaporate. He’s hard again. His cock seems ever eager to stand up at a single touch from Monroe. If sex with Monroe always feels this intense, this fucking good, then he will gladly resign himself to being Monroe’s bitch. A simple handjob, the slow glide of Monroe’s hand should not feel this good. It is not normal; he doesn’t know what the hell this is but it is not fucking normal. Because if this is how sex is supposed to be, then people would be dropping dead like flies and no one would ever leave the bedroom.

Nick can tell by Monroe’s breathing that he is still asleep even as his hand moves. Unable to help himself, he pushes back into Monroe until Nick can feel his mate’s hardness pressed tightly against his ass. Monroe groans and jerks his hips forward. He wakes up in an instant, taking note of his hand wrapped around Nick and his cock pressed sweetly against Nick’s ass. He smirks, “Couldn’t wait until I woke up, Nicky?”

Nick pouts, “You are the one that stuck your hand down my pants. It’s hardly my fault.”

Monroe laughs. “Well then, since it is apparently my fault I better take care of you, huh?” Nick is about to say something sarcastic when Monroe thumbs the tip of his dick. Nick whines and his hips jut forward. Monroe chuckles darkly in his ear, which Nick ignores in favor of focusing on fucking himself into Monroe’s fist. Nick rocks forward into the lovely tight grip and back into Monroe’s hardness. “That’s it, take what you need, Baby.” Nick rocks harder and faster, screaming as he cums all over Monroe’s fist. Monroe yanks his hand out of Nick’s boxers and shoves his mate onto his back. Monroe sits back and smiles, admiring the sight of his seed marking Nick as his. *He’s beautiful, my Nicky, completely gorgeous covered in my cum.*
face down his chest. Monroe offers his hand to his mate. Nick shyly laps up the mixture of his own and Monroe’s seed off Monroe’s hand. Monroe tugs off his boxers before he leans forward, lapping and licking Nick clean. By the time he’s done, he can feel how hard Nick has gotten just from Monroe’s tongue on his skin. The way Nick reacts to his touch only confirms that he is his mate. Nick was made for his touch and only his touch.

He eases Nick’s stained boxers down his legs; his tongue seeks out every droplet of cum still clinging to Nick. Monroe mouths his balls, tugging them gently. He tongues the slit, making Nick squirm and emit breathy, desperate sounds. Monroe sucks the tip, using his hand to stroke up and down the shaft. Nick’s fingers dig into the sheets as Monroe sinks down his dick. “Oh please. Oh god Monroe, please!” He begs prettily. Monroe takes him deep, his strong throat flexing around Nick’s cock. Monroe pulls off, stroking Nick over the edge. He closes his eyes as the hot cum spurts onto his face. Monroe mouths his balls, tugging them gently. He tongues the slit, making Nick squirm and emit breathy, desperate sounds. Monroe sucks the tip, using his hand to stroke up and down the shaft. Nick’s fingers dig into the sheets as Monroe sinks down his dick. “Oh please. Oh god Monroe, please!” He begs prettily. Monroe takes him deep, his strong throat flexing around Nick’s cock. Monroe pulls off, stroking Nick over the edge. He closes his eyes as the hot cum spurts onto his face. Nick groans as he opens his eyes and sees Monroe’s face covered in his semen. “Fuck, that’s hot.” Monroe opens his eyes slowly and stares at Nick, who makes grabby motions with his hands and Monroe crawls over to his mate. Monroe digs into his drawers for the boxers he bought for his mate and tosses a pair to Nick. Then he tugs on his own. Monroe knows they can’t have a serious talk if they’re naked.

“Are you ready to finish our talk, Nick?”

He shrugs. A part of him wants to avoid their talk entirely, sure he doesn’t want to know. But the part of him that knows that ignorance isn’t always bliss needs this talk.

Monroe guides Nick off the bed and downstairs to the kitchen. He sits on the stool while Monroe makes coffee. Monroe then starts preparing banana pancakes for breakfast. Nick watches him silently as he makes the pancake batter and starts frying them. Monroe plops three pancakes on a plate and hands it to Nick. The pancakes look good and he takes a bite. “Mmm.” Nick savors the sweetness of the blueberries and devours the rest of the pancakes on his plate.

Monroe smiles gently. “I’ll answer any questions you have.”

Nick blurs, “You were kidding about the p—pre-heat thing, right?” His face falls at the serious expression on Monroe’s face. “You’re not kidding, are you?”

Monroe shakes his head. “No. You really are in pre-heat.”

“But I’m human! I am not even Wesen!”

“Apparently, that doesn’t matter.”

Nick looks at him in disbelief, “Apparently? This hasn’t happened before?”
Monroe shrugs, “As far as I know, there has never been a Blutbad mated to a human, Grimm or not.”

Nick mutters to himself, “You just had to be the first, didn’t you Nick?” Taking a deep breath, he asks, “What does that mean? What is a pre-heat?”

“Pre-heat usually lasts a week or so. The couple will mate numerous times during pre-heat and is basically a preparation for the submissive mate’s heat.”

“So that’s the reason I—you know…” Nick vaguely gestures to his dick.

Monroe chuckles, “Yes, Nick. Your pre-heat is the reason why you have cum so many times in such a short time. You will likely crave contact with me until your heat hits.”

“I’m going into heat?”

“Yes.”

“And that means…what?”

“We’ll need to have sex, a lot of sex, for at least a couple of days.”

“Need? What happens if we don’t?”

Monroe is solemn, “Trust me, Nick, you don’t want to know. It would be excruciating for you if we didn’t.” Blutbaden have died from not mating during their heats. Monroe’s grandfather had told him a story of a Blutbad submissive that had been kidnapped and went into heat. The poor woman had died from the stress and pain of being separated from her mate during her heat.

Nick’s face looks pained, “Okay. Definitely don’t want that.” He thinks about it. “I’ll have to take off work then. Do you know when my—er—heat starts?”

Monroe breathes deeply; he can smell himself all over Nick and underneath that scent is Nick’s pre-heat smell. “In approximately five days, your heat will come.”

“And why am I going into heat? I mean it’s not like I could get pregnant or anything!” Nick jokes, laughing at the thought. His gray eyes meet Monroe’s and his laugh cuts out abruptly. “I can’t get pregnant, right? Because I’m a fucking man and men can’t get pregnant.”

Monroe’s expression is sheepish. “Well…actually Blutbaden pregnancies are not exclusive of females.”

“Are you fucking kidding me? Men can get pregnant?!” Nick screams.

“They can.”

Nick is freaking out again. *Wasn’t the whole I’m suddenly gay for Monroe and his fucking mate enough? Now I might get pregnant too! What the hell!* Nick takes a deep breath. “Okay, okay. But I’m not a Blutbad or a Wesen. I can’t get pregnant. I am a fucking male, a human. There is no way that I can get pregnant. Nope, not fucking happening.”

Monroe bites his lip, “That’s not exactly true.”

“What?! You aren’t telling me that it is possible?”

“It might be. Blutbaden matings are serious. I’ve never know a pair that was infertile, not true mates
at least.”

Nick stands hastily. “That’s it. Your dick isn’t getting anywhere near me. No fucking way. Fuck my heat. I suffer through it but you keep that huge monster you call a cock away from me,” Nick tries to run but Monroe grabs him before he has the chance. Monroe pulls him back to the couch, forcing his mate to sit on his lap. Nick struggles but his strength is no match for a Blutbad’s. He is still practically a baby Grimm and one day he will be a match for Monroe but that day is not today. Nick fights but cannot escape. Minutes later, he resigns himself to being stuck here with Monroe.

Once Nick settles down, Monroe cradles him lovingly in his arms. “I love you, Nick. There is nothing I want more than to have a family, have pups with you. But this—us—is new. My knowledge of Blutbaden mating won’t help here. I don’t know if you are fertile, Nick. That isn’t something we’ll know until after your heat.”

“The heat is supposed to get me pregnant, isn’t it?” Nick asks sounding tired.

“Traditionally, yes.”

“You want that?”

“Of course I do, Nicky. You are my mate and I’d love to have pups with you.”

Nick asks timidly, “What—if we can’t, you know?”

Monroe grubs Nick’s chin gently and turns his face toward his own. “If we can’t, I will still love you. We will always have each other. That is all that matters, Nick.”

Nick blinks back tears, the sharp, heavy pain in his chest eases. This is new and crazy and he’s still overwhelmed and fucking confused as hell but his emotions are already invested in this, in them. He wants and needs Monroe with an intensity that scares him. The thought of Monroe leaving him is terrifying, even more so than being a pregnant man.

Monroe guides his head to his shoulder and uses long, soothing strokes down Nick’s back to calm and soothe him. Nick lets Monroe’s scent flood his senses and inch by inch he relaxes. The fact that he could possibly get pregnant is still weird as shit and a bit frightening but he will have Monroe will him, whatever happens.

Nick breaks the silence, “What’s that—er—bulge thing on your—um…”

Monroe can smell and see Nick’s pretty blush. “My knot.”

“A…knot?”

Monroe explains, “Like dogs, male Blutbaden have knots. It is for breeding.”

“Breeding?”

“Locks the mates together and the seed inside the bitch; it increases the chances of impregnating the bitch.”

“Did you just call me a bitch?” Nick demands, sounding offended.

Monroe’s amusement rises, although he is smart enough to keep it hidden. Nick is definitely the bitch in this relationship especially if he turns out to be fertile but he doesn’t need to know that. “Of course not, Nicky.”
Nick eyes him suspiciously but accepts the answer.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will possibly have some awkwardness: Nick limping at work for reasons he has to lie about, Wesen (at work, i.e. Renard, and possibly other places/people as well) smelling Monroe's claim on Nick, Wesen smelling his pre-heat scent, Nick struggling to come up with a lie for taking off work, maybe some hardcore cuddling. Knowing the two horny bastards, they'll likely get naked and have some sexy fun.
The next morning, Nick is awaken by a painful, empty ache inside him a couple of hours later. Still half asleep, he whimpers softly. Nick instinctively presses his ass back into Monroe, grinding into him. Monroe grunts, opening his eyes slowly. He quickly takes note of his mate’s desperate movements and his incoherent cries. “Shh, my mate. Let me make it better.” Monroe inserts a leg between Nick’s and gently exposes his entrance. Lining himself up, Monroe eases inside. Nick sighs, “Monroe…full.” The ache is gone, filled sweetly by his mate, who is thrusting lazily. Nick goes back to sleep, not even hard. He got what he needed: to be filled. Monroe chuckles as his slow, steady thrusts lull Nick to sleep. His mate barely twitches as Monroe knots and fills him. Tied together securely, Monroe soon drifts off as well.

The next time Nick awakes it isn’t because of a painful emptiness but his morning alarm blaring on his phone. Fumbling, Nick shuts off the alarm and grumbles about not wanting to get up. Slowly, his mind wakes up and brings a few things into focus. First, he feels full, practically full enough to burst. Nick touches his stomach and swears he can feel the loads of come extending it. Second, Monroe is knotted inside him. His mind stutters. *Well, fuck.* He and Monroe had fucked like bunnies all over the house yesterday but Monroe had eaten him out before bed. Nick shouldn’t be filled with come…not unless he slept through multiple rounds of sex during the night. He has a fuzzy memory of a painful emptiness but isn’t sure if that was a dream or a memory.

Monroe kisses the back of Nick’s neck. “Morning.”

“Morning,” Nick echoes, voice thick with sleep. After a few seconds of silence, Nick blurts out,
“Did you fuck me while I was sleeping?”

Laughing quietly, Monroe answers, “Technically...yes. You woke me up at about three this morning, in obvious pain. But as soon as I was inside you, you stopped whimpering and fell asleep before I even finished. I am not even sure you were fully awake. Either way, it was clear you needed it from the sounds you made. It happened again at five and a few minutes before your alarm woke you up. I’ve heard it happens to some mates before a heat, where the submissive needs to be filled almost constantly during the night or else they are in pain.”

Nick marvels to himself. *This is so fucking weird. How is this my life now? I thought learning about Wesen existing was weird. Now men can get pregnant and my ass fucking hungers for Monroe’s dick.* “Fuck, is this going to happen while I’m at work?” How would he explain to Hank or Captain Renard or Wu? *Don’t mind me, I’m just screaming in pain ’cause my ass hurts. Nothing that can’t be solved by getting fucked by my male Blutbad mate. Nothing strange here.* Nick is unsurprisingly freaking out.

Monroe pulls out carefully and turns his mate to face him. “Nick. Nick! Calm down. How much time do you have until you have to leave?”

Taking a deep, calming breath Nick answers, “An hour.”

“Okay. You are going to shower and I’ll make breakfast. Before you leave, I’ll fuck and fill you. A butt plug should let you get through the day without me.”

“Are you kidding me? I’m not wearing a fucking butt plug to the police station! Are you insane? They’re cops, they are going to notice that I’m walking like I got something up my ass ’cause I fucking do!”

Monroe is calm despite Nick’s cursing. “Nick. We’ve been having sex practically non-stop for a few days. Trust me, butt plug or not, you are already going to be limping. We can do it your way but do you want to explain that you have to leave because your ass hurts from being empty?”

“Fuckity fuck fucking, son of a bitch!” Nick rants, not wanting to admit Monroe is right.

Amused, Monroe drawls, “Yes, I am a son of a bitch.”

Nick’s laugh is slightly manic. “My life is fucking weird as shit.”

“Good weird?” Monroe asks teasingly.

This situation with Monroe is freaking weird but Nick’s never felt more pleasure. Despite Nick being dragged along by his body’s urges, he has enjoyed being with Monroe. Monroe cares for him and only wants to make him happy. More than once, Monroe has told him that he is the most important person in his life and that he’ll do anything and everything he can to make him happy. Monroe loves him. Nick isn’t sure how he feels yet but he knows Monroe makes him feel good, not just in bed but out of it as well. “Good weird,” he admits reluctantly.

Monroe grins, kissing Nick’s smiling lips. Nick moans as his mate coaxes him to share wet, French kisses. Monroe sucks on Nick’s tongue, pulling his Grimm atop him. Nick groans and his hips jerk forward. He grinds and thrusts desperately against his Blutbad. Monroe grabs his ass and helps Nick rock against him until he spills wetly between them. He kisses him possessively as Nick eases down from his orgasm high. A minute later, Monroe orders, “Go. Shower.”

A dazed looking Nick gets up and pads naked to the bathroom, a clear limp in his gait. He seems unaware of the cum dripping down his leg.
Despite wanting to follow his mate, Monroe forces himself to go downstairs and start breakfast. Five minutes later, Nick comes down wearing only a towel. He sees no reason to get dressed only to strip a few minutes later. Nick’s time in the shower made him realize that Monroe is somewhat right. He is not wearing a fucking butt plug at work but the fucking might be a good idea. Nick is limping enough, thank you very much. No need to make it worse by sticking latex or whatever the hell plugs are made of up his ass. Breakfast is again delicious but Nick takes little time to savor. Finished, he nonchalantly tears off the towel. Monroe’s mouth hangs open, his food forgotten at the sight of his mate’s nakedness. Nick drags him to the couch, yanks his pants and boxers down and pushes him on to the couch. Without hesitation, Nick straddles him, sinks onto his cock and starts to move. Monroe’s hands automatically fall to his mate’s hips as Nick rides him. The fierce expression on Nick’s face is doing nothing to stave off his speedily approaching orgasm. Monroe tries to say something but nothing intelligible comes out.

Nick grins wickedly, pleased that he isn’t the only one that can be rendered speechless by sex. He snaps his hips faster and faster as Monroe’s fingers dig into his hips. There’s no doubt he will have finger shaped bruises on his slim hips. Monroe breaks first, his knot swelling rapidly. He growls deeply as he fills his mate. Nick bounces on Monroe’s lap until he too reaches his peak. Languid, Nick collapses forward as he catches his breath. Monroe’s large hands stroke his bare back soothingly until his knot shrinks. With gentle hands, he eases Nick’s head back. “You’d better get dressed Nicky. You don’t want to be late. Do you want me to get the plug ready for you?”

Nick’s face leaves no doubt that he just had very satisfying sex and Monroe wonders if that expression will disappear before Nick gets to the station.

Shaking his head, “No. I’ll be fine. If I have to, I will come home for lunch.”

“Okay, Nick.” Monroe doesn’t push.

Nick drags himself up, finding his towel he wipes himself off. Monroe’s sleep shirt is cum-covered and he tears it off before pulling up his boxers and sleep pants. He smiles to himself as he watches Nick walk upstairs naked.

Nick spends the drive to the station thinking up a believable lie. He can’t just blurt out “Oh hey, I’m gay now and my boyfriend is that guy I thought was kidnapping those kids. I spent the whole weekend with his sizable cock up my ass, which is why I can’t walk without a limp.” That would go over well, wouldn’t it? Wu would probably make some snarky response but Hank would look at him like he has lost his mind. Nick wishes it he could blame ice but he unfortunately isn’t that lucky. Sitting in the parking lot, Nick checks himself in the mirror and sighs loudly at the sight. *How the hell am I going to fool all those cops? Wu and Hank and Captain?* To his own eye, Nick looks sex dazed. What can he expect when he and Monroe spent most of the weekend fucking. He rubs his hands over his face roughly. He stares at himself in the mirror until he looks more like himself and less like the sex addict Monroe apparently turned him into.

Steeling himself, Nick limps into work, groaning in his head when the first person he sees is Wu.

“Morning Nick.” His eyebrow quirks at Nick’s pronounced limp. “Have some fun this weekend?”

Wanting to blush but knowing that if he does Wu will never, ever let it go. “Nothing that fun. I fell in the shower this morning.”

“You fell in the shower this morning…” Wu echoes in disbelief.

Nick can read the doubt in Wu’s eyes and the speculation.
Wu grins suddenly, “Don’t worry, Nick, the boys and I will be sure to install those safety bars in your shower for you. Don’t forget that rubber mat with the flowers just like my Nana has. Oh! And we’ll get you one of those medical alert necklaces too. Can’t be too careful.”

Nick grits his teeth and walks away with as much dignity as he can.

Wu yells at Nick’s back, “You will be safe in your house again, Nick, leave it to me!”

Nick comforts himself by telling himself it could have been a lot worse. Lost in his head, he doesn’t notice the reaction of a man that walks past him. The man, a Wesen, recognizes the scents coming from Nick immediately: a Blutbad has claimed him and Nick is in pre-heat. The man wonders if Nick is a Blutbad too before shrugging and moving on. Nick is stopped several more times for an explanation on his injury and is subjected to further teasing from his fellow officers.

Hank is sitting at his desk. “What happened to you?”

Nick expression reflects his growing frustration. He growls, “I fell in the shower, okay?”

“Whoa, bite my head off Nick. I only asked a question.”

Taking a deep calming breath, “Sorry Hank. It’s been a difficult morning.”

“No problem, man.” Hank is smirking despite his serious tone, “So you fell in your shower, huh?”

Clenching his teeth, Nick replies, “Yes.” He can’t change his story now. Nick must fully commit to the lie. He is not telling his partner about his sex crazed weekend with Monroe.

Hank leans back in his chair. “In the shower…your shower?”

The little muscle in his jaw flutters angrily. “Yes, in my shower.”

“Alone or with Juliette?”

“Alone. We broke up this weekend.” *Wow, this is the first time I’ve thought about Juliette since Monroe and I….*

Hank sits up quickly, “What? You and Juliette broke up?”

Nick silently cheers; Hank is now more concerned about his breakup with Juliette than his ‘fall’ in the shower. *Fall in the shower, right. More like fall onto Monroe’s huge dick.* The thought makes his own dick twitch. *Fuck, stop thinking about Monroe’s dick you idiot!*

“Nick. Nick!”

He startles at the sound of his name. “What?”

“What happened?”

“When?”

“With Juliette?” Hank eyes him suspiciously.

Nick shrugs, pretending to be baffled. “I don’t know. I thought we were fine but obviously we weren’t.” A person would think that being with Juliette for years would have made the breakup hard but Nick only feels relieved. At least with Monroe he doesn’t have to hide who he is anymore.
“Women. I’ve been married three times and I still don’t understand them. Sometimes I see the appeal of being gay; at least men are easy to understand,” Hank mutters almost to himself.

Nick’s mouth gapes open. He asks in a disbelieving tone, “What?” Nick swears he can see a blush forming on Hank’s dark skin. “Are you blushing?”

“What?! Nooo!” Hank’s tone only serves to make it clearer that he is blushing.

“You are totally blushing!”

Hank splutters, “I am not!”

Nick grins, happy to have the upper hand for once this morning. “Anything you’d like to tell me, Hank?”

Hank is saved from having to answer when Wu walks in and tells them they’ve got a case.

The rest of the day goes fairly smoothly. The perp is immediately identified and they spend the day searching for the man. They find Jay Candle hiding in his mother’s basement still covered in the victim’s blood. Candle is unresisting when they come for him.

Upon arriving back at the station, Hank and Nick are called into Captain Sean Renard’s office. It is only Renard’s rigid control that prevents him from reacting when Nick walks in. Sean is completely taken aback by the scent coming off Nick. For Nick to not only be claimed by a Wesen—a Blutbad at that—but to also be in pre-heat is unheard of. Renard has never heard of any human male, Grimm or otherwise, that is capable of going into pre-heat.

Once Nick and Hank update him on the case, Nick stays behind. He looks nervous as he waits for Hank to leave and shut the door. “Captain, I was hoping to get a week off. Starting Friday?”

*So Nick knows he’s going into heat.* Renard nods, “Sure Nick. Pretty short notice but I’m sure I can find someone to cover for you.”

Nick fights a blush, “Uh yeah. Juliette and I broke up and I just need some time.”

Renard makes a sympathetic noise while smirking in his head. *What a perfect lie. Good job, Nick.* “Are you okay to work the rest of this week or would you like to start your vacation now?”

Flustered, Nick hastily answers, “No. I’m good. Friday is fine.”

“Okay.” When Nick doesn’t leave, Sean asks, “Was there something else?”


“Goodnight Nick.” Sean wonders to himself how this is going to change his plans for Nick.

Nick is greatly relieved to say goodnight to his co-workers and head home. His mind wanders as he drives home on autopilot. Minutes later, he finds himself in front of the house he’d shared with Juliette. Without a second thought, Nick leaves and drives to Monroe’s home. That place feels more like home than his own house does. Entering the house with the key Monroe had given him, Nick can’t resist announcing, “I’m home.” Smiling at how strange yet somehow fitting that is, Nick goes in search of Monroe. He finds him is in his workroom, delicately and carefully fixing a clock. Shrugging, Nick goes to the bedroom, strips to his boxers and climbs into the big bed. He is thankful
that his hours away from Monroe hadn’t hurt him. Nick may have felt a bit lonely without Monroe but no pain. The case and the seemingly endless teasing had made the day feel longer. He is tired and falls asleep within minutes.

When he wakes, Nick finds himself sprawled half on top of a sleeping Monroe. He smiles, rubbing his cheek against the coarse hair on Monroe’s bare chest. His Blutbad snuffles in his sleep and one of his large hands sneaks under the waistband of Nick’s boxers to cup his butt cheek possessively. Not sure whether to be offended or embarrassed or pleased, Nick mentally shrugs and snuggles into Monroe and falls back asleep. The next time Nick wakes, he finds himself blanketed by Monroe’s body. One of Monroe’s legs is thrown over one of his and Monroe’s body is plastered to his back, a heavy and hairy arm is slung over his chest. Nick wiggles in an attempt to escape but it only serves to make Monroe grip him tighter and pull him closer. “Monroe?” Nick receives no answer and again tries to wiggle out of Monroe’s hold. Hearing Monroe growl softly in warning, Nick freezes, unsure how to react. But when Nick’s struggles cease, Monroe quiets and snuffles contently. The warm, comforting presence of Monroe soon relaxes Nick. He resigns himself to being aggressively cuddled by a large, sleeping Blutbad. Despite being practically smothered by Monroe’s cuddling, Nick finds he kind of likes it. He feels safe and protected in a way he has never experienced before. It’s sort of nice. Nick concludes he might as well enjoy it as he can’t escape until Monroe wakes anyway.

This is apparently his life now, he might as well get used to it.

Chapter End Notes

Voting time is pretty much ended. Sean and Hank are paired, obviously from the tags. I now have ideas (complete with pics) for both Wu and Rosalie’s mates.
Sean Gives Hank Something to Blush About

Chapter Notes

Didn’t I just update this story? Why yes, yes I did! Lol. I got the idea for this chapter a few days ago and it would NOT leave me alone. I might have gotten a little (ahem a lot) obsessed. If you couldn’t tell from the chapter title, this is how Sean Renard and Hank get together. Enjoy!

Warning: there is a bit of a dub con in this chapter. Be mindful if that is a trigger for you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Monday night:

Sitting in his lavish apartment, Sean lounges naked on his couch. His hand is wrapped around his cock, the smell of Nick’s coming heat still affecting him. He imagines every Wesen that inhaled Nick’s scent is doing the same; although the lucky ones will have someone and won’t be doing it alone. * I wish I had someone to fuck.* Sean supposes he could call Adalind but he isn’t that desperate. It isn’t like she hasn’t thrown herself all over him already. But while he isn’t afraid of trouble usually, that woman is more trouble than any piece of ass is worth. Had she been a man, he might have been more tempted. It isn’t that he doesn’t like women; it is simply that fucking a man gives him a rush that no woman can compete with. There is nothing better than having a powerful man under you, begging you to fuck him harder.

Sean sighs, realizing that the lust provoked from Nick’s scent isn’t going to be satisfied by his hand. He makes his way to his bedroom. Sean digs into his toy box and takes out his suction sleeve. He may not be able to fuck who wants right now but at least with the sleeve he can use his imagination. Sean settles onto his bed and closes his eyes. In his fantasy, a tall man with beautiful chocolate skin strips in front of him, revealing his powerful frame. The man gives him a sultry smile as he climbs onto the bed and straddles Sean. He doesn’t hesitate to sink onto Sean’s waiting cock and starts to ride. Sean’s breath hitches as he sees it in his mind, the big, muscular man fucking himself on his dick with lust written all over his masculine face. Sean thrusts up, fucking into the man’s tight hole. The man takes it so good, takes him so good. The man moans as Sean’s cock drives into him over and over, begging him to fuck him harder. Sean obeys, snapping his hips harder until he grunts and fills the man with his cum.

The moment he opens his eyes, however, the fantasy is broken. Sean is alone and suddenly the orgasm feels unsatisfying. He sighs audibly in his empty apartment. It is going to be a long week if he has to do this every night he comes home.

\[NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M\]

Having been dumped by his latest girlfriend, Hank is trying to drown his sorrows in alcohol at his favorite bar. He should have called Nick and they could have gotten drunk together, bonding over their mutual breakups but he hadn’t. Partly because Hank isn’t sure how he’d explain to Nick the reason for his breakup...how do you tell your partner that your girlfriend caught you jerking off to gay porn?

It’s been six months since Hank had discovered he wasn’t as straight as he’d thought when he’d
stumbled across a gay porno by accident. Instead of grossing him out as he would have thought, watching two guys fuck made him hard.

When Carrie caught him tonight, Hank hadn’t known what to do, what to say. He obviously hadn’t been expecting her and he had no explanation. Carrie had caught him dick in hand watching two big dudes fucking and there wasn’t an excuse in the world he could give that she would believe. She’d screamed at him, understandably upset and dumped him on the spot.

Watching gay porn aside, Hank doesn’t think he is gay. His sex with Carrie had been satisfying. Not mind blowing or anything but good. Hank just watches gay porn; he isn’t going to gay clubs looking to get fucked or to fuck a dude. He’s not gay, he’s…well, he doesn’t know what he is.

Taking another drink, Hank thinks to himself, *Just because I get off watching guys fuck each other, doesn’t mean I’m gay. Right?* This isn’t something he wants to think about, thus all the alcohol.

He’d given up his keys several drinks ago, knowing there is no way he’ll be sober enough to drive. When the bartender cuts him off for the night, Hank grabs his phone and dials Nick through blurry eyes.

“Hello.”

“Shit.” Hank did not dial Nick as he thought but Captain Sean Renard instead. Unbeknownst to Hank, his miscall is for the best as Nick is currently being fucked and knotted by his mate and wouldn’t have been getting his call for quite a while.

“Hank?”

“Sorry Cap’ain, I meant to call Nick.”

“What do you need, Hank?” Sean asks.

“Imma call Nick.”

Sean coaxes, “Tell me what you need.”

Hank mumbles, “A ride. I need a ride home.” He knows he is too drunk to drive.

“Where are you?”

“You don’t need—”

Sean is forceful this time, “Tell me where you are.”

Hank gives him the name of the bar and Sean hangs up without a word. He sits there stupidly staring at his phone and wondering why the hell his boss is coming to pick his drunk ass up and drive him home.

Sean couldn’t be happier to get a call from Hank, the man he’s been fantasizing about for several months. His inhibitions are still lowered by Nick’s pre-heat scent and his lust fogged brain determines this is his only chance to test the waters without fucking everything up. Many gay men would look to Nick as their first choice but not Sean. Nick is a short pretty boy. Hank on the other hand is not. He is tall and built, maybe not the striking beauty Nick is but when he smiles, he is absolutely gorgeous. And Sean wants to fuck him so badly it hurts.

Some minutes later Hank watches as Renard slinks into the bar, confident and dangerous like a sleek
predator. The bartender hands Renard Hank’s keys. Hank doesn’t resist as his boss lugs him up and half carries him to the SUV. The ride is silent but not uncomfortably so as Hank expects. Outside his house, Hank is about to thank Renard for the ride when the man gets out of the driver’s seat and comes around to the passenger side. Despite Hank’s protests, Sean helps him to the door and inside. Unsure what to do with Renard in his kitchen, he offers, “Coffee?”

“Sure.”

With care Hank walks to the coffee machine and starts making coffee.

As much as he enjoys staring at Hank’s ass, Sean realizes this is his chance. He boxes Hank in and waits for him to realize it. The hairs on the back of Hank’s neck stand up and he feels Renard at his back. Hank takes longer than he would if he was sober to react. Sean watches as he slowly turns around. Hank’s mind is clearly not firing on all cylinders and he looks confused. Sean doesn’t give him a chance to reach any conclusions but instead tilts his face up and covers his lips with his own. His kiss is confident and coaxing. Hank is stunned: his boss, his male boss is kissing him! His brain stutters, trying to swim through the alcohol enough to realize how he should react. Sean nibbles on Hank’s lips, sucking softly on his plump top lip. Sean eases back for a moment to catch his breath and try to gauge Hank’s reaction.

“Oh,” Hank blurts out in surprise, fingers instinctively touching his lips. The kiss felt good, very good. He stares at Renard with wide eyes as if seeing him in a totally different light. His tone is a bit dreamy as he mumbles, “So that’s what it feels like to kiss a guy.” Hank admits to himself, *I might be a little gay.*

A smug grin forms on Sean’s face. Looks like he won’t have to let Hank believe this was only a drunken hallucination. Sean adores the look of surprised pleasure on a supposedly straight man’s face when he realizes he enjoys the touch of another man.

Hank gulps audibly at the predatory expression on Renard’s face. His jaw drops when his boss sinks to his knees and starts opening his fly. Renard doesn’t hesitate to pull his cock out, stroking it confidently. It is then that Hank realizes he’s hard. *What the actual fuck?* His intoxicated brain struggles with the implications but every thought is wiped from his brain when Renard starts sucking his dick. Hank can only hold onto his kitchen counter with a white knuckle grip; he stares down at Renard as he fucking blows his mind with his mouth. Before he can even voice a warning, Hank is coming down Renard’s throat.

Sean pulls off and licks his lips. This is going even better than he’d imagined. Hank is wonderfully responsive. Sean slowly strips Hank of his clothing with minimal protests before doing the same to himself.

Hank can’t help but gaze upon Renard’s hard body. His boss is like a fucking Greek god, better than the porn stars he’d watched ‘cause he can touch. Without thought, Hank reaches out, splaying his hands over Renard’s chest. “Oh.” It is different but Hank likes it, likes the hard powerful muscles under his fingertips. His mind stutters at the sight of Renard’s cock. He’s never seen another guy hard before, not in person. In porn yes but that is totally different than seeing your boss’s dick hard and dripping from sucking your cock.

Sean doesn’t give him much time to think about it before he drags his subordinate to the bedroom. Hank is pushed onto the bed, looking up at Renard’s nakedness. He looks a bit lost and scared but never once asks Sean to stop. As much as Sean wants to fuck Hank, he fights against the lust burning in his veins. Instead, Sean climbs onto the bed. Leaning over Hank, Sean starts to stroke himself. His eyes never leave Hank’s even as his hand speeds up. Sean shoves aside any guilt at the sight of Hank’s blown pupils. He knows Hank wants this, wants him. Hank’s eyes are glued to
where Renard is fucking his own fist. His inhibitions are lowered by the alcohol and Hank reaches out to wrap his hand around Renard’s. Sean groans as his cock is stroked by his and Hank’s fists together. Hank’s eagerness to touch him only hurls him toward the brink faster. In far too short a time, Sean cums all over his hand and Hank’s and all over Hank, who blinks in surprise. The sensation is both familiar and new to Hank. He’s cum on himself before but never had another man’s cum on him. Curious, Hank drags a finger through the Renard’s cum. He stares at it not sure what to think. Watching gay porn hasn’t really prepared him for this.

Sean interrupts his pondering by grabbing Hank’s hand and sucking the cum off his finger. He smirks at the stunned look on the detective’s face. Sean laps up the cum on Hank’s body, licking him clean. The renewed erection poking at him only serves to make him feel smug. Sean crawls up Hank’s body and takes possession of his lips, giving him no choice but to submit under his forceful kiss. Hank moans as Sean coaxes his mouth open and maps his mouth with his tongue. Hank is drunk enough to enjoy the kiss without really having to be bothered with the implications of kissing a man. Sean takes a hold of Hank’s erection, pumping him in smooth strokes.

Hank throws back his head and arches into Renard’s hand. “Oh god!” Sean nibbles on his neck before sinking his teeth into Hank’s shoulder. Hank screams, shooting his load all over Renard’s hand and immediately passes out.

Sean grins to himself, making the decision to stay the night. He has gotten a taste of his delectable detective and he is not giving him up easily. Sean finds a washcloth and wipes Hank and then himself clean. He climbs into Hank’s big bed naked and spoons behind him. Sean expects quite the freakout in the morning but if he has his way, Hank will quickly be distracted by more pleasurable thoughts.

The following morning:

Hank freaks out to find himself sprawled on the body of another man. His head jerks up and his mouth falls open in shock. Not just any man but his very naked boss. His attempts to scramble away are thwarted when Renard’s arms tighten around him. Hank breathing quickens as he starts to panic. Sean opens his eyes to see Hank frantically trying to escape. Hank’s eyes are wide and filled with confusion and dread. Sean orders in an authoritative tone, “Breathe.” Hank gasps in air. “That’s it. In, out.” Sean loosens his hold and allows Hank to scramble away enough to get some distance between them. He does nothing to cover himself up, lying there unashamedly naked. Hank on the other hand is clutching the sheet like a shy virgin.

“Why?” Hank can’t ask more than that. He vaguely gestures to Renard’s nakedness and his own.

Sean quirks a brow, drawling, “Why are we both naked?”

“YES!”

Sean can’t help but tease, “Why do people usually wake up naked together?”

Hank curses, “Fuck.” More than anything he doesn’t want this to be what it looks like because he’s not gay. Okay, so maybe he watches gay porn and maybe it gets him hard but he likes women, loves them. And this is his boss, his very male boss. And they’re both naked, very naked. Together, naked together.

“That usually is the reason, isn’t it?” Sean declares with amusement, a bit of a smirk on his face. His smug attitude only a cover to hide his guild at taking advantage of his drunk subordinate. Influenced
by Nick’s pre-heat or not, Sean shouldn’t have had sex with Hank while he was under the influence of alcohol. And instead of apologizing, he is antagonizing Hank. But Sean can’t seem to stop himself. He wants Hank and all he is doing is ruining any chance he’d had with him.

Hank wants to smack that damned smirk off Renard’s face. He closes his eyes, rubbing his temples to soothe his pounding headache. Afraid to open his eyes, Hank asks quietly, “Did we?”

“What? Fuck?”

“Yeah.”

“Depends on what you mean by fuck.”

Frustrated with Renard already, Hank growls, “Did we have sex? Yes or no??”

Sean scans Hank’s naked body with predatory hunger clear in his eyes. “Oh, we definitely had sex.”

Hank is shocked by the shiver of lust that runs through his body at the way Renard is looking at him. *What the fuck is happening to me??* He can feel his cock stirring just from Renard’s passion-filled gaze on him. His hungover mind unhelpfully gives him flashes of how pleasurable it felt to have Renard kissing and sucking him. Hank’s mind and his body are clearly in disagreement about his level of gayness. “I’m not gay.” Hanks thinks to himself, “And if I watch gay porn, that’s nobody’s business but my own.”

Sean’s eyebrows rise in surprise.

“Fuck. I said that out loud, didn’t I?” *So not helping yourself out here Hank!* he scolds himself.

“Yes, you did.” Sean is intrigued, he might just be able to save this situation.

Hank wearily rubs his hands over his face. “Is there any possible way for you to forget I said that?”

“I don’t think so. Want to explain to me how you are not gay again?”

“Watching porn doesn’t make me gay!”

“No? What about getting off with me?” Sean smirks, “Quite eagerly at that.”

Hank growls, “I was drunk! What’s your excuse?!”

Sean turns away, mumbling, “I saw my chance and I took it.” The words come out of his mouth before he can even think about it.

“What?”

He knows Hank heard him; there is no taking it back. Resigned, Sean admits softly, “I saw my chance and took it, okay?”

Hank is confused. “I don’t understand.”

Gathering his courage, Sean gazes deep into Hank’s eyes and declares, “I want you, Hank. I’ve wanted you for a long time.”

“What?”

Sean’s expression softens and he reaches over to cup his Hank’s cheek. Hank is once again stunned.
Renard’s hand fits his cheek perfectly and the soft drag of his thumb against his lip fills him with the sudden and unexplainable urge to suck the digit into his mouth.

“Can you blame me? You are smart and loyal, strong and sexy. And you have an ass that would fit perfectly in my very capable hands.”

Hank blushes under Renard’s heated gaze.

“I wanted you in my bed for a long time, Hank and I’m sorry this is how it happened. But I can’t regret giving you pleasure. As much as I probably should, I won’t apologize for taking the chance to live the fantasy I’ve had for far too long.”

Hank is silent, not sure what to say. His whole not gay theory seems to be crumbling rapidly under his feet. A single touch from Renard and his body responds instantly. His nipples pebble and his cock hardens. His mouth tingles and he has to fight an astonishingly powerful urge to suck Renard’s thumb inside the wet cavern of his mouth. And Renard proclaiming that he wants him, fills him with intense heat. Hank is afraid that he wants Renard too.

“I’ll make you a deal, Hank.” His head snaps up, unsure whether he is hoping that this deal will result in Renard leaving and allowing Hank to pass this off as some bizarre drunk fantasy or will lead to sex... sex with Renard. Sean sees the hope in Hank’s eyes but can’t tell what Hank is hoping for. Sean knows what he is hoping for; for them both to be on the winning side of this deal. “Kiss me once and tell me that you don’t feel something worth going for. If you can do that, I’ll pretend this never happened.”

It isn’t exactly what he’d been expecting but what could one kiss hurt? Still clutching the sheet to his body, Hank tentatively shuffles toward Renard. He leans forward, intending to pull back almost immediately. Yet, the moment his lips touch Renard’s, Sean grabs his head and deepens the kiss. The quick peck turns into an unexpectedly passionate kiss. Sean drowns Hank in pleasure, overloading his mind with lust and provoking his body to respond. Like an out of body experience, Hank feels a clear disconnect between what his body is doing and what his mind is telling him he should be doing. His body apparently wins as Hank drops the sheet and straddles Renard’s lap, unconsciously grinding down. Sean’s hands fall to Hank’s ass, parting his cheeks to allow his cock to slide between them. In shock, Hank drops his head to Renard’s shoulder. His hole flutters as Renard drags his dick through his plump cheeks.

“What the fuck I am doing?” Hank wonders aloud.

Sean stills, asking in a quiet voice, “Do you want me to stop?”

Hank’s first instinct is to say no. But he forces himself to think. He has a dick between his ass cheeks and is straddling Captain fucking Renard. And for the first time in his life, Hank feels a strange emptiness. Everything is new and it is overwhelming. He doesn’t know what to do, what’s he should do.

“What? Hank?” Sean asks in a soft, concerned tone. He gently lifts Hank’s face until their eyes meet. Sean can see the struggle on Hank’s face and his expression softens.

Hank is stunned to see the tender look on Sean’s face. *He cares about me. Whatever this is, whatever he wants from me, Renard really cares about me.* Knowing this settles something within Hank and gives him to courage to take a chance. “No. Don’t stop.”

Sean searches his eyes carefully but finds nothing that indicates Hank is lying to himself or to Sean. With his cock settled firmly between Hank’s cheeks, Sean encourages Hank to lean back. Sean
wraps a hand around Hank’s leaking dick and strokes him while his hips rock smoothly. Hank is so responsive, obviously not holding back despite the newness of being with a man. Sean eats up every little sound, every expression of lust and pleasure that flashes on Hank’s handsome face.

“Cum for me,” Sean demands. With a surprising lack of hesitation, Hank spurts obediently in his hand. The sight of Hank coming on command hurls Sean over the edge, wetting Hank’s ass with his cum.

Hank slumps forward onto Renard, trying to catch his breath. *I just had sex with Renard. Gay sex, sober gay sex, really good sober gay sex. With Renard. My boss.* As he comes down from his sex haze, Hank realizes that he is going to have to rethink his belief that he is completely straight judging from how eagerly his body reacted to Renard’s touch. Mumbling more to himself than to Renard, Hank admits, “That didn’t go how I had planned.”

Sean confesses, “It went better than I had planned.”

Not really looking forward to it but knowing the necessity of it, Hank pulls himself off his boss. The wet feeling of cum between his ass cheeks is strange but not unpleasant. “What happens now?”

Hank asks staring at the soiled bedding. He isn’t sure what he wants Renard to say.

“Hank, look at me.” With reluctance, Hank meets Renard’s gaze. “I told you, I have wanted you for a long time, Hank. You aren’t some meaningless fuck. Not to me. If you were, I would have just left you last night but I didn’t.”

“Really?”

Sean’s expression is tender as he looks at Hank. “If I just wanted someone to fuck, I could have easily found someone else. But I want you, only you.”

Hank doesn’t know what to say.

Sean leans forward and kisses Hank gently.

The kiss makes Hank tremble at the love that Renard seems to be pouring into it. Shaky, Hank pulls away. “What if I say no?”

Sean’s lips curve into a sad smile. “I’d try to persuade you to change your mind but if I couldn’t, I’d have to accept it.” Being with Hank is everything he’s ever imagined.

“Just like that?”

“I am not going to force you, Hank. I want you to come willingly into my bed.”

With hesitant fingers, Hank touches Renard’s face. His eyes are drawn to Renard’s lip; he licks his own before gathering his courage and pressing their lips together. Sean doesn’t fight to take control of the kiss, instead allowing Hank to control the slow, wet slide of their lips. It’s perfect and Hank doesn’t want it to ever stop. *This is way better than watching gay porn.*

They are forced to break the kiss when they both run out of air. Hank pants softly as he stares at Renard. “Yes.” This thing with Renard isn’t what he expected but if his kiss can get him hot enough to straddle Renard’s lap and grind down on his cock without hesitation, Hank is eager to explore.

Fire leaps in Sean’s eyes. “I want to fuck you so badly. I promise it’ll be so good you will forget your own name. Let me?”
Hank’s straightness seems to be completely forgotten as his dick twitches with interest. Renard seems to have a remarkable insight on just how to make Hank’s body sing. He effortlessly plucks at Hank’s body like he is a violin. A part of Hank is screaming yes while another part is cautioning him to stop and think because once he goes there, he won’t ever be the same. Both parts of him agree that letting Renard fuck him will change him in a way he won’t ever be able to forget. Yet, no part of him can deny that getting fucked by Renard will blow his mind. Something deep inside him is telling him that this is right, being with Renard is right and Hank can’t ignore it. “Renard, I—you...o-okay.”

“Sean. Say it.”

Memorized by the dominance in Sean’s gaze, Hank stutters, “S-Sean.”

“Good boy,” he praises. “Shower first and then I’m going to fuck you.”

Hank swallows, unable to break eye contact. “O-Okay.”

Sean rises gracefully from the bed while Hank, looking more like a gangly colt, unsteadily scrambles off the bed. Hank stands there staring at Sean blankly until Sean quirks a brow and Hank snaps to focus. He leads Sean to the bathroom, turning on the spray. Sean tests the temperature before guiding Hank inside. He crowds close behind Hank, who marvels at how strange it is to be the smaller of the two. Sean has a good three inches on him, his shoulders are wider, and he doesn’t appear to have an ounce of fat on his entire body.

Sean picks up the bottle on the shower shelf, noticing it is the type you can use as a body wash and for hair. He isn’t shy as he lathers his hands and starts washing Hank, starting with his hair. The scalp massage makes Hank’s tense muscles relax inch by inch. Washing the soap from his head, Sean plasters himself against Hank’s back as he washes his chest. Hank tries to stifle his moan as Sean rubs his fingertips over his nipples but he is unsuccessful. Taking note of Hank’s sensitivity, Sean plucks at his nipples and is rewarded with a deep groan.

Hank has had other partners play with his nipples before but none had done it with the same level of confidence and skill. Sean pinches and tugs with a strong grip that makes Hank want to plead for more. When Sean’s hands trail down his stomach, Hank bites his lip to stop himself from begging. He isn’t sure what he wants more: for Sean to go back to his nipples or down to his cock. Hank closes his eyes and hisses as Sean wraps a hand around him. It feels different than when a woman does it, as Sean’s hand is much bigger and stronger. Sean’s large hand jacking him leisurely feels good, really good.

Sean presses his hips forward, allowing his hard cock to come in contact with Hank’s ass. Sean’s lips curve and he mouths at Hank’s shoulder as Hank starts rocking forward into his fist and back into his erection. After a few minutes, Sean pulls away, ignoring Hank’s protests. Sean re-lathers his hands and washes Hank’s shoulders and back. Hank starts to tense as Sean’s hands trail down to his ass.

“Relax; I’m not going to fuck you for the first time in the shower.” Hank’s muscle release a bit of the tension but tighten up again when a single finger parts his cheeks and rubs against his hole. Sean rubs insistently until the muscle relaxes and the tip of his finger slips inside.

“Ugh.” It feels weird to have something inside him and his instincts tell him to try pushing it out. To distract him, Sean uses his other hand to reach around and pump Hank’s cock. The pleasure overrides the discomfort and Hank’s anal muscles relax enough for Sean to push his finger inside. Hank tries to focus on the hand on his dick and not on the fingers inside him. Sean cleans Hank’s hole out as best he can while distracting Hank. Finished, he lets the water wash his hands clean before lathering up again. Sean washes himself and then shuts off the water.
Hank steps out of the shower and dries himself off, while Sean does the same beside him. He gulps at the sight of Sean’s stiff and dripping cock. “I’m not sure…” Sean’s dick is proportional to his large frame but thankfully he isn’t obscenely huge like some of the porn stars Hank has seen, otherwise he’d be running away screaming right about now.

But Sean isn’t about to let Hank baulk. Sean shoves him against the bathroom door and devours his mouth. Hank’s doubts disappear like magic as pure lust floods his veins. “Do you want this?”

“Yess!” Hank promises vehemently.

“That’s what I thought,” Sean answers. He isn’t about to play fair with Hank. Sean wants Hank and he isn’t letting him slip through his fingers. With no hesitation, he leads Hank back into the bedroom, refusing to give Hank time to doubt. Nothing will stop him from fucking Hank’s sweet ass. Sean shoves Hank onto the bed and orders, “Hands and knees.”

Following orders is ingrained in Hank’s brain. He is on his hands and knees before he can even register the command.

“Don’t move,” Sean demands before he leaves the room intent on grabbing the travel size bottle of lube he has in the pocket of his pants.

Hank freezes, unsure whether he should stay still or use the opportunity to think about what the hell he is about to do. As soon as he truly starts to wonder what he is doing, he is startled by Sean’s fingers parting his cheeks. Hank definitely doesn’t expect what happens next. Instead of the finger pushing into him, he feels Sean’s tongue lap at his hole. “Oh…” Sean eats at Hank’s hole eagerly, kissing and sucking as Hank makes surprised pleasured noises. By the time Sean’s tongue starts stabbing inside him, Hank enthusiastically welcomes it. He had thought the guys in the videos were just faking obscene moans while being rimmed but if it feels anything like Sean’s tongue fucking his hole does, they definitely weren’t faking. Sean works a lubed finger in beside his tongue. He goes slow, stretching Hank carefully and without hurry. If he does this right, Hank will beg him to fuck him again, which is exactly what Sean wants.

Hank may be new to this gay sex thing but he is pretty sure that Sean is going slower than necessary. Not that he’s complaining of course, having fingers shoved up your ass isn’t the easiest thing to get used to.

Sean eases a third finger in, mindful that this is Hank’s first time. When he can move them in and out with ease, Sean searches for that little nub inside of Hank. “Gah!” Hank yells, as a bolt of fiery pleasure spreads through his body. Sean rubs his fingers deliberately over that spot. Overwhelmed, Hank drops to his elbows. “Oh god!”

This is why guys beg to be fucked.

Hank pushes back into Sean’s fingers eagerly.

“Yes, fuck yourself on my fingers,” Sean purrs. Hank rocks backs and Sean groans at the sight.

By the time Sean has worked up to four fingers, Sean deems Hank ready. When he pulls his fingers out, Hank feels strangely empty. Hank rises back to his hands as Sean slicks himself up and positions behind Hank. “Now I need to you relax. Do not fight it.”

Hank swallows, wondering momentarily if he’s really doing this. And apparently he is because he finds himself nodding. Hank bites his lip as he feels the blunt pressure of the head of Sean’s dick pushing in.

“That’s it. Let me in,” Sean coaxes. His hands run soothingly up and down Hank’s sides, enticing him to relax. Hank forces himself to relax as Sean eases his whole length inside. It feels huge inside
him; Hank isn’t even sure how it fits. He feels stuffed full, a tinge of pain but mostly the feeling is just odd. Sean’s fingers seek out his nipples, plucking and pulling, distracting him from the new feeling of being penetrated until Hank is begging for more.

“I’m going to move now, okay?” Sean tells him.

Hank stutters, “O-Okay.”

Sean slowly builds up a rhythm, not too fast, not too slow. With every thrust forward, Hank makes soft noises of shocked pleasure. Sean filling his insides is a feeling unlike one Hank has ever experienced. It feels fucking amazing.

Fucking Hank is everything that Sean imagined; he is hot and tight and responsive.

Hank yelps when Sean’s dick hits his prostate for the first time. He is unaware that he chants “Oh” as Sean hits his sweet spot again and again. Hank needs more and demands, “Faster, harder.” Sean quickens his pace, putting more of his strength into his thrusts. Hank drops to his elbows, bracing himself as much as he can as Sean plunges into him. Hank leans on one elbow while his other hand reaches for his cock. He strokes himself to Sean’s rhythm but he needs more. Sounding wrecked, Hank begs, “Oh, fuck. Please! Fuck me! Fuck me hard!”

This is why Sean loves fucking men, having all that power underneath him. They take his cock and beg for more, beg to be fucked harder and faster and they love it. His hips snap forward powerfully, muscles rippling at the force. Hank’s body jerks forward with every thrust until he shudders, spilling all over the sheets, screaming Sean’s name. Sean cums two thrusts later with a deep groan.

Hank winces as Sean pulls out, wiggling at the odd feeling of cum inside him. Sean comes back with a warm washcloth and to Hank’s embarrassment carefully cleans and inspects his hole. Sean nudges to onto his back and cleans his front. “Where are your clean linens?”

Fucked out, Hank merely looks at him in confusion, “Wha?”

“Sheets, Hank.”

“Wha for?”

With exasperated patience, Sean answers, “Because the sheets are dirty.”

Hank laughs, “Don’t care.”

Sean gives up and lies down on the dry, clean side of the bed. He pulls Hank to him, tucking him against his side. Hank is out like a light. Sean, however, stays awake long enough to savor the feeling of Hank pressed against him before letting sleep overcome him.

Chapter End Notes

There is a very distinct possibility that this will transition from Hank/Sean to Hank/Sean/Wu. One of my readers, you know who you are...*cough leia3771 cough* got my muse excited and I’ve already written a good chunk of how two becomes three. But it shouldn’t happen for at least a couple of chapters.

Update: this is no longer a possibility. Instead, it will become its own story where the
pairing will start out Sean/Wu and transition to Sean/Wu/Hank.
Afternoon Heat

Chapter Notes

I know practically nothing about Sean Renard’s family. I know his parentage but nothing beyond that. I know his parents must make an appearance either in Season 3 or 4 but I’m only at the middle of Season 3 and I haven’t seen them yet. So I’m making up stuff for his family and childhood. I could find nothing about Hank’s family on the Grimm wiki, so I’m making up my own.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Reluctant to leave, Sean hits the snooze button once before he shakes Hank awake. Hank groans and rubs the sleep from his eyes. It takes him a moment to realize he is lying on a man’s chest. Hank blinks stupidly before his brain gives him memory flashes of the previous night and very early this morning. *Okay. So recap: you got dumped, got drunk, got sucked and got fucked by your boss. Way to pace yourself Hank.*

Sean can’t resist clasping Hank’s chin and pulling him into a tender kiss, his heart rejoicing when Hank returns the kiss. “Good morning.”

Brave face on, Hank parrots, “Morning.” Jumping into bed with Sean definitely wasn’t something Hank planned. He’d been perfectly content with Carrie. Okay maybe he had been mildly obsessed with watching gay porn in secret but actually sleeping with a guy wasn’t something he thought about actually doing.

Caressing Hank’s face, Sean says, “How are you feeling?”

“How are you feeling?” Hank blurts out.

Chuckling a bit, Sean answers, “Understandable.” Sean fights with himself, trying to determine whether to say what he wants to or to be more cautious. Taking a chance, he declares, “Being with you was as perfect as I’d imagined.”

Hank is startled at the admission. He hadn’t thought much about Sean outside of work but Hank imagined he would be much more closed off. Sean seemed the type to keep things to himself. Hank doesn’t know what to say to that and just stares at Sean blankly. He watches as a faint blush blooms on Sean’s cheeks. Hank didn’t think it was possible but Captain Renard, his big bad boss, is blushing! How unexpected.

Sean tries to keep the hope growing in his chest in check but he fails spectacularly. “Would you have dinner with me tonight?”

“Like a date, a dinner date?”

“A date,” Sean answers confidently.

“Where?”

“My place? I thought you might be more comfortable eating in and I’d like to cook for you.”
Hank grins; he likes this side of Sean, who would imagine he could be sweet? “You cook?”

*God, he’s beautiful.* Sean marvels at how Hank’s face transforms when he smiles. “Yes.”

Hank considers his options. He could say no, forget all about what happened last night and this morning like it never happened. Pretend that he never kissed a guy, pretend that Sean didn’t fuck him and that he didn’t beg Sean for more. Or he could take a chance. Hank has never been lucky in love, thus the three ex-wives and too many ex-girlfriends to count. Maybe Sean will be different; being with him certainly feels different. “Okay.”

Sean is thrilled that Hank said yes and lunges forward to capture Hank’s lips. Hank willingly opens his mouth and their tongues meet in a wonderfully hot and wet kiss.

Kissing a man isn’t as unfamiliar as Hank would have thought, despite the foreign feeling of Sean’s stubble against his face. Sean tastes good and is quite skilled, not that Hank is really surprised. Sean is one of those guys that likely don’t have to try very hard to get a date. Hank is sure Sean has had plenty of experience. He is very intense and sexy, which Hank imagines both men and women are attracted to.

With regret, Sean declares, “We better get ready for work. We’re going to be late as it is.” Sean thankfully has a spare suit in his vehicle to change into.

“Can you drop me off at my car?”

As much as he wants to stroll into work late beside Hank and have others speculating as to the reason, Sean realizes Hank is going to need his car. “Sure.”

They both dress quickly and are out the door. Conscious of the newness, Sean refrains from kissing Hank’s plump lips when he drops him off. Instead, he holds Hank’s hand a beat longer than socially accepted and then offers Hank his keys.

Hank gets behind the wheel, marveling at all the changes the last day had wrought. It isn’t until he parks that Hank realizes that he isn’t sure how to act like nothing has changed. He got fucked by a guy for the first time in his life and not just any guy but his boss. And it was good. That is pretty life changing for someone his age. Hank shrugs to himself, he is fairly certain he can get through this day without giving himself away. Apparently getting fucked is a nice hangover cure because he doesn’t usually feel this good after getting completely wasted.

Tuesday morning Nick is greeted by Wu, who appears to be waiting for him. That can never be good. With a wide grin, Wu takes out the thing he’s been hiding behind his back. It’s a shower mat that looks like he stole it from a nursing home. “Can’t be too careful at your age, Nick.”

Nick stares at him flustered, then shouts at him, “You’re like eight years older than me!”

“Who is the one that slipped in the shower and came in limping like a 90 year old man? Hmm? I’m pretty sure that wasn’t me.” Wu’s expression turns contemplative. “Who was that again?”

Nick grits his teeth, ripping the shower mat from Wu’s fingers. “Goodbye Wu.”

Wu grabs his arm, preventing him from leaving. “Can’t remember? Memory going too, Nick?” Wu’s voice quiets and he whispers conspiratorially, “It was you.”

Disgusted, Nick rips himself out of Wu’s grip and stalks off. He can hear Wu laughing to himself.
behind him. Nick chucks the shower mat into the trash can. He should have just blurted out the truth; it would have almost been worth it to see the shock on Wu’s face.

Hank comes in late and something is different about him. Nick isn’t sure what it is yet though. That plus the blushing and his comment from yesterday has peaked Nick’s interest. Despite Nick’s persistence, he can’t get anything out of Hank. His partner seems to be fighting a blush when asked about yesterday. Hank conveniently finds a way to change the subject or leave every time Nick brings it up. Eventually Nick stops trying; knowing that he himself is hiding more than one secret from Hank. Hank will tell him when he’s ready, just as Nick will tell Hank his own secrets in due time. He doesn’t like keeping secrets from Hank but telling him about the Wesen world is enough of a challenge, adding that Nick is essentially mated to a real life werewolf is kind of hard to explain without explaining the first part.

“I’m taking a week off starting Friday,” Nick announces nonchalantly out of the blue.

Hank looks at his partner critically. “Why?” Nick can’t be taking off suddenly to go on a vacation with Juliette because they are no longer together.

Nick shrugs, “I thought I’d take some time to get my head on straight after what happened with Juliette. Maybe go camping or something, I don’t know yet.”

Hank’s eyes narrow, “You and Juliette broke up so you’re…going camping?” His tone makes his doubt at Nick’s truthfulness exceedingly clear. Hank watches distrustfully as Nick gives him those sad puppy eyes of his.

Not really having an answer Nick shrugs again. “I guess.”

“I guess I am just surprised that workaholic Nick Burkhardt suddenly wants to convene with nature to get over a breakup instead of doing what he usually does, which is work. The last time you broke up with a girlfriend you picked up every overtime shift you could get.” Hank knows something is going on with Nick, something that Nick doesn’t want to tell him.

“We were together for years. I was going to ask her to marry me. I just need some time to process it, Hank.” Parts of that are true. He and Juliette had been together for years and Nick had considered asking her to marry him. But then he met Monroe and his thoughts of marrying Juliette disappeared.

Despite his doubts, Hank drops it. If he pushes Nick hard enough, Nick will push back and Hank is hiding a secret of his own. One he is nowhere near ready to talk about. Hank needs time to figure this out for himself before he tells Nick about it.

Nick is glad Hank drops it. He isn’t ready for the talk yet. How is he supposed to explain the whole situation with Monroe? He hasn’t even wrapped his brain around it himself. Nick accepts that he is Monroe’s mate. It isn’t something he can deny, not with how his body reacts to the Blutbad. The rest will take some time to get used to.

Hank is nervous that night when he goes to Sean’s apartment. He picks nervously at the clothes he chose: his favorite leather jacket, a purple sweater and black jeans he’s been told hug his ass nicely. He also put on his best cologne. It had been a strange feeling to agonize over his clothing for meeting his boss, his male boss, who is his what? Boyfriend? Fuckbuddy? Hank isn’t sure what they are yet.

In front of Sean’s door, Hank bites his lip wondering if he really knows what he is doing. This can’t end well, right? Fucking your boss or as a voice in his head never fails to remind him getting fucked
by your boss is likely a recipe for disaster. *Is this even worth the risk?* His mind pushes for caution but his body is quick to respond with an emphatic hell yes, it’s worth it. Hank’s muscles tense and he swears his ass clenches at just the thought of Sean fucking him again. He is a little sore but nothing like he’d thought he would feel; Sean had taken good care of him. Hank shakes off his nerves and knocks.

Sean opens the door looking suave and sexy in a baby blue sweater and tailored dark gray slacks. His green eyes are alight with heat as he scans over Hank’s outfit. An appreciative expression on his face, Sean vows, “You look good enough to eat.”

Hank honest to god blushes. “T-Thank you.” Sean finds it adorable. “You look great too,” Hank blurts awkwardly. Sean doesn’t comment but is glad for the compliment no matter how awkwardly given. He invites Hank inside, Sean’s hand naturally falling to the small of Hank’s back, guiding him to the dining room. “Oh, wow.” The food looks delicious. Sean had made juicy steaks with loaded twice baked potatoes and garlic biscuits. Hank is impressed. It looks like a chef made it. “You really did all this yourself?”

Sean smiles easily, “Of course. Being in the kitchen relaxes me. Why don’t we eat?”

“Oh, okay.” The food turns out to be as delicious as it looks. They make small talk during the meal but don’t delve deep, keeping it light. After they finish, Sean invites Hank to sit on the couch. Hank nervously sits down and Sean sits beside him, situating himself firmly into Hank’s space. To try to distract himself from the conflicting feelings of discomfort and lust, Hank asks, “Tell me about yourself.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Do you have family? Siblings?”

Sean’s mouth turns automatically into a grimace. Family is a touchy subject for him.

Sensing he shouldn’t have asked about Sean’s family, he says “You don’t have to answer. It’s none of my business.” Hank has to fight the urge to fidget.

Sean’s shoulders lose their tension. “My family is…complicated to say the least. I’m a bastard of an important political figure in Europe. I have a half brother but we…don’t get along. My father and the rest of his so-called legitimate family wish I was never born.” Sean obviously omits that they tried to remedy that when he was a child but had failed and that his half brother is far more likely to slit his throat than do anything kind.

“Oh, that must be tough.”

“My mother protected me the best she could despite the imbalance of power between her and my father. I didn’t have an easy childhood by any means but it wasn’t horrible either. We made the best of a bad situation together.”

Hank’s brown eyes soften. “I’m glad you had your mom on your side.”

Sean quirks a minute smile. “Me too.” Without her, Sean likely would have been killed long ago. She had hidden him and kept him safe as a child. She had also gotten him trained. His proficiency at hand to hand and with firearms has saved his life more than once and he owes that to his mother.

“What about you? Do you have family?”

“My mom raised me and my three sisters mostly alone.”
“Your dad?”

“He was KIA. Navy Seals.”

Sean cups the back on Hank’s neck comfortingly. “I’m sorry.”

“It was a long time ago. He was a good man and I’ll always be proud to be his son. The one thing I really remember him saying was that every time someone called him a hero he would say the real hero in our family was Mom. She’s amazing. I am not ashamed to say I’m a mama’s boy.” Hank’s eyes sparkle as he smiles at Sean.

As a child, he’d clung to his mother. Sean had to, he didn’t have anyone else. Maybe his father had loved his mother at one time but having Sean had changed that. Sean doesn’t know what his father feels for him; he suspects his feelings are as conflicted as Sean’s are. The Royals aren’t too keen on having heirs that they can’t control. Bastard children are just threats to the power the legitimate royals enjoy. Had his mother allowed Sean to be put under the thumb of his father and his family, the Royals might have been slightly less inclined to want to kill him but only slightly.

Hank tells Sean about his childhood. “My grandma, my dad’s mom, came to live with us after Dad died. She took care of us while Mom was at work. Grandma Griffin was something else. A bit like Mom strangely enough, a strong, independent woman who didn’t take crap from no one. She died a few years ago.”

Sean pulls Hank into a hug, “I’m sorry, Hank.”

For a moment, Hank tenses but Sean’s big hand rubbing his back is surprisingly comforting. Hank relaxes in Sean’s embrace. “It isn’t your fault. She had a long, full life and I cherish my memories of her. She had cancer and as much as it hurt, I was glad she wasn’t suffering anymore,” he murmurs softly into Sean’s neck.

The two men are silent. An outsider seeing them would think they’ve been together a long time at the comfortable intimacy between them.

Hank shakes himself out of his memories and tells Sean about his three sisters. “Abigail is the oldest. She’s five years older than me. She’s a bossy overachiever, not that I’d say that to her face. It surprised no one that she became a judge, lording over people in judgment is right up her alley. Never thought she’d get married but Bruce is the most laid back guy I’ve ever met. Somehow he’s mellowed her out. They have two genius kids, Brett and Whitney. Faith is three years older than me and the free spirit in the family. She’d be so happy about us, happy to have a nontraditional relationship in the family, to have two g-guys together.”

Sean hides his smile but is proud that Hank can say that with only a slight stutter.

Hank pushes on, not comfortable yet to talk about him possibly maybe kind of being a bit gay…or a lot considering how he reacts to Sean. “She works with one of those activist groups, which one I’m not sure. She seems to change groups every week; I can’t keep up. Boyfriends come and go with the same frequency. Rebecca is the baby of the family, a year younger than me. She’s an architect. Becca hasn’t told anyone yet that she is dating a guy fifteen years her senior. I can’t say I’m happy about it but I guess if he loves her, I will try to refrain from shooting him.”

“I’m sure they appreciate that,” Sean says. He doesn’t have siblings—well he sort of does but his half-brother is more like his literal enemy than a loved one. They didn’t grow up together and they certainly aren’t close enough to be protective over one another. “Are…are you going to tell her about us?”
Hank tenses, replying hesitantly, “I don’t know. Are we—are we an us?”

Sean pulls Hank back until their eyes can meet. “I hope we are. I want there to be. Do you want us to be a couple?”

This thing with Sean is very new but Hank has never felt like this before. He gets lust and he gets love, yet he has never felt the rightness he feels being with Sean before. He shouldn’t feel like this, not so quickly. Hank says shyly, “I—I’d like that.” It’s a big risk considering it is his first gay relationship and Sean is his boss. Yet, for the first time in a while, Hank trusts his heart. He trusts his heart’s feeling that his place is with Sean.

Hank and Sean get to know each other for hours. It is more comfortable and effortless than either of them expects. And when the night ends with Hank in Sean’s bed, neither is complaining.

For Nick, the whole week is the same thing, different day. Wu continues to tease. Hank continues to act odd, although he seems happy, so Nick doesn’t push for details. Nick himself continues to pretend to be broken up over Juliette, although he isn’t sure either Wu or Hank buys it.

Every night after work, Nick crashes and wakes up being cuddled rather aggressively by Monroe. And every morning he wakes up filled to the brim with Monroe’s cum. Sometimes he remembers the sex, sometimes not but the story is the same every morning: Monroe is repeatedly awakened by Nick because of Nick’s painful feeling of emptiness. Their quick fuck before work gets Nick through the days without issue, that is until Thursday.

Thursday morning Nick is plagued by a strange sensation; he is restless, almost like he has ants crawling under his skin. He unconsciously scratches at the bonding mark Monroe had given him that is hidden by his shirt. The feeling grows stronger by the hour. By lunchtime Nick is desperate for Monroe. Drumming his fingers on his leg, he makes a decision. Hank has already left for lunch, so Nick doesn’t have to worry about him questioning him. Nick goes to the bathroom in the basement that no one ever uses, locks himself in and dials Monroe using his blue tooth.

When Monroe answers, Nick cannot hold back his whimper. “Need you.”

“Oh, Nicky,” Monroe replies softly. “Can you make it home, Baby?”

“Need.” Nick is too far gone to say anything more.

“Okay. I’m going to tell you what to do and you’re going to do it, okay?”

Nick nods his head furiously not that Monroe can see it.

“Are you alone?”

“Bathroom.”

“Good. I want your pants and boxers around your ankles.”

Nick shoves them down immediately, sighing in relief. His cock is full and heavy and his hole is clenching hungrily.

“That’s it. Now stick your fingers in your mouth and suck. Get them nice and wet for me.”

Nick sucks on his fingers, he moans low as he imagines they are Monroe’s cock.
“My good boy. You are doing so well, Pretty.”

Nick’s chest swells at the praise, making him suck harder.

“Now pull them out slowly.”

He whines softly but does as he is told.

“Part your beautiful cheeks, Babe. I want you to push your two fingers inside your pretty hole.”

Nick moans as his fingers breach his body. He is too far gone to even be apprehensive about pushing his fingers inside his hole for the first time.

Seeing it in his mind, Monroe opens his pants and pulls his cock out, stroking it slowly. He chuckles at the sounds coming from Nick. “Feels good, doesn’t it? Thrust them in and out, smooth and slow.”

“M’roe, ‘s good,” Nick slurs as he fucks his fingers inside his eager hole.

“You are doing so good, Nicky. Can you add another finger for me?”

Nick obeys quickly, shoving three fingers deep inside. “Oh.”

“That’s it. Fuck yourself on your fingers. Feels good, doesn’t it?” Monroe’s fist speeds up as he pictures his mate desperate and needy, fucking himself on his fingers in a police station bathroom. “Now I want you to find your prostate and press your fingers against it.” It is clear when Nick finds it as he mewls weakly.

“Close.”

“Imagine me pushing you against the wall. You spread your legs eagerly for me, don’t you my little mate? You beg me to take you and I lift you easily as you cling to me. Your legs hook around my waist as I plunge inside of you. Slow at first, then harder and deeper. You are so tight for me, feels so good.”

Nick whines high and desperate as his fingers fuck his hole faster.

“You cum between us and I fuck you straight through. You whine as you feel my knot swelling inside you, locking us together. I rock into you with short, careful stabs until my hot cum fills you.”

Nick explodes wildly, keening softly in the deserted bathroom. Monroe grunts as he strokes himself to completion. It takes a minute or two before Nick comes back to himself. Nick looks around in disbelief. His cum is on the floor and the door of the stall, his pants are around his ankles and three fingers are still buried inside him. Nick carefully eases his fingers out. “Fuck.” He can’t believe that is happening to him. He’s at work! He had phone sex and fingered himself at the station!

“Are you okay, Nick?”

Face blushing, “Uh, yeah. I’m better, thanks?”

Monroe purrs softly, “My pleasure.”

Nick groans at the silky tone. It makes him want to crawl into Monroe’s lap and let him fuck him so hard he passes out.

Monroe feels a bit smug knowing exactly how his tone is affecting his mate. Figuring he has teased Nick enough, Monroe asks, “Do you need to come home or can you make it through the rest of the
“I can make it.” Nick doesn’t feel that anxious, urgent drive to be with Monroe anymore. He feels more like himself now. “Thanks for...you know.”

Grinning, he answers, “Any time, Nick.” Monroe is eagerly awaiting Nick’s heat. It will be days of practically nonstop fucking and he can’t wait. The last few days, Nick has been craving affection rather than sex at least when he is awake. During the night, Nick doesn’t seem satisfied without his dick inside him. Even toys do not seem to satisfy his achy, painful hole...Monroe’s cock is the only thing that eases the empty ache for his mate. If Nick is this desperate before his heat, Monroe can only imagine how needy he will be during his heat.

Nick laughs nervously. “Right, yeah, uh...I’ll see you tonight I guess.”

Monroe is unable to hide his amusement at Nick’s bashful awkwardness. “Until tonight.”

Nick cleans himself up and goes back to his desk. Hank isn’t back yet. Nick forces himself to eat the lunch Monroe packed. Despite having his hunger for sex satisfied, he isn’t really hungry for food but eats anyway.

Twenty minutes prior:

Hank leaves the station trying to look as nonchalant as he can. It wouldn’t do for his fellow officers to get suspicious that he is hiding something. Hank goes to the little restaurant that Sean texted to him. Giving his name to the server, he is led to a private room where Sean is waiting. Hank has never seen a room quite like this before. Instead of chairs or a booth, there is a single long backless but cushy seat. Hank sits down next to Sean hesitantly. “Hi.”

Sean smiles easily, “Hi,” and leans in to give Hank a hello kiss. Predictably, the chaste kiss almost immediately turns passionate. Sean turns, straddling the seat to face Hank and pulls him into the wide V of his spread legs. Hank groans leaning forward into the kiss as Sean’s hands glide down his back to cup his rounded ass.

“What,” Hank sighs.

Sean’s hands sneak under Hank’s shirt, eager to touch his bare skin. But just as Sean is about to pull Hank’s shirt off, the waitress comes in with their meals. Hank squeaks and tries to scramble away from Sean but he is held still by Sean’s strong arms.

The waitress averts her gaze as she sets down their plates and drinks. She bows respectfully to Sean before leaving without a word.

Hank trembles a bit at being caught in necking with Sean. “Oh my god.”

Sean tilts Hank’s head back and stares into Hank’s bewildered eyes. “Hank, it’s fine. You are fine.”

“No, I’m not! We just got caught making out by the waitress! I am really not okay.”

His heart jolts, emotion wells within him as he says quietly, “You are ashamed of me, of us.”

Hank feels a sharp pain in his chest at the hurt he hears in Sean’s voice. “No, I-I didn’t mean.” A trembling hand lifts to cup Sean’s face, “Sean, no. I am not ashamed of you. I just—this is new for me. And I’m not ready to show what we have together to the world. That doesn’t mean I am
ashamed of you. I just need some time, okay?”

Sean leans into Hank’s hand and sighs softly. For a moment, he had forgotten that this is Hank’s first time with a guy. He has to remember that Hank’s desire to hide their relationship isn’t because he is ashamed, even if it hurts. Hank will understandably need some time to come to grips with being in a gay relationship with him. Sean has to give him time; he can’t bear the thought of losing Hank if he pushes too hard, too fast. “Okay.”

Hank smiles and pecks Sean’s lips softly. “Why don’t we eat?”

Sean nods and the two men start eating. The restaurant is owned by a Wesen family that knows of Sean’s heritage and they are always eager to serve the Prince. The room they are in is reserved exclusively for him. “I hope you like what I ordered for you,” Sean says. It is a little odd for Hank, to have someone else order for him but the food is really good. “It’s very good, thanks.” Sean beams happily and digs into his own meal.

When they are finished, Hank declares, “I think Nick knows something is up. He seems suspicious. Although he’s being as secretive as I am. He’s hiding something too.”

Sean isn’t surprised, “Are you surprised? Nick is very perceptive.”

“No, not really.”

“Do you have any idea what he is hiding?” Sean isn’t about to reveal out Nick’s secret but imagines when Hank and Nick do talk, they will have a lot more in common than they think, considering they are both involved with men and non-humans at that.

Hank shrugs, “I am not sure. He pretends to be broken up about Juliette but I don’t think he is. I think he’s happy they aren’t together, which is weird considering how long they dated.”

Sean makes a noise of agreement but doesn’t say anything. He has other things on his mind and all of them involve giving Hank pleasure.

Hank is about to continue talking about Nick when he sees the heat in Sean’s eyes. “Um…” No one should be allowed to look so sexy and predatory. Sean grins far too much like a predator spotting his prey and Hank swallows nervously. Sean stands and moves to stand before Hank. He parts Hank’s legs and settles on his knees between them. “Fuck, you’re hot.”

Sean smirks, “Oh, I know.” He opens Hank’s pants and pulls out his cock, which twitches in his hand. Sean laps teasingly at the head before opening his mouth. Hank shudders as Sean takes every inch into his mouth with ease. His hands loosely hold onto Sean’s head as he bobs.

“Sean…” he cries, Hank’s voice is thick with lust. Sean sucks harder, his fingers playing with Hank’s balls, rolling and tugging on them. Hank’s dick hits the back of his throat and Sean swallows eagerly. “Oh god, oh god, oh god,” Hank chants and his fingers tighten their grip on Sean’s head. His hips start moving with desperation and Sean lets Hank fuck his mouth. Hank groans as he cums down Sean’s throat. He can feel Sean’s strong throat flutter as he swallows his cum.

Hank collapses backward onto the cushion, limp and satisfied. He’s pretty sure Sean just sucked his brains out of his cock. It is two full minutes later before his mind regains any sort of coherency. Without opening his eyes, Hank admits, “Your mouth should be a registered as a lethal weapon. I’m pretty sure you almost killed me.”

Sean laughs, not simply a chuckle but a full-fledged belly laugh. Hank opens his eyes to see Sean’s eyes crinkling with delight and it makes him so happy. It makes him want to give Sean just as much
pleasure as he’d just been given.

Hank drags himself up, tucking his cock away and zipping up his pants. He pulls Sean up from his knees and pushes him onto the cushion. Nervously, Hank opens Sean’s legs and kneels between them. He bites his lip and sneaks a look at Sean’s face. Sean looks at him fondly, his big hand cupping Hank’s cheek. Despite the clear bulge in his pants, Sean says, “You don’t have to, Hank.”

With fumbling fingers, Hank opens Sean’s pants. “I-I want to. Unless you don’t want me to,” he whispers almost inaudibly.

“Of course I do, Hank.”

Hank gulps and gathers his courage as he pulls Sean’s boxers down. Sean’s dick is full and heavy, leaking pre-cum. Hank stares at it, eyes wide and fear rising in his chest.

“Hank, look at me.” Fearful brown eyes look up. “Are you sure you want to do this? We can wait.”

Hank doesn’t hesitate in answering, “I want to.”

“Okay.”

He shyly wraps a hand around Sean’s cock, pumping him slowly. His confidence grows as Sean promises, “Feels good.” Hank knows that he could just use his hand to make Sean cum but even as scared as he is, he wants to taste Sean. He gathers his nerve and laps tentatively at the head of Sean’s dick. The pre-cum is bitter but not unpleasantly so and doesn’t taste much different than his own. Hank’s tongue peeks out for another lick. Sean’s hand settles loosely at the back of his neck. Hank lets the touch steady him. He holds Sean’s dick and licks it from base to tip, drawing a deep groan from Sean. *Okay, Hank. You can do this.* Hank opens his mouth and bravely takes in a bit of Sean’s cock. His mind stutters, not sure what to do now. Sean’s confident voice praises him, “That’s it, Baby. Now close your lips around me and suck.” Hank closes his mouth and timidly sucks. “Yes! You’re doing so good. Now, tongue my slit.” Sean’s orders lessen Hank’s anxiety. He can follow instructions, especially when he has no idea what he is doing. “Move your hand up and down my shaft while you suck my cockhead.” Hank obeys; his hand moves fluidly and he sucks harder.

Sean pets Hank’s hair. “You are doing so good. Can you take me deeper? Just a little.” Hank eases a bit more into his mouth, sucking deeply while his hand speeds up. Sean looks down at him, “Do you have any idea how hot you look with my cock in your mouth?” Hank blushes, both shy and happy about the compliment. “Move my dick in and out of your mouth. Slowly and carefully. Don’t choke yourself.” Hank’s blush deepens. Slowly, he moves his mouth up and down the bit of Sean’s cock that he is comfortably able to fit without gagging. “God, Hank. Watching you wrap your DSL (dick sucking lips) around my dick, fuck, just watching it is almost enough to make me cum all over your pretty face.”

Hank’s cock twitches at the thought. He pulls his mouth off Sean and swallows before he blurts, “I-I want that.”

Sean’s hand tightens on Hank’s neck. “Fuck. Open for me, let me fuck your mouth.” He grips Hank’s head and starts guiding him into a slow, shallow pace. Hank sucks as Sean gently thrusts into his mouth and his hand strokes Sean firmly. What Hank lacks in technique, he more than makes up for in enthusiasm. Hank’s eagerness only makes Sean throb harder. And being able to watch as his cock fucks Hank’s beautiful mouth is the hottest thing Sean has ever seen. Unsurprisingly, it isn’t long before Sean feels his orgasm build and he pulls Hank back as his dick pulses. Cum splatters Hank’s face. Hank’s hand stops in shock and Sean strokes himself until empty. Sean stares at Hank, his dark face covered in white cum. “Fuck, Hank.” Hank opens his eyes carefully and meets Sean’s
gaze.

Sean looks like he wants to devour him. Unable to stop himself, Sean wipes his cock over Hank’s cum soaked face. “Beautiful.” He leans down, yanking Hank up and kisses those perfect lips. The passion in his kiss makes Hank’s sore jaw and the strange feeling of cum on his face completely worth it. Sean kisses Hank greedily, wanting nothing more than to push him to the floor and fuck him until Hank cums so many times he passes out.

Sean finally reels himself in, gentling the kiss before he licks a glob of cum off Hank’s face and shares it with him. Hank moans happily, his mouth is parted open, ready for more cum as Sean licks his face clean. Once clean, Sean nibbles and sucks on Hank’s lower lip until he finally pulls back. Hank opens his eyes slowly, a part of him reluctant to break the moment. To Hank’s eyes, Sean looks both smug and pleased. “Thank you, Hank. You didn’t have to do that but it was perfect.” Hank feels joy flare inside him at the praise. “I’m g-glad, Sean.”

Sean’s phone buzzes, signaling that their lunch break soon ends. Sean grabs moist toilletes and cleans them both up. He helps Hank up and kisses him sweetly. “We better go, Hank. My place tonight?”

Hank feels himself nod, stuttering, “O-Okay.”

Hank comes back from lunch looking very satisfied and to Nick’s eye like someone that just had sex on their lunch break. Nonetheless, Nick keeps quiet. He knows he probably has the same look on his face. Neither man comments on the other’s sex glow for fear of having to talk about whom and what they’d been doing on their lunch break.

Nick makes it through the rest of the day with no more problems, although he is fighting the need to be near Monroe for the last hour. When his shift ends, Nick flies out of the station with a quick goodbye to Hank and Wu.

The itching, burning need for Monroe grows on his frantic drive home. Nick calls Monroe in his Jeep, letting Monroe’s calm, comforting voice soothe him. The minute Nick closes the front door a very naked Monroe is on him. Monroe can smell the heat growing in Nick. A few more hours and he’ll be in full heat. Nick whines at the sight of Monroe, high and needy. Impatient, Monroe literally tears the clothes off Nick. He is going to fuck his mate just like he’d told Nick to imagine earlier. Not even taking the time to stretch Nick, Monroe lifts his mate into his arms and with Nick’s help thrusts deep inside. Nick’s eyes roll when he is penetrated. Monroe bounces Nick, fucking him hard and fast in his arms. “Yesss,” Nick hisses, loving how Monroe manhandles him like he weighs nothing.

Frustrated by the lack of leverage, Monroe drops Nick to the couch, flipping him onto his stomach and positions him with his ass hanging off the seat. Monroe spreads Nick’s legs impossible wide and settles behind him. Planting his strong legs, Monroe rocks forward with all his might. The couch shudders under his strength, moving backwards with each thrust. Nick grunts and buries his face in the couch. Monroe doesn’t hold back, knowing Nick can take it. He can feel himself woging, his eyes bleeding red and his fangs poking his lip. Monroe’s fingernails shift to sharp claws as they grip Nick’s hips tightly but carefully. Nick pleasured cries flood Monroe’s sensitive ears. Impossibly fast, Nick spills onto the couch as Monroe’s knot swells. Monroe cums hot and hard inside him. Nick’s dick spurts a second time and he passes out.

Monroe catches his breath, caressing Nick’s bare skin. With his mate still out cold, Monroe carefully lifts Nick, his knot still tying them together and carries him to bed. Gingerly, he lays them both down and snuggles against Nick’s back, closing his eyes. The next time they awaken, Nick’s heat might
very well be at full strength.

Hours later Monroe is woken up by the distress of his mate. Nick is trembling, his eyes wild and hungry but also reflecting a bit of fear at the strange sensations from his heat. “Shh, let me take care of you.” At his touch, his mate’s shivering eases. “You know what to do, Nicky.” Nick scrambles onto his hands and knees, presenting like Monroe had told him to. “That’s it. So good for me, my mate.” He pushes a finger inside Nick, marveling at the surprising slickness. Nick’s ass is self lubricating. This happens for all male Blutbaden when they are the submissive mate and go into heat but Monroe hadn’t expected Nick to have this ability considering his human status. *Well, that will make his heat easier.* He praises, “So wet for me.” Nick is too far gone to care that his ass is unnaturally wet with slick.

Monroe pulls his finger out and sinks into Nick, his mate’s natural lubricant slicking the way. Nick’s pheromones in the air have Monroe hard from the moment he woke. “M’roe, please!” Nick’s brain is focused on Monroe’s dick in his hole, getting filled, getting fucked, getting bred. Monroe groans as Nick’s channel squeezes and clings tightly to him as if trying to coax out his seed. Monroe has heard how this works even if he hasn’t been with anyone during their heat so he pays no attention to Nick as he fucks into him with forceful jabs. Nick won’t stop hurting until he is knotted for the first time. Monroe fucks his mate quick and dirty with the singular goal of stopping Nick’s pain; pleasure comes afterward. Nick sobs as Monroe’s knot finally inflates within him, locking them together. By the first splash of cum the achy pain is completely erased and Nick feels his own cock fill rapidly. Nick cums within seconds, before Monroe can even lay a hand on him. The tension in Nick eases as his body gets what it wants.

Monroe’s hips don’t stop moving and before his knot can shrink he cums a second time. Instead of making Nick feel full, he feels empty just as Monroe had warned him might happen. The point of a heat is breeding; his body is driven toward the singular goal of getting pregnant. Monroe had explained that that his body would likely crave his seed hungrily and no matter how many times he’s filled, his body will want more. Immersed in his heat, Nick’s body only cries out to be bred. Nothing else matters. Without a thought, Nick gives voice to his body’s yearnings, “Breed me, Mate. Please!”

Monroe’s wolf chuffs in happiness, wanting nothing more than to have pups with his mate. Monroe shoves his hips forward, “I’m going to breed you so good. Fill you up my pups.” Nick’s eyes roll back as he’s filled for the third time, the sensation pushing him over the edge again. Monroe nuzzles Nick’s neck, both of them enjoying the brief chance to breathe.

When Monroe’s knot shrinks and he is able to pull free, Nick pushes at Monroe until he flops onto his back. He straddles Monroe, kissing his mate sloppily. His Blutbad is hard by the time he breaks the kiss, just as Nick had hoped. Nick holds Monroe’s dick steady while he sinks onto it with a sigh. He closes his eyes and stills for several seconds, simply enjoying the sensation of Monroe filling him. Nick’s gray eyes open, taking in his mate’s large frame and his hairy chest. Monroe smiles and Nick can’t help but smile in return. “Gonna ride me, Nicky?” Nick doesn’t respond with words, instead his hips start moving. The slick slide of the cock inside him is perfect and Nick alternates between rocking forward and back and bouncing up and down. It’s a beautiful sight to watch the tight muscles in Nick’s body flutter and bunch under his skin as he rides.

His knot starts to expand and Nick leans back as far as he can, taking him deep until they are locked together. Then his little mate starts riding him with fevered intensity. Nick’s hips stutter as his cock spurts but almost immediately he returns to his fast, smooth pace. Monroe growls and clutches Nick’s hips as he cums. Nick sprawls backwards, his head hanging off the foot of the bed.
The room is silent except for their breathing until Nick’s stomach growls. Monroe leans up on his elbow to look at his mate, who doesn’t so much as twitch. “We’d better get some food before the next round.” Nick cracks open one eye, grumbling unintelligibly. Monroe sits up and drags a very reluctant Nick up with him. “Don’t wanna move.” Monroe laughs at Nick’s whining but lugs his mate up, cradling him in his arms as he gets off the bed. Nick instinctively wraps his arms and legs around Monroe, even as he mutters, “Was comfy.” The walk down the stairs is enough to get both of them hard since they are still locked together. Monroe stumbles to the table, laying Nick on top of it before he starts thrusting. Nick grips the table tightly as Monroe shoves into him. “Fuck Monroe. So good.” Nick cums on his own stomach a second before Monroe. He’s content to just lay there forever but Monroe clearly isn’t. He lifts Nick’s limp body and drops them both onto the couch until the knot tying them together loosens.

Nick snuggles into Monroe dozing lightly while his hair is pet. He protests when minutes later Monroe shifts out from underneath him but Monroe shushes him. “I’ll be right back.” Nick grumbles but can’t find the strength to stop him. When Monroe comes back, he is bearing gifts. Nick snatches a handful of Monroe’s homemade granola and shoves it into his mouth. “Smoothie?” Monroe asks with a bit of smirk.

Nick slows, realizing he’s acting like a starving man. He swallows the granola and answers sheepishly, “Okay.” Both of them eat their fill quickly.

When they are finished, Monroe pulls Nick into his lap so they are chest to back. Nick leans against his mate, spreading his legs and planting them, intent on letting Monroe do all the work. His Blutbad is happy to oblige, hips jerking up, thrusting his dick into Nick’s hot channel. Nick’s head lulls back as that hard length slides in and out of him. “Monroooee,” Nick whines, “harder.” Monroe grins but obeys. He shoves up harder, forcing his mate to take him deeper. Nick cums without a touch seconds later and Monroe slows his pace. “Nooo, faster,” Nick demands, a pout clear in his voice. Again, Monroe complies and within a few thrusts his knot starts to swell. He pulls Nick down into his lap, his cock settling firmly between his mate’s cheeks as they are knotted together. Nick wiggles and bounces.

As his hot seed floods Nick’s insides, Monroe croons, “Feel that, my little mate. Fill you so good; fill you with my pups. Can’t wait to see you swell with our pups. You’ll so look beautiful, Nicky.” Nick’s mind might not be ready for that image but his body is wholeheartedly on board. His dick hardens as Monroe continues to whisper promises to fill him with pups and praises of how beautiful he’ll be pregnant. Nick cums as he listens to his mate talk about how he will fuck him naked in the middle of woods while Nick is heavy with their pups.

“Is that what you really want, Monroe?” Nick asks timidly, staring away from his mate as if afraid to look at him. Despite already being told before, Nick fears that Monroe won’t want him anymore if he can’t get pregnant.

“Nicky, look at me.” When Nick doesn’t move, Monroe allows his Alpha Wolf tone to bleed through. “Look at me.”

Helpless to disobey, Nick shifts his upper body to the side and with great reluctance meets Monroe’s eyes. His mate’s brown eyes are filled with concern and love.

“I do want that. It would make me so happy to have pups with you because you are my mate and I love you. I want pups with you but if we can’t, I will still be happy because I have you.” he love Monroe feels is written all over his face. “I know this is new for you, Nick. I understand that it is a lot for you to take in. We haven’t had a lot time together…and most of it admittedly has been us having sex but Nick, I do love you. And not just because you are my mate. You are beautiful and so
kind. You care not only about humans but about Wesen too. You look at us and see us, not monsters that need to be executed that all the other Grimms see.” Monroe caresses Nick’s face tenderly.
“You’re brilliant and strong and more than I deserve. I love you not just for your body but for your mind and your heart. I love you because you’re you. I hope you’ll let me spend the rest of our lives proving how much I love you Nicholas Burkhardt.”

Nick’s heart flutters violently. He’d known that Monroe cared about him and that the Blutbad wanted him. But a part of him didn’t believe Monroe would care for him if they weren’t mates. A part of him feared that Monroe only wanted him for his body. But Nick cannot deny the love clear on Monroe’s face. He has never felt so loved before, like his partner would be lost without him.

“Monroe, I—I…”

Monroe’s face softens, “Oh, Nicky. You don’t have to say it back. I can wait until you are ready. Until the day that you love me as much as I do you.”

Nick can feel tears welling up his eyes. “How did I get so lucky?” he wonders aloud.

Monroe smiles, “I’m the lucky one, blessed to be mated to someone as perfect as you are.” He means it, unashamed of the sappiness.

Nick leans forward and kisses Monroe sweetly. He has a feeling it will be far too easy to fall in love with his sweet, loving, sexy as hell Blutbad. “You are—Monroe, you are more than I ever thought I’d have.” The touching moment is broken suddenly when Nick groans, his heat flaring hot and demanding. “Need,” Nick cries softly.

Monroe lifts his mate, laying him on his back on the plush rug on the floor. He settles between Nick’s spread legs and pushes inside his mate. Nick hooks his legs behind Monroe’s, Nick’s hands cradling his face and pulling him down so their lips can meet for wet, passionate kisses. Nick sucks on his mate’s tongue as Monroe fucks him slow and steady. Nick arches his neck as Monroe shoves forward and fills him completely, stilling for a moment before he rocks back and does it all over again. Monroe thrusts forward as his knot starts to expand, pushing it in and out of Nick’s hole, making Nick mewl at the feeling of his hole stretching over the growing bulge. Monroe growls as he shoves forward one last time and his knot locks them together. “Yesss!” Nick hisses as Monroe’s dick pulses inside him, pushing Nick over the edge, covering their stomachs with his release.

Monroe settles comfortably atop Nick, who wraps around him like a clingy octopus. Sounding completely wrecked but absolutely content, Nick murmurs, “Never thought it’d feel so good to have a huge cock locked inside me, be filled with loads of cum, and have a very heavy man on top of me.”

Chuckling, “Oh Nicky, I knew how good it’d feel to have my very pretty little mate under me, my cock in his hot, tight and oh so welcoming ass.”

Nick giggles, “Welcoming ass?”

“I dare you to deny it.”

“Kinda hard when my ass literally aches for your dick.”

“An ache my dick is very happy to ease.”

Nick laughs, “I’ve noticed.”

Monroe grins and rolls them over so Nick is sprawled on top of him and kisses his sweet lips. “You are perfect.”
“I know,” Nick says jokingly. The playful mood is broken when Nick yawns widely and his eyes suddenly feel heavy.

“Sleep, Nicky.” Nick makes himself comfortable on Monroe’s broad chest and is asleep moments after his eyes close. Monroe kisses Nick’s forehead, petting his hair lovingly before closing his own eyes.

Chapter End Notes

If you like Hank’s lunch scene, you have Gia to thank as she asked for it. She was lucky enough to get to read it while I was writing it and I made her almost run into a pole, which is awesome.
I'm WHAT?!!

Chapter Notes

A few notes for those of you who are not Grimm fans. A Fuchsbau (FOOKS-bow) is a fox-like Wesen. More cuddly looking than some of the others. Long orange fur with either black or white patches, fox-like features: ears, eyes, nose, sharp teeth. They have a good sense of smell. Rosalee Calvert is a Fuchsbau. Nick meets her when her brother is murdered and they become friends.

I have an OMC in this chapter who is a Jägerbar (YAY-gər-bar), which is a bear-like Wesen. They have brown fur, bear-like ears, a snout, and fangs. They have an enhanced sense of smell.

Hexenbiests (female, pronounced HEK-sən-beest) and Zauberbiests (male, like Sean, pronounced TSOW-bər-beest) are zombie/mummy/corpse-looking Wesen when they woge (ugly but they seem to find their woged states beautiful/attractive, go figure). They have seductive powers among other powers/strengths.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When Monroe wakes, he wakes up happy with his mate bouncing enthusiastically on his lap, reverse cowboy style. Monroe cannot imagine a better way to start the morning. Nick is moaning desperately; he has clearly been riding Monroe for some time since they are already knotted together. He tugs at his cock harshly, his smooth gait stuttering as he cum. Monroe lets the sweet squeeze of Nick’s passage tip him over the edge. His arms reach for Nick and help to ease his mate backward to lie on top of him. Monroe caresses Nick’s stomach lovingly while ropes of cum fill him. “We could have pups in there, Nicky. Our pups, beautiful just like their mother.”

Nick’s body jerks in shock, tugging painfully on where they are tied. “M-MOTHER?!” Nick screeches sounding horrified.

Monroe’s hands rub soothing circles on Nick’s bare skin. “Sh, Nick. I’m sorry, is bearer better?”

“Oh my god, I’m dreaming. This is a nightmare. It has to be. Men can’t get pregnant. And I’m a fucking man. Come on, Nick. Wake up!” Nick shuts his eyes tight, pinching himself harshly while praying with all his might that this is some kind of horrible nightmare. That he’s not getting literally bred by his Blutbad mate, who wants nothing more than to knock him up and call him mother. His hope dies an awful death when his gray eyes open and everything is the same. He is still naked on the floor, Monroe’s floor, with Monroe’s cock knotted inside him.

Monroe tries to stem the hurt that flares inside him but his wolf feels like he is being rejected by his mate. A pained sounding whine escapes his throat, startling Nick out of his freak out. Monroe bites his lip hard enough to draw blood to stop another whine from leaving his lips. His hands abruptly leave Nick’s body. Monroe fights with his wolf, who wants Monroe to claim Nick forcibly and without mercy. His wolf refuses to allow their mate to reject them.

Nick senses something is wrong, he tries to turn but Monroe’s knot doesn’t give him much room to maneuver. “Monroe? Are you okay? Talk to me.”
Monroe loses the fight to his wolf, who takes control, woging and rolling them until Nick is underneath the Blutbad. He growls menacingly.

Nick freezes, his instincts screaming at him. “Monroe? It is just me, Nick…your mate.”

“MINE!” Monroe growls.

Nick can tell Monroe has woged. Monroe is nuzzling his neck; the hairs brushing his bare skin are coarser than his normal hair. “Yours,” Nick vows, hoping to calm Monroe down. He doesn’t know what happened to make Monroe lose his control. Without warning, Monroe bites down on the bond mark he made that first night. Nick cries out, the bite is harder, rougher, and deeper than his first bonding bite. He goes limp, one of part of him screaming to fight back while the other, louder voice telling him to submit. It seems that voice is right and Monroe releases his hold on Nick’s neck. Nick whimpers when Monroe laps at the blood but doesn’t try to wiggle away.

Monroe plants his claws into the carpet beside Nick’s head and starts rocking his body, pushing into Nick with all his might, forcing his mate to take him as deep as possible. Nick grunts as Monroe thrusts into him forcefully over and over. Monroe’s inner wolf is powerfully reasserting his claim, as if something has threatened or challenged his claim. Nick doesn’t know how he knows that but somehow he does. The knowledge lights a flare of lust inside him. Nick mewls and keens as Monroe pushes so, so deep inside him. And Monroe’s wolf yips in happiness at the pleasured cries of his mate, Nick is accepting his claim. Nick is his, Nick is theirs.

Overwhelmed, Nick is shaking under Monroe. The cock in his ass is hot and heavy and perfect as Monroe thrusts deep with inhuman strength. The friction from the carpet and feeling of Monroe at his back are hurling him toward the brink. “M-Monroe! Oh god, please. Pleasefuckmeclaimmemakemeyours.” The Blutbad growls. His fangs bite into the back of Nick’s neck, holding Nick in place as he’s fucked without mercy. Thrusting impossibly deep, Monroe pumps his seed inside of Nick. His wolf cheers as his mate whimpers and spills onto the carpet.

Monroe’s wolf retreats a moment later leaving Monroe horrified at the sight of his mate. The two bloody bite marks stand out starkly against Nick’s pale skin. Monroe shakes his head violently, chanting, “Nonono! Nick!”

Nick can hear the anguish and shame in Monroe’s voice as he separates their bodies as much as possibly while they are tied. “Monroe. Monroe! MONROE!” Nick shouts. Monroe jolts, stilling. Nick looks over his shoulder and Monroe ducks his head and refuses to meet Nick’s eyes. It hurts to see the sorrow and regret on Monroe’s face.

“I’m sorry, Nick. I’m so sorry.”

Nick nudges Monroe until he lays down on his back, allowing Nick to sit in his lap and twist his torso to look at him. “Monroe, look at me.” When he doesn’t, Nick pleads, “Please look at me.” With great reluctance, Monroe meets Nick’s gray eyes. “What just happened?”

He obviously doesn’t want to answer but feels he owes Nick an explanation. “I lost control and I won’t ever forgive myself. I hurt you.”

Nick’s heart squeezes, “No, you didn’t hurt me.”

“Nick, you are bleeding! I bit you!”

“Well, yeah but it didn’t feel like you were hurting me, not really. Why did you lose control?”

Monroe admits, “My wolf…felt you were rejecting us and took control to claim you in a way you
Nick is baffled. “I didn’t reject you.” He wouldn’t reject Monroe. As weird as things can get being mated to a Blutbad, Nick has not once truly considered leaving. Yes, he has freaked out more than once but who wouldn’t in his shoes? Freak outs aside, Nick doesn’t want to leave. Monroe loves him and Nick cares for Monroe too. He might not be in love yet but Nick knows himself enough to realize that it won’t be long before he loves Monroe back.

Monroe mumbles to himself, “Sure sounded that way.”

“What? What are you talking about?”

“You called this, being with me, a nightmare. You wanted to wake up… You wished this wasn’t real,” Monroe says, sounding hurt.

Nick winces, realizing that his freak out had hurt Monroe. He opens his eyes, regret unmistakable in his eyes. “I’m sorry, Monroe. I really am. I didn’t mean it. Being called a m-mother was…shocking and I admit I didn’t handle it well. But I wasn’t rejecting you and I don’t think this is a nightmare. A bit much to take sometimes but not a nightmare. I’m sorry you thought I was rejecting you.” Nick feels Monroe’s knot loosen and he lifts up carefully. He turns around and lies on Monroe’s chest, their faces close. “You are my mate. I would never deny that. Never. You aren’t the only one that feels it, the connection, the rightness between us. I never wanted to hurt you, never meant to make you feel like I don’t want to be with you. I care for you and never ever doubt that. I don’t want to wake up tomorrow and find out this was just a dream. I don’t want to lose you.”

Monroe can read the regret and sincerity on Nick’s expressive face. “I don’t want to lose you either.” He wants to ask Nick if he’s forgiven too but doesn’t dare.

“I forgive you too. So you can stop feeling so guilty.” Nick smiles at Monroe’s sheepish expression. “I’m a Grimm, Monroe. It’s going to take more than that to hurt me. And your wolf should feel more secure now that I’ve been sufficiently claimed.”

Monroe nods, even as he can hear his wolf practically purring in agreement.

Nick lays his head on Monroe’s chest, his fingers playing with the hair on his chest. “Is that what I’ll be? The mother?” Nick asks quietly, needing to know but thankful to be able to hide his face against Monroe’s chest.

Monroe is a little uncertain how to answer that, especially considering how Nick reacted before. But his mate deserves honesty. “Technically yes, although bearer is probably a more accurate term. Like a mother, you will bear the pups.”

“So our children will call me mother?”

“Doubtful. Most same sex couples in the Wesen community traditionally use parental terms according to the sex of the parent. You may be the ‘mother’ but our pups will likely call you some variation of father, just like me.”

Nick is relieved and lets his muscles relax. The thought of being called mother is a little unnerving. He has enough threats to his masculinity being a submissive mate of a Blutbad, who might get pregnant, without adding that to the mix. “Okay.”

They lie there together for a while, both of them needing the close intimacy to soothe away the hurt and the guilt.
The moment ends when Monroe’s stomach growls. Nick smiles and gets off Monroe without a word. They both go to the kitchen. Monroe takes out a casserole he’d made specifically for during Nick’s heat and pops it in the oven. They’ll have some time before it is ready. “Shower?”

“Oh god, yes.” Nick feels disgusting, dried cum everywhere. Getting under the hot spray feels heavenly and he sighs, standing there thoroughly enjoying it. Monroe, like the good Alpha he is, lathers his hands and starts washing his mate. Nick is content to let him. Monroe washes his back, paying special attention to his ass. He cleans Nick both outside and in. Monroe washes his chest and belly before cleaning off his cock, which hardens in Monroe’s hand. Nick leans back against his mate, reveling in Monroe’s firm grip on his cock and his mate’s hardness against the small of his back. It doesn’t take long for Nick to spill over Monroe’s hand nor for Monroe’s hot cum to shoot onto Nick’s ass. The edge taken off, Monroe washes the rest of Nick and starts to wash himself. Nick’s hand stops him, “Let me?”

Monroe drops his hand, sighing as Nick’s lathered hands bashfully smooth over his chest. He smiles softly at his mate, enjoying Nick’s shy exploration of his body. Nick washes his belly, only hesitating for a second before taking Monroe in hand and stroking him slowly. “Nicky…” he groans, his cock thickening excitedly at his mate’s touch. Fascinated, Nick watches eagerly as he pleasures Monroe. His hand speeds up, stroking Monroe firmly. Watching his mate writhing under his touch makes Nick hard. His hand slows, making Monroe growl “Nicky…” warningly. Nick smirks even as he obeys, stroking Monroe faster. His thumb drags over the slit making Monroe shudder. Nick suddenly drops to his knees, staring at Monroe’s dick a little uncertainly. Monroe’s fingers caress Nick’s cheek, “You don’t have to.”

“I want to.” Monroe certainly isn’t going to stop Nick. Nick stares a moment before gathering his nerve. He holds it still with one hand and cautiously licks at the leaking head. Monroe closes his eyes, savoring the feeling of Nick’s tongue lapping at his cock. Nick bites his lip for a second. He leans forward with his mouth open and takes the head of Monroe’s cock inside. He sucks hard, pulling a groan from his mate. “So good.” The praise gives him confidence and Nick takes in more before easing back. His tongue traces the thick vein, suckling on the tip. Monroe buries his fingers in Nick’s hair as his mate takes him shockingly deep. The heavy weight on his tongue feels a bit odd but Nick finds he likes it.

“Fuck, Nicky. You have no gag reflex.” Monroe thrusts forward gently and Nick takes him perfectly. Surer, Monroe juts forward until his cock is in Nick’s throat. Nick doesn’t know how it is possible to fit Monroe’s not insubstantial dick in his mouth and down his throat without gagging but he isn’t complaining. Nick sucks as Monroe thrusts into his mouth over and over. The fullness in his mouth only serves to make his ass feel emptier.

Monroe suddenly tears Nick away, pulling him up and pushing him against the shower wall. He lifts Nick up, who instinctively wraps his legs around Monroe. Without hesitation, Monroe pushes into his mate. He ruts into Nick desperately. “Yes! Fuck me! Breed me!”

Monroe growls. “Gonna drown you in my seed, my pretty little mate, until you’re swollen with my pups.” Nick’s eyes roll as they are tied once more, the hot splash of cum filling him sweetly. His cock pulses between them.

Monroe leans heavily against the wall, carefully to keep Nick steady. He can feel Nick’s soft lips kissing and sucking gently on his skin. Monroe stands with care, stepping out of the shower with Nick clinging to him. He drapes a towel down on the toilet seat and sits down. Nick eases back and they stare at each other. They smile and Nick leans forward to kiss Monroe. Their kisses are unhurried, wet, and passionate. Monroe pushes his tongue into Nick’s mouth, mapping it with his tongue. Nick sucks on Monroe’s tongue lazily. When he releases it, he uses his own tongue to
explore Monroe’s mouth. They trade sweet kisses until Monroe’s knot shrinks. One last peck and Nick gingerly lifts off Monroe’s lap. They dry themselves quickly, both of them pondering whether it is worth it to put on underwear. Nick shrugs his shoulders figuring there is no sense in wearing anything until his heat is over and walks downstairs to the kitchen nude, while an equally naked Monroe follows him.

“Take that out for me, Nicky.” Monroe readies the fixings for a salad, taking out caramalized almonds, fruit, some chicken for Nick, veggies, and several different homemade salad dressings. “Do you want to make your own salad or should I fix it for you?”

Nick shakes his head, “Nah, I’ll do it.” The two men fix their own salads. Nick chooses a mix of spinach and red leaf lettuce with orange peppers, strawberries, almonds, a little chicken and cucumbers. Monroe chooses baby beet greens, bok choy, and romaine lettuce with tomatoes, avocado, red peppers, and mushrooms. Each decides on a different dressing. They sit at the breakfast bar and dig into their salads. Neither of them takes much time to savor, no doubt Nick’s heat will flare up soon. Salads eaten, they dig into the casserole. Halfway done, Nick stands up. The slick leaking from his ass makes it difficult to sit on the stool. They both finish quickly.

Leaving the food on the counter, Nick and Monroe go into the living room. Nick gets onto the floor on all fours, Monroe settles behind him. Monroe pushes inside and Nick sighs contently at being full again. Nick isn’t satisfied to just take it though. “Stop.”

Monroe stills, puzzled. Nick takes advantage of his confusion and starts pushing back. Monroe grins, perfectly happy to watch Nick fuck himself on his dick. It’s a beautiful sight: Nick’s strong muscles moving as he rolls backward, taking him deep before rocking forward. “So beautiful, my little mate. How easy you take me, so hot and tight and eager.” Monroe’s hand wraps around Nick, letting him fuck back onto his cock and forward into his fist. Nick moans wantonly, rocking back and forth faster. He cums hard, melting into a pile of satisfied goo. Monroe straddles his ass, pushing back inside and his hips rut frantically. They are quickly knotted together, Monroe filling Nick once again.

But Nick isn’t satisfied, demanding, “More.”

Unable to deny his love, Monroe starts moving his hips again. He spreads Nick’s legs and thrusts with hard but controlled jabs. Nick lies there limp and loose. The sight of his mate just laying there completely fucked out yet begging for more is enough to get Monroe hard again.

Monroe makes Nick take him hard and slow, making good on the promise to drown his mate in his seed. Nick lies there open and loose, happily letting Monroe use his body. His own cock fills from the friction of the carpet underneath him and from Monroe’s cock in his ass. Nick cums suddenly before passing out. Monroe thrusts twice before he too cums. He eases them onto their sides and waits for his knot to come loose. Once it does, he picks his mate up gently and carries him to their bed.

NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M*

By Sunday morning, Monroe has fucked Nick in every room in the house, at least twice. On the floor, the bed, the couch, the table, the counter, the shower, the desk, the wall, anywhere and everywhere. Their near constant fucking finally has started to lessen. Both of them are starving and they having a leisurely and enormous brunch, gorging themselves as if to make up for the previous days’ lack of food.

The rest of the day is spent lazing about watching movies. Nick’s heat only flares up three times.

By Monday, Monroe smells the change in Nick’s scent. The heat scent has mostly faded and in its
Nick is pregnant. Nick interrupts his thoughts when he asks, “When will we know? If my heat was successful?” It’s clear from his tone that Nick is taking pains to ensure he sounds nonchalant.

Monroe already knows but he needs to be positive before telling Nick. “I didn’t know when your heat would end so I couldn’t set up an appointment but I did warn a Wesen doctor that we would be coming to see him this week. You aren’t giving off the heat scent anymore, so we should be able to see him now. He will determine if you are pregnant or not.”

Nick squirms, not sure if it is worse that the doctor is male or not.

Monroe adds, “Dr. Owens is a bearer too.”

“What? Really?”

He nods, “I thought you might be more comfortable with him.”

Nick finds it does make him feel better. He isn’t sure whether he wants the test to be positive or negative. Maybe Dr. Owens could answer some questions for him. “Thanks Roe.”

He grins before pulling out his phone and making the appointment. “He’ll see us tomorrow, first thing in the morning.”

Nick nods; glad he doesn’t have to wait too long. He lets Monroe gather him close. When Monroe starts to caress his flat belly, Nick feels strange. Warm and protected, proud and loved, unsure but happy. Tomorrow he will find out. Tomorrow he could discover he is the first male human to become pregnant. A Grimm impregnated by Blutbad. Nick knows if he is pregnant, things are just going to get more complicated. *Will Wesen want to kill me more or less if I’m carrying a half-Wesen baby? How am I going to explain this to Hank, Wu, Renard, and the rest of the station? Sooner or later, they are going to notice how fat I’m getting.*

Monroe lets Nick’s mind run wild. For tomorrow, Nick will find out he is pregnant. Monroe hopes that Nick will eventually be as happy as he is. It won’t be easy for his mate but Monroe will be right by his side.

Nick doesn’t sleep well that night. His dreams are filled with possibilities both heartwarming and horrifying. Of a little boy with his eyes and Monroe’s build, a little girl that is carbon copy of him. Of his belly round and obviously pregnant. Of Monroe rubbing his pregnant belly and talking to their baby. Of him being hunted by Humans and Wesen alike, for being a freak of nature. Of scientists cutting him open, ripping out his baby, dissecting him. Of their child being stolen even as he lies dying, powerless to stop them. Of Monroe going mad with grief and being slaughtered.

Nick wakes screaming, his gray eyes swirling with a storm of emotion. Monroe jolts awake, instinctively reaching out to Nick. But Nick is still panicked from his nightmare, filled with grief and fury. He fights Monroe as if he is the one trying to steal their child. Monroe tries not to hurt his mate as he finally pins him underneath him. “Nick! Nicky! Look at me!” Monroe shouts, using his Alpha power to force Nick to obey. Nick’s panicked eyes meet Monroe’s and slowly Nick comes back. He clutches Monroe desperately as he starts to sob. Monroe holds him close, whispering words of comfort and love. When Nick’s weeping finally ceases, Monroe asks gently, “What happened, Baby?”

Nick buries his face into Monroe’s neck. “I-It was horrible. They stole our baby. They cut me open and stole our baby. I couldn’t stop them. I laid there and had to watch, I was dying, helpless. And you went mad and they k-killed you. I couldn’t stop them, I c-couldn’t save our baby or you or
myself! I had to watch us all die.”

Monroe shudders, “Never. That will never happen. I promise, Nick.”

“How can you promise that? How? It wasn’t just Humans that wanted me dead but Wesen. They hunted me.”

“Why would Wesen hunt you, well besides you being a Grimm?”

“For being a freak, being a pregnant man, a pregnant Grimm.”

Monroe shakes his head, “There are lots of male Wesen that can get pregnant. You wouldn’t be a freak by any measure in the Wesen community. And you wouldn’t just be a pregnant Grimm. You are mated to me, to a Blutbad. That alone will show the community that you are not like other Grimms. The Wesen community would never allow Humans to take our child. We have been hiding our existence for centuries and the Council would never let Humans experiment on our child. Together we will protect any pups we may have and each other.”

Nick is only slightly reassured. The unspeakable images from his nightmare flash in his mind in a constant loop. It isn’t easy to forget but having Monroe’s comforting presence beside him helps a little. No doubt he and Monroe will have to have several long talks in the future. That is if he can become pregnant. Nick has no idea how the whole thing would work. His most pressing questions are how is he supposed to hide the pregnancy? He works with cops, they will notice him gaining weight and especially if and when he looks like a pregnant woman. Nick’s mind shies away from the most pressing question: how exactly will the baby come out? He is not even close to being ready to tackle that question.

“I mean it, Nick. I will do everything within my power to protect both you and our pups. I told you before that Blutbaden search their whole lives for their mates. Our mates, our pups, are our everything. We will fight to the death to protect them. I will fight to the death to protect you. I won’t allow anyone or anything to hurt you or our pups,” Monroe promises. “Plus, you are a Grimm.”

Nick’s slowly forming smile is menacing. In his nightmare he was helpless. But here in the real world, he is far from helpless. He is a Grimm; it is his job to go against Wesen, creatures that are far stronger, faster, and more evolved than Humans. A pissed off Grimm is dangerous, a pissed Grimm whose child is being threatened is akin to a protective mama grizzly bear on PCP. Add an enraged papa Blutbad intent on protecting both his mate and child to the mix and it is like unleashing a tsunami of rage. Nick’s fear finally lessens. “No one will hurt our child. Not with us standing in their way.”

Nick and Monroe stand outside the clinic. To Nick, it looks like any other. He is nervous enough that he is grateful for Monroe’s hand on the small of his back and his protective hovering. Nick lets Monroe usher him inside. There is only one other couple in the waiting room when Nick and Monroe sit down. Nick’s leg bounces nervously as they wait. He glances over at the other couple, the woman obviously very pregnant. She woges suddenly; she is a Fuschsbau. In shock, she fearfully whispers to her husband, “Grimm.” The husband stands hastily, putting himself in front of his wife in a futile attempt to protect his wife and child. Fuschsbau don’t stand much of a chance against a Grimm.

Monroe quickly stands, holding his hands out in an attempt to placate the two Fuschsbau. “Nick won’t hurt you.” Nick does his best to look harmless. If Monroe can handle this without him, he’s happy to let him. Nick does not want to get in a brawl at the doctor’s office and hurt a couple of
innocent Fuschbau, especially considering one of them is pregnant.

The husband growls, “He’s a Grimm!”

“He’s my mate.”

The husband and wife both gasp. “What?”

“Nick is my mate.”

“B-But he’s a Grimm!”

Monroe says in a reasonable tone, “He is my mate. Smell him. He won’t hurt you.”

The husband woges and warily steps close enough to scent Nick. He backs up, saying with astonishment, “It’s true. He’s been claimed.” He might not be a Blutbad but he knows about their mates, how only their true mate can be claimed. Even more intriguing is why the Blutbad brought the Grimm here; this is an obstetrician’s office. The Blutbad must be pregnant or at least could be. It can’t be the Grimm; Grimms are stronger than a normal Human but they are still Human. And Humans haven’t evolved like Wesen, males cannot get pregnant.

The two couples go back to their perspective corners and wait. Nick ignores the repeated paranoid glances in his direction. Considering all he has read from the books of his ancestors, he isn’t surprised they fear him. Grimms have a history of killing any Wesen they can find, whether they are dangerous or not. Nick isn’t like that and he doesn’t want to be.

A few minutes later, the Fuchsbau couple is called by a nurse. When they are gone, Nick sighs with relief. *At least I didn’t have to fight them.* His leg continues its nervous bouncing until a nurse calls for them.

Nick is reluctant, not sure he is ready to find out the truth but again, he lets Monroe usher him forward anyway. At the nurse’s instruction, Nick changes and sits on the examination table to wait for the doctor. Monroe stands next to him, holding his hand. Nick isn’t ashamed to admit he needs it.

The doctor comes in a few minutes later. “Welcome, I am Dr. Jack Owens.” He woges in greeting. He’s a Jägerbar and it only takes a second for him to realize that Nick is a Grimm. “Grimm!”

Monroe woges and steps in front of Nick. “He’s my mate.”

Dr. Owens takes a deep breath. The Blutbad isn’t lying. The Grimm has been claimed, he can smell it. He shakes his head, looking again like a normal human. “Monroe, you should have warned me your mate was a Grimm.” When Monroe moves back beside his mate, Jack looks at the Grimm. The man is obviously nervous, his fingers picking at his clothes, his leg bouncing with anxious energy. Jack’s eyes go from the Grimm to his mate. “He’s Human. Why are you even here?”

“Human or not, Nick went into heat.”

Owens suddenly appears interested, “Truly?”

“Yes. I would know, wouldn’t I? We spent the last several days breeding nonstop, if that isn’t a heat, I do not know what is.”

Jack eyes the now blushing Grimm with fascination. He woges and stands close to the Grimm and breathes in. His sensitive nose picks out not only the Blutbad’s claim but also the faint scent of a passed heat. The most shocking thing he smells is the last thing he expects to smell coming from a
male Grimm: new life. Owens inhales twice more and it is the same. The Grimm has been successfully bred and is pregnant.

“How does this work exactly? Blood tests or something?” Nick asks.

Jack looks over at Monroe, who shrugs. “This isn’t a human hospital.”

Nick asks confused, “So…no tests?”

Owens’ expression turns amused. “Not to determine whether or not you are pregnant.”

“So…am I?” Nick asks timidly.

Jack glances at Monroe. He knows the Blutbad already knows. “You are.”

Nick curses. Too many emotions flood him to really what he is feeling. Happiness, sadness, shock, nervousness, confusion, horror, fear. “You’re sure? Shouldn’t you run a test or something?”

“Sir.”

“Nick, Nick Burkhardt.”

“Mr. Burkhardt, I am a Jägerbar. Our sense of smell is highly advanced. I can smell the life growing in you, just as your mate can.”

Nick turns to Monroe, narrowing his eyes and says accusingly, “You knew?!”

“Would you have believed me?”

“Well, no.” Nick scrubs his hand over his face wearily. “So what happens now?”

Jack admits, “You are a unique case, Mr. Burkhardt.”

“Nick, call me Nick.” He doesn’t want to spend every visit being called Mr. Burkhardt.

“Well, Nick. Now I do a full exam on you to determine any risks or concerns for the pregnancy.” Nick nods and remains silent throughout the exam. He still in shock, his mind stuck on being pregnant. The rest of the appointment is a blur for Nick. He doesn’t hear the doctor talking about how his body had somehow evolved like Wesen to enable him to support a pregnancy. Nor does he hear Dr. Owens’ comment about how healthy he is. Nick doesn’t hear the instructions on the vitamins, both for human and Wesen, that he should be taking.

“So you have any questions?” When Nick doesn’t respond, the doctor tries again. “Nick?” Again, no response.

Monroe, who has been listening avidly, cups the back of Nick’s neck. “Nicky?”

He looks up, confused. “What?”

Monroe’s expression softens. He can see how overwhelmed his mate is. “Do you have any questions for Dr. Owens?”

Nick’s mind roars with questions. “How did this happen?”

Dr. Owens hides his smile. “Are you referring to how you became pregnant? Or how is it possible for you to become pregnant?”
Nick’s expression makes it clear which question he is asking.

“Blutbaden matings are unusual. Whereas the majority of Wesen choose their mates, Blutbaden don’t; their mates are chosen for them. Blutbaden believe their mates were made for them. You are a unique case. A Human, even a Grimm should not be able to be mated to a Blutbad. You should not be able to go into heat. You should not be able to become pregnant. Yet, you did go into heat and you are pregnant. Your body physically changed for your mate, formed all the things necessary to support a pregnancy. It is quite remarkable.”

Nick grimaces, he doesn’t feel remarkable. “So I’m what now, a hermaphrodite?”

“In Humans’ terms, perhaps but in the Wesen world, you are just a bearer, same as I am.”

“You don’t know…how I changed?”

Jack answers, “Medically speaking, no. It shouldn’t be possible but then isn’t that what Humans would say about Wesen?”

Nick has to admit, that is a good point. Ever since finding out he is a Grimm and about Wesen and realizing that he wasn’t crazy, he has simply found it easier to simply accept the unexplainable. There is no point of trying to find a rational, scientific explanation for how people can change into human-animal hybrids. Just as finding out how his body changed is pointless. It won’t change anything; it won’t make him any less pregnant. “How will this work? What can I expect?”

Owens admits, “I cannot be certain but I suspect your pregnancy will develop more like a Wesen’s than a Human’s.”

“How are they different?”

“Wesen’s are typically shorter, usually around six months instead of nine.”

“Really?” Nick asks, sounding interested. Being pregnant for a shorter amount of time is an idea he can get behind.

Jack says, “Yes. The next month the growth rate of your fetus or fetuses will determine the length of your pregnancy.”

Nick gulps, “There could be more than one?”

Owens glances over at Monroe before answering, “Blutbaden pregnancies are often similar to wolves, having litters instead of a single baby. Generally they have two or three pups at a time. It is rare for Blutbaden to have a single pup.”

“What?!” Nick’s head whips around to Monroe, jabbing an accusing finger at his mate, “YOU!”

Monroe swallows reflexively and tries to calm him. “Now Nicky.”

“Don’t Nicky me! Two or three babies at the same time! Are you fucking insane?! Why didn’t you tell me, you bastard?!”

Jack mutters, “Fucking is how you got here in the first place,” before backing away, trying to hide his smirk. Watching a mate cringe while their bearer yells at him, never fails to amuse him.

“Nick, don’t you want our pups? However many there will be? Don’t you want them to have a sibling to play with and grow up with? Wasn’t it lonely growing up with just you and your aunt?”
Owens admits to himself, *Guilt trip. Good move, Monroe.*

Nick scowls, “Not fair.”

Monroe smiles, his guilt trip worked.

Nick pouts. “Fine. You’re right. I’ll love them, no matter how many there are.” *Please no more than three, dear god, please no more than three!* He consoles himself, admitting aloud, “It was lonely without a sibling.” Nick turns to the doctor asking, “How am I supposed to hide this? I’m a cop. I work with trained observers. They are going to notice if I suddenly get fat and start looking like a pregnant woman.”

Owens again hides his amusement, “Yes, I could see how that would be a concern. Nick, Wesen have been hiding male pregnancies for centuries. We have our ways. I’ll send you to the local spice shop; they will have the potions you’ll need to hide the pregnancy. They won’t be necessary until you start to gain weight.” Jack writes down the address and hands it to Nick.

“This is Rosalee’s shop.”

His eyebrows rise in surprise. “You know of it?”

“Yeah, Rosalee’s brother was murdered. She helped us in finding the people who murdered him,” Nick says nonchalantly. “She saved Monroe’s life.”

Jack is again surprised. This Grimm certainly is different. He is not only mated to a Blutbad, he is working with Wesen. Like all Wesen, Jack has always feared his family would encounter a Grimm and be slaughtered. Yet, here is a Grimm unlike any other. A Grimm that acts as if helping a Wesen is normal. No Grimm he has ever heard of has seen a differential between innocent/harmless Wesen and dangerous/killing Wesen. Grimms see them all as dangerous. All except this Grimm. He looks at Monroe. “You are remarkably blessed.”

Monroe grins, puffing out his chest with pride, “I know.” His Nicky is one of a kind.

Nick looks at them confused, not realizing how significant he is.

Both the Wesen know how very momentous it is for a Grimm to have compassion for a Wesen, to be eager and willing to help Wesen instead of simply slaughtering every one he comes across. Perhaps if Nick had grown up knowing about Wesen, being trained to be a killer, he may have been just like every other Grimm. But he didn’t. He’s a cop because he wants to protect people. Nick sees being a Grimm as the same as being a cop. He is there to help people, humans and Wesen alike.

“How does this potion work?”

“You’ll take it the first potion ten minutes before you leave the house. It works like an illusion. You will look like you did pre-pregnancy. The second potion you take once you are at home; it will allow your true body to be seen. You probably will need to start taking these potions by the end of the month, if you progress in the manner of Wesen pregnancies.”

Jack chuckles, “Like magic, right?”

“Why is it the more I know about the Wesen world, the less fantasy Harry Potter seems?”
Monroe laughs, “Rowling is Wesen you know.”

“What? Really?”

Jack grins, “Why do you think she was able to make her Harry Potter world so believable?”

Nick has to admit that does make some sense. “Wesen can do that? Write stories influenced by the Wesen world?”

“The Council is fairly lenient with Wesen writing fiction and fantasy,” Owens states. “Anyone that thinks what they write is real is typically written off as crazy. There isn’t much of a risk that fantasy novels will reveal that Wesen creatures are real.”

Nick nods, “True.” He mentally shrugs; he is always learning something new about Wesens. No doubt he will continue to do so.

“Back to you, Nick. We need to set up appointments for next month, one per week. The next appointment, I will check the development of your pregnancy, ensure that baby or babies and you are both doing well. As I said before, by the end of the first month I will be able to tell you approximately how long your pregnancy will be.”

Nick shifts uncomfortably before getting the courage to ask, “What about symptoms? Will they be the same as a woman’s?”

Jack looks at him with sympathy, this situation cannot be easy for him. “Symptoms for bearers can be similar to females. However, symptoms are sometimes more severe for men than women. Mood swings are very common for bearers, considering the flux of hormones that comes with pregnancy.” He glances over to Monroe. “Our mates take the brunt of it but they’re tough.”

They both look to Monroe. He grins cheerfully at Nick. “Anything you need, my little mate, I am happy to provide…even if it is a punching bag.”

Nick mumbles under his breath, “Damn straight.” He figures Monroe owes him after all the stuff he is putting him through. Nick could still be blissfully ignorant to all this male pregnancy/Wesen mate stuff. Without Monroe, there wouldn’t be any threats to his sexuality or his masculinity. He’d still be straight, be unaware that men can go into heat, and be ignorant of the possibly of men becoming pregnant. Monroe owes him.

Owens vows, “If you have any questions, feel free to ask. I realize this is new to you and I promise to answer any questions you may have.”

“Thanks, Doc.”

In the car, Monroe takes Nick’s hand. “How are you doing?”

“I thought finding out I was a Grimm and about Wesen was tough but all this is harder to take in.” Seeing the expression on his mate’s face, Nick clarifies, “I am not saying this is bad, it will simply take time. You’ll have to be patient with me.” Nick waves his hands to signify both himself and Monroe, “All of this is new to me. What I’ve been taught since I was a child is suddenly wrong. Although I am getting used to this feeling, being a pregnant man is no different than seeing a person turn into an animal. Both completely against everything humans are taught and both supposed to be impossible.” Nick scrubs his hands over his face. “We’re going to have babies, Monroe. Actual babies. In six months.”
Monroe turns Nick’s face to him and kisses his lips. “We’re having pups, Nicky. A family. Our own little pack. Just you and me and our pups.”

“Yeah, our own family.” Despite being overwhelmed, Nick likes the idea. Monroe loves him and couldn’t be happier to have babies. Together they are strong enough to protect their babies. “Will our kids be Wesen or Grimm?”

Monroe has never considered that. “I’m not sure.” Their pups will get half their genetics from each father but will that make the pups Wesen or Grimm or Wesen and Grimm? “I suppose we’ll find out as they grow.”

Nick thinks about it for a second before dismissing it. He’s pregnant now and they won’t know what the baby or babies will be until later. No sense in getting worked up about it now; he’s got enough shit to deal with at the moment. “Where are we going to live Monroe? Your little house is fine for now but with two or more babies, there won’t be enough space as they grow. My house is—”

Monroe growls, thinking of the woman that once lived there with Nick. “No. Not there, not where you lived with…her,” Monroe sneers.

Nick’s lips turn up, “You’re jealous!”

“Damn straight!”

He snickers, “Straight.” Nick’s far from straight now, all thanks to Monroe.

Monroe rolls his eyes.

“I think it is cute that you’re jealous. Trust me, Monroe, Juliette is the furthest thing from my mind. You got me pregnant. You fucked me for days and got me pregnant with twins or triplets or god forbid quadruplets. If I have five babies inside of me, so help me Monroe. Your dick isn’t getting anywhere near me for a long, long time!”

Monroe gulps, saying soothingly “Carrying five pups is extremely unlikely, Nicky.”

Nick points at him accusingly, “It better be! Now, what was I saying? Oh yeah. Until I went to work that Monday, I had forgotten all about Juliette. Do you know how hard it was to pretend I was sad over the breakup at work? How hard it was considering how happy and fucked out you make me? I don’t think Hank believed me for a second!”

That makes Monroe feel a bit better. “We’ll start looking for a place, okay? A place that will be ours.” He’ll need to find somewhere that isn’t already claimed by another Blutbad.

Nick is stunned by how much and how fast his life is changing. A week and a half ago, he was a normal guy. Living with his longtime girlfriend in the house they shared, considering making their relationship official. Content with his life at the very least, even if not ecstatically happy. Now, he has a mate, a man that will love him for the rest of their lives. He’s pregnant with likely multiple babies, due in half a year with a new house on the horizon. His life is admittedly crazy but Nick’s okay with that. He doesn’t remember a time he’s been happier. “That sounds nice,” Nick says with a smile. “You know I’m going to have to see Juliette, right? We’ll have to sell the house, unless she wants it for herself. And no, you can’t come with. I don’t think she needs to know about us, it would only hurt her more.” Nick is suddenly slightly afraid at the sight of the expression on Monroe’s face. “What the hell are you thinking about?”

Monroe grins. *I may not get to be there with Nicky but he sure as hell will have me with him. I’ll fill him up to the brim and plug all my seed inside of him, that way he can’t forget who he belongs to.*
“Seriously? What’s that mean?” Nick asks, indicating Monroe’s face.

“I promise not to go with you if I can claim you.”

Nick’s eyes narrow suspiciously, “Claim me how?”

“Let me fill you up with my cum…”

Nick shrugs, that isn’t so bad.

Monroe finishes, “And wear a plug to keep it all inside you.”

“Wait, what?”

“Those are my terms.”

“But a plug? Why?”

Monroe answers, “You won’t for a second forget who you belong to, will you?”

Nick grumbles to himself, careful to keep it unintelligible. He doesn’t need Monroe to go all possessive. *As if I could forget. Knocked up dude here, kinda difficult to forget that. Juliette isn’t what I want or need. Not anymore.* Nick has a feeling that if he refuses, he’ll have Monroe hovering over him during his meeting with Juliette. *And wouldn’t make it glaring obvious that Monroe is my overprotective, possessive boyfriend?!* “Fine.”

Monroe looks rather smug.

“Stop smirking you asshole,” Nick scolds, his twitching lips making it clear there is no malice in his words.

“I have a lot to be smug about, my little mate.”

Nick rolls his eyes but the smile on his lips is fond.

“Do you want to go see Rosalee now or…?”

Nick thinks about being mated to Monroe and his pregnancy. Rosalee is the only one besides Monroe that he can tell right now. He will have to tell Hank at some point but that will be a more complicated story. Rosalee already knows who and what he and Monroe are. Nick being pregnant will likely be a surprise but she is more apt to accept it fairly easily. “Now is fine.”

The drive to the spice shop is quiet but comfortable. Together they enter.

“Nick, Monroe, morning,” Rosalee greets.

Monroe says cheerfully, “Morning Rosalee.”

“Hey,” Nick says.

Rosalee’s eyes widen as Nick gets closer. She exclaims in shock, “Nick, you’re?”

“What?” Nick is baffled for a second before he realizes that Fuchsbau’s sense of smell is as strong as a Blutbad’s. Oh, yeah. Surprise?”

“You’re—he’s?” Rosalee says looking from Nick to Monroe.
Monroe puffs up his chest and declares proudly, “Nicky’s my mate.”

Nick smiles shyly as Monroe throws an arm around him.

“Wow. I didn’t think a Grimm could be a mate of a Wesen, especially a Blutbad at that.”

“Tell me about it,” Nick mutters.

Rosalee woges, and she can’t believe what she is smelling. “You went into heat.”

“Can’t hide much from Fuchsbau, can you?”

Rosalee laughs despite her shock, “No, not very easily.”

Nick asks, “So do you know it all then?”

“That you’re pregnant too? Yes, I can smell that as well.” She shakes her head and her face returns to its normal state.

Monroe looks immensely proud. Nick shrugs, “Monroe just keeps laying surprises on me. Less than a week and half and he’s claimed me, gone through a heat with me, and knocked me up. He really knows how to take things slow.”

Rosalee giggles. “You seem to be taking this remarkably well, Nick.”

Nick laughs, “I’m sure Monroe would disagree. I admit I’ve had my share of freak outs in our time together. Who knew Blutbaden had mates or that men could go into heat or that men could get pregnant?! Certainly not me.”

Hiding her amusement, she admits, “I imagine none that was in those books from your ancestors.”

“I can tell you for certain, I have never come across anything that alluded to any of that in the books I’ve looked at. Guess my ancestors didn’t know everything.”

Monroe adds, “Your ancestors were more concerned with learning how to kill Wesen than what their mating habits are.”

Nick nods in agreement. Getting them back on track, Nick says, “We’re here for those potions, the pregnancy ones.”

Rosalee smiles gently, “Of course. Just let me get those for you.” The potions are always kept on hand. “Here you go, Nick. Did the doctor tell you how these work?”

“Yes. One before work, one when I get home. Takes about ten minutes to take effect and I will probably need to start taking them by the end of the month.”

“Yes. If you have any side effects or concerns, feel free to contact me. If your symptoms are giving you trouble, I have several herbal options that could help for nausea, cramping and the like.”

“Thanks Rosalee.” Nick takes the bag.

Rosalee comes around the counter, hugging Monroe first and then Nick. “Congratulations you two. On your mating and your pups.”

Monroe beams happily. Nick smiles a bit, realizing that as unplanned and unready as he feels, he isn’t dreading having children but actually looking forward to it.
Nick calls Juliette Wednesday morning. Monroe is hovering beside him, no doubt using his keen hearing to listen in. “Hello Juliette.”

“…” For a second Nick doesn’t think she is going to respond. “Hello, Nick.”

Nick had been hoping this would be less awkward but it is just as bad as he imagined. “Um…so, I was wondering about the house…do you want it?”

Juliette asks in surprise, “You don’t?”

“Ah, no. I’m staying with a friend. I…I don’t want the house.”

“A friend, right. Is she what you were hiding from me?” Juliette accuses angrily.

Nick can’t believe she is calling him a cheater! He may have had sex dreams, extremely hot ones at that, about Monroe but he hadn’t acted on them. “I never cheated on you, if that’s what you are implying.”

“I don’t see you denying that your ‘friend’ is just that, are you?”

Nick rubs his forehead, “Juliette, we aren’t together. What I’m doing or who I am with now is none of your business anymore. You are the one that broke up with me.”

Juliette’s voice is shrill as she yells, “You were lying to me, Nick! If it wasn’t an affair, what couldn’t you tell me? We were together for years and you shack up with the first bimbo you can find?!”

“I wasn’t lying to you. I didn’t have an affair and I haven’t shack up with some bimbo. I’m staying with Monroe.” Nick isn’t about to tell her she is right. He has been lying to her but it isn’t like he can tell her he is a Grimm or about Wesen. And technically Monroe isn’t a bimbo…isn’t a woman at all. It isn’t a lie; he simply isn’t telling her the whole truth. She doesn’t need to know he left her for a man. He doesn’t need her attacking him.

“Monroe?” Juliette asks in disbelief.

“If you don’t believe me, I could put him on the phone.”

Juliette concedes. “Fine. I don’t want the house either.”

“Fine. We’ll put it on the market and split the profits. We should meet with a realtor.”

“I call my friend, Betty. I’m sure she will be willing to help us out. I’ll call you with a meeting time.”

Nick is relieved; Juliette’s anger has seemed to recede a bit. He doesn’t want to fight with her. Frankly, he just wants her out of his life for good. Nick is happy with Monroe and he doesn’t want Juliette’s bitterness to taint his new life. “Okay.”

Juliette pauses, the silence awkward until she mumbles, “Bye.”

“Bye.” Nick sighs, grateful that is over.

“So she thinks you left her for some bimbo,” Monroe declares with amusement.

Nick laughs, “You are definitely not a bimbo.”
Monroe wraps his arms around Nick, his mate’s back to his chest, and rests his hands on his belly, where their pups are growing. Nick leans back into his embrace eagerly. Monroe admits, “I was afraid talking to her would make you miss her.”

Nick answers honestly, “I thought I might have but her anger and bitterness made me just want her out of our lives. You make me happy, happier than she ever did. Until you, I didn’t realize that I was simply content, not happy. If I didn’t want to be with you, I wouldn’t be, mate or not. It is you that makes all the craziness that comes with being your mate worth it.”

Monroe smiles against Nick’s skin. “I love you too, Nicky.”

Wednesday night:

The week has been odd for Hank without Nick. Although it has helped Hank’s relationship with Sean as his temporary partner couldn’t care less about his personal life. Since their start, Hank and Sean have spent every night together. It isn’t just sex either. Sean clearly cares for him and isn’t afraid to show it and Hank has quickly grown to crave Sean’s easy affection. He enjoys simply sleeping together as much as he does Sean fucking him.

For the first time since he and Sean got together, Hank goes home alone without the hope of Sean coming over. Sean has meetings and doesn’t anticipate being done until late. It is a strange feeling for Hank, to be alone for the first time since he and Sean got together. He misses Sean, his house feels empty without him. Hank is lonely without Sean. It shocks him to feel this way, for Sean’s absence to be felt so keenly after only a little over a week. This shouldn’t be happening; he shouldn’t be feeling like this. Not so soon. *This is my life, not one of those dumb romantic comedies, where two people catch eyes and instantly fall in love. I shouldn’t feel like this.* Hank has never in his life felt this strongly about another person, this fast. It is crazy and he knows it. *Maybe this is going too fast. Maybe I should tell Sean I need some time.* Hank’s frantic thoughts are interrupted by the sound of his doorbell.

Ever the paranoid cop, he takes his gun with him as he peeks out of the window and is stunned to see Sean standing on his doorstep. Hank is at the door and opening it before he even realizes it. “Sean. What—I wasn’t expecting you.” Sean’s sudden appearance pushes all the doubts from his mind, at least for the moment.

Sean smiles. *Hank is cute when he’s flustered.* The sight only urges him to kiss Hank’s startled face. Sean gives in, pecking Hank’s lips lightly. “Can I come in…or are you going to leave me standing out here?”


Hank closes the door and the hairs on the back of his neck stand up. Sean is crowding behind him; he can feel it without even turning around. Hank swallows, his cock already starting to harden just from Sean’s closeness. He turns and Sean leans against the door, boxing Hank in. Sean smirks at the visible shiver that goes through Hank. He presses his body against Hank’s and Sean can hear and feel as Hank’s breath stutters at his nearness. Sean loves to see and feel how his presence and his touch affect Hank. His face is impossibly close to Hank’s for a heartbeat before he leans in. Hank melts under Sean’s kiss. Sean nibles on Hank’s lips leisurely.

Smiling, Sean pulls back, “Hi.”

Looking dazed, Hank replies, “Hi.”
“Have you eaten yet?”

“Um, no. I wasn’t really hungry.” A second later Hank’s stomach rumbles noisily as if to loudly contradict him.

Sean smirks, quirking a brow. “Your stomach seems to disagree.”

Hank shifts his body awkwardly, avoiding Sean’s eyes. He doesn’t want to admit that he’d missed Sean and he’s spent the night moping like a lovesick calf. They’ve been together a week and a half, he shouldn’t be so clingy already.

“Hank, look at me.” Hank bites his lip and lifts his gaze with reluctance. Sean’s green eyes are warm and concerned, “What’s wrong?” Everything within Hank wants him to flee, to hide. Sean can see the hint of fear in Hank’s brown eyes. When Hank tries to look away, Sean takes his chin in hand and demands, “Tell me.”

Hank can almost feel the panic bubbling up from his chest. He wants to lash out at Sean but those sea green eyes are full of concern. And in the face of it, Hank finds himself admitting the truth. “I… I missed you.” Sean’s heart contracts at the soft declaration and he wraps Hank into a bear hug. He feels Hank tremble slightly in his embrace and Sean shushes him, holding Hank infinitely close. Hank hides his face in Sean’s neck, overwhelmed by the feelings Sean provokes in him.

Hank’s reaction to him only makes Sean surer that Hank truly is his mate. Sean hadn’t been certain he would have a mate, being a hybrid. Hexenbiests and Zauberbiests are sexual creatures, able to use their seductive power to lure men and women. But a mate is always immune; a mate’s emotions cannot be influenced by a Zauberbiest’s seductive powers. Instead like many Wesen creatures, a mate of a Zauberbiest often feels an inexplicable pull and an irresistible need to be close to the Zauberbiest. Hank’s shy, almost ashamed admission is exactly how a mate would react. Sean leans back, framing Hank’s face in his hands. “You don’t have to be ashamed of that. Never be ashamed of missing me or how you feel about me. Never.”

“I shouldn’t feel this way. Not so soon,” Hank says as if thinking aloud.

Sean smiles gently, “Is it so wrong? I already care deeply for you, Hank. I am not ashamed to admit I care for you. Maybe more so than seems possible for our short time together but no one has ever made me feel the way that you do. I can be myself with you, in a way that I cannot with anyone else. I don’t care that we have only begun. This is just between you and me. This is us. It only matters what we feel for each other. Not what others think we should or should not feel. Okay?”

Hank blinks back tears, Sean’s speech provoking such a swirl of emotion within him. But most importantly, it makes Hank feel like he isn’t alone in this. Sean is just as invested as Hank is. “Okay.”

“Good.” Sean pecks his lips once but can’t resist the lure of Hank’s lips. Melding their lips together with practiced ease as if they’d been together for years. Sean walks Hank to the couch without ever breaking their passionate kiss. He pushes him down. Hank lands with a soft plop, looking up at Sean with lust blown eyes, his legs automatically falling open. Sean sinks down on top of him, Hank’s legs hooking behind his back. Hank throws his head back as Sean nibbles teasingly on his neck. Sean’s nimble fingers make short work of the buttons on Hank’s shirt and eagerly open the shirt. Sean loves Hank’s body, thick and muscular. He is beautiful. Sean leans down and sucks a mark on his shoulder, where it can easily be hidden.

Hank shows his appreciation by moaning Sean’s name and digging his fingers into Sean’s back. Sean sucks mark after mark all while rocking their bodies together. “Oh god, Sean.” He fumbles, not
patient enough to unbutton Sean’s shirt, and simply tears the shirt open. He needs to feel Sean’s skin and doesn’t care that he ruins an expensive shirt to do so. Hank’s hands glide down Sean’s chest to his flat, muscled stomach and back up and over his shoulders and down his back. Hank loves the feeling of Sean’s skin, taunt and strong, so unlike a woman’s.

Hank encourages him to move, wrapping himself more tightly around Sean. Sean’s body feels perfect on top of him, heavy and solid. Hank moves with Sean as they rock together smoothly. Sean pants into his neck and Hank’s hands grab Sean’s ass, pulling him closer with each thrust. Hank feels the pressure build with the sweet friction of Sean’s body against his. “Gonna cum.”

Sean groans, “Yes, fuck. Cum for me.” Hank growls as he explodes wetly inside his pants, falling limp. Sean rocks against him frantically until he stills and comes in his pants. He falls atop Hank heavily, nuzzling his neck contently. Hank savors the feeling of Sean’s big body practically swallowing his. He finds he likes it, a lot. He likes the feeling of Sean’s strong, large frame against him, on top of him, beside him and if he is being honest, inside him. Hank never thought he would experience being penetrated, much less enjoy it. He could quite easily get addicted to Sean’s hot, hard length inside him.

They stay like that for several minutes until Hank’s stomach growls again. Hank blushes even as he can feel Sean smiling against his skin. Sean lifts his smiling face from Hank’s neck and says, “Looks like I need to feed you.” Sean kisses Hank’s plump lips once before he reluctantly gets up. The wetness in his pants is a bit uncomfortable and without a thought Sean strips bare. Hank gulps as Sean takes off his pants and underwear, using his boxers to wipe himself clean. Sean walks to the kitchen, unashamed at his nakedness not aware of the fact that Hank is gaping at his back.

Hank rises up from the couch, squirming at the wet feeling in his pants. A part of him wants to strip like Sean but he feels too self-conscious to do so. He goes into the kitchen to find Sean looking through his cupboards. Sean looks over his shoulder, “Your fridge is empty, unless you call frozen dinners food which I do not. When is the last time you went shopping?”

Hank shrugs, “I don’t cook and neither does—did Carrie.”

Sean turns and eyes Hank critically. Hank doesn’t seem too sad about the breakup. He can’t help but ask, “Did you love her?” Like a moth to a flame, Sean can’t resist despite knowing how much Hank’s answer could hurt.

Hank shuffles awkwardly, looking away as he says, “Not really.” *Nothing like what I feel for you.* Hank doesn’t dare give voice to his thoughts.

Sean stares in Hank’s eyes, admitting softly, “Her loss is my gain.” Hank ducks his head, the words making his cheek heat.

Sean moves closer and his hands fall onto Hank’s hips. Hank is helpless to deny the urge to touch Sean’s bare skin. His hands clutch the back of Sean’s shoulders before sliding down his bare back to rest just above his ass. Sean arches into his touch, humming happily. Hank tentatively moves his hands lower until they cup Sean’s ass. Sean takes possession of Hank’s lips, biting and sucking until his lips are swollen and red. Hank’s grip on his butt tightens, pulling Sean closer.

The sexual tension heightens…until Hank’s stomach again rumbles loudly. The mood is broken as Sean laughs and Hank joins him a second later. When they finally can stifle their humor, Sean says, “We better order something. I refuse to eat any of the stuff you call food. Do you like Thai?” Hank nods. “Good, I’ll order and you shower,” Sean says.

Hank opens a drawer and pulls out a menu from his favorite Thai place. “Get whatever you want,
you can’t go wrong at this place,” Hank says before he retreating to the bathroom to shower.

A minute later, Sean opens the door and climbs into the shower with him. It takes everything within Hank not to jolt and try to cover up like some shy virgin. He has to remind himself that Sean isn’t seeing anything he hasn’t already seen. “We’ve got twenty minutes before the food should get here,” Sean states nonchalantly as he lathers his hands and starts washing Hank. When Sean is done, Hank bolsters himself and reaches for the soap. With soapy hands, he starts to wash Sean. Hank is a bit timid but gains confidence when Sean’s body relaxes under his touch. Once they are both clean, they step out of the shower. Hank goes to his bedroom to dress while Sean walks naked to the front door. The overnight bag is on the floor where he left it. Sean pulls on boxers and a pair of soft, comfortable lounge pants, not bothering with a shirt.

The doorbell rings. Sean quickly grabs his wallet and opens the door. A teenage girl is standing on the doorstep, food in hand. She gapes at shirtless Sean, drooling at the sight of his very delectable bare chest and abs. Hank comes in dressed in a t-shirt and sweatpants. He greets the girl by name, not that she notices until he says it three times. “Oh, Mr. Griffin! Um—I have your food,” she says sounding very flustered. Hank takes the food from the stunned girl who is still staring at Sean’s torso and licking her lips. Feeling possessive, Hank steps in front of Sean. His body blocks Sean’s bare chest from view, which snaps the delivery girl out of her lustful daze. Sean smirks, giving the girl the money for the food. Hank says a quick goodbye before shutting the door in her face.

Sean hugs Hank from behind, saying laughingly “No need to feel jealous, Hank.”

Hank huffs in aggravation.

“I don’t want anyone but you. Plus, she’s young enough to be my daughter!”

Hank grumbles under his breath, “Not too young to be ogling you.”

Sean chuckles at Hank’s petulant tone.

“You’re mine,” Hank mutters possessively. He freezes a second later, realizing what he said. Hank doesn’t move a muscle, afraid that Sean will react poorly to his possessiveness.

Warmth spreads through his body at Hank’s jealousy and possessiveness. “Of course I am. Just as you’re mine.”

“R—Really?” Hank stutters, sounding shy but hopeful.

“Really.”

Chapter End Notes

FYI, Juliette is probably going to be a bitch in this story. I’m not a fan of her and although I haven’t seen Season 4 yet, I do know she somehow turns into a hexenbiest (I found out on accident).

I finished Season 3 tonight and I have to say, they are portraying Sean’s character all wrong. He’s this huge 6’4” muscle bound guy who’s a Royal and a police captain…and they portray him as an idiot and a wimp. He never figures things out until it is too late.
(how could he not have figured out it was Adalind in disguise? Moron!) and he gets his ass kicked all the time? WTF? Grr, so frustrating! Sean’s not going to be like that in my fic, one way or another I’m going to show his intelligence and get him to kick some ass.

My good friend Gia and I started a group on Facebook called Slash Fans & Writers Unite! Feel free to join!
You're WHAT?!

Chapter Notes

Fingers crossed fourth time is the charm (please god be right!) and Eisbär Wächter means what I want it to, which is (polar bear + guardian) in German (thanks Wing). I tried to take after the Wesen in Grimm in the naming. Wesen names are often descriptive words in a variety of languages. The description of their appearance will likely be explained when they appear in the story.

Seltenvogel is briefly mentioned in this chapter. They are extremely rare, bird-like Wesen. They can produce an egg shaped stone that is composed mostly of gold. They also lack strength and have been preyed upon by stronger Wesen for centuries. Bottom line is they are very vulnerable and often hunted and kept captive for profit.

When Nick and Monroe get home, all Nick wants to do is sleep. He drags Monroe to the bed, stripping them both before shoving him onto the bed. Nick climbs in and makes himself comfortable; he pillows his head on Monroe’s shoulder and snuggles against his side. Within seconds, he is asleep. Monroe smiles down at his mate, stroking the soft skin of his hip. Nick took the news of his pregnancy pretty well, although he wasn’t too happy about finding out he’s probably carrying multiple pups. Sometimes Monroe forgets that this is all new to Nick but he is learning to take Nicky’s freak outs with grace.

Not tired, Monroe thinks about Nick and their mating. As far as he knows has he is the first Blutbad to have a Human mate. Sure other Wesen have had sex with humans, even on rare occasion married them or had children with them but not Blutbaden. Monroe isn’t surprised a Grimm has never mated a Blutbad or any kind of Wesen; every Grimm but Nick he’s ever heard of wanted nothing more than to kill Wesen, any and every Wesen. And let’s face it, Wesen are thinking about survival when dealing with a Grimm, not sex. It is unlikely that a Grimm, male or female, has ever become impregnated by a Wesen. *What will our pups be? Blutbad? Grimm? Both? Will they be the first Grimm-Blutbad hybrid?* Monroe knows whatever they are, he’ll love them with everything he has. He and Nicky both.

Mating with Nick has changed everything. So many firsts. First Grimm to be the mate of a Wesen, a Blutbad. The first Human male to go into heat. The first male Human, first Grimm to be impregnated by a Wesen. And soon, the first children bore from a Grimm and a Blutbad. *Are we the only ones or just the beginning of a new era? Will there be others? Will other Wesen start finding their mates in humans? Will other human men be able to bear young like Nick?*

Monroe feels a trickle of unease shiver up his spine. Deep in his heart he knows his pups will be unique, unlike any other. They will be vulnerable, like the Seltenvogel. Hunted. For profit. For sport. And the enemies of both he and Nick will look to their pups as a weakness to exploit. Monroe can’t let anyone hurt their pups.

Monroe knows who to go to. Eisbär Wächter. There is no other Wesen more protective over their charges than Eisbär Wächter. Their entire existence is built on loyalty and protection of family, children especially. Under their watchful gaze, his pups will be safe. When Nick wakes, he will call the local Eisbär Wächter group and put in a request. Monroe has faith they won’t deny the request;
the danger of Nicky being a Grimm and him being a Blutbad will only incite their natural protective instincts. He’s sure that Nick will feel better knowing that their pups will be protected.

A plan made, Monroe closes his eyes and sinks into a light sleep.

Nick awakes feeling better, less overwhelmed and exhausted. He marvels to himself at how quickly his life has changed. Nick looks up and discovers Monroe is awake, shivering at the look in his eyes. How can so much love be encompassed in a pair of brown eyes? Monroe smiles, reaching out to stroke Nick’s flat stomach lovingly and in that moment Nick feels the first stirrings of love.

“Feel better, Nicky?”

He smiles. Nick is amazed at how much the nickname is growing on him. It’s been a long time since anyone has called him that, back before his parents were killed. The fondness in Monroe’s voice whenever he calls him Nicky makes it difficult not to enjoy it. “Yeah.”

“Good. I did some thinking while you were napping.”

Curious, Nick asks, “And?”

“Our pups are going to be vulnerable, Nicky. We have to protect them.”

Nick’s expression is part worry, part protective fury. “No one will hurt them. We won’t let them!”

Monroe soothes, “I know. And I know how to make sure they are safe.”

“How?” Nick is willing to do anything to ensure their children’s safety.

“Eisbär Wächter.”

“Es-what? What is that?”

Smiling, “Eisbär Wächter. It means polar bear guardian in German.”

Nick is confused. “That’s your solution? A Wesen? A protective polar bear type Wesen? What are they going to do?”

Monroe clarifies, “They are known through the Wesen world as the greatest protectors of family. They are fiercely protective of their charges. Their power is almost unmatchable. They won’t let anyone hurt our pups. We need to know they are safe when we aren’t around. The Eisbär Wächter will guarantee their safety, whether we are around or not.”

“So what, we’re hiring them? I’m a Grimm, Monroe! They’re Wesen, how is that going to work?”

“We put in a request. They won’t deny us. Our pups will be unique, Nicky. The first of their kind. The Eisbär Wächter will protect them when they’re born. They won’t care you’re a Grimm, not knowing the danger to our pups.”

Nick thinks about it. “You promise our children will be safe with them? Can they be bought? I mean, would they even consider taking a bribe to look the other way?”

“No. Once hired, they are loyal to their charges above all else. When Eisbär Wächter are employed as guardians, their whole existence revolves around their charges. They would kill their own mother or brother to protect them. Eisbär Wächter aren’t political nor do they care about money or material
goods. It is considered a high honor to be chosen to be a guardian. Eisbär Wächter wish for nothing else but to serve as a guardian for a child.”

“Okay, call them.” Nick trusts Monroe’s judgment. Monroe would never have suggested Eisbär Wächter to protect their children if he wasn’t sure they could be trusted.

With Nick’s permission, Monroe gets the process started. By the time their pups are born, their guardians will be chosen and at the hospital already in place.

Nick goes into the kitchen and makes lunch. He’s by no means a chef but Nick can put a wrap together. He spreads Monroe’s homemade hummus on tortillas and fills them both with beans, rice, and veggies, although he does add a bit of chicken to his. Nick takes out yogurt and some fresh fruit. It is ready by the time Monroe is finished.

As he eats, Monroe is worrying about the future and about Nick’s pregnancy. Nick is not only a cop but a Grimm. Both are dangerous, life-threatening even. He can’t be chasing bad guys when he is heavily pregnant. Yet, he can’t exactly ask for maternity leave or to be assigned desk duty because of pregnancy. “How much do you trust Hank?”

Nick chews carefully before answering confidently “Completely. I trust him with my life. And yours. Why?”

“If you trust him that much, we need to consider telling him about everything.”

“What? I thought Humans aren’t supposed to know.”

Monroe answers, “Usually that is true. But Nick, you are a cop, a Grimm. And you’re pregnant. You need to know...I need to know that he will protect you and our pups with his life. He can’t do that if he doesn’t know you’re pregnant. You cannot chase after bad guys when you’re heavily pregnant. You shouldn’t even be doing it now. You could hurt yourself or our pups.”

Nick scrubs his hands over his face. “I see your point.” He hadn’t really thought about that yet. He has only just accepted he is pregnant. Everything goes too fast in his new life with Monroe. Nick can hardly keep up, much less plan for the future but then he supposes he has Monroe for that. “You think I should tell him?”

“I do not see how this could work without him, Nick. You are vulnerable and you will only grow more so as the days pass by. You’ll need his protection and mine. If only we could find another Grimm to help you,” Monroe wishes aloud.

Nick is shocked and asks in disbelief, “Did you just wish for another Grimm?”

Monroe shakes his head, “I guess I did.”

Nick’s lips twitch at the absurdity of a Wesen wishing for another Grimm. “I don’t think it is likely to happen, Monroe. What do you think? A Grimm is simply going to walk into Portland? Even if it happened, Grimms are bloodthirsty. It’s not like we’re going to find another Grimm like me that doesn’t want to slaughter every Wesen they see.”

Monroe has to agree. Grimms are rigidly black and white in their thinking. All Wesen are bad, plain and simple. Grimms are not known for seeing gray. “Then we need Hank to know. I will need to be there to protect you and for me to be there, Hank needs to know.”

Nick eyes Monroe critically. “Are you sure you’re up for that? I know you don’t like having to use your more violent side.”
“It is something I will have to decide soon but I believe with you I won’t have a problem. Having you, having my mate will give me more control, which is why mates are so revered. Finding your mate settles the wolf side down while the human side is able to assert more control over the wolf. Instead of the wolf and human sides fighting for dominance, they tend to cooperate and they are far less likely to lose themselves to their wolf. Mated Blutbaden compared to unmated Blutbaden is like comparing a sane wolf to one with rabies. Unmated lack control and discipline; they are driven by their bloodlust to kill. But mated Blutbaden are calm, disciplined and in control. They can kill without losing their humanity to the wolf. With you, I could start to relax my routine. I might not even need it anymore. And even if I don’t abandon my routine, the instinctive need to protect you, my mate, and our pups will make me more powerful.” Monroe grins, “Do you see why I am happy to have found you? You’ve given me what I crave most: control. With you at my side, I don’t have to fear my wolf.”

Nick beams, grateful that he could give Monroe what he needs most merely by being his mate.

After lunch, Monroe and Nick pick up some packing boxes and go to the house Nick shared with Juliette. Monroe’s wolf growls as they step inside. Nick’s wonderful smell is tainted by the smell of Juliette. She smells bitter to his sensitive nose, Monroe doesn’t know if that is how she smells or if her being a rival is what makes her smell unpleasant.

Nick looks over at Monroe, his mate is tense and making rumbling noises in his chest. “You okay, Monroe?” Nick receives his answer but not in the way he expects. He is shoved against the wall. “Whoa, Monroe!” Monroe sniffs at Nick’s neck, calming slightly when he realizes his scent covers his mate. He leans back, growling again at the overwhelming scent of Juliette. Monroe flips Nick over, forcing him to face the wall. Nick asks confused, “What are you doing?” Monroe grins at Nick’s back, reaching around to open Nick’s pants and yanks them down. Nick laughs in disbelief, “You can’t be serious?!”

Monroe chuckles darkly, “I am very serious, Nicky. That woman’s smell is all over this house. I better make sure you know who you belong to.”

“I’m already yours, Monroe. This really isn’t necessary.”

“Necessary? Perhaps not but it sure as hell will make my wolf happy.”

Nick tries to turn but Monroe’s hands hold him in place. “You know Juliette could walk in on us!”

Monroe’s smile is smug, “Good.” He yanks down Nick’s boxers and takes out the travel size lube from his pocket. Nick doesn’t have to chance to protest before lubed fingers are parting his cheeks and nudging his hole. The moment two fingers push inside, Nick forgets all about Juliette and the possibility of being caught. He plants his hands on the wall and pushes his ass back, moaning softly as Monroe readies him. Monroe flips Nick over, forcing him to face the wall. Monroe grins at Nick’s back, reaching around to open Nick’s pants and yanks them down. Nick laughs in disbelief, “You can’t be serious?!”

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“You gonna cum for me Nicky? Cum on my dick?” Nick groans. Nothing makes him feel as full as Monroe’s thick cock filling him. Nick’s orgasm is triggered as Monroe’s knot starts to swell. Nick leans heavily against the wall with Monroe is locked inside him. He sighs, his cock twitching as he feels Monroe fill him with his hot seed.
Monroe grins as he lifts his mate’s limp body into his arms, carrying him to the living room chair. Nick’s legs are spread wide; leaving no doubt that Monroe is filling his ass. Part of him wishes Juliette would come in. She wouldn’t be able to deny that Nicky belongs to him now, not if she saw Nick sprawled limply and bare below the waist on his lap, his cock firmly in Nick’s sweet ass. She’d know that Nicky is his now.

In the end, it doesn’t really matter. Monroe has claimed Nick completely. He has been claimed by bite, by sex, and most of all by the pups growing inside of his mate. Monroe strokes Nick’s flat stomach protectively. Nick doesn’t open his eyes, leaving his head resting on Monroe’s shoulder. “I’m going to have to get used to that, aren’t I?”

Monroe chuckles softly, “I guess you are.” His fingers continue to stroke the skin of Nick’s stomach.

Nick’s lips quirk up, saying lazily, “I’ll add it to the list.”

When Monroe’s knot loosens, Nick pulls on his boxers and pants. “Well, we better start packing,” Nick says with surprising nonchalance. Monroe starts packing up Nick’s clothes, while Nick goes through the bathroom. Together they get through the upstairs. Nick packs only his things, nothing that he and Juliette bought together. They spend a good couple of hours going through the house and packing up a good chunk of Nick’s things.

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Tuesday night:

The first couple days back had been busy which Nick was thankful for, it helped keep his mind off being pregnant and the fact that he’ll have to tell Hank soon.

He and Hank are sitting in their car watching a suspect’s house. It’s been quiet so far. Nick notices Hank’s nervous twitching, which is a clear sign something is up. “What’s going on, Hank?”

Hank laughs nervously, “I don’t know what you mean.”

Nick gives him a look.

Sighing, Hank admits, “Carrie dumped me.”

Nick’s surprised, considering how Hank has been acting. “Really? When?”

“A couple of weeks ago,” Hank admits nonchalantly.

Nick thinks back to that Thursday before his heat when Hank came back looking far too satisfied for just a lunch. With deliberate ease, “You don’t seem too broken up about that…”

“Me? What about you? You and Juliette were dating a lot longer and you sure don’t seem too sad about losing her,” Hank shouts defensively.

“Geez, Hank. Calm down.”

Hank huffs.

“You want to tell me what is really going on?”

Before he can even think about it, he’s blurting out, “I’m fucking Renard.”

“…”
“Nick?”

Nick is beyond surprised, “Captain Renard?”

Hank slumps, silent for a moment before admitting, “Yeah.”

“You’re fucking Captain Renard?” Nick asks, still feeling like he is in the twilight zone.

“Well, he’s kind of fucking me…”

Nick barks out a laugh before he too blurts, “I’m sort of fucking Monroe.”

“…” Hank is shocked.

“Hank?”

“That guy we thought was kidnapping little girls? You’re fucking him?”

Nick confesses, “Well…I guess it is more like he is fucking me.”

“…”

“…”

Hank and Nick look at each other silently before they start laughing. Who would have guessed the pair of them would both suddenly be not only dating men but also both be the ones getting fucked.

“Well, I never saw this coming. This your first time with a guy?” Nick inquires.

Nodding, Hank admits, “Yeah. You?”

“Yup.”

“How did you and Renard get together?”

Hank ponders how much he should tell Nick. Figuring he needs someone to talk to besides Sean about this and considering Nick’s with a guy for the first time too, he might as well be truthful.

“Carrie caught me watching a gay porno…with my pants down.”

Nick laughs. “You’re kidding me!”

“I wish.”

“Gay porn, huh?”

“I might have stumbled upon one once and discovered I liked it.”

Nick can’t believe them, two men far too old to discover their homosexual tendencies. “Obviously that is the reason she dumped you.”

Hank’s expression clearly says duh. “I went to a bar and got drunk.”

Nick eyes him critically. “Drinking away your sorrows or drinking away your possible sexual crisis?”

Hank looks at him, “What do you think? Problem is that when I tried to call you, I accidentally called Sean. He insisted on driving me home, even after I said I’d call you for a ride.”
“Oh, he did, did he? How…very generous of him,” Nick says with a smirk.

Hank glares at Nick. “Shut up.”

“Did Renard take advantage of you, Hank? Do I need to defend your honor?”

Grumbling, Hank declares “Didn’t I tell you to shut up?! I wouldn’t be so smug there Nick, you are telling your story next.”


Hank shifts in his seat, his eyes on the suspect’s house. “I don’t really remember it all but I remember he kissed me and…”

Nick guesses, “And what? He dropped to his knees and gave you a blow job?” The look on Hank’s face makes it clear he guessed right. “Oh my god, he did! He gave your drunk ass a blow job!”

Hank blushes.

“Come on, what else?”

Hank skips to the next morning, “When I woke up, I was naked in bed with Sean.”

“You freaked out didn’t you?”

“Of course I did! I was a straight man who woke up naked in bed with another naked man, my boss! And I couldn’t remember what happened.”

Nick can relate. “It must have worked out though, right?”

“Yeah. Turns out Sean wanted me for a while and with me being drunk he took a chance.”

“Really?” Nick internally smiles at the fact that Renard had been silently pining after Hank. Guy like Renard is likely used to getting about anyone he wants. “Did this all happen before or after your little comment about seeing the appeal of being gay?”

Hank glares at Nick; he’d been hoping that Nick had forgotten that. “After.” Hank wants to smack the resulting grin right off of Nick’s smug face.

Nick soberes, putting his teasing aside to ask, “He makes you happy, then?”

For the first time, he admits to someone other than Sean that he’s happy. “Yeah, he does.” Hank asks, “What about you and Monroe? How did you get together?”

Nick knows he can’t exactly say what really happened. Hank wouldn’t understand the truth; Nick can only imagine what Hank would think if he told him that Monroe lured him outside, told him to run, chased him from his yard to the woods and then fucked and knotted him multiple times in the forest. Thinking fast, Nick weaves a believable story using bits of truth. “Well, not really that different from your story I guess. The Friday before you and Monroe got together, Juliette dumped me. Monroe stopped by with beer and found me moping. He listened to me complaining about Juliette and why we broke up and then he kissed me out of the blue. I definitely wasn’t expecting it. But fuck, it was the best kiss I’ve ever had. Before I knew it, I was getting fucked for the first time… I woke up naked and confused with a large hairy guy spooning me and obviously I freaked. I admit I’ve had my fair share of freak outs over the weeks we’ve been together but I think any man in my situation would.”
Hank laughs, “Yeah, I think it comes with the territory. We are too old to find out we’re gay all of a sudden.”

“No shit. Talk about life-changing. Who would have thought the pair of us would find happiness in our first gay relationships. The only thing that would be more surprising would be if we’d have gotten together with each other!”

Nick and Hank look at each other before again bursting out in laughter. They are like brothers; the thought of being romantically involved is ridiculous.

They are silent for a moment when Hank hesitantly says, “Sean makes me happy…only…”

“Only what?”

Hank squirms a bit, unsure he wants to say what he’s thinking…and feeling aloud. But really, who else can he talk to about this?

Nick hits his arm, “Come on, Hank. Who else can you talk to about this? It isn’t like I can judge you if I’m in the same boat.”

“I’m worried that things are just going too fast.”

“What do you mean?”

Hank sighs, “I shouldn’t being feeling like I do. With Sean, everything feels right. But when we’re not together, my doubts start to rise. When I am not with him, I feel lonely and I miss him. It’s insane!” He clutches his head, “I’m scared of how much I want him, need him, already. What happens when he gets sick of me? I do not have a good track record, Nick. Sean is my boss and when this goes wrong, how I am supposed to cope with seeing him every day?” Hank doesn’t want to admit even to himself how much the mere thought of Sean dumping him scares him. He knows Sean means more to him than any of his ex-wives ever had and if—when he loses him… Hank is terrified that it is going to shatter him. His heart lurches as he blurts out, “What if he dumps me and I have to see him with someone else? I don’t know if I could take that, Nick.” Hank shudders at the thought; seeing Sean with someone else would break his heart.

In a calm voice, Nick says, “Hank, just breathe. Do you know how Sean feels about you? How serious this is for him?”

“He says he cares for me, more than should be possible in such a short time. I believe him; I can see it in his eyes. Sean seems serious about us.”

“Seam feels the same and makes you happy, don’t fight it. Don’t let your doubts and fears take away your chance at happiness. Maybe Sean is the person for you.” Nick hopes he is; Hank hasn’t been lucky in love and he deserves someone great. “If it makes you feel any better, Monroe and I have been together only a few days longer than you. The morning after we got together, we went to his house and I just never left. And we’re already going to start looking for a house together and we’re talking about kids.”

“You’re WHAT?!”

The look on Hank’s face makes him laugh. “Still thinking you and Renard are moving too fast?”

“You’re joking, right? A house? Kids?”

Nick’s tone is humorous, “Insane, right? But it’s true.” Nick knows he is Monroe’s mate. They’ll be
together for life. And he is pregnant with Monroe’s pups, as the Blutbad refers to them so fondly. Things have happened crazy fast but Nick is learning to roll with the punches. He might freak out but in the end, he cannot change things and he knows it. Nick is pregnant, likely with multiples. As weird as it is to be pregnant, Nick knows he wouldn’t change it. He has babies growing inside him, his and Monroe’s babies. Nick is already feeling his love for his future children grow with each passing day and as for Monroe, he is falling hard and fast for him. Monroe is not what he expected but perhaps he is what Nick needs. Monroe is a loving and protective mate. Nick knows Monroe will be an amazing father. Far too soon, Nick will be finding out what kind of parents they will be. If the doctor is right, in less than six months, he will be giving birth…however that will work.

Hank shakes his head in disbelief. He isn’t close to being ready to even talk about kids with Sean. The house, well, he and Sean are already practically living together. In the time they have been dating, they have yet to spend a night apart.

“Monroe is worth the freak outs and the angst. Definitely not who I imagined would make me happier than I’d ever been but he is. He loves me and I know it won’t be long before I love him back,” Nick admits. He stares off into the distance. “It should scare me, the thought of loving him so quickly, of committing to him far too fast but it doesn’t.”

Hank is silent as he thinks.

“Maybe things are going fast but that doesn’t mean it’s wrong. Perhaps it simply means you and Sean are meant to be. It may be unexpected. I know I certainly didn’t expect to find someone like Monroe and I’d guess you feel the same about Sean.”

Hank admits, “Yeah, I definitely never anticipated being with another guy.”

Nick adds, “The surprise of being with another man for the first time, it would throw any man our age for a loop. Imagine for a second that Sean was a woman, would you be concerned about how fast you are falling?”

Hank takes a moment to think before answering honestly, “No. But then my track record with women isn’t the best either. I have been married three times, Nick.”

Nick’s tone is patient and confident, “Yes but did any of your wives or even your girlfriends make you feel what Sean does?”

“Well...no.”

“Then perhaps Sean isn’t so much different because he is a man but because of how he makes you feel.”

Hank thinks Nick makes a good point, one he’d not considered. He’s been too concerned with Sean being male and maybe that isn’t what matters. Perhaps Nick is right and Hank is more scared of what Sean makes him feels than anything else.

“Feel better?”

“Yeah.” Monroe and Nick seem to be moving even faster than he and Sean. And maybe, just maybe what he feels for Sean isn’t so crazy after all.

NB*M*NB*M* NB*M*NB*M*NB*M*NB*M*NB*M*NB*M*NB*M

Hours later, they decide to quit for the night. Hank drops Nick off at the station, saying goodnight. For a moment, he considers going home but decides to send Sean a text to say they have quit for the
night. Sean is quick to respond, inviting him over. With only a slight hesitation, Hank agrees and drives to Sean’s apartment.

While the doubts are not gone, his talk with Nick has at least assuaged them some. Hank feels emotion swell in his chest at the sight of Sean. He’s tall and strong, intimidating even but with Hank, he is gentle and loving. Never for a moment has Hank feared his power and strength, instead Sean’s physical superiority makes him feel protected.

When Sean’s lips meet his, Hank doesn’t even care that they are standing in the hallway, where anyone could see. Something about Sean makes Hank forget everything but him.

Sean pulls Hank inside. He can feel the tightness in Hank’s back and shoulders. Without a word Sean leads Hank into the bedroom, stripping him to his boxers and pushing him face first onto the bed. When Hank tries to get up, Sean says, “Lie down, Hank. Let me give you a massage.”

Hank lies back down, the thought of Sean’s big hands all over him sounds good. Slick large hands start at his shoulders and just as he thought Sean’s hands are strong and skilled. Within minutes, Sean reduces Hank into a pile of goo. Taking advantage of Hank’s relaxed state, Sean unveils that delectable ass by tugging down Hank’s boxers. He kneads his plump cheeks, pulling a groan out of Hank. Sean couldn’t be happier. He can touch and kiss, lick and bite at Hank’s fuckable ass all he wants; Hank is far too languid to protest. Sean parts his cheeks, leaning in close, and dragging his tongue across Hank’s entrance. Hank whines softly, “Sean.” One swipe of Sean’s tongue and he is getting hard. Who would have thought that getting his ass licked would feel so fucking good?

Sean smiles against his skin, he would have to be completely oblivious not to notice how much Hank loves to be rimmed. “I love how you taste.” Sean’s tongue pushes inside. “I could eat you out for hours.” His tongue thrusts in and out. “Can you cum from this, Hank? My tongue in your delicious ass?”

“Fuck, Sean.” Hank leaks on the sheets. *It feels so good.*

“You can, can’t you? Cum on my tongue, Pet.” Sean licks, sucks, and bites at Hank’s entrance, fucking Hank with his tongue without mercy.

Hank moans and trembles under Sean’s relentless assault. *Fuck, his tongue should be illegal.* Hank breaks apart seconds later, his hole clenching on Sean’s tongue tightly. He is limp and satisfied when Sean pulls back and tenderly turns Hank onto his back.

Sean kisses his slack lips. “Fuck, you’re beautiful.”

Hank doesn’t think so but doesn’t contest the proclamation. His eyes flick down to the prominent bulge in Sean’s pants. “Are you going to strip and fuck me or not?”

Sean’s green eyes almost glow with heat. “Are you sure? I don’t have to.”

“Sean, you just made me cum by licking my ass.”

“It’s called rimming,” Sean explains, looking smug.

Hank drawls, “You’re awfully cheeky for an ass licker.”

Sean chuckles.

Hank realizes he used cheeky and ass licker in the same sentence. He glares at Sean, “Laugh all you like, Renard.”
Sean’s laughter cuts off abruptly. He’s smart enough to realize he is in trouble.

“See if you get anywhere near my ass any time soon.”

“Hey now, I didn’t mean anything by it, Pet. No need for threats.”

Hank grins. He understands now why women threaten to withhold sex; it is a very useful tool. One little threat and Sean is practically falling all over himself to apologize. Amused, Hank asks, “Pet?”

Sean replies hesitantly, “Uh, sorry?”

“I kinda like it,” Hank admits.

Sean’s eyes lit up, “Really?”

Hank shrugs, a little embarrassed at the feeling of warmth that wells in his chest when Sean calls him Pet.

“Are you still mad at me, Pet?” Sean asks with a grin.

Hank rolls his eyes. “You’re lucky I like you.”

Sean beams goofily. “You like me.”

He wonders how many people have seen this side of Sean. Hank has a feeling it isn’t too many.

Sean lies down beside Hank, “I like you too.” An uncertain expression flashes on his face. Sean looks deeply into Hank’s eyes and declares a shade timidly but steadily, “More than that, I love you, Hank.”

Hank stares at him in shock. “Y-You. You love me?”

Sean rests his forehead against Hank’s. “I do. I know that our time together has been short but I have never felt this way about anyone.” Hank is his mate, he knows it.

“Sean, I—”

Smiling, Sean cups Hank’s cheek and pecks his lips. “Don’t. I can wait until you are ready, Pet.”

Hank fears that before long he’ll be hopelessly in love with Sean. He isn’t sure whether that will turn out to be the best decision of his life or the worst mistake he’ll ever make.

Lying in bed with Sean, Hank reveals, “I told Nick about us.”

Sean rolls them over until Hank is underneath him. Their faces are close as he asks, “Did you now?”

Sean admits to himself that Hank telling someone about them makes him happy.

Hank smiles, the expression on Sean’s face is intense. “Yup.”

“And how did he take it?”

“Nick…was surprised to say the least.”

Sean thinks aloud, “I wonder if he was more surprised that you are with a man or that the man is me?”
“The fact that is you was probably a bit more shocking. He took it better that I’d expected. But then, with what he told me, I suppose he had reasons to,” Hank adds mysteriously.

“And what did Nick tell you?”

Hank answers, “Remember that kidnapping case, where that mailman had kidnapped the young girl? The guy that we suspected was involved in the case, Monroe? Well… it turns out I’m not the only one that is all of a sudden gay. Nick is too. He’s dating Monroe.”

*He’s doing more than dating ’im.* Sean acts surprised. “Really?” He’d known Nick had been claimed by a male Blutbad, even if he didn’t know who. He wonders if Nick is pregnant. Blutbaden are serious about mating, more than most. Nick being a mate to a Blutbad and going into heat… Well, if he can go into heat, there is a chance he can be impregnated as well.

“Yes. And that’s not all!”

*Nick’s pregnant? No, Hank doesn’t know he’s a Grimm. At least I don’t think he knows…* Sean asks, “What?”

Hank states, “They are looking for a house together and talking kids already!”

*Holy fuck, Nick really is pregnant! A Grimm impregnated by a Wesen, unbelievable!* Sean shakes his head in disbelief. *Nick is going to have to tell Hank about Wesen and him being a Grimm.* A part of Sean is relieved. Maybe he won’t have to tell Hank about the Wesen world. If Hank can deal with it, perhaps he will accept Sean being half Zauberbiest. He knows in his heart that Hank is his mate but he fears Hank’s reaction to what he is. Sean sees that Hank is afraid of how fast their relationship is progressing and until Hank knows, Sean cannot tell him why. “How long have they been together?” Sean can’t say that he already knows, having scented it.

“Not much longer than we’ve been together. Crazy, right?”

Sean looks away from Hank’s eyes. “Crazy,” he declares softly. Moving in with Hank and having kids doesn’t seem crazy to him. Sean never thought about having children before but finding his mate, finding Hank, has changed that. He’d love to have children with Hank.

Hank eyes Sean with concern. Sean’s tone makes it obvious he doesn’t think it is crazy. *Is Sean that serious that he would consider us officially moving in together?* Hank isn’t ready to even think about them talking about kids. While Hank debates with himself on whether or not to call Sean on his lie, Sean shakes himself. “We better go to bed, Pet. We’ve got work in the morning.” Sean guides Hank to his side and spoons behind. And if he dreams about Hank heavy with their child, that is no one’s business but his own.
Still surprised about Hank, Nick shakes his head in disbelief as he enters the house, “Monroe, I’m home.” He takes a deep breath; it smells like home to Nick now. The moment he enters, it is almost like a warm blanket wrapping securely around him.

Monroe pops out from his workroom; he’d been trying to catch up on the work that Nicky’s heat had pushed aside. “Hey Nicky.” He pecks his mate’s sweet lips in greeting.

Nick, not satisfied by the brief greeting, pulls Monroe down for a toe curling kiss. He hums into Monroe’s mouth, “That’s more like it.”

Monroe’s lips curve upward. “I am always happy to oblige, Nicky.” His sensitive nose twitches in delight as he breathes in; he can smell not only Nick’s musk but himself and the pups growing within his mate.

Laughing, Nick says, “I just bet you are.”

Monroe flings an arm around Nick and leads him to the sofa. They plop down together, Nick snuggling comfortably against Monroe’s side. “You’ll never guess what Hank told me tonight.”

Intrigued, Monroe inquires, “What?”

Nick grins. “Looks like I’m not the only straight guy to find himself suddenly getting fucked.”

“What?” Hank being in a gay relationship is astonishing, considering Nick told him Hank is very much a ladies’ man. “Didn’t you say he has been married twice?”

“Three times actually. Oh, and it gets even better. Guess who is fucking him.”

“Who?”

“Our captain,” Nick answers excitedly.

Monroe has never seen Nick’s captain. “Your boss and Hank?”

Nick grins, “Yup. Apparently Renard has been secretly pining after Hank for a while, which I have to admit is hilarious.”

Monroe raises a brow in question.

“Renard is one of those guys that can pretty much get anyone he wants. Insanely tall, good looking, and built.”

“You think he’s attractive?” Monroe asks, feigning disinterest.

Nick isn’t a detective for nothing. “Are you jealous?” Monroe’s attempt at nonchalance is clearly forced.

Monroe grumbles incoherently.
Smiling, Nick declares, “No need to be jealous, Monroe. I have never had any interest in Renard or any other man. I’m your mate, Monroe. And fucking pregnant with your kids. I’m not going anywhere.”

Monroe hugs him close, kissing his temple. “Good. Tell me about Renard and Hank.”

“Apparently Hank’s been watching gay porn for a while and his girlfriend caught him.”

Monroe chuckles, admitting to himself that had to be quite the shock for the woman.

Nick meets Monroe’s laughing eyes. “That’s exactly what I was thinking. I think Hank might be gayer than I am.”

Monroe scoffs.

“What? I wasn’t watching gay porn!” Monroe laughs at him. “I wasn’t! I was just having gay dreams about you. I’m gay for you…Hank might just be gay.”

He doesn’t even try to hide his amusement. “Whatever makes you feel better, Nicky.”

Nick pouts adorably. Monroe’s nudge gets him to continue the story. “Hank went to a bar and got drunk. He called me to pick him up but got Renard instead. He drove him home. And get this, drops to his knees and blows Hank! You should have seen the shock on Hank’s face when I guessed! Granted, I was joking but apparently I was right.” Nick laughs at the memory of Hank’s expression. “It worked out though. They’ve been together ever since.”

Drunken hookup to a relationship, not an unheard of story. “And what did you tell him about us? Assuming you told him,” Monroe asks, curious.

Nick rolls his eyes. “Of course I told him about us. Not the real story, Hank is definitely not ready for that but one with enough grains of truth to it. Hank was definitely surprised to find out I was in a similar situation. It is pretty unlikely. For both of us to suddenly be in gay relationships.” Nick shrugs at the coincidence. “Although Hank seems a bit overwhelmed by it all, afraid of his intense feelings for Renard. Says he’s never felt like this before, which is weird considering he has three ex-wives and who knows how many ex-girlfriends!”

Monroe has to wonder about the coincidental timing. Blutbaden aren’t the only Wesen who have mates but how likely is it that both Hank and Nick turn out to be mates to Wesen? Or for two Wesen to have Human mates? He shakes his head, dismissing the crazy idea. For two Humans to be Wesen mates almost simultaneously…the odds are astronomical. It is impossible.

“At least Renard seems to feel as strongly toward Hank as Hank does toward him,” Nick adds.

*No. It’s a coincidence. No way is Nick’s boss a Wesen too. No way is Hank the second Human in all of history to be a mate of a Wesen. That’s insane…right?* Despite how mind-boggling it is, a part of Monroe knows that it is possible. If a Human male and a Grimm can be the mate of a Blutbad something thought to be impossible, then the possibilities are endless. Perhaps he was right in thinking that his mating with Nick was the beginning of a new era. At some point he will meet this Renard and maybe then he will have his answer.

Nick admits, “I told him that we were looking for a house together and talking kids.”

Monroe is surprised that Nick told Hank even that much so quickly. “Really?”

“Yeah. He was shocked but hearing about us made him feel better about how fast things are going
with Renard. I figured this is a way of easing him toward the truth; he’ll have to know the whole truth soon enough.” Nick admits to himself that he is not looking forward to that conversation. Admitting he’s pregnant to himself and even Wesen has not been easy but having to tell Hank is going to be a lot harder. “I am going to have to tell Hank about Wesen soon. He is going to think I’m fucking crazy.”

Monroe laughs, “Probably.” There is a reason Wesen hide themselves from Humans. The human brain often rebels when seeing something that is too far-fetched to be real, even when it is true. Humans have gone crazy from seeing a Wesen woge.

Nick’s expression is half disgust, half disbelief. “Isn’t this where you are supposed to be comforting me? You are the reason I’m in this mess in the first place! You and your damned mating and your fucking potent sperm!” he grumbles.

Monroe hides his smirk. *Potent sperm. Damn Straight.* *“You didn’t let me finish, Nicky.”*

Nick crosses his arms, sulking.

“Hank will probably think you are crazy at first. But you can’t tell me he doesn’t have his suspicions that something weird is going on with all the Wesen cases you both have worked. Hank is too good a detective to not to suspect something,” Monroe declares.

Nick’s expression turns thoughtful.

“Make him believe.”

“W-Would you woge for him if I need you to?”

Monroe’s reluctance is clear. “Don’t you think Rosalee would be a better option?”

Nick’s eyebrow quirks, “Is Rosalee the one that got mated me and got me pregnant?”

“No.”

“Then it isn’t really Rosalee’s problem, is it?”

Monroe tries to pacify him, “But Nicky…”

Nick glares at Monroe.

Swallowing hard, Monroe again tries to explain. “Shouldn’t the first Wesen Hank sees woge be one that doesn’t look like a monster from a horror movie? If he sees me woge, won’t he just be terrified?” Monroe gulps at the smile that stretches over Nick’s lips.

Nick pats his cheek condescendingly. “Don’t worry Monroe. I’ll be there to protect you.”

**Saturday morning:**

Nick blinks sleepily, pulled from his very pleasant dream. The sleepy fog vanishes from his brain the instant he realizes the interrupted dream was real. Nick is on his side; his hips are held in Monroe’s strong grip as his mate sucks his cock rather enthusiastically. “Fuck.” Nick could count on one hand with fingers left over the number of times a girlfriend woke him with sex. He doesn’t know if it is a gay thing or if it is simply Monroe but he loves it. What guy wouldn’t want to be woken up by
Noticing his mate is awake Monroe pulls off and nudges Nick onto his back. He grins. “Morning Nick. Do you know what today is?”

Before Nick can even try to remember, Monroe’s mouth is back on his dick. The sweet suction, Monroe’s big hands cupping his ass, pushing him deliciously deep into his throat. Nick closes his eyes, unrestrained lust written all over his face, whining and thrusting his hips thrust up. The feeling of Monroe swallowing around him hurls him over the edge. Nick falls limp, not resisting as Monroe turns him onto his stomach. He knows what is going to happen and wisely conserves his energy for the next round.

Monroe shoves a pillow under Nick’s hips. He spreads his mate’s delicious pale cheeks, spitting Nick’s cum onto the exposed bud. Monroe gathers it on his fingers and starts pushing it inside the little hole, leaving a small bit for later. “Feel that Nicky. I’m gonna lube you with your own cum and then I’m gonna fuck you.” Monroe smirks as Nick’s muscles flutter around his fingers. “You want it, don’t you?” Scissoring his fingers, Monroe scoops up the little cum he set aside and lubes his cock with it. He turns Nick onto his back again. Brown eyes stare deeply into gray as Monroe enters Nick is a single, smooth thrust. He pulls one leg onto his shoulder as his hips jut forward. Their gaze never wavers. Monroe fucks Nick slowly. He wants his mate to remember who he belongs to it, to remember that Monroe is the only one that is allowed to touch him, to give him please. Monroe growls, “Mine!”

Nick is mesmerized. He vows, “Yours.” Sex has never felt more intimate. He swears he can read every emotion in Monroe’s eyes: love and lust, possessive fire and unquestioning trust. Nick feels it happen, feels himself falling helplessly in love with Monroe. But the words are stuck in his throat. The intensity in Monroe’s eyes makes him shiver and he starts to tremble under it all. The emotion, the love, the fear, the feeling. The hard cock moving in and out of him somehow grounds him and makes him fly away at the same time.

His hips move faster. “I love you Nicky. Love you and our pups more than life. You are mine and I am yours. Forever.”

Awestruck, Nick isn’t even aware as he replies “Forever and always, M’Roe.”

Monroe’s knot expands, locking them together. He surges forward and captures Nick’s sweet mouth. Monroe can taste Nick’s surrender and it is oh so sweet. A second later he is pumping his cum into his mate.

Nick moans into the kiss, finding his release a second later. His leg falls from Monroe’s shoulder, lying limply on the bed.

Monroe kisses down the pale column of his mate’s neck even as his hips continue to move in short, careful jabs. For a moment he considers sucking a mark there where Juliette would see it. Instead he trails kisses along his collarbone before sucking a deep purple mark on Nick’s shoulder, which will be safely covered by his shirt.

Nick silently screams, overwhelmed by the dual sensation of Monroe’s mouth licking, biting, and sucking on his skin and Monroe’s cock moving carefully inside him. His own cock is hard again between them. Suddenly, Monroe rolls them until Nick is on top.

“Ride me Nicky.” Monroe’s hands grip his hips firmly.

Nick stretches up, folding his arms behind his head and starts slowly rolling his hips. Monroe
watches with apt fascination as the muscles in Nick’s stomach move sensually like a belly dancer as his hips unhurriedly canter. “Fuck Nick. Do you have any idea how sexy you look?” Nick’s only response is a mischievous grin and a tortuously slow roll of his hips. *My Nicky is made to ride. Look at him. Fucking sexiest thing I have ever seen.* Monroe groans, his hands gliding up Nick’s body to splay across his abdomen. He lets out a shaky breath as he feels the muscles bunching under his fingertips and a shiver of pure lust races through his body. Nick closes his gray eyes, savoring the sensation of power. He can feel Monroe’s surrendering to him and it is heady. A needy, vaguely canine whine escapes Monroe’s mouth. “Oh god. Please Nicky!” Nick delights in Monroe’s begging. He continues the slow pace for a moment before speeding up. He opens his eyes and stares down at Monroe, watching with rapt attention as his mate falls apart beneath him. Monroe clutches Nick’s hips and desperately thrusts up until he starts to come. The wrecked look on Monroe’s face pushes him closer to the precipice, a few more rolls of his hips and ropes of cum spurt out from Nick’s bouncing cock. Nick’s hips continue to move in leisurely rolls for a minute until Nick finally stills. He feels a great deal of satisfaction at how fucked out Monroe looks.

Monroe looks up at his mate through lust hazy eyes. “I fucking love you so much, Nick.”

“You love me for my sexy body,” Nick says with a smirk.

Unexpectedly, Monroe rolls them until Nick is beneath him. He leans close, mere millimeters between their faces. “I love you because of who are you, Nick. I admit I find your body sexy as hell but that isn’t why I love you. I love you because you are smart…and loyal…and kind…and badass…and compassionate…and strong…and most of all mine,” Monroe tells him between kisses.

Nick’s heart squeezes. He loves Monroe. “I love you too, Monroe.”

Monroe is blank for a second before he lights up. “You do? Truly?”

“I do.” Nick is sure. Monroe is exactly who he needs.

Monroe surges forward, kissing Nick with every ounce of love within him. “You love me,” he says with awe.

Nick smiles crookedly, “And you love me. And we’re having pups together. We’ll be a family.” It isn’t until that moment that Nick realizes how much he wants a family. His aunt cared for him and loved him in her own way but what they had, hadn’t really been a family. With Monroe, he can have that. They will love each other and be parents together, have children together. They’ll be a family.

“A family,” Monroe repeats. There is nothing he wants more than to have a family with Nick, with his mate. It is a wish come true.

Monroe’s knot loosens and he pulls out gently. Without a thought, Nick’s ass clamps down to keep his mate’s seed inside him. Monroe walks over to their toy box and takes out the largest plug inside. Seeing it, Nick gulps but turns onto his stomach without a word. Monroe lubes it thoroughly and starts pushing the huge plug inside of his mate. Nick groans as the long, thick plug is fully sheathed, locking Monroe’s cum inside. His muscles clench automatically around it and his dick gives a tired twitch.

Nick turns over, moaning low. Monroe stands beside the bed and gently pulls Nick up. “You better get ready for your meeting with Juliette and the realtor. Nick goes over to the closet gingerly. Monroe smirks at his mate’s deliberate, careful movements as a result of the plug. Nicky won’t be able to forget who he belongs to, not with that plug shifting and pressing on his prostate.
Nick huffs in frustration, turning around slowly to face his mate. “You know this is torture, Monroe! How am I going to explain the obvious hard on I have to Juliette?” The smug expression on Monroe’s face makes Nick feel a little afraid.

“I have the perfect solution.” Monroe digs out something from the box and holds it up.

Nick looks at it, part of him scared and other part confused, “What the hell is that?”

Monroe grins wickedly, “This, my beloved mate, is called a cock cage. No worries about getting hard with this locked on.”

“You have got to be kidding me!”

Advancing, Monroe coaxes, “Now Nicky. You know the plug in non-negotiable. And neither of us wants you getting hard around Juliette. It is the perfect solution. It’s comfortable, Nicky. And I promise to take it off when you get home.” Nick still looks reluctant. “Do it for me, Nicky?” Monroe asks with a pathetic puppy dog expression on his face. He can tell the moment his mate gives in by the resigned expression on his face and slump in his shoulders.


Monroe leans back, eying the cock cage with satisfaction. He can’t stop himself from circling Nick, taking note of the thick plug keeping his cum inside and the cock cage locked on his mate’s cock. “Beautiful.” He kisses Nick passionately. “I’ll go make some breakfast while you dress.”

A minute later, Nick shakes himself out of his daze. As if controlled, Nick walks to the bathroom and looks at himself in the full length mirror. He looks…owned. Nick is surprised that it doesn’t make him feel disgusted. Staring at the metal tube sheathing his penis, he realizes that he likes it. *Fuck, Monroe has turned me into a kinky bastard, hasn’t he?* The knowledge that he can’t get hard even with the constant weight of the plug is almost freeing. With one last look, Nick goes back into the bedroom and tugs on clothes.

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Juliette is waiting when Nick arrives, walking normally. He’d gotten used the large plug by the time he had to leave. Juliette’s expression is tight as she offers Nick a terse hello. Nick pulls on his detective persona and greets her politely but impersonally.

Juliette’s realtor friend, Betty, stands off to the side quietly. Betty knows Juliette is bitter and angry at Nick. She only hopes the redhead can keep herself together and not make an uncomfortable scene. But Betty’s hopes are not high considering the rigidity in Juliette’s body. Nick, however, is stoic and appears unaffected.

Nick spots Betty, an almost six feet tall woman with startling light green eyes and coffee colored skin. “Hello Betty. Nice to see you again.” Her handshake is firm.

“Hi Nick. Good to see you as well.” Betty isn’t surprised when Juliette stomps off into the house. She loves her friend dearly but isn’t blind to her faults. “Sorry about her, Nick.”

Nick shrugs. “Not your fault, Betty.”

“I hope you are happy, Nick, you deserve to be,” Betty declares sincerely. She never understood Juliette and Nick as a couple. They just didn’t click but neither of them seemed to realize that.
Smiling, Nick answers, “Thank you. I am happy. More than I’ve ever been.”

“I’m happy for you Nick.” Betty smiles back. “We better get inside…” Both know that Juliette has a stereotypical redhead’s temper. If they stay out here much longer, no doubt she will blow.

The three of them go through the house. Nick’s possessions are pointedly absent and there is nothing more in the house that he will take. The furniture that Juliette doesn’t want will be offered as part of the house.

Nick finds that the shifting of the plug to be almost a comfort. It reminds him that he has an amazing man who loves him unconditionally waiting for him at home. All he has to do is get through this and he can go home to Monroe’s waiting arms.

Betty drops her pen, which rolls under the bed in the spare room. Nick waves off Betty, no sense in her trying to crawl after it in a skirt. Nick sinks to his knees and reaches under the bed. Without realizing it, his shirt pulls up as he stretches and exposes finger shaped bruises on his hips.

Betty’s eyes widen in shock while Juliette screeches, “What the hell are those, Nick?!”

Nick looks up, confused. His gray eyes shift down to find where the women’s eyes are glued. His shirt has pulled up, revealing the bruises Nick hadn’t realized Monroe made on his hips. Nick pulls his shirt down and stands, the pen forgotten. “They are none of your business,” Nick vows, his tone hard.

Juliette’s eyes are crazy as she shoves him onto the bed and yanks Nick’s shirt up and his pants down his hips. “What the fuck, Nick?!” The bruises stand out starkly against Nick’s pale skin. Rage overtakes her brain and as a result Juliette does not realize that the bruises are far too large to have been made by a female.

Nick pushes Juliette back. “Back off! You are the one that broke up with me, Juliette!”

Furious, Juliette punches Nick in the face. His head snaps back from the force but when she tries to punch him again, Nick grabs her fist. He growls, “If you try to hit me again, I’m pressing charges.”

Betty grabs Juliette before she can try to hit Nick again, her eyes pleading with Nick to leave.

Nick stalks off, yanking his pants back up. When he gets into the driver’s seat, the press of the plug cools him down. Juliette doesn’t matter. Not anymore. Calmer, Nick drives home.

Hearing Nick coming through the door, Monroe makes his way to the door to greet his mate. He stops cold at the forming bruise on his mate’s face. He and his wolf growl dangerously, “I’ll kill her!” Despite his anger, his fingers are gentle as they touch the bruise.

Nick winces at the touch but proclaims, “No. She doesn’t matter, Monroe. She isn’t worth it.”

“She hurt you.”

“Who cares?! I probably won’t ever have to see her again. Betty is handling the sale and I have everything I want from the house.”

Monroe whispers, “She hurt you.”

Nick rolls his eyes. “I’m fine.” He giggles softly, “It is your fault anyway.”

“My fault? What did I do?”
“I was bending over and my shirt lifted. She saw the bruises you made on my hips.”

Monroe isn’t ashamed to admit the feeling of possessive satisfaction at knowing Juliette saw *his* marks on Nick. “She knows it’s me?”

Nick shakes his head. “I don’t think so. I don’t think she even realized that it had to be a man and not a woman that made the bruises. Your hands aren’t exactly small Monroe.”

“Let’s get some ice on that.” Monroe takes Nick’s hand and leads him to the kitchen. He snags an ice pack from the freezer, taking a kitchen towel as well and escorts his mate to the living room. Monroe lies down, pulling Nick down on top of him. He can feel the cock cage against his leg and he wonders if Nick would be willing to wear it for him again. Nick lays the uninjured side of his face on Monroe’s chest. A moment later, Monroe tenderly presses the towel wrapped ice pack to the bruise on Nick’s jaw. Nick sighs, relaxing in the comfortable embrace of his mate. Within minutes, he’s asleep.

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When Nick wakes, it is from the pressure in his bladder. He squirms off of Monroe and hurry to the bathroom. When he pulls down his pants and boxers, Nick realizes he’s still locked into the cock cage. “Fuck!” He rushes back to the living room. Nick swats Monroe’s shoulder. “Wake up!”

Monroe grumbles sleepily. “What?”

“You need to take this thing off me! I need to pee!”

Burying his face into the couch, “Don’t hafta. You can pee with it on.”

Nick’s body language reflects his outrage. “I am NOT peeing with this thing on!”

Monroe mumbles incoherently. Then he turns over and goes back to sleep.

Nick shakes him again but Monroe doesn’t react. Desperate, Nick pulls Monroe off the couch, the Blutbad lands heavily on the ground. Monroe groans and opens his eyes. “What was that for?”

“I have to *pee*, Monroe! Take it off! Now!” Nick needs to pee badly and he shifts from foot to foot.

Awake, Monroe finally decides to take the cock cage off. As much as he’d love to make Nicky keep it on, that is something that he will have to ease his mate into. He unlocks it and releases Nick, who scrambles to the bathroom. Nick sighs loudly as he relieves himself.

Coming out, Nick barks, “What the heck, Monroe? Did you actually expect me to pee with that thing on me?”

Monroe quirks an eyebrow at his tone. “I took it off, didn’t I?”

“Well, yeah…but!”

“I didn’t have to, Nicholas.” Monroe’s dangerous tone and the fact he called his mate Nicholas raises Nick’s cackles. Nick gulps as Monroe trails a finger down his throat. “I could have left you locked in. I could have made you piss with your pretty cock still in its cage. I ignored my own desire to see you piss with it on and to keep you caged. Instead I bowed to your wish. You should be grateful for my generosity.”

Nick shudders at the deep, dangerous rumble of Monroe’s voice. His freed cock is already...
thickening.

Monroe presses himself against Nick’s back and whispers in his ear. “Trust me, my pretty little mate, the next time I won’t be so accommodating. You’ll beg me so prettily to release you but deep down you’ll want to be kept caged as much I want you caged.”

Nick trembles in Monroe’s embrace. “Fuck.” He can see it in his mind, see himself caged and begging. And wanting…

Monroe shoves Nick to his knees, opening his pants and pulling out his cock. He strokes himself to full hardness and looks down at his beautiful Nick, pliant and eager to give him pleasure. The only thing that could make this better would be to have Nick caged and squirming. Monroe slaps his face with his cock several times before smearing pre-cum onto Nicky’s lips. Nick opens his mouth and Monroe pushes inside his wet heat. His Alpha dominance still too close to the surface to allow Nick any control, Monroe guides Nick into the rhythm he desires and his mate follows it willingly. He buries himself deep into Nick’s throat, stilling. “Look at me, Nicky.” Nick tilts his eyes upward, his lips spread widely around the cock in his mouth. “Good boy,” Monroe praises. “You are going to cum from sucking my cock alone.”

It is obvious to Nick that it isn’t a request but a command. Monroe can see the acknowledgment in Nick’s gray eyes. Nick throws himself into it fully. Monroe’s eyes are glued to his mate’s pretty mouth, watching as his cock thrusts in and out of it even as Nick sucks and licks. Monroe closes his eyes, tightening his grip on Nick’s hair as he cums down his mate’s throat. Yet, what pushes him over the edge isn’t Nicky’s talented mouth but his willing submission. The trust he is showing in Monroe, in submitting to his dominance as he never has to anyone else. Monroe opens his eyes and stares fascinated as Nick drinks him down. He can tell from Nick’s blissful expression that he’s already cum himself. Looking down, Monroe confirms it.

Monroe eases back slowly. Nick meets his gaze as Monroe’s cock drops from his mouth and licks his lips. Monroe pulls him up and covers Nick’s lips with his. A little thrill going through him as he dominates the kiss; Monroe bites and sucks, mapping his mate’s mouth with his tongue. Monroe barely allows Nick to breathe for several minutes before his wolf is finally satisfied by his mate’s submission. When he pulls back, Nick looks both dazed and smug. Smirking, Nick asks, “Better?”

Monroe stares back unapologetic.

Nick rolls his eyes. “Yeah, yeah. Better get used to it, Nicky,” he drawls, mimicking Monroe’s voice.

Monroe grins, a little amused. “I love you, Nicky.”

When Nick doesn’t answer, Monroe nudges him. “I love you too,” Nick parrots sarcastically. A raised eyebrow from Monroe makes Nick roll his eyes again. “I love you too.” This time he actually sounds sincere. Nick still isn’t sure how he ended up like this, the submissive mate of a Blutbad, but Monroe makes him happy and that makes having to deal with all the weird shit worth it.

Chapter End Notes

If you want to see how I pictured Nick while he’s riding Monroe, check out Tooji’s The Father Project music video. Obviously NSFW but if you are reading this, I doubt you
are at work! The way Tooji moves his hips is incredibly sexy, how could I not be inspired looking at those wicked, wicked hips? Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XSn6RfeefI
Betrayal

Chapter Notes

Thanks to Kevin and Gia on Facebook for coming up with good suggestions for how Hank smells and Gia for helping with Sean’s.

For those of you not familiar with Grimm, Adalind is a Hexenbiest (female version of what Sean is but she’s not a hybrid). Hexenbiests are witch-like and looks similar to a zombie/mummy with visibly decaying flesh when woged. Adalind is…definitely not a good person in Grimm. I’ll leave it at that.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After talking with Nick, Hank tries his best to go with the flow and not worry so much. It is mostly working. This, being with Sean, isn’t what he expected and parts of him are still reeling. Yet, Hank is trying to live in the moment because he is happy. Sean makes him deliriously happy.

Sean is still sleeping and Hank revels in the quiet moment. The gentle expansion of Sean’s chest as he breathes, the steady beat of Sean’s heart under his ear, the warmth of his skin, and Sean’s intoxicating scent of sandalwood: cedar and spice and a hint of sweetness. Hank breathes deep, he loves how Sean smells. Feeling brave, he trails his hand down Sean’s hard chest, sliding over the delicious hard planes of his abdomen. Even now, Hank is still surprised at how much he enjoys the feel of Sean’s hard body, the feeling of strength, of power. He doesn’t miss the softness, the curves of a woman. Not really. Not with the beautiful expanse of naked skin before him.

Hank first glides his fingers over the bulge in Sean’s sleep pants. Sean stirs, shifting into Hank’s fingers but doesn’t wake; Hank smiles as Sean moves instinctively into his touch. More than anything that is why he isn’t running away screaming. Sean craves his touch as much as he does Sean’s. It isn’t one-sided, they are in this together. Gathering his courage, Hank sneaks his hand under the waistband of Sean’s pants. He bites his lip as he encircles Sean and begins to stroke him slowly. A wave of satisfaction floods his body as Sean hardens in his grip.

Sean blinks his eyes sleepily, not really wanting to leave the delicious dream but it is as if he is being dragged from it. He groans at the realization that reality is even better than the dream and that Hank is stroking him. Sean revels in Hank’s touch, the slow glide up and down his shaft. But he needs more and Sean yanks Hank down, capturing his luscious mouth. The kiss is chaste at first until Sean opens his mouth and Hank’s tongue dives in. Sean hums against Hank’s lips at the feeling of his mate on top of him. Hank plants his hands beside Sean and starts rocking his hips. Their pre-cum slicking the way as their cocks rub together. Sean urges Hank on, wrapping his long legs around his hips as Hank ruts against him. “Yes! Hank! Feels so good!” He closes his eyes, clutching Hank’s back, savoring the feeling of his mate rocking between his legs. Soon it is too much and Sean spills between them. Hank’s hips roll faster and harder until he too cums wetly between them.

“How that’s the way to wake up,” Sean purrs.

Hank grins, “A little dirty but very pleasurable.”

“I’ll take dirty any day as long as you’re involved.”
Hank laughs. “You are ridiculous.”

Sean smiles against Hank’s skin. He has never smelled a man with as complex a smell as Hank. His mate smells deliciously of freshly ground coffee beans with a hint of rich pipe tobacco and a surprising trace of chocolate. Sean cannot get enough of it and loves going to bed each night with his nose pressed against Hank, allowing him to breathe in that fantastic scent all night.

Hank pecks Sean’s lips and then asks, “Shower?” Not waiting for an answer, Hank pads naked to the bathroom. It’s too early in the morning to care about his nakedness.

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

Hank exits the police station, heading for his car. He and Nick closed another case. Hank whistles cheerfully as he advances to his car. He sings to the radio as he drives over to Sean’s, his bag packed for the weekend. Hank parks and gets out, a bounce in his step. Hank is smiling in anticipation as he steps off the elevator but the smile falls abruptly at the sight of a beautiful blonde woman at Sean’s door and worse Sean is nearly nude, clothed only in a towel.

The woman sways close to Sean, her interest in him obvious from her body language. Hank shakes himself, telling himself that he trusts Sean and it isn’t what it looks like. He starts walking but then he sees the blonde yank Sean down for a kiss. Hank’s hands form fists as his heart breaks. *I should have known better. He’s been playing me. How could I have thought any differently?* His heart cries out as if in denial of Sean’s betrayal. Hank turns his back on Sean and quietly enters the stairway. Safe from Sean’s eyes, Hank rushes down the stairs. He needs to get away now.

Hank collapses into the driver’s seat. His hands are shaking as he takes the wheel, Hank is afraid he’ll fall apart right here. He takes several shaky deep breaths before he is certain he can hold himself together long enough to get home. Hank peels out and heads home. He doesn’t think he’s ever hurt this much, like his heart has been ripped out and flayed in front of him. Hank thought he could trust Sean but he was wrong. *Dead wrong.* He snags a bottle of bourbon and drags himself to his bedroom. The sight of the bed makes his heart wrench. He can see him and Sean together in that bed. Hank takes a hit of the bourbon straight from the bottle, tears trickling down his face. Hank wanders around the house trying to find a spot that Sean hasn’t touched but he sees the blasted man in every room. Sean filled his life so completely in their short time together and that only makes Sean’s betrayal hurt more. He feels empty, his life, his heart and soul, all of it feels empty without Sean. Hank ends up in the garage on the cold cement, drinking his bottle of bourbon and trying to ignore his tears and the ache in his chest. Hank drinks until he sinks into blissful unconsciousness.

Hank wakes hours later, feeling worse than he had before. Not only does he have a hangover but his whole body hurts from lying on the cement. Worse of all his heart and his body are crying out for Sean. It doesn’t seem to matter that he saw Sean kiss a woman dressed in only a towel with his own eyes, no doubt a goodbye kiss after they had fucked. Despite everything he saw, Hank still aches for the treacherous man.

*Stop this. Sean’s a two-timing bastard. He fucked some stupid blonde right under your nose. Get over it. Get over him. Stop acting like a love-sick fool,* Hank berates himself. *I don’t love him! I don’t!* But it doesn’t matter how much he tells himself that he isn’t in love with Sean. His heart refuses to believe the lie.

Hank is startled by the sound of his phone. Seeing Sean’s name, Hank fights with himself: part of him wanting to confront the cheating bastard, the other wanting Sean to tell him that it wasn’t what it looked like. Hank ignores the call, closing his eyes until the blasted thing stops ringing. He sighs and checks his phone, three text messages, three miscalls, and two voicemails, all from Sean. No doubt the bastard is wondering where he is, considering they were supposed to go away for the weekend.
Hank can’t bear to even look at them. He doesn’t want to see Sean’s lies, his false concern. *If he really cared he wouldn’t have cheated on me with that whore!*

Hank groans, still feeling an aching emptiness inside him. He feels consumed by it, the pain unceasing. Hank’s only hope is sleep, to ease the ache if only for a brief time. *Maybe when I wake it won’t hurt so badly. Maybe then losing that cheating bastard won’t feel like the end of the world, like I’m dying because he’s no longer with me.* He drags himself inside, falls into bed and doesn’t leave the bed for a day and a half.

Sean shoves Adalind away, growling, “What the hell do you think you are doing?!”

The Hexenbiest smiles sensually. “What do you think I’m doing, Sean?” She reaches out to touch his bare chest but he grabs her hands. The blonde pouts at being denied; she loves Sean and wants nothing more than to be in his bed. But Sean is stubborn and continues to deny her advances.

Sean looks down at her coldly, “I have already told you, Adalind. I have found my mate. You throwing yourself at me will not change that.” Adalind’s conniving eyes strive for innocence but Sean sees right through her. “Go away, Adalind, do not make me tell you again,” Sean warns, dismissing her like the little nobody she is. He shuts the door in her face, immediately wiping her from his mind. Sean smiles, eagerness to spend the weekend with his beloved, his mate swells within him and he goes back to packing.

Adalind narrows her eyes, vowing to herself, *One way or another, I will have you my Prince. Mate or no mate.* Adalind stomps off like a spoiled child.

Packed and ready, Sean waits for Hank. And waits…

Sean checks his watch, “Hank should be here by now.” Worried, Sean calls Hank’s cell but gets no answer. He waits longer until Hank is over an hour late. He calls, he texts but still no answer.

Finally, Sean calls the station looking for Hank only to find out he had left long ago. An ache in his chest flares. He shakes his head violently. “No. No! He wouldn’t…” Sean’s mind flashes to the memory of Adalind kissing him. “No, please, no!” The ache grows like fire out of control. Sean sinks to his knees and sobs. He can feel it, feel his mate abandoning him, trying to sever the link between them. Nothing has ever been as painful as losing Hank. Sean wants to curl up and die, the empty feeling inside is excruciating. An agonizing reminder that his mate is gone and he will never be complete. His sobs are heart wrenching as he prays for an end, the pain builds inside him until it pushes him into unconsciousness. Sean welcomes the darkness like a lover, sinking happily into oblivion.

Chapter End Notes

Chapter twelve is written as I decided to divide chapter eleven into two. I’ll post it later in the week.
Hank wakes feeling no better than when he passed out. In fact, the ache has only intensified and now it is near unbearable. “It hurts. Oh God, it hurts! Please make it stop!” Hank begs quietly to the empty room, praying for someone or something to stop the pain.

As if an answer to his prayer, he suddenly hears frantic knocking on his front door. Hank can hear Sean’s worried sounding voice at the door. He puts his hands over his ears and tries to block out the worried sound of his soon to be ex’s voice. But it doesn’t work.

“Hank? I know you’re in there. Please, just let me know you are okay!” Sean’s tone is near anguished with worry and need. “Hank! Talk to me, answer me please!”

Hank grimaces, something within him crying out for Sean. The sound of Sean’s voice makes his heart leap in anticipation, yearning for the man that has stolen his heart. He knows that it is somehow their separation that is causing the pain and Hank is in too much pain to deny it despite how crazy that sounds. Sean’s begging only increases in desperation the longer he gets no response. Hank bites his pillow to muffle his sobs as Sean’s voice breaks. Sean is hurting just as much as he is and it takes all his willpower to deny the urge to go to him.

Finally, the man leaves and Hank sags in relief. But the relief cannot drown out that piece of him that is grief-stricken at Sean’s absence. It feels like he’s dying, withering away without Sean. Hank drags himself to the window and makes sure Sean isn’t outside. Not seeing him, Hank calls Nick.

“Burkhardt.”

Hank croaks, “Nick, hey.”

“What’s wrong?” Nick asks. He can hear the distress in Hank’s voice.

Hank sighs shakily, “Can I come over?”

“Of course. Do you need me to pick you up? Are you okay to drive?”

Hank laughs a little hysterically.

“I’m coming over, just hang on, okay? I’ll be there as soon as I can.” Nick hangs up and dashes out of the house. Within minutes, he is knocking on Hank’s door. When Hank opens the door, Nick stares at him in shock. Hank looks terrible, worse than he’s ever seen him.

Ignoring Nick’s stunned look, Hank stumbles out the door. “Let’s go, Nick. Before he comes back.”

“Who?”

Hank shushes him, shoving Nick toward his vehicle. He doesn’t want to risk running into Sean. They get seated but Nick does not seem to want to leave. “Look, just drive. Please. We can talk about it after we get away from here, alright?”

Nick drives in silence back to Monroe’s. Hank appears to relax more the further they get from his house.
Nick sits down on the couch, inviting Hank to do the same. Monroe pops out of his work room looking surprised to see Hank. “Hello Hank, it’s good to finally…” he trails off as he really looks at Nick’s partner. “Uh, why don’t I go grab…” Monroe points to the kitchen. He comes back with two bottles of beer. “I’ll just be in the other room if you need me.”

Hank waves him off, “You might as well stay. Nick’s gonna tell you everything anyway.” Monroe sits down next to Nick, feeling a little awkward to be included in the conversation that is to come.

Nick breaks the moment by saying, “You want to tell me what’s going on?”

Hank blurts out, “I caught Sean cheating.”


Hank is confused by the dueling feelings inside him, part of him agreeing with Nick while the other wants to defend Sean as foolish as that sounds. “I caught him kissing some woman outside his apartment and he was only wearing a towel. It—it was obvious what had happened…”

“I’m sorry, man.” Nick feels guilty for telling Hank to not worry so much. Apparently, he did need to worry. Sean evidently wasn’t as committed to the relationship as Hank was.

Hank rubs his chest, trying to ease the painful ache he feels. “I think he broke me, Nick. I don’t understand it but I feel this anguishing pain inside me. It’s…it’s not normal. I have had my heart broken before but this feels a million times worse. Like a piece of my soul has been torn from my body.”

“Hank, it’ll pass. You just need some time to get over him. That’s all.” Nick’s voice is confident but deep down, he isn’t as sure. Hank sounds wrecked, hell he looks wrecked. Nick can’t help but wonder if he’d feel the same if he had found Monroe cheating. He rubs his own chest to soothe the echoes of the pulsing ache that arises at the mere thought.

Hank is fervent in his reply, “No, Nick. You don’t understand. I’ve been dumped before, even been cheated on before. My heart’s been broken. But this, I don’t know what this is but it isn’t like that. Yeah, my heart’s broken that Sean betrayed me but it is much more than that. It physically hurts. Like a piece of me has been ripped away and the rest of me is dying.”

Monroe’s eyes light with understanding. If he is right, Sean is Wesen and Hank is his mate. Monroe grew up hearing stories of Wesen dying after being rejected or separated from their mate. But even suspecting the truth, there isn’t much Monroe can do. He can’t tell Hank his suspicions; Nick’s partner would only think he’s crazy.

Then Nick’s phone rings. He checks it, a surge of rage flooding his body as he sees Renard’s name. Nick wars with himself before he answers. He is Hank’s friend but Renard is also his boss.


“Nick, have you seen Hank?” Sean asks, his tone is unmistakably concerned. “He isn’t answering my calls and we were supposed to go away this weekend. I haven’t seen him since yesterday at the station.”

Nick is pointedly silent.

“Is he there? Is he okay? Can I talk to him?” Sean asks. He’s sick with worry, not only for Hank but for them both. Sean cannot ignore the agonizing pain throbbing within him, his Wesen side crying out for the mate that has appeared to have abandoned him. He needs his mate, to see him, touch him, claim him. Sean needs Hank and Hank needs him.
“If Hank wanted to talk to you, he’d answer your calls. Why don’t you leave him alone?” Nick growls.

Sean closes his eyes and shudders. Just as he feared, Hank must have seen. *Goddamn you Adalind!* “Fine.” Sean hangs up. He’s not giving up though and goes to the station to find an old case file, which has Monroe’s address in it as he was a suspect. Sean isn’t letting Hank go without a fight. He should have told Hank long ago and now Adalind has forced his hand. Sean isn’t letting that bitch ruin things for him.

He drives to Monroe’s house, knocking on the door. A tall man with a beard answers the door. “Can I help you?”

“I’m looking for Hank.”

The man eyes him critically before woging and with a slight hesitation Sean woges back. “Zauberbiest…huh,” Monroe comments, sounding surprised. “Come in, Hank’s in the living room.”

Sean is thankful for Nick’s mate; the man appears to understand Sean’s position and his need to see his mate.

“Who was it?” Nick asks Monroe before he turns and notices Sean. Both Nick and Hank surge up from their seats. Nick growls, “What are you doing here?! Why’d you let him in?!”

Hank stands frozen under Sean’s gaze. Sean advances on him as if he’s a frightened deer. The touch of Sean’s hand on his arm sends an irrational burst of heat and euphoria through Hank. The torturous pain eases and Hank feels like sobbing. He sags and doesn’t resist as Sean pulls him into a hug.

Sean shudders as he wraps Hank into a hug. His soul feels whole again, the gut-wrenching emptiness is filled by Hank, by his mate.

Hank finally snaps out of his daze, stiffening in Sean’s arms. “Let me go,” he demands lowly.

“No, I need you to listen to me. And if I let you go, you are going to run. I can’t let you do that.”

Nick’s attempt to butt in is quickly stopped when Monroe puts his hand over his mouth. He whispers into Nick’s ear, “Don’t. Trust me, let Renard talk.”

Sean squeezes Hank tight. “Please listen to me. I know what you think you saw.”

“What I think I saw! You fucked some blonde slut!”

Sean answers vehemently, “No! She kissed me but I pushed her away. She never got inside my apartment. I don’t want her; I only want you. I would never cheat on you, Hank. I love you. Let me prove it to you. Promise me you’ll listen to what I have to say and if you still don’t believe me, I will let you go. You have my word.”

“Promise?”

“I promise, Hank.”

Hank eases out of Sean’s arms and nods sharply.

Sean looks around at Nick and Monroe, then back to Hank. It is clear that Hank isn’t willing to have this conversation in private. Sean will take what he can get and perhaps it will help having Nick and Monroe there. “First, the woman, Adalind… She is an acquaintance but has long sought a more
intimate relationship with me. She has thrown herself repeatedly at me but I’ve never wanted her.
She kissed me; I know you must have seen that. I didn’t kiss her back, Hank. I couldn’t, not now that
I’ve found you. I do not want anyone but you. And I told her that.”

While a part of him rejoices at the fervent words, Hank cannot allow himself to give in easily. His
heart is on the line and Hank has to know that Sean won’t break it again.

“Can you tell me what you’ve been feeling since you saw her kiss me?” Sean asks quietly.

Hank shakes his head, no way is he going to share what a wreck he’s been without Sean.

“Did you feel like your heart had been ripped out? Like a piece of you was missing? An agonizing
ache, a physical unbearable pain in your chest that won’t go away? Like you were dying without
me?”

Hank stills, each word is like a knife. *How could he know that?*

Sean cups Hank’s face, forcing him to look into his eyes. He answers Hank’s unvoiced question,
“Because that is exactly what I felt like without you. And I know why.” He pauses, taking in the
eager expression on Hank’s face. “You are my mate, Hank. Just like Nick is Monroe’s. It is why we
are drawn to each other. Why I can be so certain so quickly that I love you. You are my other half
and deep down a part of me recognized you. I think maybe a part of you recognized me too.”

Hank’s heart jumps in his chest as if recognizing Sean’s words as truth. “I don’t understand.”

Sean looks at the other two men briefly before staring into Hank’s eyes. “There is a whole world that
exists right under your nose and you don’t even know it. I am part of that world…and so are Monroe
and Nick.” This isn’t how he wanted to tell Hank about the Wesen world but he has no choice.

Nick’s eyebrows rise in shock. *Renard is Wesen! And Hank’s his mate! Holy shit!* Nick finally
understands why Monroe let Renard inside, he must have suspected they are mates.

Hank turns to his partner; the astonishment on his face isn’t what confuses him. What does is the lack
of disbelief. Almost as if Nick knows what Sean is trying to say, *But Nick can’t know…can he?*
The skepticism in his eyes is clear even if Hank doesn’t say anything.

“I know you’ll think I’m crazy, I probably would feel the same if I was in your shoes. But Humans
aren’t the only people on Earth. There are others called Wesen, people who look completely normal
to you but they aren’t.”

Hank’s incredulous expression is what Sean expected. “Wesen? Are you saying there are human-
looking aliens or something? You expect me to believe that?” Hank looks over at Nick and Monroe,
anticipating seeing the same expression on their faces but he doesn’t. Instead, they look calm and
*normal* as if Sean didn’t just say something completely insane.

“Not aliens. We’re—”

“Excuse me? We? Are you saying you’re a Wesen?”

Sean takes a deep breath, now or never. “Yes. I am a Zauberbiest. Technically a Zauberbiest hybrid,
half-Human, half-Hexenbiest.”

Nick blurts out, “You’re a male Hexenbiest! Oh my god!”

“Zauberbiest. And you’re a Grimm, I know,” Sean replies coolly.
“How did I not know you were Wesen?!?”

Monroe’s lips twitch, “Nick, now really isn’t the time.”

Nick ducks his head muttering a quiet sorry. This is about Hank, not him.

Getting Hank’s attention back, Sean says, “Think over the last few months of cases. Hasn’t there been anything that you found suspicious? How about when Nick was certain by just looking at him that Monroe was the perp kidnapping those girls? Attacked him without provocation? Did you not find that suspicious?”

“Well, yeah.”

Sean thinks just maybe he can get Hank to believe him. “The reason that Nick reacted that way was because he saw Monroe’s true face. His Wesen face.”

“So Monroe’s a Wesen too? And Nick can see him,” Hank states, doubt clear in his tone.

“Nick is a Grimm, a Human that can see Wesen.”

“So you’re saying that you have no proof. That I am just supposed to believe that ‘Wesen’ exist?”

Sean again breathes deep, “No. You can see Wesen but only when we want you to. Grimms are different; they can see us even when we don’t want them to. They recognize Wesen because in moments of high emotion, Wesen often woge or show their true faces. Grimms can see when this happens. So I’m going to woge for you, show you my Zauberbiest side but I want you to remember why I am doing this. I am doing this because I love you, because you are my mate and you should know every side of me.”

Hank gulps nervously while Nick and Monroe watch with wide eyes. Sean visibly takes a deep breath and shakes his head. Hank jolts as Sean’s beautiful face changes, two large patches of skin change: one over his right eye and the other left starting at the left corner of his mouth. He stares in shock, the patches look like decaying skin. *Holy fuck, either he isn’t lying or I’m hallucinating.*

“So that’s what a half-Zauberbiest looks like,” Nick declares, sounding amazed. He’s never seen a Zauberbiest woge, much less a hybrid.

Sean shakes his head and his face goes back to normal. His green eyes are imploring Hank to accept him. “I—you—” Hank doesn’t know what to say but as crazy as it is he cannot deny what he saw, not when he knows Nick saw the same thing.

“I love you, Hank. With everything I am. You are my mate and there will never be anyone else.”

Stunned by those words, Hank stares at Sean. “No one?”

“Never,” Sean vows.

“Is this a-a Zesen thing?”

Sean gives a small smile, “Wesen. Yes, it’s a Wesen thing. You are my mate; I feel it deep inside me, the recognition. I could never cheat on you, Hank. You are my heart, my soul, my everything.”

Something in Hank sings at Sean’s words. Deep down a piece of him echoes the words. Hank meets Sean’s eyes.

The moment he sees belief in his mate’s eyes, Sean sags in relief. *He believes me. I haven’t lost
him.* He crushes Hank to him, soaking in the feeling of his mate against him. Tears prickle his eyes in overwhelming happiness and relief. Sean pulls back, framing Hank’s beautiful face with his hands and peppers his lips, his cheeks, his face with kisses before going back to his lips and kissing him with everything he has.

A throat clearing breaks them both from the mind-blowing kiss. Nick and Monroe stand to the side smiling and looking a little amused at how quickly they had been forgotten.

Hank blushes faintly while Sean simply beams happily with his arm around his mate.

Monroe grins, “Well, welcome to the club. Looks like it isn’t just Nick and I anymore.”

Sean laughs, knowing exactly what Monroe is referring to. “I guess not.”

Hank though has a perplexed expression on his face.

Sean looks down at him and explains, “Before Nick and before you, there has never been a human that was a Wesen’s mate.”


Sean answers, “Never. Obviously humans have had sex with Wesen, even dated or married them. I’m proof of that. But a Wesen’s mate has never been a human before. At least not until you and Nick.”

“And that’s…?”

Monroe responds, “Huge. Life-changing. World-changing. I truly thought Nick was able to be my mate because he was a Grimm but you pretty much prove that wrong. You are not a Grimm but you are clearly Renard’s mate.”

Hank rubs his forehead, trying to wrap his brain around everything that he’s been told. “So Wesen, do they all look like Sean when they, um…what did you call it?”

“Woge and no. Wesen are widely different and I have a whole trailer full of books on the different types of Wesen. Monroe is a Blutbad, which is sort of like a werewolf,” Nick explains.

“Why do you have books on Wesen? Because of Monroe?”

Nick answers, “No. The books are all from my ancestors. Grimms in my family have been documenting Wesen for centuries.”

“What exactly is a Grimm?”

“Grimms hunt Wesen,” Nick says.

Monroe elaborates, “Grimms are the boogeyman to Wesen. They are what parents tell their children to be afraid of.”

“Grimms are vicious and will kill any and every Wesen they can find. It doesn’t matter if they are dangerous or completely harmless,” Sean adds.

Hank looks horrified as he looks at Nick, “You kill innocents?!”

“What? No!!” Nick pauses briefly before admitting, “My ancestors did but I’m different.”
Monroe smirks, “I imagine things would have gone a lot differently had you not been.” Nick would have killed him a long time ago had he been like his ancestors.

“You think?” Nick retorts sarcastically. Monroe would be dead and so would a lot of other Wesen.

Hank says, “I still don’t know what a Grimm is…”

“Grimms are Humans that see Wesen. I protect both Humans and Wesen from dangerous Wesen that seek to harm or kill people.”

“So a Grimm is kind of like a supernatural detective?”

Nick nods, “Sort of. Except sometimes it is a little hard to find proof that our legal system would accept. Can’t just say I saw the perp turn into a monster and kill someone. And Grimm cases are more frequently life and death than regular cases.”

Hank turns to Monroe, “Can I see your werewolf face?”

Monroe grimaces, “Blutbad, I’m a Blutbad not a werewolf.”

“Whatever,” Hank says dismissively, “show me.”

Monroe cautions, “Remember, it is still me and I’m not going to hurt you, okay?”

Hank nods, watching closely as Monroe does a similar head roll thing. “Whoa!” Hank shouts as he instinctively jumps back.

Monroe moves his head and his face is back to normal. “See. Still me.”

“Okay, okay,” Hank mutters. “Again.” Monroe woges again. This time Hank doesn’t jerk away but studies Monroe’s face with interest. “Do all Blutbads look like you?”

“Blutbaden, the plural is Blutbaden. And no, I’m a Wieder Blutbad and my woged face reflects that.”

Hank asks confused, “Wieder?”

“It means again in German. It means I’m a reformed Blutbad. I am dedicated to living a much more peaceful and nonviolent lifestyle in comparison to unreformed Blutbaden. No more hunting Humans or Wesen, no more killing for anything but defense,” Monroe explains.

Nick’s eyes narrow and the look he gives Monroe means they will be talking about this in the near future. He hadn’t thought about Monroe’s life before and from the sounds of it, Nick isn’t going to enjoy the conversation to come. Monroe acknowledges the look with an almost indecipherable nod; he isn’t looking forward to that discussion either.

Hank is glad Monroe is reformed; it sounds like Blutbaden can be ruthless killing machines. He turns to Nick, “Can I see your books?”

Nick stares at Sean, silently trying to determine whether to trust him with this. Sean doesn’t look away and meets his gaze without flinching.

“Do you not want me to see them?” Hank inquires.

Nick tears his eyes away from Renard. “No, that’s not it. I trust you Hank and Monroe…” Nick trails off.
“What he is saying is that he doesn’t know if he can trust me,” Sean says.

Nick shrugs, not denying anything.

“You are my mate’s partner, Nick. His safety is in your hands. Do you think I would risk his life by betraying you?” Sean explains.

Nick has to admit Renard has a point and nods his head sharply to convey his consent. He turns to Hank, “Let’s go. I can show the Wesen I’ve seen on our cases.”

Inside the trailer, Nick asks, “Books first or weapons?”

Hank replies sounding intrigued, “Weapons.” When Nick opens the doors of his weapon cabinet, Hank is stunned by the sheer number and variety. “Damn!” Hank listens vividly as Nick talks about numerous weapons and what Wesen they are used to hunt and/or kill.

Monroe and Sean stand off to the side, talking quietly. “So Nick’s your mate. Did you know since you first met?” Sean asks.

“Yes,” Monroe taps his nose, “I could smell it.”

“Were you surprised?”

The Blutbad shrugs. “That he was a Grimm? I wasn’t expecting that but the certainty I felt made it easy to accept. It didn’t matter to me that he’s a Grimm. All that mattered was that he was mine. What about you?”

Sean thinks on the question, “Nothing so easy. Something about Hank has always drawn me in but I assumed it was only attraction. I never considered it was anything else. It didn’t really matter as I never planned on doing anything about it. I was fairly certain that Hank was straight, plus he’s my subordinate. It seemed foolish to risk a messy situation for mere attraction. Without Nick, I probably would never have known Hank was my mate.”

Monroe wonders about that. “What does Nick have to do with you and Hank?”

“Nick’s heat. It…lowered my inhibitions and when Hank called me thinking I was Nick asking for a ride, I saw my chance. To my surprise I soon realized that Hank was my mate. I wasn’t even sure I’d have a mate being a hybrid.”

Monroe and Sean both think about the coincidence for a moment. It is almost like fate brought them together, leading Nick to Monroe while their mating led Hank to Sean. It cannot simply be a happenstance that Nick and Hank connect the four men together, that the first two human mates would know each other. Sean has a fleeting senseless thought that perhaps one of the other officers at the station that work with Nick and Hank could end up being a human mate as well. *Will there be more? People I know? Will they all be connected to Nick and Hank or will human mates start emerging from all over the world?* Sean wonders.

Monroe is lost in his own thoughts, *Will Wesen find their mates in humans more often now? What about Rosalee? Will she find her mate in another Fuchsbau? Or a Human?*

Nick and Hank move onto the books, pulling in their mates. Sean’s fluency in French, German, Russian, and Latin soon is revealed and most assuredly helps with translating some of the entries. Monroe can translate German and Spanish. With the unexpected help with translations, the four of them study the books for hours.
Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will likely be Hank and Sean talking more but in private this time, plus I’ll probably throw in some make-up sex too.
Chapter Notes

It has obviously been a while since I updated this story. I was having some muse problems but thankfully it isn’t as much of a struggle to convince my muse to cooperate so I can write. I also needed some time away from the story.

Monroe notices that Nick is starting to flag. “Okay, that’s enough guys. The books will still be here later, why don’t we call it a night?”

Hank is wide-eyed and looks like he could go all night but seeing Nick’s wide yawn, he agrees. Goodnights are quickly given and the two couples split up. Monroe drives Nick home in his little Bug and Sean gets into the driver’s seat of his SUV while Hank gets in the passenger’s seat. “Where to, Hank?”

Knowing he needs to confront the memory of that woman kissing Sean, Hank answers, “Your place.”

Sean nods at Hank’s sure tone and drives home. Getting out of his SUV, Sean gravitates to Hank’s side. He puts his arm around him with his hand on Hank’s hip and walks to his building. Sean questions whether he should remove his arm or not, hesitating at the door a second. But Hank doesn’t seem inclined to put a more respectable distance between them. Sean is ecstatic to have his mate back at his side.

With Sean’s warm, reassuring heat, Hank walks inside with confidence. He finds that almost losing Sean has put things into perspective. Hank doesn’t care what these strangers think about them. They ride up the elevator alone, which Sean takes advantage of by boxing Hank in and lifting his face for a kiss. They share soft and slow kisses that are both reassuring and arousing. Arriving at Sean’s floor, Sean pecks his lips once more before easing back. Hank hesitates for only a beat before he takes Sean’s hand and plods determinedly forward. He can see the kiss in his mind and it is solely Sean’s hand clasped tightly with his that combats the pain. It is a relief to get inside the apartment, a space untainted by that woman.

“Hungry?”

Hank’s stomach rumbles.

Sean smiles and enters the kitchen. He takes out his homemade bacon jam, sandwich meat, and cheese. He plugs in his Panini press and then fixes several sandwiches. Sean spreads the jam onto bread, layering several pieces of meat and topping it with a slice of cheese. Putting the sandwiches on the press, he takes out some cut up veggies. “Something to drink?” Sean takes out his favorite beer, holding it up.

“Sure.” Hank enjoys watching Sean’s domesticity. He is utterly comfortable in the kitchen, moving with the confidence and ease of an experienced chef. “When did you start cooking?”

Sean looks up from the platter he has been arranging. “I was…’ he appears to remembering something or someone, “eight? My mother is not skilled in the kitchen. She is the only person I have
ever known that can burn water. Don’t ask me how but I’ve seen it done.”

“So who taught you or did you learn by trial and error?”

“My mother hired a tutor to teach me at home. At the time, it…wasn’t safe for me to go to a public school.” Seeing the look in Hank’s eyes, Sean says, “It’s a long story, one that you’ll hear but not tonight. Okay?”

Hank bobs his head. He knows neither of them is up for another talk tonight. “This tutor taught you to cook then?”

Sean smiles as he remembers Gustave Dubois. “He loved food and I was fascinated by his skill in the kitchen. Gustave saw my interest and used it. I learned more about fractions in the kitchen than I ever did in a classroom. Gustave was a good teacher both in and out of the kitchen.”

Hank has to smile at the soft look on Sean’s face. Remembering how Sean said his childhood was difficult, he is glad Sean has good memories to combat the bad.

The pair enjoys the sandwiches, veggies, and chips. Neither man has eaten much of anything since the kiss; both need the sustenance. After they fill their bellies, Hank and Sean want nothing more than to sleep. They strip and crawl into bed. Sean is pressed against Hank’s back, a leg between Hank’s and an arm around his waist. Sean can feel their bond singing from the close contact. He has his mate back.

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Sunday morning:

Nick startles awake, his nightmare feeling all too real. When Monroe sleepily touches his back, it takes everything within to stop himself from flinching.

“What’s wrong, Nick?”


Monroe rubs his mate’s back. “I can smell your fear. What scared you? What did you dream about?”

Nick’s eyes meet his mate’s as he whispers, “I dreamt of you.”

Monroe’s eyes widen. “I hurt you?”

“Not me. I saw you hurting other people…innocent people.”

Closing his eyes, Monroe sighs regretfully. “This is because of what I said about Wieder versus regular Blutbaden?”

“You’ve killed people, haven’t you? Innocent people.”

Monroe does not like to think of the past, of what he’d done. Yet, Nick wants to know. Monroe stares at the wall as he explains, “Many young Blutbaden are almost…feral. Woging completely, it is as if the Human part of you ceases to exist and you become only a wolf. It’s heady, the hunt, the chase. Like a drug. Doing it in a pack makes it only more so. My parents brought my brother, sisters, and I hunting with them for sheep, goats, rabbits even. It was…normal for us.”

“And that makes it okay?” Nick challenges.
Monroe doesn’t get mad but instead tries to help Nick understand it from his perspective. “Wesen are different. We aren’t Human and the way we think is different. The way we see Humans is different. It is normal for Wesen to view Humans as animals, as lesser beings. Much like how Humans view animals. Just as it is normal for Humans to kill animals for food or to treat them as if they are less important, Wesen do to Humans. It is common and normal for us. Wesen are superior to Humans, more advanced, more evolved, just...more.”

Nick fumes, “So I’m just an animal to you?!”

“Of course not! You are my mate, Nick! You are everything to me!”

Nick grumbles to himself, not quite satisfied with the answer he’s given. Monroe tries to touch him but Nick jerks away. Monroe digs his nails into his thighs to stop from reaching out for his mate. Taking a deep breath, he attempts to quiet the hurt at Nick’s rejection. “Think of it this way, if your parents had lived and taught you the way of your ancestors, of Grimms, you would have been raised thinking that all Wesen are scum. That they are nothing but animals that need to be eradicated.”

Nick does not want to think about that, about how his ancestors were ruthless in their destruction of Wesen. “But I wasn’t!”

“But I was, Nick. I was raised as a Wesen, as a Blutbad. You weren’t raised like Grimms usually are but tell me this, when you have to kill a Wesen, how does it feel? Is it the same feeling you have when you have to take a Human life?”

His eyes widen and Nick flails backward in surprise. Monroe hits a nerve, one Nick didn’t realize before. “I-I…” Nick stutters, his mind frozen.

“It feels different, doesn’t it?”

Hanging his head in shock and shame, Nick cannot answer. He does not want to admit it feels different. It shouldn’t but it does.

Monroe doesn’t force the issue, instead he continues. “The way we view the world and others in it are shaped by our parents, by our families, by who we are. Yet, we can change how we see the world. I stopped believing what my parents taught me. I killed people, I was so caught up in the hunt that I attacked the first ‘animal’ I saw. It was a man and a woman who lived in the woods. I killed them and it still haunts me today.” Monroe shudders at the memory. He never wants to be that again, that monstrous mindless killing machine. Monroe glances up into Nick’s, “I didn’t intend to but I killed them and I can never take that back. I have to live with it. Their deaths opened my eyes. After that I fought my instincts and what I was raised to believe. I became a Wieder Blutbad; it was hard and I had relapses but eventually I found a system that worked. I changed Nick, I changed a lot. Our friendship, our mating is proof of that. Blutbaden hate Grimms and Grimms hate Blutbaden. But I never hated you, I never for a second denied that you are my mate. From the moment we met, I knew you were mine and I was yours.” Monroe wishes he could hide this from Nick but he can’t. Nick either has to accept his past...or not.

Nick scans Monroe, reading the sincerity and regret in his expression and body language. But he can’t get past it. Monroe killed at least two people, innocent people. Nick doesn’t know if he can accept Monroe’s past. “I-I need some time. To think about this.” He grabs his bag from the closet and tosses some clothes into it. Nick avoids looking at Monroe and swiftly leaves the bedroom and then the house.

Monroe grabs his chest, a pained canine whine echoing in the silent, empty house. He collapses on the bed, his keen nose seeking Nick’s scent. He breathes deep, letting his mate’s scent wrap around
him. Monroe buries himself in the sheets, his heart aching with the knowledge that his violent past may have chased his mate away. He woges, howling in sorrow at losing his mate and the pups Nick is carrying inside him.

Hank rubs his nose against the warm skin in front of him while his left hand caresses the taut muscles of his partner’s stomach. Smiling sleepily, he breathes in Sean’s familiar scent. Hank snuggles closer unconsciously, only waking fully when Sean chuckles. He blinks rapidly, realizing the sometime during the night they’d switched positions. Hank is spooning Sean, one of his legs between Sean’s, an arm flung over him. “Oh, um…sorry?” Hank mumbles, moving away from Sean.

Sean stops Hank’s retreat. “Stay, I like it.” Hank tentatively eases back against him, making Sean smile. He’s tense for several beats before Hank relaxes. They stay that way for several minutes, Hank making little patterns with his fingers on Sean’s stomach. Sean closes his eyes, imagining what he wants to happen. He surprises Hank when he presses his ass back into him.

Hank flushes red as his hips jerk forward instinctively. He wrenches back but Sean reaches behind, yanking Hank’s hips against him. Sean’s firm grip holds Hank there as Sean wiggles and grinds his ass into his mate’s increasingly interested cock. Sean moans lustfully and Hank freezes at the sound, stunned at what Sean seems to be asking. “S-Sean?”

Sean continues to grind his ass backward, answering distractingly, “Hmm?”

“You, uh, you, want me to uh…” Hank stutters incoherently.

Sean laughs. Finding Hank’s hand, he moves it to his crotch, letting Hank see how hard he is. “I want you inside me, Hank.”

“But I thought—I was—you were?”

Sean turns around, pushing Hank onto his back. He leans close, their faces almost touching. “We are equals, Hank. You are my mate. I want to do everything with you. I want to give myself to you, just as you have given yourself to me.”

“Really?” Hank asks in disbelief. He thought that things would always be the same. He never imagined that Sean would want to change things, that he would want Hank to fuck him.

Smiling, Sean answers, “Yes, really. I trust you, I love you, Hank.”

Hank beams. “I—I love you, too.” His heart is near bursting at releasing those three little words.

Sean’s smile is like a ray of pure joy. He captures Hank’s lips for a sweet kiss, which quickly turns dirty. Hank pushes Sean onto his back, dominating the kiss until they run out of breath. “Fuck,” Sean curses, “you keep kissing like that and it’ll be over before we start.” Hank laughs, a warm feeling building inside him. Sean asks, “How do you want to do this? It’s been a long time for me, I could do it…or you could.”

“I want to,” Hank says hurriedly.

Sean grabs the lube and hands it over. He lies down on his stomach, a pillow under his hips and his legs spread wide.

Hank has to stare for several moments, Sean is fucking beautiful, his long nude body relaxed and willing. He gulps quietly, lubing several fingers. Hank closes his eyes, remembering how Sean
stretched his body. On his knees, he sidles up behind Sean. Hank stares at Sean’s ass, it’s small and lightly curved, nothing like his own. He cups it in his hands, kneading it softly. Hank tilts his head, listening to the noise coming from Sean. It sounds like Sean is purring. Whatever the sound, Sean is clearly enjoying himself as he pushes his ass into Hank’s hands.

Gaining confidence, Hank parts Sean’s cheeks, rubbing a finger on his hole. Gently at first, then more insistently, Hank feels the muscle loosen under his touch. He slides the tip of his finger inside, rocking it back and forth, easing it deeper. Sean groans at the feeling of Hank’s finger inside him. It has been a long time since he’s trusted someone to touch him there. He reaches back, spreading his cheeks for his mate. Hank moans, watching avidly as his finger sinks into Sean. Too fascinated by the sight, Hank doesn’t add another finger until Sean demands more. Hank feels his own ass clench as Sean swallows his two fingers eagerly. The slick slide of his fingers fucking Sean’s hole is intensely arousing. Hank bites his lip as he pulls them out and eases three in. Sean arches, moaning Hank’s name as his mate finds his prostate. Hank scissors his fingers, stretching Sean carefully and thoroughly. He doesn’t stop even when Sean says he’s ready.

Once he’s sure Sean is ready, Hank demands, “Turn over, on your back.” Sean obeys. Hank has to grip the base of his dick to stop himself from coming on the spot at the sight of Sean’s leaking, aroused cock. The knowledge that he did that to Sean, that Sean is visibly and undeniably eager to be fucked by him.

“Fuck me,” Sean orders. He needs Hank inside him. Just the thought makes his whole body clench. He wants Hank so badly.

Hank growls, surging forward and taking Sean’s lips in a brutal kiss, he gives his mate no choice but to submit. Sean softens, submitting easily because it’s Hank. The kiss gentles and they kiss lazily. Sean enjoys the weight of his mate atop him as Hank trails kisses down his arched neck. His hands hold Hank’s head as his mate sucks a mark at the base of his throat. Hank shuffles backward, admiring the mark. It will be hidden by Sean’s dress shirt but they’ll both know it is there. Sean smirks at the satisfaction on Hank’s face. “Like your mark on me, don’t you?”

Hank tears his eyes from the mark to meet Sean’s, who looks quite amused at his preoccupation. He looks between the mark and Sean’s eyes. Smirking back, Hank purrs, “Looks good on you.”

Sean chuckles, enjoying this confident side of Hank; he leans back and stretches languidly. Hank’s eyes watch his every move. Sean can’t resist shifting, flexing muscles to draw Hank’s gaze. “Gonna mark me good, Pet?” Hank quirks a brow at Sean’s challenge but all Sean does is urge him on. Sean trails his fingers down his chest. “You want to, don’t you? Cover me in marks, marking me as yours.” Sean can feel Hank’s heated gaze on him.

Hank can picture it and he wants it. He does not waste time, sliding his hands up Sean’s stomach and chest. With his fingers pinching and plucking at Sean’s nipples, Hank leans down and mouths Sean’s hip bone. Tasting his skin, Hank finds the perfect spot and sucks a second, larger mark on his mate’s hip. Then Hank’s mouth follows the same path as his hands; his lips kissing up the flat planes of Sean’s stomach, stopping twice more to suck another mark. His lips are soon drawn to Sean’s nipples, laving them with his tongue. Hank starts to suck one while pinching the other. He drags his teeth carefully across Sean’s nipple before moving on, kissing up his mate’s chest to his shoulder. Hank can’t resist sucking one more mark there before kissing Sean’s lips almost lazily.

Pulling back, Hank meets Sean’s eyes and the heat he finds there only serves to further inflame his desire. He finds the lube again, slicking up his cock. He knee-walks forward, grabbing a pillow, and shoving it under Sean’s lifted hips. “Ready?”

“More than ready,” Sean declares.
With one hand on Sean’s hip and the other guiding his cock, Hank slowly eases the head inside as he looks into Sean’s eyes. He rocks forward and back, just as he’d done with his finger, pushing deeper with each thrust until he’s completely inside of Sean. Hank stills, a bit overwhelmed at the pleasure of being enveloped in Sean’s heat. He grunts softly when Sean squeezes around him. Sean feels tight and hot and perfect.

Sean tugs Hank’s head down for a kiss, pouring all his love and lust into it. Hank’s weight on top of him and filling him feels even better than he imagined. It’s heaven. Sean wraps his long legs behind Hank’s and breaks the kiss. “Fuck me, Hank.”

Hank leans back just enough to look Sean in the eyes and starts to rock his hips. He eats up the little noises Sean makes and the blissful expression on his face. Hank has never felt like this before, connected to his partner not only in body but in soul. They rock together effortlessly, moving as one.

Sean’s big hands settle on Hank’s ass, pulling him deeper with each thrust. He moans loudly with every stroke, feeling Hank’s thick cock splitting him open like no one has before. Every person before Hank pales in comparison. Their bond flares, strengthening as Hank claims Sean just as Sean had claimed Hank. They are mated. Hank grunts softly as he speeds his pace, fucking Sean harder and deeper than before. Sean arches, his cock leaking profusely. “Feels so good. Your fat cock pushing inside me, making us one,” Sean moans.

“Mine!” Hank growls possessively, shoving forward with intense determination.

Sean groans, “Ugh.” His body jolts as Hank’s hips snap fast and forcibly. “Yours!” Sean vows. Hank’s fingers dig into his hips hard enough to bruise and Sean loves it. “I’m gonna cum!” Hank’s brutal pace doesn’t abate as Sean begins to come, painting his stomach white. He fucks him straight through, seeking his own release. Hank’s eyes rove over Sean, from the satisfied expression on his face to his seed covered stomach. He pushes Sean’s impossible long legs toward his shoulders and thrusts hard and deep. Hank moans Sean’s name as he finally comes. He holds himself up as Sean releases his legs and lays them on the bed. Hank’s arms give out and he slumps on top of Sean, cradled by Sean’s big body. Sean hugs him close, trailing his fingertips up and down Hank’s back.

Hank listens to Sean’s slowing heartbeat, still amazed and a bit euphoric. The connection between them is stronger than before. Knowing what he does, Hank won’t deny it. They are mates. He is Sean’s, and Sean is his. The rest they will have to work out together.
His heart and soul crying out for his mate, Monroe lies on the bed in a ball of misery. He has never felt this depth of agony before. He may have lost Nick for good, his one true mate, his heart, his everything. The memory of his mate’s fear, of Nick avoiding his eyes as he left, Nick leaving, is burned into his brain like a brand. *He’s gone. He isn’t coming back. You lost him. You lost them.* Monroe does not blame Nick for leaving. Maybe he should but Monroe can’t find it in himself to do so.

Unable to take the torture any longer, Monroe surges off the bed and abandons his home. His sanctuary provides him no comfort, merely a painful reminder of what he has lost. The pain he and his wolf feel only increases with each second Nick is gone, just as the certainty that he has lost both his mate and his pups grows stronger with every passing moment. *Nick is not coming back. He thinks you are a monster. A murderous scum that needs to be exterminated. You will never see your pups.* Monroe knows what will happen if Nick doesn’t come back soon and he accepts it. It is incredibly rare for a Blutbad to reject his or her mate but when it happens Blutbaden do not survive for long. A Blutbad’s mate is her or his reason for living, take that away and the Blutbad has nothing. *He has nothing.*

Monroe is driven to seek the only place that can give him a trace of comfort: the woods. He runs swiftly until he is at last deep in the forest. For the first time in years, Monroe gives himself up to his wolf and woges completely. He howls his grief and anguish until his voice goes hoarse. Then he runs, his mind’s sole focus is to run as fast and as far as he can, pushing every other thought from his consciousness. Monroe runs until his legs give out and he collapses heavily onto the grass. Exhausted physically and mentally, he whimpers as he falls into unconsciousness. His last thoughts full of Nick and their pups.

Nick drives mindlessly away from Monroe. He doesn’t know where he is going and does not care. He just needs to get away. Less than an hour later, Nick finds himself in Salem. The name only serves as a reminder what he is hiding from. Stomach growling, Nick sighs and finds a restaurant. He silently devours his large meal. With his hunger satisfied, Nick can no longer ignore the painful ache in his chest. He can feel it grow stronger and more painful with every beat of his heart. Nick groans and rests his head against the cool surface of the table. *Will I have to endure this pain unless I go back to Monroe?*

Startling Nick, a voice asks, “Want to talk about it, Son?” Nick turns, at the ready for an attack as his eyes dart around. He finds an older woman standing before him, looking down at him concerned. The woman has one of those faces; she could be anywhere from forty to seventy. She has pale blonde hair attractively streaked with silver. The woman is tall, about 5’9” and holds herself with poise and confidence. Her hazel eyes are lit with intelligence. She appears harmless but Nick knows that just because she looks harmless, doesn’t mean she is. The woman does not react like Wesen do, which may mean she is perfectly human. He eyes her critically but does not answer her question.

Vivian Lascelles asks challengingly, “Running isn’t going to solve anything, now is it?”

Nick’s eyes narrow at her perceptiveness.
“Oh, come now, you can’t think it isn’t obvious that you are running from something or perhaps someone, young man?” She has been anticipating this day for nearly a year now. Vivian is both nervous and relieved that it is finally here. Today, right now, will impact the future in a significant and lasting manner. Nick has no idea the importance of the decision he will soon make.

Finding his voice, Nick answers politely but firmly, “No offense, Ma’am, but I don’t see how that is any of your business.”

The older woman laughs, her hazel eyes sparkling with amusement. “Even your brush off is polite.” She pats his cheek. “Come, Nick. Tell Vivian what the problem is.”

His eyes widen before narrowing with suspicion and he demands harshly, “How do you know my name?” Nick readies to fight; he will fight to the death to protect his babies. He might not want to think about their father at the moment but he loves the lives growing within him and he won’t let anyone harm them.

Vivian doesn’t appear fazed, waving off his unspoken threat. “I’m not going to hurt you, Nick. Nor your babies,” she finishes quietly.

Nick’s jaw drops. *How did she know?!*

“Why don’t we take this somewhere more private? Mmm?”

Too shocked to protest, Nick lets the woman guide him away from the table and out of the restaurant. She takes him to a quaint little house and sits him down in a rocking chair on the porch.

“There now, that’s better.”

“How do you know my name? How do you know about—”

Vivian answers quietly, “I’m a Seer, Nick. I’ve known you would come for months now.” Nick is still too shocked to hide his disbelief but Vivian merely chuckles at him. “You believe that Wesen exist and that men can become pregnant but scoff at someone seeing the future? Seers are not unheard of, especially in Hexenbiests.”

“Wait, what? Are you saying you are a Hexenbiest?” Nick asks in disbelief.

Smirking, Vivian challenges, “Is that so hard to believe?”

“But—aren’t you afraid of me?” Nick’s baffled by her lack of fear. Wesen are always afraid of him.

Vivian smiles and answers confidently, “Of course not, Nicholas. I know what kind of person, what kind of Grimm, you are.”

Nick is silent as he thinks. He cannot think of another reason why Vivian would know his name or about his pregnancy. He rubs his temples, resigned. “What do you want from me?”

Vivian’s expression softens at the misery on Nick’s face. “I only want to help you, Son.” She needs to help Nick, the future depends on it. Not only hers and Nick’s but her loved ones and so many others.

“How?”

Vivian says simply, “Tell me why you are running.”

Nick sighs. “My mate is a murderer.”
Vivian takes the confession unflinchingly as if Nick admitted something as innocuous as his mate having brown hair. “Is he?” she asks, a wealth of meaning in those two little words.

Fire lights Nick’s eyes as he answers confidently, “Yes. Two people are dead because of him.”

“And you? Are your hands clean?” Vivian questions softly.

“I have never killed an innocent! He has!”

Vivian purses her lips. She changes the subject unexpectedly. “Are you a vegetarian or a vegan, Nicholas?”

Confused, Nick answers, “No.”

“Animals are killed for meat. Are they not innocent?”

“That’s different.”

Vivian shakes her head and shoots Nick an ‘are you shitting me’ look. She quirks a brow and challenges “Is it?”

Nick growls, “Yes! It is! Monroe killed those people for sport, for the hunt! Humans kill animals for survival.”

“Aren’t Blutbaden raised to believe that humans are animals?”

“That’s bullshit! I don’t care how he was raised, he murdered two, innocent people!”

Vivian remains calm in the face of Nick’s anger. Over the last year, Vivian has been living Nick and Monroe’s future lives in her dreams before Nick and Monroe even had met. The argument that she knows happened recently is one she’s seen many times in the prior months. Vivian knows more about Nick and Monroe than she does about people she’s known her whole life. She was chosen for this duty; her being a Seer as well as her nephew’s connection with Nick are likely the reasons fate chose her. He will be as influential as Nick will be in the future. For years, Vivian has waited to be involved in her nephew’s life and the time is finally approaching. Finally! She takes a deep breath, knowing how very vital convincing Nick is. “How a person is raised can have a considerable impact on who a person becomes.”

Nick stares at Vivian, wondering what she’s thinking about and where she is going with this.

She closes her eyes. Vivian thinks of her nephew and how much she missed of his life. To this day, she wishes she could have been involved in his life. But at least she knows he has grown up to be a great man and if she can convince Nick, her nephew, Nick, and a few others will change the world. “Close your eyes and listen to me.” Seeing his mouth opening to interrupt, she continues, “Just listen, Nicholas. Let me paint you a picture.”

Nick wonders why he is even listening to this stranger, this odd woman who looks completely normal but obviously isn’t. He doesn’t know much about her, other than she’s a Hexenbiest, not afraid of him, a seer, and for some unexplainable reason Vivian is determined to convince him that Monroe isn’t a monster. Even if she does know more than she should about his life and about Monroe, it isn’t a reason to listen to her, is it? Nick shakes his head, apparently it is. Resigned in the face of Vivian’s calm but determined presence, Nick closes his eyes.

“A young boy is forced to flee in the dead of night with his mother, running from those that seek his death. A woman hugs the boy tightly before hugging the boy’s mother just as desperately. She sends
them off with great regret. She can do nothing but watch the boy and his mother leave. The boy needs protection."

As soon as Vivian begins to speak, images dance through Nick’s mind. Her words are somehow literally sparking his mind to picture her story. The boy is small, probably only six or seven. His lips tremble and his green eyes are wet with tears as his mother pulls him away from the other woman. Nick doesn’t know who the boy or his mother are but the woman looks like a younger Vivian. He’s tempted to open his eyes but the pain he hears in Vivian’s voice is enough to confirm his suspicions.

“The woman only sees the boy in her dreams. His life is hard and barren for too many years. His mother hides him well, trains him vigorously. Even so, men locate them. The mother and her son flee into the night more than once to escape the men. The boy becomes intimately acquainted with fear and grief. At nine, he watches his bodyguard and trainer take bullets meant for him. The boy is given no time to grieve, urged by his mother and his dying guard to run. It happens again less than a year later but this time his mother is shot too. The men want her dead as much as the boy. The ten year old boy drags his injured mother into the night. Together they run.”

Without warning, the images change and Nick sees himself as a teenager. He has no idea what the boy has to do with him.

“You are twelve. You’ve lost your father and mother. You don’t know that your mother lives. She keeps her survival a secret. She runs and hides to protect you from the people that sought her death.”

Seeing his father and mother’s faces in his mind makes Nick’s heart hurt. It has been so long since they died. To see his mother, to see her alive even knowing that she died all those years ago, Nick doesn’t even know what to feel.

Vivian can see the emotions swirling inside of Nick. He doesn’t yet know what to feel. If only he knew that her words about his mother are true. She is alive and has chosen to hide to protect Nick. Vivian can identify with Nick’s mother and knows that sometimes you have to make sacrifices you wish you didn’t have to make. Vivian thinks of her nephew and what had to be sacrificed to ensure his safety. She can still feel the ache and emptiness of her nephew’s absence to this day. It doesn’t matter that he is a grown man now; she loves him as a son and she has missed too much of his life. Vivian feels for Nick’s mother. It couldn’t have been easy to leave him behind, her flesh and blood, her only son.

“Your aunt raises you the next three years. One day in school, a bully’s face changes before your eyes. You stare in disbelief as his face turns distinctly cat-like. The bully’s eyes turn fearful as you stare at him and he whispers the word ‘Grimm’ and flees. That night you dream of it, reliving it in your mind over and over. And again the next and the next until you cannot ignore it any longer. You go to your aunt and tell her what you saw even knowing she will likely think you’re crazy. In that moment, she knows that you too are a Grimm and the next day your training begins. She trains your body and your mind. She teaches you what Wesen are and that they are to be killed. She drills into your brain that they are nothing more than animals to be put down.

She takes you out of school and you travel with her from city to city. She brings you on hunts to observe and show you what Wesen can do to humans. The first time you watch your aunt kill, you are sick. But she does not relent until you can watch her kill without flinching. By your sixteenth birthday, she tells you that you are ready. Your first solo hunt will begin. She sends you after a Bauerschwein, an easy target for a baby Grimm. A flicker of unease goes through you at the thought of killing a Wesen but the memories of your aunt’s words and lessons strengthen your resolve. Finding the Bauerschwein, you watch the fear rise in her eyes. Ignoring it, you kill the Wesen.”
Nick shudders as he watches himself kill the Bauerschwein for no other reason than she is Wesen.

“That night your aunt praises you. Together, you both celebrate your first kill. With each kill, it gets easier. You are a Grimm and must protect humans from Wesen. They cannot hurt anyone if they are dead. Any doubts you once had soon disappear; it does not matter if Wesen have killed or harmed humans before, if they are live, they have the opportunity to. By your seventeenth birthday, you feel nothing but satisfaction as you end another vermin’s life. His pleas for mercy and of his innocence go unnoticed. He is nothing to you, lower than a rat. He must die and that is all that matters.

Nick watches with repulsion at the man he is in the vision. A cold, unfeeling killing machine.

“Before your eighteenth birthday, you and your aunt separate. You hunt and live on your own. At twenty-nine, you find yourself back in Portland. Little girls are vanishing and you know that a Blutbad is hunting. You watch dispassionately as a Blutbad woges at the sight of a little girl in a red sweatshirt. You watch him and learn that this Blutbad is not the one taking the girls but in the end it doesn’t matter. You can tell that he fights his instincts. But he’s a Blutbad and you are a Grimm. One day he’ll lose the fight and hurt or kill someone. You can’t let that happen. A day later, you go to his home. He bursts through his window and without hesitation you kill him.”

Nick’s mouth opens in horror, watching himself kill Monroe ruthlessly. There is no mercy in this Nick. He is not a good person, killing dangerous Wesen in order to protect the innocent. No, he is an annihilator. A killer. Nick cannot understand this version of himself, this cold man that takes another’s life without an ounce of emotion.

Vivian is silent, letting the image of him killing Monroe loop in Nick’s mind. “You feel nothing, leaving his dead body where it lays on the grass. He was an animal to be exterminated, nothing more. The murderer is dead. You are a Grimm, he was a Wesen. Simple as that. You never think of the Blutbad again, simply moving onto the next kill.”

Nick does not want to see these images in his mind. He wants them to stop! “No more. Stop. Please,” Nick begs.

Vivian ignores his pleas. “Later, you find the Blutbad and save the child. You come back to Portland again and again. It becomes your favorite hunting grounds. Hexenbiest, Eisbiber, Fuchsbau, Hundjäger, Jägerbar, Reinigen. Portland never fails to supply you with Wesen to kill.”

Nick watches in horror as vision Nick kills Wesen he knows to be harmless: Rosalee, Bud and his family, Frank and Barry Rabe, Holly. Vision Nick kills children and teenagers without remorse. How could he ever be like that Nick?

“A police captain takes notice of your kills and finally after eight months of tracking you he makes his move to stop your indiscriminate hunting. You meet the unknown 6’4” man head on, no fear in your eyes just as there is none in his. He growls Grimm and you attack. It does not matter what kind of Wesen he is, he’s a threat. He punches you in the face and you shoot him a bloody grin. Your blood sings, finally a Wesen that provides a challenge. The fight is bloody and violent but in the end you come out on top. The Wesen is dead, just like all the others.”

Nick can do nothing but stare at the image of Renard’s bloody and broken form in his mind.

“You leave him there without a care. You don’t come back to Portland for five years afterward. The Portland PD searched hard and wide for the person that murdered their captain to no avail. When you come back, you encounter a detective. He is chasing the same killer as you, although he does not know what the killer is: a Skalenzahne. You kill him but not before the detective falls victim. You feel a tinge of regret and nothing more at the sight of the dead detective.”
The image of Nick standing over Hank’s body, feeling only the barest of regrets at his death, is awful to see and even more terrible to realize that he could have become that man had things been different.

This time when Vivian stops, the images vanish. “That is who you could have become, Nicholas. This is what you could have wrought had circumstances been different.”

Nick’s guts twist painfully. Watching himself become a cold and efficient killer was horrifying. To see his friends die at his hand. To feel the lack of care, of concern, of regret, of guilt, of emotion of any sort in vision Nick. His body wants to tremble, to quake at all he has seen and felt.

“Had things been different, instead of mating with Monroe, you would have killed him and never given him a single thought afterward,” Vivian states dispassionately. “How did you feel watching yourself kill Monroe?”

It takes everything within him to bite back the sob. He does not want to answer, does not want to remember how it felt.

“How did you feel, Nicholas? Tell me,” Vivian insists.

Nick whispers, “Like a monster.” Seeing himself like that, killing Monroe for the simple reason he was Wesen, was awful. Monroe was innocent and he killed him without remorse. And he wasn’t the only one, he also killed Rosalee and Holly, Bud, his wife, his children, Frank and Barry Rabe. They were all innocent and vision Nick killed them without guilt or regret. Even Renard, he may have been the one to attack first but he’d only been trying to protect Wesen in Portland from a ruthless Grimm.

“How did you feel, Nicholas? Tell me. Do you believe that Nick could change as Monroe has? Could you have tossed aside every lesson your aunt ever taught you? Everything she taught you about Grimms, about Wesen, about the world you live in?”

Shaking his head, Nick admits, “No.” His certainty is unshakeable. He had watched himself grow colder and more heartless with every kill. Innocence meant nothing to vision Nick. If he had been that Nick, he knows he wouldn’t change everything the way that Monroe has. That Nick wouldn’t even consider that he needed to change.

“Monroe did it. The deaths of those two people at his hand made him change everything. He rejected what his parents taught him. He changed the way he sees humans. He changed the way he sees himself. Monroe became someone different, someone he could feel proud to be. All these years, he has stood strong because of what he had done.”

For the first time, Nick realizes how significant the changes Monroe made are. He fought against everything: his parents, Blutbaden history, Blutbaden thinking, himself, his instincts, his desires. And Monroe told him the truth. He hadn’t hidden what he had done, even knowing what he was risking. He could have lied and how would Nick have known the difference? But Monroe chose truth over lies and how had Nick reacted? By punishing Monroe for his biggest regret and rejecting him without hesitation.

“Change wasn’t something Monroe had to do. He chose to. He could have kept living his life like any normal Blutbad, a life of unrestrained violence and killing. The most meaningful changes are often the hardest to make.” Vivian thinks of all the hard choices, the sacrifices that have lead to this moment.

Nick hadn’t considered that. He has been so focused on Monroe killing someone that he never thought that Monroe didn’t have to change. He didn’t even have to feel guilty considering how he
was raised. In Monroe’s world, humans are basically animals. Killing one would probably give a moment’s regret but it would likely quickly disappear. But Monroe didn’t view their deaths like that. He seems to still regret what he’d done. It would have been much easier for Monroe to simply forget about the two, insignificant humans. Monroe chose the hard road instead. Because of this atrocious sin, Monroe changed everything. What happened affected him deeply. He changed not only how he thinks but who he is.

Vivian closes her eyes and sighs in relief. She’s gotten through to Nick, she can feel it. She knows Monroe and Nick can be part of changing the world for the better one day. The outcome of this event will help determine the future. If Nick completely rejects Monroe now, the Blutbad will die and the guilt will eat at Nick until he commits suicide, leaving their newly born children alone in the world. They too will be killed well before their time. And none of that good would ever be realized. But if Nick can find it in his heart to forgive and accept Monroe’s past and who Monroe is now, those changes will still have a chance to come to fruition.

The ache in Nick’s heart suddenly intensifies radically as if his new understanding of Monroe has forced the pain of their separation out of hiding. It overpowers Nick in its strength and the Grimm passes out. Vivian clutches her fingers together tightly and whispers under her breath, “Hold on, Monroe.” She cannot delay. Vivian grabs a glass of water and dumps it on Nick. The Grimm splutters, waking abruptly. “Go, Nicholas. You haven’t much time. Find your mate. Before it is too late,” Vivian warns ominously.

The Seer’s tone makes a shiver of fear run through Nick. He forgets her as he surges up and sprints back to his car. Thankful for the siren he keeps in his car, Nick slaps it onto the roof and floors it. Monroe needs him. The time seems to both speed up and slow down at the same time. The pain in his heart is excruciating, yet he accepts it like a penance he deserves. When he finally pulls up to Monroe’s home, his heart is beating furiously as he dashes into the house. “Monroe! MONROE!”

Dread grows in the pit of his stomach as he hears no response. Every room he searches is empty. Monroe isn’t here. With shaking fingers, Nick dials Hank.

“Griffin.”

Nick yells, “Hank! Monroe’s gone! I need to find him!”

Stunned by Nick’s panicked desperation, Hank forces himself to respond calmly. “Slow down, tell me what happened.”

Nick has to bite back a sob. He can feel it, feel Monroe’s life bleeding away because of him. He has to find him and soon. Monroe’s will to live is depleting by the second. “I had a nightmare about Monroe being a killer and then he told me about his past. I couldn’t deal with it. I left him. The rest doesn’t matter. I need to find him, Hank. He’ll die if I don’t find him soon.” Nick feels incredible dread. If Monroe dies, it will be his fault. He will become the monster he once considered Monroe to be.

Sean takes the phone from Hank. “Nick. Listen to me,” he orders.

Nick snaps to attention at the commanding voice.

“You can find him. All you need to do is find the thread linking you.” Sean knows that in desperate life and death situations, some people can be located by their mate. He does not doubt that Nick has this ability within him. Many Blutbaden mates have the ability. Nick is pregnant and mated to Blutbad, he can do it. “Find the link, Nick. You are connected.”

Nick shuts his eyes tight and mentally reaches inside himself, searching for the link. The moment he
finds it, he latches onto it like the lifeline it is. “He’s in the woods. Deep in the woods.” Nick shoves the phone into his pocket without even hanging up and races out of the house and into the woods. He follows the link, running deeper and deeper into the woods. Nick thinks of nothing but finding Monroe. Even as he runs, Nick strengthens the link, pushing his energy through it and into Monroe.

He skids to a stop at the sight of Monroe lying unconscious on the grass. The Blutbad is deathly pale and his breathing is slow. Nick sinks to his knees beside Monroe. “No no no!” He immediately reaches out to touch his cold face. “Monroe, I’m here. Don’t die, don’t you dare die! Come on, Monroe!” Nick commands frantically. Again, he pushes everything within him through the link.

This time Monroe’s eyes pop open. He searches Nick’s face with disbelief. “Nick—what are you doing here?”

Nick’s hand trembles as he strokes Monroe’s face. “Oh thank god!” He collapses forward onto the Blutbad, shaking with adrenaline and relief. “You’re alive!” Until this moment, Nick didn’t realize just how much Monroe means to him. He could have lost Monroe and it would have been his fault. “I’m sorry, Monroe. I’m so sorry!”

Monroe holds Nick tightly until his mate finally stops shaking and crying. He eases Nick back until he can see his face. His eyes search Nick, seeing the remnants of fear, guilt, and the overwhelming relief on his face. Monroe tenderly wipes the tears from Nick’s cheeks. “Nicky,” he whispers.

Nick grasps Monroe’s face. Staring into his eyes, he vows, “I love you. I didn’t realize until now how much but I love you.”

Monroe’s expression softens at Nick’s fervent promise.

Before Monroe can respond, Nick continues, “I’m sorry. I am sorry I left. I’m sorry I nearly cost you your life.”

Monroe pulls Nick down on top of him. Nick clings to him, burrowing as close to Monroe as he can. He does not say a word. Instead Monroe holds Nick close, allowing their bond to strengthen at their nearness. He knows how close he came to death. Even so, Monroe would never have blamed Nick. He has never forgotten what he did and Monroe understands why Nick would have a problem accepting it. Monroe rubs Nick’s back, whispering words of comfort and reassurance.

Nick eventually calms down and pulls away from Monroe. He avoids his mate’s eyes, ashamed that he could have selfishly killed Monroe. “I’m really sorry, Monroe.”

The Blutbad tips Nick’s face up. “Nick, do not apologize. You have nothing to feel guilty about.”

“I almost killed you!”

Monroe shakes his head. “I do not blame you. I would never blame you. I can’t forget what I did. Why would I expect you to be more accepting than I am to myself? It hurt more than I could have imagined having to watch you leave but never did I blame you. I can’t change what I did, Nick. I can’t. No matter what I do or how much I change, I can never take it back. I have to live with the memory of it for the rest of my life and I accept that.” He looks at Nick, his tone soft. “I would rather die than force you to be with me. All I want is for you to be happy.”

Nick looks at him in disbelief. “Are you saying that as long I was happy, you’d willingly die? Are you insane?!?” Monroe’s attitude is utterly selfless to such a degree that it is idiotic.

Monroe shrugs. He would, although he doesn’t think that makes him crazy, just a Blutbad who has found his true mate. Monroe simply repeats his earlier statement, “I would rather die than force you
to be with me.” Nick and their pups mean more to Monroe than his own life. If Nick is happy, that is all he can ask for.

Nick barks out an incredulous laugh. “You cannot be serious?!” Monroe seems willing to give Nick his life without hesitation or regret.

He merely smiles and answers honestly, “You and our pups mean more to me than my own life.”

Nick shakes his head. This is the man he considered a monster? This man who would literally lay down his life for him and the pups growing inside Nick without complaint? Whoever and whatever Monroe was before is dead and gone. The Blutbad that killed those people is not who Monroe is today. He is a good man now, no matter what he did. Monroe is a good, decent, loving man. A changed man, one Nick is proud to be mated to and a man that will be an amazing father to their pups. “I don’t know what to say. Who you were then isn’t who you are now. I wouldn’t have chosen that Monroe but I do choose you.”

“Yeah?” Monroe asks softly, a small smile on his lips.

Nick frames Monroe’s face with his hands, bringing him close. “Yeah.” He closes the distance between them and kisses Monroe slow and deep. It feels like coming home.

Vivian sits in her car outside her nephew’s apartment. With tears in her eyes, she watches him and his mate exit his building. He has grown up so much. She wishes she could go back to when he was a child and shield him from all he had to endure. But his childhood made him strong and brave. Like Nick, he broke the mold. He is not like those that came before him. With Nick, Monroe, and his mate, he’ll change the world. With regret, Vivian watches Sean leave with his mate. Someday soon they will meet again but not quite yet.

Chapter End Notes

I picture Vivian looking like Christine Baranski.
“How did you find me?”

Lying on top of Monroe with his face pressed against the vulnerable hollow of Monroe’s throat, Nick answers softly, “Renard. He told me I could locate you; he said most Blutbaden mates have the ability.” He does not want to imagine what would have happened without Renard’s help. Nick doesn’t want to remember the vision Vivian showed him, especially his callous disregard of his victims.

“I suppose I owe him a debt then,” Monroe says as his caresses Nick’s hair with one hand and his back with the other. Nick is nearly naked, clothed only in his boxers just as Monroe is. Nick had stripped them both, pushed Monroe down, and curled up on top of him. Clearly, Nick needs the skin to skin contact and Monroe isn’t going to deny him that. He finds he needs it too.

“No, I owe him a debt. Just like I owe Vivian a debt.”

Puzzled, Monroe asks, “Who is Vivian?”

Nick nuzzles his mate’s jaw, voicing quietly, “I found her, or I guess she found me, in Salem. She was odd. At first, I thought she meant harm but she said she wanted to help. And she did. Did you know Seers are real?”

Monroe smiles at Nick’s surprise. Sometimes he forgets that Nick is fairly new to his world. “Yes, of course. Vivian is a Seer?”

“That’s what she said. Vivian knew things she shouldn’t know. She knew my name, your name, that I’m pregnant. She knew about our fight and about us in more detail than I could have ever imagined. The cop in me said that she must have planted recording devices in our home. But the Grimm part of me suspected that she was telling the truth about how she knew all that information about us.”

Monroe isn’t surprised; Nick’s Grimm instincts are honed already. With time and experience, he will be a near unstoppable Grimm someday.

Nick continues, “Vivian said she had been waiting for months for me to arrive.”

He tries to tug Nick off to allow them to see each other face to face but his mate resists. It seems Nick still needs the skin contact and isn’t willing to give an inch. “What kind of Wesen was she? Did she say?”

“Hexenbiest.”

That explains it. For a Hexenbiest to have a special magical gift or an affinity with magic is not uncommon. Seers are found more often in Hexenbiests than any other Wesen. Even so, it is a fairly rare gift. “Is she from Salem?”

Nick bobs his head, saying, “That’s where she lives at least; she took me to her house.”

“I wonder why she saw us. I have heard rumors that there is a Hexenbiest Seer residing in Portland, why would Vivian be chosen and not the one from here?”

“I don’t know.”
Monroe considers the problem. “Vivian was chosen for a reason.” He has no idea what that reason could be but he has a feeling that sooner or later they’ll discover the truth.

The sound of Nick’s phone ringing breaks the contemplative mood. Nick grumbles at having to move in order to grab the phone. His irritation shows as he barks out, “Burkhardt.”

“Nick? Did you find him?” Hank asks worriedly. Sean had told him how very serious the consequences could be, especially for a Blutbad.

“Yes, I found him.” Nick rubs his cheek against Monroe’s hairy chest.

“And he’s okay?”

Nick smiles, happy that despite the drama, they are both here and healthy. “Yeah, he’s okay.”

“What happened?” Hank is curious to find out the whole story of what happened.

Sean rests his chin on Hank’s shoulder. “Maybe we should let him get home before we ask for the whole story.”

“But—” Hank starts, halting his questions when Sean says his name almost warningly. “Fine. We’ll meet you at Monroe’s.”

Nick and Monroe can hear as Hank turns away from the phone and says, “I was curious! Don’t you think Nick owes me an explanation? I thought he was going to have a panic attack!”

Renard’s voice is quiet, seeming to indicate they are moving away from the phone. “Of course, Pet. But don’t you think they need a little time to themselves before that happens?”

They can barely hear Hank’s pouting reply. “Don’t look at me like that. I can’t stay mad when you look at me like that.”

They hear Sean’s chuckle but can’t hear the words he says back to Hank. A moment later, Renard speaks into the phone. “Take your time. We’ll have food ready for you when you get back.”

Nick props himself up and looks at Monroe. “I’m still kind of stunned that Hank is with Renard—Sean. I suppose I better get used to calling him Sean.”

Monroe smiles at his mate, who looks a bit baffled by the relationship between his partner and his captain. “He seems to be quite smitten with Hank.”

“It’s weird,” Nick announces.


“Because it’s Hank with a guy, our boss! No one even knows anything about him at the precinct. How he could rise through the ranks without giving any information about himself out is as much as mystery as Ren—Sean is.”

“You do see the irony here, don’t you?”

“What? I don’t know what you mean.”

Monroe smirks, “Hank probably thinks the same of you. You suddenly break up with your almost fiancée and start sleeping with a prior suspect who he knows nothing about.”
Nick purses his lips, thinking hard. He wonders aloud, “How do you do that anyhow? Appear open and honest while remaining completely mysterious?”

“I don’t know what you mean, Nicky. I’m an open-book to you.”

Narrowing his eyes, “Oh really? Then answer this, what is your last name? And why do you go out of your way to avoid saying it?”

Monroe chuckles. “That is a story for another day.”

“Promise?”

“Of course, Nicky.”

Hank looks at Sean, marveling at the changes that have occurred since that night.

“What?”

“Just thinking.”

Worried, Sean eyes him carefully.

Hank’s lips curve into a smile. “Stop looking so worried.”

Sean tries to pull on his captain persona but with Hank looking at him, he can’t. He fears that Hank can see his insecurity. Losing Hank was crushing and Sean can’t go through that again.

“Sean, look at me,” Hank orders. The moment Sean’s eyes meet his, he promises, “I’m not having doubts, okay?” No one would believe it possible, confident and unflappable Captain Sean Renard being insecure. And the fact that he gets to see this side of Sean warms his heart. “Come here,” Hank says, beckoning Sean closer. He opens his arms and envelopes Sean despite their height difference.

Sean closes his eyes, savoring the sensation of his mate holding him. He remembers the fear he’d felt this morning when he woke up and Hank wasn’t in the bed with him. Sean panicked until he heard the toilet flush. Shaking himself from the memory, Sean concentrates on the connection pulsing between them. He swears he can feel Hank’s certainty flowing through their bond and it soothes the fear and insecurity welling within him. Sean eases back, kissing Hank’s lips softly. “I love you.”

Hank smiles genuinely in response, vowing, “I love you too.”

Hearing those words is exactly what he needs and he kisses Hank once more in gratitude.

Hank doesn’t comment on Sean’s moment of insecurity and changes the subject. “What are you making to eat?”

“Well, Monroe is a Wieder. It will have to be vegetarian.” His mind flips through recipes. “Baked spinach and ricotta rotolo,” Sean decides.

Hank isn’t sure about spinach and he doesn’t know what rotolo is either.

Sean grins at the expression on Hank’s face. “You’ll like it; it’s delicious.”

Looking skeptical, Hank answers, “If you say so.”
Monroe wonders what this Vivian said to Nick. His mate is clingy and emotional, even adding in pregnancy hormones and what almost happened cannot fully explain it. Nick cannot go a moment without touching his skin as if reassuring himself that they are both still here. Whatever happened with Vivian has clearly affected Nick and until Monroe knows what happened, he won’t know how to make it better. “Nicky.” When he doesn’t respond, Monroe brushes his thick hair back from his forehead and coaxes, “Please Nicky, look at me.” The sorrow in his eyes when Nick finally meets his eyes is heartbreaking. “Oh, Baby, what did she say to you?” The simple question breaks Nick’s defenses and he bursts into tears, sobbing long and hard. All Monroe can do is comfort him with his touch and voice.

“I-It was h-horrible! W-What I could have b-become! A c-cold blooded murderer. I k-killed you. I killed everyone! Renard and Rosalee! Even Hank died because of me! And I felt n-nothing! All those deaths, innocent d-deaths and the monster I c-could have been felt nothing.”

Monroe is shocked by Nick’s stuttered words and the anguish and disgust in his voice. He cradles his mate close and shushing him gently. Monroe can’t help Nick until he calms down. With gentle persistence, Monroe eventually gets through to his mate. Stroking his hair, he asks, “Want to tell me what happened?”

Haltingly, Nick tells Monroe everything he saw in the visions Vivian showed him despite how difficult it is to spit out the words. He remembers the sight of Monroe, Hank, Sean, and the others’ bodies far too clearly. Nick isn’t looking forward to going to sleep tonight or the nightmares that are sure to come.

Hearing all that he saw, Monroe’s heart is breaking for Nick. “Shh, it’s okay. That wasn’t you, Nick. That person is nothing like you!”

“But it could have been me; I could have been that man, that Grimm. That is why it hurt to see. If I had become a Grimm earlier, my aunt might have trained and taught me to be the same type of Grimm as my ancestors. Men and women that professed to be protecting humans by slaughtering Wesen simply for being Wesen for centuries.”

Monroe can’t deny that. Grimms are the monsters that all Wesen children fear more than anything else and for good reason. Grimms, normal ones at least, are heartless; no Wesen is safe from their wrath. But Nick is different in that he cares about everyone. For the first time in centuries, good Wesen do not need to fear. “But you are not. Do you realize how important you are to Wesen? How significant it is that you see us as people, as worthy of protection, of love, and of life? As more than animals to be exterminated?” Monroe lifts Nick’s face to his. “You are amazing, Nicky. What you saw, it wasn’t real. That isn’t who you are. No other Grimm can say they made friends with Wesen, much less mated with one! You changed history, Nicky, in more ways than one.”

Despite Monroe’s reassurance, Nick can’t forget vision Nick or what he saw. He won’t for a long time. Nor should he. It made him understand Monroe better. The memory can help him for years to come as a constant reminder to continue to be a Grimm he can be proud of. “I don’t know how you did it, you know.”

“Did what?” Monroe asks, wondering what Nick is talking about.

Nick props himself up on his elbows and meets Monroe’s gaze. “How you changed to a Wieder lifestyle.”
Monroe is inclined to just shrug it off but seeing Nick’s expression, he answers truthfully. “It was difficult. Incredibly so.” Monroe is hesitant to bring it up but it is the reason behind his change. “Before I killed those people, I agreed with my parents and those around me. Humans were animals, lower than Blutbads. I didn’t see differently until they died. Their blood was on my hands and I felt it. They were innocent and much more than the animals I was taught to see them as. The responsibility of what I did weighed heavily on me. Still does.”

Monroe stares off in space, remembering those dark days. His parents and his family didn’t understand. In fact, they tried their best to convince him against going Wieder. If not for the support of his Wieder friends, Monroe probably wouldn’t have made it. “My family was completely against it. When I refused to change my mind about becoming Wieder, my parents cut ties. I didn’t talk to them for several years.”

“I’m sorry.”

He shrugs. The hardships he endured during those few years after was his part of his penance. It made him remember and kept him strong in his conviction to change. “Don’t be. I needed it that way. I struggled but I had my Wieder friends. It made me stronger as a person.”

“You are a good man, Monroe. You really are.”

Smiling, Monroe replies sincerely, “Thank you, Nicky.” It feels good to hear, especially after what Nick had said back at the house.

“What I said about you being…you know. I was wrong. I am sorry for saying it; you didn’t deserve that.” Before Monroe can say anything, Nick continues. “I didn’t understand and probably still wouldn’t without Vivian.” Nick hopes he sees Vivian again; he has to thank her for what she did. He isn’t sure he and Monroe could have gotten through this without her. Finally comfortable enough to ease away, Nick kisses Monroe. Then he gets to his feet. Nick helps Monroe to his feet and then they start to dress.

Without a word, they start the long trek home.

Voicing something he has been wondering since he saw it in his mind, Nick asks, “Why do you think she showed me the vision of that boy?”

That is something Monroe has been wondering himself. “I don’t know. He must be important. Or connected to you somehow or will be. Maybe even both.”

“Why would someone want to kill a boy and his mother?”

Monroe contemplates that seriously. His first thought is a Grimm but that doesn’t quite make sense. “I don’t know. Could be revenge. Or that the mother and boy have something they want.”

Nick shakes his head. “Revenge is a possibility, although you would have to be especially cold to kill a child to get revenge. As for the latter reason, if they kill her and the boy and then don’t find what they are looking for, they are shit out of luck. Not a solid plan.”

He has to agree with Nick there. “He and his mother could be some kind of rare Wesen, a type that is worth more dead than alive.”

“A possibility.” He never saw the mother or boy woge. “But…what if they aren’t Wesen?” Nick doesn’t know why Vivian would show her them if they weren’t but he can’t rule it out.

Monroe makes a thinking sound. “I see what you mean. Maybe…” he shakes his head, “no. It
couldn’t be.”

Nick hears the skepticism in Monroe’s voice, the reluctance to believe whatever he is thinking is possible. “What?”

Still uncertain whether or not to voice his thoughts, “What do you know about the Royals?”

“Royals?”

Monroe doesn’t want to go into the whole story of the Seven Houses that represent the seven royal families. “Suffice it to say, the Royals are powerful families that are based mostly in Europe. But I have heard rumors of that a prince from one of the royal families is residing in Portland. As far as I know, it is nothing but a rumor. Now if it is true, likely the prince is exiled. No Royal would seek to live in such isolation. Which means, if the prince is indeed exiled…”

Nick lights up, catching onto what Monroe is saying. “…then he could be the boy I saw in my head.”

“Yes. Royals can be brutal and they are not afraid to get violent. They kill ruthlessly. If they had a good reason, they wouldn’t hesitate to kill a mother and child. And they would be relentless in their pursuit.”

Nick admits, it does make sense and is at the very least, a viable possibility. “Okay. The boy may or may not be an exiled prince from one of the seven royal families. Or maybe the people after the boy and his mother simply sought their deaths for revenge. This is sounding more and more like a soap opera.”

Monroe laughs, he’s not wrong. He wraps an arm around his little mate, “Come on, Nicky. Let’s enjoy the rest of the walk home. We can think about Vivian’s visions later, okay?”

Nick nods, agreeing easily, “Yeah.”

Almost home, Monroe stops Nick, turning and pinning him easily to a tree. Nick’s breath catches in his throat as Monroe leans down and captures his lips. They kiss slow, drinking from each other deeply. Nick wraps his arms around Monroe’s back, holding him close.

They almost lost this.

Nick is pressed harder into the tree by Monroe’s weight. A touch of desperation bleeds into their kiss and Nick jumps, wrapping his legs around Monroe’s waist. Monroe shifts Nick up until their heads are even, relieving the ache in Nick’s neck. Their kiss grows more passionate with every passing second. A desire to strengthen the bond they almost lost flares within them both. Monroe forces Nick’s neck to arch and bites repeatedly on the pale skin. Nick’s choked cries fill the silence of the woods, his cock thickening in his pants as Monroe marks his neck relentlessly. “Yes! M’roe!”

Monroe growls in response. His mind is completely focused on marking Nick as his. Nick shudders as Monroe bites him again and then drags his sharp teeth across the reddened marks on his neck. Nick wants, no needs, Monroe inside him. He doesn’t care that their house is visible and anyone could walk into the woods and see them. “Fuck me,” Nick chokes out, half demanding and half pleading.

Monroe turns to look at his home and back to his mate. He doesn’t want to wait either. He has to claim Nick now. With one arm, Monroe holds Nick up while the other clumsily opens Nick’s pants and yanks both his boxers and pants off. Nick’s strong legs circle high on Monroe’s waist while the Blutbad tears his own pants open and pulls his cock out. He bats Nick’s hand away, Monroe isn’t
going to take his mate completely without prep. Fingers in front of Nick’s mouth, Monroe orders, “Suck.” Nick smirks and teasingly takes Monroe’s fingers into his mouth. He sucks and nips at them, wetting them thoroughly. Monroe’s cock twitches as he pulls his fingers out of Nick’s wet heat.

Nick arches as Monroe’s slick fingers press against his entrance before they sink inside. “Yes!” Nick closes his eyes, letting the sensation of Monroe stretching him wash over him. He is too impatient to wait. “Enough! Fuck me!” Nick demands.

Monroe pulls his fingers out and replaces them with his cock. Barely giving Nick a second to adjust, Monroe starts moving in and out hard and fast.

Instead of complaining, Nick urges Monroe to go faster and harder despite the bark of the tree rubbing his back raw through his shirt. Nick clutches Monroe’s shoulders tightly, keeping himself as steady as he can as Monroe fucks him. “Harder! Fuck me like you mean it!” Nick yells.

Monroe growls, ripping Nick off the tree and slamming him onto the forest floor. He enters Nick brutally, fucking him hard enough that Nick loses his ability to speak. Monroe pummels Nick’s prostate until Nick comes with a hoarse cry. Monroe pummels his knot swells and locks them together. Monroe rocks into Nick twice more before he starts to come. Nick moans weakly, his cock spurting a gob of cum as warm cum fills his insides.

With his arms wobbling dangerously, Monroe rolls them carefully until Nick sprawls over him. Tiredly, Nick lifts his head and kisses Monroe a little sloppily. He drops his head to Monroe’s chest and closes his eyes. “Love you,” Nick murmurs into Monroe’s skin.

Monroe caresses his bare bottom, echoing, “Love you, too, Nicky.”

Several minutes later, Monroe pulls out and nudges Nick from his light doze. “Come on, Nicky. Let’s go home.”

Emotionally and physically exhausted, Nick drags himself off Monroe and haltingly puts his boxers and pants back on. Nick stumbles toward home for a few steps before Monroe scoops him up. Nick rests his head on Monroe’s shoulder as he is carried home.

When they enter, the intoxicating scent of food baking assaults them. Both their stomachs growl loudly.

Hank and Sean are in the kitchen and they look up. Hank tries not to stare at Nick cradled in Monroe’s arms and angry red bite marks covering his neck but he isn’t successful. Thankfully, Nick is too tired to notice and Monroe’s attention is on Nick. “We didn’t break in, the door was unlocked,” Hank blurs out.

Nick smiles tiredly, slurring, “Sss’okay.” Monroe sets him on a stool and Nick leans forward, tired enough that it is a struggle to keep upright. Monroe sits next to him, an arm around Nick’s back to help support him.

Sean dishes up two plates, pushing them toward the two exhausted mates. “It’s vegetarian.”

Monroe smiles gratefully. Then he and Nick dig in. Sean dishes up two plates for him and Hank next.

Sean watches Hank take his first bite, grinning at the surprised expression on his face. Clearly, Hank anticipated not liking the dish.

The men all take a second helping and finish their meal in silence. When Monroe notices his mate
almost falling asleep in his seat, he lifts Nick into his arms. “Please excuse us,” Monroe says in apology. “I’ll be back down in a few minutes.”

Knowing that he wouldn’t want to leave Hank if they were in Monroe and Nick’s place, Sean waves off his apology. “It’s fine. We’ll come back later.”

Monroe smiles gratefully, holding his already sleeping mate close. “Thank you. And thank you for the meal. When Nick is up to it, we will call.”

Sean replies, “Of course. Take care of him.”

“Always.” Monroe answers. He leaves with Nick, going upstairs to their bedroom. His pregnant mate is thoroughly exhausted and needs rest.

Sean and Hank clean up quickly and then leave the house. Hank grabs Sean’s hand as they walk to his car. He probably should feel awkward holding Sean’s hand in public but he doesn’t. Hank can’t forget the pain he felt at their separation. The remembered anguish makes it easy to be confident about being publicly demonstrative with Sean.

Hank drives them back to Sean’s apartment. Sean smiles when Hank again takes his hand. His smile falters a bit when he feels someone watching them. Sean looks around discreetly but doesn’t notice anyone in particular. He turns his attention back to Hank, confident that whomever is watching them does not mean them harm.

Sean settles on the couch with Hank’s head on his lap.

“Tell me about the Wesen world,” Hank asks.

Wondering if he should tell Hank about his royal status, Sean decides against it. He isn’t quite up to that yet. Instead, he tells about a variety of Wesen, including his own type.

Hank is fascinated by Wesens, stunned that an entire world could be hidden with such skill and effectiveness for this long. “How have Wesen remained hidden?”

“Even when humans see Wesen, it is often too much for them. Their brains cannot comprehend seeing Wesen. They don’t or can’t believe what they saw is real. And those that do believe many times are unable to let go of what they saw. No one believes them, why would they? Frequently, they are institutionalized.” Sean pauses before continuing, “Which is why it is best for both humans and Wesen for their existence to remain hidden.”

Hank voices something he has been wondering, “But now that two humans are mated to two Wesen, is that going to change? You said that has never happened before. Are we simply abnormalities or will Wesen find their mates in humans with more frequency?”

That is something Sean does not know. Only time will tell the significance of Hank and Nick. “I don’t know. I do not believe in coincidence. It can’t be a coincidence that the first two humans mated to Wesen in all of history know each other. Not only do you both live in the same city but you and Nick know each other intimately as partners. I can’t believe that is mere chance.” The fact that Sean is Royal, even a bastard exiled Royal, makes his mating with Hank more significant. And Nick being a Grimm and mated to a Blutbad is equally significant. “What impact our mating has on the future is something I have no doubt we will learn in the coming days. I don’t know how things will change but I know things will change.”
Hank releases the breath he’s been holding. Sean’s words echo his own thoughts. Being Sean’s mate is more momentous than he could imagine. Adding the whole Wesen thing makes Sean being his first gay relationship seem insignificant. Hank averts his eyes, not wanting to see Sean’s eyes when he asks, “What if it isn’t for the better? What if our mating makes the world worse?”

Sean’s heart squeezes at the fear and pain in his mate’s voice. “Look at me, Hank.” When Hank refuses, Sean coaxes, “Please, look at me, Pet.”

Hank’s terrified eyes meet Sean’s calm ones. “Our mating is not wrong and I refuse to believe that you being my mate could ever be a catalyst to something bad. You brought light into my world, Hank. You took away my loneliness and fill my life with love and happiness. No matter what happens, no matter what anyone says, I will never regret you being my mate. Together, we can endure anything. The happy moments and the sad.”

Sean’s fervent words dispel his fear. Hank believes him. Together they are strong; together they can weather any storm. Come what may, their love will sustain them.
Faith

While Sean is out shopping for groceries, Hank is sitting in Sean’s posh living room trying to work up the nerve to call his sisters and his mother. Pushing through his nerves, Hank dials Faith. His second older sister should be the easiest, being the free spirit she is.

“Hi Hank,” Faith greets.

“Hi Faith.” He can do this. Holy shit, is he really doing this? “How are you doing?”

“You know me, I’m a butterfly. Happy as long as I’m flitting around the world.”

Hank shakes his head; Faith is the oddball of the family. No one is quite sure where she came from but they all love her anyway. “I know. I’m glad you’re enjoying yourself. Found yourself another flame?” If people think he has a lot of ex’s, Faith has twice as many. Well, that is if hers can even be considered ex’s.

Faith laughs. Her family doesn’t understand her mindset in terms of sex. They all feed into the monogamy BS, which is not for her. The fact that Hank is asking about her love life is a red flag, he may accept her but Hank sure as hell doesn’t understand her perspective on sex. “Want to tell me what’s wrong?”

“Wrong? There’s nothing wrong,” Hank splutters.

“Oh please, little brother. You don’t ask about my sex life unless you are hiding something. Out with it,” Faith orders.

He doesn’t know if he’s relieved that he cannot hide anything from the women in his family or simply annoyed. “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

Faith scoffs. “Sure, you don’t, Hanky.”

Hank grimaces, the childhood nickname is like nails on a chalkboard. “Don’t call me that.”

Faith taunts in a sing song tone, “Hanky, Hanky.”

“Dear god, stop,” Hank begs.

“Then tell me your news. Getting married again? Found wife number four?”

Hank laughs, picturing Sean as his ‘wife.’ Sean’s tall frame in a wedding dress is a ridiculous image but he’s sure Sean would pull it off somehow. Sean is the type that could make anything look good. “No wife. No woman at all.”

Faith’s brow creases in confusion. “Then what? Did you get shot? Have you been fired?” She does not understand why Hank is dancing around the issue.

“No and no. I’m dating someone.”

“But you said it wasn’t a woman—wait, are you dating a man?!” Faith asks excitedly. “Oh my god, you are!”
Hank shakes his head indulgently. Why he thought she would react any other way is beyond him. “Yeah,” he admits.

“How did that even happen?” Hank is an open-minded guy. He accepted her rational view of sex and her fluid sexuality with no problem. He may not understand it or agree with her but he accepts her. Yet, acceptance of someone else’s sexuality is miles away from changing one’s own sexuality. Hank has never shown any interest in men or any fluidity to his sexuality to her knowledge. He has been firmly heterosexual his whole life.

He shrugs. “I don’t know.” Hank sighs, deciding to at least tell Faith most of the truth. “I stumbled on some gay porn and I liked it. Carrie caught me watching some and dumped me on the spot.”

Faith’s eyes widen, that’s one way to figure things out.

“Then I went to a bar and got drunk. I tried to call Nick for a ride but called Sean instead. He drove me home. Then he kissed me and things progressed from there.” Faith doesn’t really need to know about the sexual details of what happened after the kiss.

“Sean? One of your friends?” Faith doesn’t recall Hank talking about a friend named Sean.

Hank blushes. “Er, well, not exactly.”

Faith swears she can hear Hank’s blush. “Then who exactly is Sean.”

“He’s my boss.”

Faith’s brows rise dramatically. “You, Hank Michael Griffin, are dating your boss?”

“Yeah.”

Faith pauses, not sure she wants to say what she is thinking. “I am happy if you are happy, Hank. I really am. But…have you thought about the consequences?” She knows her brother. He often is all in and he’s been burned more than once. If this relationship goes badly, he can’t simply cut Sean from his life. Sean is his superior, unless he quits or transfers. She doesn’t want her brother to lose both the man he loves and the job he loves in one fell swoop.

Hank sighs, “I know. I have thought about this. But Sean isn’t like the others. It’s different with him, he’s different.” He can sense Faith’s disbelief. It isn’t the first time he’s said those words but it is the first time he completely certain the words are true. Exhaling audibly, Hank addresses her unspoken protests. “I know I’ve said that before but I truly believe Sean is different. Look, I get it. I do. My past relationships make it apparent that my romantic instincts aren’t great. Frankly, not long ago, I thought I made the worst mistake of my life being with him. But—”

“What? What did he do?” Faith snarls. Free spirit or not, it doesn’t mean she is a pushover. She’s been there to hold him far too many times after he got his heart broken. His respect of women, having been raised surrounded by women, makes him a good man. But the women he chooses seem to take advantage of Hank’s tenderheartedness too often. Faith isn’t afraid to confront someone, either woman or man, that has hurt her only brother.

“Calm down, Faith. He didn’t do anything. I just thought he did. I saw a woman kiss him and thought the worst. I was wrong. If I had only waited, I’d have seen him push her away.”

Faith narrows her eyes, questioning, “Are you sure? Because if he cheated on you—”

Hank rolls his eyes; his older sisters still think they need to take care of him. “I am sure. He wouldn’t
do that. Sean is loyal to a fault. He is not a cheater.” *Especially since I am his mate. For the first time in my life, I don’t have to worry about my partner cheating on me or leaving me. I am Sean’s mate and that won’t change. Not ever.*

She inhales deeply and closes her eyes, letting it out slowly to calm herself.

“Sean makes me happy, Faith.” The adoring look Sean often gives him flashes in his mind. “He loves me.”

“The question is do you love him back?”

Hank can feel the adoring expression spread over his face and doesn’t fight it. “I do. I really do. He’s amazing. And he’s amazing to me.”

Faith listens to the happiness in his voice. It strikes a chord in her heart. Hank needs this, to love and be loved in return by a single person. “I’m happy for you, Hank. You deserve it.”

“Thanks, Sis.” Hank doesn’t say he wishes for her to find the same. Faith isn’t like him. She is happy being single and being free to have sex with no strings attached.

“So, is he hot?”

Hank laughs, hearing the lecherous smirk in her voice. “Of course he is. His nickname is pantry-dropper at the station, not that he knows that.”

“Just how hot is this guy?” Faith wonders.

Hank snorts. “He is pretty fucking hot. He’s tall, dark, and handsome. He is practically a Disney prince. Plus, he has this air of mystery that attracts women like flies.”

“Come on, I need deets! Describe ‘im.”

“He’s 6’4” with not an ounce of fat on his body, short cropped black hair, and gorgeous green eyes.”

“You have to send me a pic,” Faith pleads.

Hank smirks, “Prepare to be jealous.” He sends his sister the picture of a shirtless Sean lounging on the bed. The expression on his face is intimate and sensual as he looks to the camera and Hank. Faith is the only one besides him that will ever see this picture.

Faith moans involuntarily and gulps. “Damn, Hank! You are one lucky man. Because not only is he smoking hot, the way he looks at you…” she trails off. Faith smiles to herself, happy that Hank has found someone that will look at him like that. “He looks at you like you are his world,” saying the first thing that comes into her mind at the sight of Sean’s expression. Sure he also looks like he wants to eat Hank alive but underneath is a surprising depth of love. Before Hank can respond, Faith lightens the mood by declaring, “Abigail and Becca are going to be so jealous. Hell, I’m jealous.”

“He cooks too,” Hank brags, reveling in the knowledge that a catch like Sean is his.

“Is this guy real? Are you sure he isn’t a Disney prince in disguise?” If only either of them knew that Sean Renard truly is a prince.

Hank admits, “He feels real. Maybe fate is paying me back for all the cheating, horrible ex’s I have had.”

“You deserve him, Hank. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.”
“Thanks, Faith.” Hank needed to hear that. Because sometimes he doubts that he deserves this, deserves happiness and love and having a wonderful mate like Sean.

Faith asks, “How are you doing with this? Your whole homosexual awakening?”

Hank shakes his head, only Faith would ask it like that. “Amazingly, I am doing fine. It is new and strange, I must admit, to suddenly realize I am bisexual. But being with Sean feels more right than any relationship I have ever had.”

“What have you told anyone yet?”

“Besides you? Nick.”

“And how did Nick react?”

Hank laughs. “He couldn’t do much but be accepting considering he is in the same boat.”

Faith shrieks, “Wait, what? Nick’s gay? I thought he was going to propose to what’s her name, the redhead?”

“Yeah, that never happened. He met Monroe and any plans concerning Juliette went out the window.”

She is stunned by the coincidence of both Hank and Nick entering their first gay relationships at the same time. “That’s bizarre. Not you or Nick being with guys, you know I love you and I completely support whoever you decide to date. But both of you finding men for the first time at nearly the same time.”

Hank admits it certainly seems like more than a coincidence. “It is odd timing.” He shrugs, he can’t tell Faith that it is much more than that or about the Wesen world and how monumental two Humans mating to two Wesen is. Hearing the door, Hank smiles as his mate comes inside with an armful of groceries. Sean smiles back, setting down the bags. He can’t resist wrapping his arms around Hank from behind and nuzzling his neck.

“Hank?”

His focus jolts back to his sister. “Sorry, what did you say?”

Faith grins at the distraction in his voice. “He’s there, isn’t he?”

Hank closes his eyes, absorbing the warm heat of Sean at his back. Sean’s touch is quickly becoming like a drug to him. “Mmmh, yeah,” the words are half a result of Sean’s big hands caressing his chest and stomach under his shirt and half an answer to Faith’s question.

“Let me talk to him.”

“What? No, no. You are not—”

Faith is unyielding; this Sean guy needs to realize that Hank is special and the consequences of not treating him right. “Let me talk to him.”

Hank clenches his jaw but lifts the phone from his ear and hands it to Sean. “It’s my sister. Faith. She, uh, wants to talk to you.”

Sean’s brows rise in surprise. “You told your sister about us?”
Hank shrugs nonchalantly, “Yeah. I thought I’d tell all my sisters and my mom. They’ll be meeting you the next time they visit anyway.”

Sean grins, kissing Hank’s lips softly in thanks. He takes the phone. “Hello.”

Faith blinks rapidly, seems Hank forgot about Sean’s sexy voice. “Hello,” she responds dumbly.

Sean pauses, waiting for Faith to say what she wants to say.

She shakes her head to get her focus back. “I’m Faith, Hank’s second oldest sister.”

Sean smiles. “I know. Hank has told me a lot about you.”

“Likewise.” Wanting Sean to be as off balance as she is, Faith says, “Did you know your nickname around the station is panty-dropper?”

Sean’s brows lift sharply in surprise. “I’m sorry, what?”

“You heard me, panty-dropper.”

“No, I can say with certainty that I had no idea I was referred to as such.” Sean glances at Hank, still a little shocked at the nickname.

Faith grins like a shark, “I have only one thing to say. If you hurt my brother, I will hunt you down and cut off your balls. Understand?”

Sean has to bite back a laugh, good thing Hank warned him about Faith’s overprotective tendencies or he would be shocked right now. “I understand. I like my balls where they are,” Sean declares solemnly.

Hank stares at Sean confused, refusing to believe what he knows deep down Faith said.

Faith doesn’t react for several beats. Then she laughs, “I like you, Sean.”

Grinning, Sean says, “I like you, too. Despite the threat to cut off my balls.” He isn’t worried. Hank is his mate and hurting Hank will only hurt him.

Hank rips the phone away from Sean and yells, “Faith! What the hell?!”

“What? I just wanted Sean to know where we stood.”

“You can’t just threaten my boyfriend!” Hank scolds. But then he is momentarily distracted by actually saying my boyfriend aloud. Boyfriend. He has a boyfriend. Hank glances at Sean, eyes sparkling as he thinks *An incredibly sexy boyfriend.*

Faith breaks into his thought with her cheerful reassurance. “Don’t worry about it, Hank. I didn’t scare him away. I think Sean is a keeper. I already like him. Becca will too.” Any guy that takes a threat to his balls with humor is either crazy or crazy in love. Faith thinks Sean is the latter. “The ones you have to worry about are Mom and Abigail.”

Hank scrubs his face with his hand. “I know.” He eyes Sean carefully. “I am certain Sean can turn on his charm and they’ll be eating out of his hand.”

Sean smiles back and winks. He does know how to charm women and the women in Hank’s life are important to not only his mate but to him. He is absolutely prepared to charm his mate’s sisters and mother.
“I am really happy for you, Hank. I am.”

“Thanks, Faith,” Hank responds softly. It means a lot to have her support.

“I’m going to let you go enjoy your man,” Faith says conspiringly.

Hank smiles. “Take care of yourself.” He truly loves his sister.

“You too.”

He turns to Sean and it hits him right in the chest. He loves Sean and Sean loves him back. He is happy and at the moment everything is perfect. Hank isn’t foolish enough to think that because they are mates that nothing bad will ever happen. Shit will happen, Hank will get hurt or Sean will get hurt, they’ll get angry at each other, frustrated. But in the end, he hopes that like Nick and Monroe, they work through it together. To Sean, he is the only person for him. And despite being Human, Hank feels that too. He doesn’t want anyone else, not since he found Sean. Something in him relaxes when Sean reaches for him, wrapping his arms around his back while Hank can’t resist settling his hands on the curve of Sean’s ass. Then they are swaying together like middle-schoolers slow dancing. It should be awkward but it isn’t. Hank closes his eyes and lays his head on Sean’s shoulder.

Sean soaks up the feeling of simply swaying with Hank, enjoying the intimate moment.

Some minutes later, Hank apologizes, “Sorry my sister threatened you.”

“No need. I understand her position. I know relationships haven’t worked out well for you and she only wants to protect you.” Sean cradles the back of Hank’s head in one big hand. “I would do anything to protect you. Anything.”

An inexplicable shiver races down Hank’s spine at the way Sean says anything. Underneath the words and in his tone, Hank feels what he means. Sean would kill for him. Sean would die for him. Without faltering, without an ounce of uncertainty, without thought. It’s heavy, the knowledge that he means that much to Sean. Sean and his love are on a level that cannot be matched. It’s overwhelming, yet comforting at the same time. Hank pulls back far enough to meet Sean’s eyes. The absolute earnestness in his eyes is powerful. “I would do anything to protect you, Sean.” He would take a bullet to save Sean.

Sean hopes it never comes to that because Hank’s life will always be more important than his own. Not wanting to think about that, Sean smirks and asks, “Panty-dropper?”

Hank splutters, he really shouldn’t have told Faith that. “Not me! I never called you that. But some of the women and frankly some of the men have been known to maybe call you that.” Unable to take Sean’s smirking look, Hank blurts, “What? I’m not responsible. You can’t be that surprised. At work, as Captain Renard, you are mysterious. You keep everything close to the vest and no one really knows much about you. Plus, you’re hot.” Hank flails wildly to indicate Sean’s face and body, “Add all of this with your mysterious air and you get…well, you know.”

“Panty-dropper apparently.”

Fighting a blush, Hank steels himself. “Can you deny it? Because I doubt that you’ve had much difficulty getting women into your bed.”

Sean crowds Hank in a way that is sure to make Hank hot. “What do you think?”

Trying desperately to regulate his breathing, Hank answers, “I-I think you had no t-trouble—” His
voice freezes as Sean presses against his back.

Sean lowers his voice seductively, “What’s that, Pet?” Not giving him a chance to answer, Sean nuzzles Hank’s neck, sucking, licking, and kissing the delicious skin.

All thought, except for Sean, flies out the window.

“How about it, Pet? Gonna drop your pants for me? I could bend you over the back of the couch and fuck you right here.” Sean circles Hank, his touch setting little fires all over Hank’s body.

Hank moans, “Fuck yes.” Sean’s seductive voice in his ear and those little touches sends liquid desire rushing through his veins.

Unable to resist the lure of Hank’s bare skin, Sean lifts up his shirt. He admires the sight of Hank’s strong back muscles flexing. Sean kisses the back of his shoulders down his spine stopping at the waist of Hank’s pants. He quickly grabs the lube he stashed in the table beside the couch and drops it on the floor. Sinking to his knees, Sean palms Hank’s ass before easing the clothing over Hank’s curved ass and down his muscular legs. He blindingly tosses the clothing away. Sean massages Hank’s cheeks, obsessed by their plumpness and the feeling of sliding between them. He nuzzles the firm skin, murmuring, “I love your ass. Never get enough of it. The firmness, the smooth silkiness of your skin. The way it bounces when I fuck into you. The musky taste, mmmh, of your hole.” Hank groans as Sean spreads his cheeks and licks teasingly at his hole. “Those delicious little sounds you make when I lick you, fuck you with my tongue; the way you eagerly push back into my face like you can’t get enough.” Sean laps at Hank’s hole, desiring to hear those needy little noises Hank makes. He moans as the sound hits his ears, the pleasure dripping from Hank’s mouth only sparking the desire to make Hank come undone under his mouth.

Hank whines, trying to find the leverage to push back. Sean’s tongue in his ass is second only to Sean’s cock in his ass. His cock aches between his legs but he can’t stroke it without face planting into the couch. Instead, he tilts his ass up and begs for more.

By the third finger, Hank cannot take any more. “I’m ready, come on, Sean. I need you.”

Sean eases his fingers out and slicks his cock. Lining himself up, Sean pushes in achingly slow. The two of them are fully in that moment together, both of them closing their eyes and letting the sensation of Sean entering Hank wash over them. Sean stills, allowing them both to savor the feeling of being intimately connected. Then he starts to move. The slow, easy glide is exactly what they both need. Sean makes love to Hank, whispering soft words of love as he rocks his hips.

Hank gasps. The physical sensation of Sean within him and the emotional feeling of Sean’s love...
surrounding him overwhelm Hank. The indescribable feeling is like nothing he has ever felt before.

Sean feels it too. The physical act of making love and the emotional, spiritual, almost otherworldly sensation of their souls mating is powerful. Sean pushes as deep as he can, then he reaches for Hank. He vows, “I feel it, too,” knowing that Hank is feeling exactly what he is. They are mates; their souls are accepting each other. Sean’s soul has marked Hank’s just as Hank’s has marked Sean’s. Not a physical one yet one that cannot be denied. “You are mine.”

“And you are mine.” Hank turns to the side and messily kisses Sean. The angle is awkward and a little painful for Hank’s neck but the brief kiss adds another thread connecting them.

Sean grinds his hips in slow circles, grabbing Hank’s leaking cock and starts stroking. Hank groans at the stimulation. Needing more, Sean starts pumping his hips, his hand matching his thrusts. Sean moans, feeling the heat build gradually within him. Never quickening his pace, Sean pours all of his love and life into Hank, feeding the otherworldly connection sparking between them.

“It’s too much,” Hank cries. His body trembles, Sean’s slow thrusting and the intense connection between them making him fall apart. Hank sobs and Sean moans as they come simultaneously.

Sean closes his eyes and savors his connection with Hank. He feels it in his mind, like everything about them is now linked. Their bodies, their hearts, their minds. Deep down, this is what Sean has secretly longed for but never imagined he’d have. A person made only for him and one that he would feel more for than ever before. A person that connects with him on the deepest of levels, the one only possible among mates. He’s craved that since he was a child. It’s what his mother never got to feel because of the shit storm his father created. So much time spent hiding, not only from his father and his goons but hiding their true selves, who they are deep inside. With Hank, he doesn’t have to hide anymore. He can be his true self. Sean pulls out of Hank gently, helps him turn around and to share lazy kisses.

Hank steps away from Sean, wondering if the connection he feels to Sean will disappear as soon as they separate. But it doesn’t, the mysterious and inexplicable link is as strong and undeniable as ever. Would he have denied this if he’d been ignorant of the Wesen world and of mates? Hank thinks back to the anguish he felt after he caught the woman kissing Sean and how it worsened the longer he was separated from Sean. He was ignorant then and despite the signs, Hank refused to believe that his pain was more than emotional. He even ignored Sean’s confused anguish. If Sean hadn’t persisted, would they still both be in unspeakable pain? Or would Sean have…perished like Monroe could have by his mate’s rejection? In the end, it doesn’t matter. He does know and he doesn’t want to ignore this perhaps strange but not unwelcome connection to the man he loves. “I love you.”

Sean smiles, cupping Hank’s cheek, vowing, “And I you.” Hank smiles back and then yanks Sean into a hug. Sean savors the embrace before leading them to the couch. Sprawling back, Hank pulls Sean half on top of him. He is content to lay naked with his mate, tracing small circles on Sean’s skin.

“You know, this is my deepest desire come true,” Sean nonchalantly admits.

Hank looks down at Sean’s face where it rests against his chest. “Lounging naked on the couch?”

Smiling, Sean shakes his head. “No, although, that is nice too. I meant the mate connection. I never wanted to admit it but more than anything I wanted to find a mate. Someone I could be Sean with and not Captain Renard. Someone I could love and be loved in return. To be linked: bodies, minds, and hearts.”
Looking at Sean fondly, Hank strokes his beautiful face. “Sap,” he teases. Sobering, Hank continues honestly, “I think that this is what I have been searching for but never found. Not until you. Something was missing in every other relationship I had. I feared that maybe there was something wrong with me.”

Folding his hands on Hank’s chest, he rests his chin on them. “Never, Sweetheart, you are perfect. Made just for me, just as I was made for you.”

Hank chuckles and ruffles Sean’s short hair. “You really are a giant sap.”

Sean shrugs with a smile.

“Together, we are complete,” Hank declares linking fingers with Sean.

Feeling blessed, Sean echoes, “Together, we are whole.”

Chapter End Notes

More fluff for Sean and Hank, they love the sap :)

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Chapter End Notes

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Nick and Monroe sleep for twelve hours straight; the strain of Nick’s rejection on their bond and the emotional impact of their reunion has exhausted them both. Opening his eyes, Nick is overwhelmed by sensations: the solid warm feeling of Monroe at his back and the undeniable need to stay close to his mate. The bond between them is strong, more so now that Nick understands Monroe and his past thoroughly. Yet, it and they are still reeling from what happened. Without Vivian, he may never have been able to understand or forgive Monroe’s past. The thought of it nearly breaks his heart. Monroe has turned his life upside down and inside out. Challenged everything he thought he knew about the world and himself. Loved him without hesitation and without restriction. Still, he had judged Monroe and found him lacking, condemned him without cause. And how had Monroe reacted? Had he lashed out as Nick had? No. He’d accepted Nick’s harsh judgment as deserving and was willing to die if it meant Nick was happy. He doesn’t know how to deal with that level of unrestrained love and commitment. He certainly does not feel he deserves it.

Monroe is nothing like what he imagined he wanted. Instead, Monroe is everything he needs and more. Nick isn’t sure he deserves such devotion, forgiveness, and love. Whether or not he does, he has it. Even knowing that things likely won’t be smooth sailing in the future, Nick is hopeful. They’ll fight, both of them too stubborn not to. Plus, he is pregnant. A pregnant man. All those hormones and the changes going on in his body are going to cause problems. Pregnancy is crazy and emotionally stressful for women. Nick sincerely doubts he’ll deal with it better than a woman would. Reaching down, he cups his belly that is just starting to curve. Nick still isn’t sure what to feel about the physical changes to his body. He is not certain he can be ready for what being a pregnant male will entail.

Monroe snuffles in his sleep, his big hand moving to cover Nick’s. He threads their fingers together, the two of them cupping the baby, or more likely, babies, to come.

Warmth spreads throughout his body. He can feel tender love pulsing through their bond. Monroe has such a deep love for their coming pups and for him. With his mate by his side, Nick thinks he can do this. It will be strange and probably overwhelming to carry lives inside of him until they are born. But for the first time since his aunt died, Nick will have a family. A mate that loves him a co-parent that will love their children as much as he will, and the children to love. The future is a scary thing, especially considering how their mating could change the world. Nick turns around, his eyes caressing Monroe’s sleeping face. Certainty rises within him; together they will find happiness and love. Together, they will endure and survive whatever is thrown at them. They will protect their pups and each other.

Nick wraps himself around Monroe; the skin to skin contact exactly what he needs right now. Satisfied, he falls back asleep.

Two hours later, Monroe wakes to find Nick’s face pressed against his neck. The warmth of Nick and the strength of their bond are reassuring. He thought he would die out there in the woods. Life without Nick, without his mate, would not have been a life worth living especially since Nick rejected him. Stroking Nick’s soft hair, Monroe is thankful for this Vivian woman. She brought his family, Nick and his pups, back by helping Nick see and understand him and his past. Monroe owes her in a way he cannot repay.

Monroe closes his eyes, soaking up the way Nick clings to him in his sleep. Their relationship hasn’t been easy thus far and he doesn’t imagine that will change in the future. But Monroe hopes that their bond will continue to strengthen through the fights, disagreements, and hardships. They will need
that strength in the future, especially when their pups are born. Their pups will be special. Monroe can feel it. He will do anything to protect them and to protect Nick, no matter the cost. Their safety and survival are what matters most.

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The sunlight shining through the window pulls Monroe from sleep. Nick is still close, although this time he is pressed tight against Monroe’s back with a possessive hand on his stomach. As nice as it feels and as much as he’d like to stay like this, Monroe needs to feel clean. He tries to ease away from his mate but Nick grumbles no and pulls Monroe closer. Monroe chuckles softly, Nick sounding like a child possessive over a toy. Clearly, he isn’t getting anywhere while Nick is sleeping. “Nicky.”

“Mmmh.”

“Nicky.”

More sleepy grumbles, Nick is quite resistant to waking.

“Nicholas Burkhardt!”

Nick jerks awake, looking annoyed. “What ‘Roe?”

Monroe smiles and turns in Nick’s hold. “Morning.”

Nick glares, both at being woken up and unconsciously at Monroe moving away from him even for a brief moment.

“You can go back to sleep if you let me go,” Monroe promises while indicating the tight hold Nick still has on him.

Nick looks down where his hands are gripping Monroe. Without a thought, his grip tightens at the thought of Monroe leaving him. “No,” he blurts out.

“No?” Monroe challenges with a quirk of his brow.

“Don’t leave,” Nick explains quietly, his hold on Monroe a touch desperate.

Monroe cups Nick’s face, thumbing his cheek gently. “What’s wrong, Nicky?”

Overwhelmed by the emotions swirling inside him, Nick fights the tears prickling his eyes.

Seeing Nick’s eyes sparkling with unshed tears, Monroe tries to soothe his mate. “Oh, Baby. I am not going anywhere.” He wraps his arms around Nick, trying to calm him with his touch.

Nick shudders; the sensation of Monroe surrounding him settles that clingy, needy part of him. He doesn’t understand why he is feeling this way.

Monroe realizes what is wrong. The bond. “It’s the bond, Love.”

Nick whimpered softly, the urge to be as close as possible to Monroe making him almost want to crawl inside of Roe.

With soothing strokes, Monroe explains, “What you are feeling is the bond.” Nick’s rejection had challenged their bond to say the least.
“I can’t bear to be away from you. To not touch your skin and have you touching mine,” Nick mumbles into Monroe’s chest.

Monroe understands, aware of what and why this is happening. Nick’s intense need to be near him is both a penance for his mistake and a way for their bond to strengthen. The bond is demanding commitment and sacrifice. “You won’t have to. Until that feeling goes away, I’ll be right here with you. Okay?”

Something eases inside Nick, his need to be near Monroe will be satisfied. “Thank you.”

“Anything for you, Love.” Monroe kisses Nick slow and sensual, pulling out a sweet moan from his mate. “Why don’t we have a bath together? How does that sound?”

Nick briefly snuggles closer, nodding his head against Monroe’s chest. “Sounds wonderful, Roe.”

Taking Nick’s hand, he leads them into the bathroom. Monroe is glad he sprung for an enormous tub when he bought the house. Soaking in that tub was a blessing during his transition to Wieder and the aches that came with fighting his instincts. Once the water is hot, he starts filling the tub. Nick seems content enough plastered to his back. While the water runs, Monroe takes the time to relieve himself, encouraging his mate to do the same. Once the tub is full, Monroe pulls away from Nick, careful to keep hold of his hand as he eases into the tub. Settled, he guides Nick in front of him. Monroe lathers a cloth and starts washing Nick carefully, paying special attention to the red marks on his back from the tree.

“How long will it be like this?”

Monroe admits, “I don’t know. It varies; it will last until the bond is satisfied.”

“I’m sorry I am such an awful mate. You deserve better.”

“Hey.” Monroe shifts Nick, needing to be face to face. “Never say that, Nick. You are perfect for me and I could not find a better mate.”

Nick looks away, ashamed at how much trouble his fighting their bond has caused. “I hurt you, almost killed you. I keep fighting the bond and you keep getting hurt.”

Monroe tips Nick’s chin up, “Look at me.” He waits until Nick meets his eyes. “You are a Grimm and I am a Blutbad. We are bound to encounter difficulties. But no matter what happens, I love you. I am incredibly blessed to have you as my mate.”

“Even with all the pain and trouble I cause with my stupidity?”

“Without a doubt. And you are not stupid, Nicky. You simply come from a different world; give yourself some slack. It takes time to deal with all the changes,” Monroe soothes. “Now, relax and enjoy our bath.”

“Come on in, door is unlocked.” Entering, Hank and Sean find Nick cradled in Monroe’s lap on the couch. Both of them are shirtless, surprisingly.

Hank scans Nick, who looks better than yesterday. “Um, hey Nick.” He’s a little shocked to notice Nick’s less than flat stomach. With all the physical activity Nick does, Hank cannot fathom how he has put on weight since the last time he saw him shirtless.
“Hi Hank.”

Monroe smiles at his mate, thumbing his side gently. He isn’t exactly comfortable being shirtless in front Hank and Sean but Nick needs the contact and he can’t deny him anything. “Sit down, make yourselves comfortable.”

Hank sits in one of the chairs while Sean sits on the arm. Sean isn’t surprised by the bare skin showing or Nick’s clinginess. Blutbaden bonds are among the strongest mating bonds in the Wesen world. A threat to that bond can have a powerful effect on mates. Sean, too, notices Nick’s stomach but unlike Hank, he knows the true reason for the weight gain. Soon enough it will begin to curve as the lives inside continue to grow. The big question is when is Nick going to tell Hank. It has to be soon as Hank will need to protect Nick the further along he gets. Sean would tell Hank himself but it isn’t his place. Turning back to the pregnancy, he wonders what the babies, as Blutbaden are known for litters, will turn out to be when they are born. A Grimm and a Wesen have never had a child before. Nick and Monroe’s children will be the first and that makes them valuable, important, and dangerous.

“Thanks for making us food yesterday.”

Sean waves it off. “It was nothing, Nick. I was happy to help.”

Averting his eyes from Nick and Monroe’s bare chests, Hank asks, “Can you tell us what happened now?”

“Hank,” Sean says warningly.

“What? I want to know.”

Shaking his head, Sean scolds fondly, “Patience, Love.”

Hank ignores him and meets Nick’s tired but amused eyes.

“No need to wait, Hank. Between Roe and me, you’ll find out everything that you are so eager to discover.”

Hank throws up his hands, grumbling, “Why is everyone giving me a hard time? Is it so bad I want to know what happened? You sounded panicked and from what Sean said, it could have been really bad if you hadn’t found Monroe in time.”

“It could have been,” Nick admits. “He could have died.”

Sensing Nick’s distress, Monroe soothes his mate with his touch. “I’m fine, Nicky.”

“But you could have—”

“But I didn’t and that is all that matters, okay?”

Nick sighs, “Okay.” He focuses back on Hank and Sean. “I drove aimlessly when I left and ended up in Salem. I stopped to eat and a woman came up to me. She knew too much for it to be a coincidence. She knew my name, that I’m a Grimm. All about Monroe and I, and our fight.”

“A Seer,” Sean voices.

Hank turns around to look at his mate, “Psychics are real? Seriously?”

“Seers are, yes.”
Nick laughs at Hank’s expression. “Don’t worry, Hank. I didn’t know Seers existed either until yesterday.”

“What else is out there that I don’t know about?” Hank wonders aloud. Before anyone can answer, he makes a halting gesture to the others, “Don’t tell me. I really don’t want to know.”

Nick agrees with Hank to a degree. Part of him doesn’t want to know what is out there but the Grimm part warns him it is best to be prepared. Either way, there is only so much time. Nick predicts that new Wesen will unfortunately come faster than he can learn and research. “Back to yesterday. She said her name was Vivian and that she is a Hexenbiest Seer.”

“Hexenbiest and Zauberbiests have an affinity to magic, which means they are Seers more often than any other type of Wesen,” Sean informs Hank.

“Does that mean you can do magic?” Hank asks, interested.

“Technically, yes. Not as strong as a full-blooded Zauberbiest or Hexenbiest would be but I inherited some talent from my mother. She has quite the affinity for magic. Thus far, I have not had a lot of reason to or interest in utilizing those talents.”

“Well, you should start,” Monroe suggests, “we could use a skilled Zauberbiest on our side.” He suddenly realizes what he said, “Not that you don’t have your talents already. Nick may need you and your magical talents at some point. Some spells and potions only Hexenbiests and Zauberbiests can counter.”

Sean shoots Monroe an amused expression. “I’ll get right on that.”

There’s something about Sean that makes Monroe uneasy in a way one predator is wary of another. Sean is a tall, muscular Wesen. Monroe can sense the power underneath his calm appearance. Instinctively, he knows Sean Renard could either be a powerful ally or a powerful enemy. Clearing his throat a tad nervously, Monroe suggests, “Nick, would you like to tell them about the visions?”

“Vivian, the Seer, took me to her house and tried to convince me that I was wrong about Roe being a murderer. As a last resort, she told me to close my eyes and then she began to speak. I could see everything she described in my head like a movie. The first thing she showed me was a boy, maybe six or seven years old, and his mother. They were running from people that wanted to kill them.”

A shiver of awareness runs through Sean but he ignores it. The Seer wouldn’t show Nick his childhood. She wouldn’t have reason to, right?

“The mother trained the boy and even had a bodyguard to protect them. The boy saw two of his guards killed in front of him.”

Sean’s mind flashes to his past, re-living those horrible moments in crystal clear detail.

“I don’t understand what the point of that was. I have no idea who the boy and his mother are or why Vivian thought it was important for me to see.”

Sean breathes deeply and then lets it out heavily, “The boy is me.”

“What?” All three voices question together, each of them sounding shocked at the proclamation.

“The boy is your vision, it’s me.”

Hank reaches out and takes Sean’s hand. “The boy was you? Oh, Sean.” His heart aches for the boy
Sean was; his childhood was even worse than he thought.

“Who was trying to kill you?” Nick asks.

Sean rubs his face wearily. “My father’s family.”

Nick blurts out, “That’s messed up.”

Before Nick can even finish, Hank grabs Sean’s hand. “That’s why it was just you and your mother? Because your father and his family wanted to kill you?”

Sean kisses Hank lightly, wanting to comfort them both. “As far as I know, my father didn’t—doesn’t want me dead. His family on the other hand…”

“Why would they want you dead?” Nick wonders.

While Sean planned on telling Hank privately, it may be better to do it now. Monroe will understand even if Hank and Nick don’t. “I’m a Royal bastard.”

Monroe’s eyes widen in surprise. *A Royal.*

“Sean, no.” He doesn’t like Sean calling himself a royal bastard.

Sean smiles gently, “Yes, Hank. I am the bastard son of a Royal. A Royal bastard.”

Hank’s brow wrinkles in confusion, “Your father is a king?”

“Oh my god! You’re a Royal,” Nick exclaims, making the connection with what Roe told him earlier about the seven royal families.

“What does that mean?” Hank looks around and is baffled that everyone but him seems to know what Sean means by a Royal.

“Centuries past, the seven Royal families ruled the world, Wesen and otherwise. They were the ultimate power and with Grimms acting as their knights, they were nearly unstoppable. While they no longer are the ultimate rule, the Royal families still hold a lot of power, especially considering their vast wealth.”

“But you are half-human, right?”

Sean explains, “Royals are human.” He pauses briefly, saying, “Sort of.”

“Sort of?”

“Well, they can see Wesen like Grimms can but they aren’t Grimms. They are human but not. They’re stronger and faster than regular humans, much like Grimms. Their eyes change as Grimms’ do but instead of turning black, they lighten. It has a calming effect on Wesen, instead of terrifying them. No one is certain why Royals are different, even after all these years. Nowadays, Royals use Wesen as muscle but deep down, they despise them. Wesen are tools to be use and nothing more. All Royals want is power and more power and they will do anything to accomplish that.”

Nick butts in, “So why were the Royals trying to kill you?”

Sean turns and admits, “A couple of reasons I imagine. First, Royals are not fond of bastards, same as regular royalty is I am sure. Second, they are especially not pleased at the existence of a half-Wesen bastard. Royals are snobs and Wesen are beneath them. My existence is a significant
embarrassment for my father’s family. Lastly, they are exceptionally annoyed when said half-Wesen bastard is not under their complete control. My mother has never been a pushover and she refused to let my father control us.”

“Typical Royals,” Monroe complains. When the three men look at him, he says, “What? Royals are bloodthirsty. You think Blutbaden are violent? Royals are cold and calculated. Blutbaden at least have instincts that drive their violence, Royals have no such excuse. All they want is power and they will do anything to get it.”

Sean shrugs but doesn’t deny it. People think Hexenbiests are trouble: manipulative, power hungry, and cold but Royals are much worse by far. His father’s family makes his mother and her kind look like near saints in comparison. Suddenly, Sean smirks, “In the end, my mother and I won. We both survived despite being hunted by their Royal dogs for years.”

Nick grins, “I bet they aren’t happy about that.”

“No, they certainly are not. The attempts to kill my mother and I have lessened over the years but every once in a while, they do make a half-hearted attempt.”

“No wonder you don’t get along with your half-brother,” Hank realizes.

Sean nods. “I think he wants me dead more than any of them, he sees me as a threat to his succession. Not that I’d want to take up leadership of the family even if I could.”

“You probably wouldn’t survive long if you tried,” Monroe concludes.

“Exactly. It’d be a death wish.” The Royals want him dead now just because he exists, add in them having to accept him as the leader of the family and every member would seek his death with a fervor that wouldn’t cease until he was dead.

Monroe laughs unexpectedly, “The rumor that an exiled Prince was living in Portland is completely true. I can’t believe it.”

“Wait, WHAT?” Hank splutters, “You’re a Prince? For real?” He’s been too overwhelmed by everything he’s heard to make that connection.

“Technically, yes.”

Hank shakes his head, laughing a tad hysterically. “A prince, he’s really a prince. Faith would never believe me even if I could tell her. Holy shit, I’m mated to a real life fucking prince,” Hank mutters to himself. Starting to hyperventilate, Hank feels Sean guide his head between his knees.

“Breathe.” Sean rubs his back soothingly while Hank takes great gulps until he calms down. “Better?” Sean doesn’t blame Hank for his reaction. Their mating has thrown a lot at Hank, him being a bonafide Prince is simply the newest.

Hank nods jerkily. *My mate is a prince. Holy fuck.*

“Does that make you a prince too?” Nick asks teasingly.

Hank’s eye widen drastically.

“Nicky,” Monroe chastises.

Nick grins in response, looking up at Roe cheekily. “What?” It is rather nice to see someone other
than him get thrown a curveball.

Monroe forces a frown and scolds, “Not helping.”

“I hope not,” Hank mutters.

Sean tries to hide his smile. “Do not worry, Hank. I may technically be a Prince of the Royal family, in reality it is utterly meaningless. Sure, it gives me a bit of power but I will never be anything more than an exiled Prince, a Royal bastard. The family’s power will not be passed onto me.”

Nick comments, “So, Prince in name only, huh?”

“Essentially.” Sean rubs Hank’s back. “Don’t worry, Love. The Royals would never acknowledge you. In their eyes, I am beneath them and I’m their blood. You are so far beneath them that you are fundamentally invisible.”

Hank exhales loudly. “That’s a relief.” Being a Prince by mating is not something he wants to deal with now or ever.

Monroe changes the subject back to the visions and the Seer. “Vivian knows Nick and I and Sean. That cannot be a coincidence.”

Sean nods, “Not only that but she thought it was important enough to show Nick visions of my mother and I running from the Royals.”

“Do you think it is a warning? Perhaps Vivian is trying to tell us that the Royals are going to make trouble for you and for us.”

Sean wouldn’t put anything past them. His paternal family is dangerous and he knows not to ever relax completely. They are a constant threat. “It is a possibility. I think we need to talk to this Seer, Vivian.”

“I could go back to her house, see if she is there.”

Hank asks, “Do you remember the address?”

“Yeah.” As a cop, he tends to keep a constant awareness of location and surroundings. “Good idea, I can get her name and some background on her.”

Sean agrees, “Do that. Keep me in the loop. We need to find out what she knows. If the Royals are planning something then we need to know. I’ll reach out to my contacts to see if I can discover anything.”

Nick nods distractingly, his focus more on stroking Roe’s skin than anything else. Touching his mate makes him feel better.

Hank looks away, feeling like he is intruding on their private moment. Clearing his throat, he asks hesitantly, “Is there anything else that we need to know?”

Monroe hugs Nick. “The other visions showed Nick the man, the Grimm, he could have been.”

The tone of his voice clues Sean and Hank in that whatever Nick saw, it wasn’t pleasant.

“I was a heartless killing machine. A murderer,” Nick says monotonously.

Monroe rubs Nick’s arms comfortably. “It wasn’t real.”
Nick tucks his head down and declares quietly, “It could have been.”

“But it isn’t. You are a good person, Nicky. A caring and protective Grimm, the likes the Wesen world has never seen. You are not the man you saw in Vivian’s visions.”

Nick closes his eyes and leans heavily against Roe. “I hope you are right.”


Fear rises in Nick’s expressive eyes. “Promise me, if I... If I become that Nick, you’ll stop me.”

“That won’t—”

“Promise me,” Nick insists.

Monroe stares into Nick’s eyes deeply. “I promise.”

The vow releases the tension in Nick’s body. “Thank you.” He closes his eyes, exhausted.

Monroe holds him securely as his mate falls asleep. He turns his attention to Hank and Sean, the two men look concerned.

“Is he going to be okay?” Hank asks worriedly.

Roe’s mouth quirks into a slight smile and he states, “Yeah, he will be. With what happened, Nicky’s running on empty. He needs rest, that's all.”

“Take care of him.”

Monroe strokes Nick’s back tenderly. “Always.”

Nick takes a few days off to recover before the bond allows him to separate from Monroe. Lucky for him, he has an understanding boss and partner. Finally able to research Vivian, Nick quickly finds her records. He and Hank go into Sean’s office to inform him. If Nick didn’t know they were mated, he likely wouldn’t have noticed anything at all. But since he does, he can see an almost imperceptible softening in Sean’s face when he sees Hank. Clearing his throat, Nick informs, “According to the records, Vivian’s name is Vivian Emily Lascelles.”

Sean’s voice questions sharply, “Lascelles? Her last name is Lascelles? Are you certain?”

Nick looks down at his notes to confirm. “Yes, Lascelles.” He then spells it. “Does that mean something to you?”

“My mother’s family name is Lascelles.”

Hank’s brows rise in surprise. “Does your mother have any sisters?”

“Not that I am aware of.”

Nick thinks back to the vision. “You were what, six, when you and your mother went on the run?”

“Yes.”
“In the vision Vivian showed me, a woman hugged both you and your mother fiercely before you left. The woman looked to me like a younger Vivian.”

Hank picks up his thread. “If it was her in the vision that means Vivian was there and knows your mother.”

“Which could indicate that she is related to your mother and to you.”

Sean thinks hard, wondering why his mother would leave out a relative’s existence. “I need to talk to my mother.” He needs answers and his mother may have them. Sean has a feeling that whoever Vivian is, she has knowledge they will need.

Wu knocks and enters, giving the three men a curious look. “We have a body.”

Hank and Sean lock gazes briefly, a silent message of concern and reassurance passing between them. Then Hank and Nick follow Wu out.

Sean impatiently waits until lunch, heading back to his apartment for privacy. Safety inside, he dials his mother.

“Hello.”

“Mother.”

Smiling, Elizabeth greets fondly, “Sean. It’s good to hear your voice.”

“You, too.” Sean adores his mother; he wouldn’t be alive without the sacrifices she made for him.

“What’s wrong, Sean?”

Shaking his head, he wonders how she knows.

Smirking into the phone, Elizabeth says, “You don’t call during work hours unless something is wrong.”

“Do we have a relative named Vivian Lascelles.” The silent that meets his question is suspicious.

“Why do you ask?”

Sean rubs his face and starts explaining. He knows his mother won’t answer until she is ready. “You remember the Grimm I told you about, Nick Burkhardt?”

“Of course.”

“He’s mated to a Blutbad.”

Elizabeth is shocked into silence. “He’s what?”

Sean chuckles softly, “The Grimm is mated to a Blutbad; he’s even pregnant.”

“The Grimm impregnated a Blutbad?”

“Other way around.”

Elizabeth is stunned, “A Grimm is pregnant, a male Grimm. How is that even possible?”

“I don’t know, Mother. However it is possible, it is clear that Nick is bringing change.” He doesn’t
know exactly what changes will come because of Nick but he knows there will be more.

“Clearly, he is.” Humans have not evolved like Wesen. That is until now. Elizabeth wonders if only Grimms have evolved or if normal humans have as well.

Sean, wanting answers, focuses back on the reason he is calling. “Nick and Monroe, his Blutbad, had a fight. Nick drove off and Monroe ran off into the woods to die as his wolf went into mourning with Nick’s rejection of their bond. A Seer named Vivian found Nick and her visions brought him clarity. With her help, Nick went back to Monroe and saved them both.”

“That is quite a story,” Elizabeth comments.

Sean can hear the tiniest bit of amusement in his mother’s voice. “One of the visions she showed Nick was of us when we started running from the Royals. Why would Vivian Lascelles, a woman with your last name, show Nick that? Nick also said that there was a woman saying goodbye to us, a woman that likely was a younger Vivian. Now, who is Vivian Lascelles, Mother?”

The time has finally come. Elizabeth and Vivian have kept Vivian’s existence a secret from Sean since they left. Sean was young enough that he forgot about Vivian over the years. Vivian saw that one day she and Sean would meet again but until then, Sean needed to be ignorant. “Vivian is my sister.”

Sean rubs his forehead wearily. “I have an aunt living close by that I have never met? Why did you keep her a secret?”

“Vivian said it had to be this way. She saw it in a vision and what could have happened if her existence was revealed to you before the correct time. We couldn’t risk it, Viv is rarely wrong,” Elizabeth justifies.

Timing is a fickle thing, which is something his mother had drilled into his head as far back as he can remember. “Okay, now that I know she exists, will she come to talk to me? We have a lot of questions.” Sean knows that threats are coming, how many, he doesn’t know. He only wants to be as prepared as he can.

“She will find you, Sean, when the time is right.”

“But not before,” Sean says with a sigh.

Elizabeth smiles, her son can be endlessly patient but he’s never happy about it.

“There is something else I wanted to tell you about,” Sean admits reluctantly.

Intrigued by Sean’s hesitancy, Elizabeth asks, “I am listening.”

“I’m dating someone,” Sean confesses.

“Truly? Tell me about her or him.”

Sean discovers he cannot lie or even omit who and what Hank is. “His name is Hank and he’s my mate.”

“You found your mate?” Elizabeth asks excitedly.

Sean grins, “I did.”

“Well, tell me about him.”
“He’s Human,” Sean discloses. His announcement is met with a heavy silence.

Sean’s father may not have been her mate but Elizabeth knows the trouble that can come from being in a relationship with a Human. “Son—”

“No, I know what you are going to say but you are wrong. He is my mate, Mother. Our souls have accepted each other, we both felt it. I love Hank and I never want anyone else.”

She knows her son. He is strong, independent, willful, intelligent, and sure of his mind. If he is certain this Human is his mate, she will not be able to dissuade him. Sean is a stubborn sort. Elizabeth smirks to herself, *He comes by it naturally.*

Sean clears his throat and declares stiffly, “I thought you should know.”

Sighing soundlessly, Elizabeth states, “If he is your mate and he makes you happy, I couldn’t ask for more. I love you. And if you love him then I am sure I will grow to love him as well.” She didn’t want her son to find a mate with a Human but Sean’s Wesen side has made his choice. Elizabeth can do nothing to change that. It shouldn’t even be possible but if Grimms and Blutbaden can mate, nothing is impossible any longer.

“Thank you, Mother. Hank is,” Sean laughs a little, “he is my heart.”

She wonders if she’ll ever get any grandchildren. Human males can’t get pregnant, the Grimm aside. “Take care of him, then,” Elizabeth advises.

Sean vows, “With my last breath.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that,” she drawls.
Later that night, the two mated couples go to the trailer. Nick and Hank need to scan through the books to discover what kind of Wesen could have killed their victim.

“I called my mother today,” Sean admits.

Hank looks up from the book in front of him, a part of him wondering if Sean told her about them.

“What did she say? Does she know who Vivian is?” Nick asks, not bothering to look up.

“Vivian Lascelles is my mother’s sister. According to Mother, Vivian had a vision of what could happen should I find out about her before the right time. Clearly, whatever she saw wasn’t good.”

“Does that mean she’ll come to talk to us?” Nick questions absentmindedly.

Sean sighs. “Unfortunately, no. Mother said Vivian will find me when the time is right,” Sean finishes sarcastically. “Seers and their infernal timing.”

Hank stifles a snort of amusement at Sean’s disgusted tone.

Nick scowls, “So we have to just wait?” If Vivian has information that can help them prepare for future threats and protect themselves, he wants those answers now.

Monroe shrugs. “Seers are obsessed with timing, Nicky. It is just their way.”


Sean’s lips curve into a smile, seems he isn’t the only one that curses Seers annoying emphasis on timing.

“Couldn’t I just go to her house?”

“You could try but I doubt you would find her. She knows you and me and Monroe. Vivian would disappear as soon as she saw us.”

Nick grins wickedly, “But she doesn’t know Hank.”

Hank freezes, the heavy weight of the three men’s gazes makes his body twitch with anxiety. “Wait, what? I’m not sure I’m comfortable...”

“Don’t you want answers? She could know something that could save our lives.”
“What am I supposed to do, Nick? Just walk up to her house and interrogate her? She’s a Hexenbiest!”

“It isn’t going to work, anyway,” Sean declares. “Vivian won’t tell any of us anything until the ‘right time,’ she won’t risk it.”

Monroe bobs his head in agreement. “He’s right. This Vivian has hidden her existence from Sean for years, including the time she has lived near him. Only to find Nick and through him, connect somewhat with Sean. It has to happen soon and messing with the timing could have dire consequences.”

Nick exhales sulkily but admits Roe is right. “I get it. If we jump the timing, something could happen to Vivian before she can pass her knowledge on to us. The risk is too great. Doesn’t mean I have to be happy about it.”

Monroe hides his smile, moving behind him to rub his tense shoulders. “Of course you don’t, Love.”

Nick resists the urge to relax under Roe’s fingers, wanting to revel in his sulk for a moment, the flux of pregnancy hormones and dealing with being a pregnant man is stressful enough. Not knowing what Vivian knows and fearing hidden enemies lurking in the shadows only adds to his stress. Nick hates not knowing. His life is dangerous: being a cop and a Grimm. But now that danger is something he actively fears because it isn’t only his life at risk anymore. The lives of his babies depend on him, on surviving any threat that comes his way. It still weirds him out being pregnant at times but he will do anything to keep them safe. “I just want to keep them, er,” Nick glances at Hank quickly. “Us, I want to keep us all safe.” Roe squeezes his shoulders in response, a silent message that Nick can’t stall much longer. Nick realizes he is right; he needs to tell Hank soon. He’s fairly sure that Sean at least suspects and if he doesn’t, Hank will tell him. Finally, Nick cannot hold out anymore under Roe’s skilled hands and allows his muscles to loosen and relax.

“Whatever Vivian saw, whatever she knows must be important, Nick. She’s been following this path since I was a child. Vivian will not risk her life or your life or mine...or any of the lives involved,” Sean assures.

*He knows.* Nick can see it in Sean’s eyes. The certainty in his voice eases his fear slightly. *Let’s hope Sean is right. Because if my babies are harmed because Vivian kept her mouth shut waiting for the right time, I will kill her.* *Nick clenches his fingers around the book to keep from reaching down to his stomach. Roe’s touch on his shoulders reassures him. Together, they will protect their babies.

Hank is oblivious to the silent messages being transmitted between Sean and Nick. Instead, he is focused on the book in front of him. The picture and description match what happened to the victim. “Hey Nick, what about this?”

Nick leans over to look at the Wesen Hank found. “Sure looks like it. Same marks.” He reads through the notes, now they know what they are dealing with and the Wesen’s weaknesses, should it come to that.

“You found ‘im, good. Now we can go home.”

Nick would protest but he’s dead tired and just wants sleep. “Okay, Roe. Let’s go home. See ya t’morrow, guys.”

“Get some sleep, Nick, you look exhausted,” Hank advises. Nick nods, getting in and slumping gratefully in the passenger seat. He watches the pair drive off before he climbs into Sean’s SUV. “Do you think what happened before is still affecting Nick? He looks like shit.”
Sean hums in agreement, unsure what exactly to say. He doesn’t want to lie but he can’t exactly tell him the truth either. “It must be a result of their bond.” Nick’s pregnancy is a result of their bond, so it isn’t exactly a lie. Not wanting to talk about Nick, Sean confesses nonchalantly, “I told Mother about you.”

Hank’s head turns toward Sean so fast he could have whiplash. “You did?” He tries to read Sean’s face for disappointment or anger but finds none. “W-What did she say?”

Sean chances a quick glance at his mate before turning his attention back to the road. “She was concerned at first. Her dealings with my father made her wary of Humans.”

“Your father wasn’t her mate, was he?”

Sean chuckles darkly, “Definitely not. As far as I know, a Royal has never been mated to a Wesen before. Which is probably for the best, Royals aren’t the loyal, monogamous type. It’d get bloody.”

“You’re a loyal, monogamous man and you’re a Royal.”

“Thank you, Love, but I’m not a typical Royal. Being a half-Wesen bastard separates me from them. Maybe I’d be different if my father had raised me but he didn’t. Mother did. She may not have found her mate but a part of her has always held out hope. Maybe she will find hers someday. Mother instilled that hope in me.” Sean smiles briefly. His mother may be a dangerous and at times scary Hexenbiest but she has a romantic heart buried deep under all her power.

Hank smiles at him fondly, “You clearly got her romantic heart.”

“Hey, my romantic heart was just as hidden as hers until you came along. I wasn’t like this with anyone else. Just you. It’s your fault I’m a mushy softie.”

“My fault, really?” Hank asks dryly.

Sean grins, “I never said it was a bad thing. I like being romantic and mushy for you. I love you and I love showing it.”

Hank’s lips twitch. He likes knowing that he’s the only one to see this side of Sean. “I love you, too, you big softie.”

Every time he hears Hank declare his love sends a spark of satisfaction through him. His mate loves him and that is all he’s ever wanted.

“So...”

“So?”

“What happened after? You said at first she was concerned...”

“Oh, she said if you make me happy, then she is happy.”

“Really?”

Arriving home, Sean parks. Then he turns to Hank. “Of course. She said if I love you, then she’s sure she will love you too.”

The tightness in his chest eases. Sean’s mother is the most important person in his life, Sean didn’t have anyone else growing up but her and Hank had feared what would have happened if she refused to accept him.
“You were afraid she wouldn’t.”

Hank nods jerkily.

“She knows me well, Hank. Better than anyone else, even you, although I hope with time that changes. She knew if she didn’t accept you, she would lose me.”

Hank is torn between joy and anger. Happy that Sean would choose him over his mother but angry that her acceptance was forced, not freely given. Anger wins out and Hank throws the door open. He stomps away without a word.

Sean scrambles out of his seat, shocked by Hank’s reaction. He rushes after him and yanks him to a stop. “What’s wrong?”

Clenching his jaw, Hank attempts to keep the harsh words inside but loses the battle. “Your mother’s acceptance is meaningless.”

Sean stares at him gobsmacked. He thought Hank would be happy. “But—”

“You basically said yourself that she would have denied me if it hadn’t meant losing you. She is a threat! She’s a Hexenbiest that doesn’t want her only son to be mated with a Human. She’ll kill me the first chance she gets, won’t she?”

“No. Hank, no. She wouldn’t do that.”

“I don’t want to lose you,” Hank admits. Visions of Sean’s mother killing him with a cold expression on her face, the emptiness of death, of an existence without Sean, flashes horrifyingly through his mind. “If I died, then you could find a proper Wesen mate that your mother would approve of.”

Sean’s heart breaks at the sadness and fear he hears in Hank’s voice. He wraps his arms around Hank and vows fervently, “You won’t lose me. Mother knows our souls are linked, Hank. She knows that. My happiness, my very life is tied to yours forever. Even if you died, I wouldn’t find another mate. I couldn’t, my soul chose you and that means everything I am yours. For always. Maybe she isn’t happy that you are Human but Mother would never hurt you.”

Hank closes his eyes and shudders. “Promise?”

“I promise, Pet. I would not lie about this. My soul is yours, just as yours is mine. We cannot be separated, not even by death. There will be no other. And I vow I will not allow her to hurt you. You’re my heart and I’d kill her if she ever harmed you.”

Hank meets Sean’s eyes. “You really mean that.”

“You are my soul mate and are first in my life. No one is more important, not even my mother. Okay?”

“Okay.” Hank is embarrassed by his insecurity but Sean’s mother is a Hexenbiest and an unknown. He didn’t know enough about Wesen mates to know if Sean would have the option for another if he was killed. History has taught him that the powerful often get what they want and frequently without any consequences.

“She will love you, Hank, choose to love you. I know she will. Just give her a chance.”

Hank nods; he’ll give Sean’s mother a chance to get to know him. Hopefully Sean will be right and his mother will accept him of her own free will.
Relieved, Sean guides Hank inside. His hand remains on the small of Hank’s back, projecting a possessive claim on him while reassuring Hank with the heat of his touch. The door is shut behind them and Sean finds himself immediately backed against it. The heat in Hank’s eyes makes him shiver in anticipation. Sean can’t resist teasing, “Something you wanted, Love?”

“You.” Hank presses against Sean fully, chest to chest, hip to hip. “You’re mine.”

Sean grins, “I am. Gonna claim me? Leave no doubt?”

Hank doesn’t answer, lunging forward to kiss Sean until he is breathless. The sight of Sean’s lust blown eyes and feeling of his hardening cock pressing into his hip is sweet. Tonight, Hank wants to watch Sean fall apart before his eyes and that’s exactly what he is going to do.

“Burkhardt.”

“Hi Nick, it’s Betty.”

His cheeks redden in embarrassment at the memory of Juliette making a scene after seeing the bruises on his hips. “Oh, hey.”

Betty can hear his embarrassment even over the phone. She still can’t believe the way Juliette had reacted. After the incident, Juliette has been spouting crazy talk about stalking Nick and finding the bitch he’s sleeping with and well, the violent things the woman said frankly scare Betty. Juliette has lost her sanity concerning Nick. Why, she’s isn’t sure. Nick and Juliette never seemed like that great of a couple or well-suited. Nick clearly has moved on but Juliette is obsessed with him, which is baffling. The woman seems more into Nick now then when they were actually dating. It’s weird. Betty has tried to get her friend to go to therapy because to say she is not dealing well with the breakup is an understatement. “You and Juliette have gotten a few offers on the house. Several people are seriously interested in the house. The latest offer is twenty thousand above asking price.”

“Wow.” Nick’s surprised that the house has attracted enough buyers to start a bidding war. He shrugs. The house is nice, in a good location, and is big enough for a family. “What do you recommend? Should we accept that offer?”

“The family is determined to have your house. They probably would be willing to go higher if you wanted. They’ve also given me a letter to give you and Juliette about who they are and why they want the house. Juliette read the letter already; she is willing to accept their offer. I didn’t have the address to where you are staying but if we could meet, I could give it to you.”

Nick doesn’t have time to meet today and doesn’t want to wait. “Could you just read it to me? If you have the time.”

“Sure, Nick.” She opens the letter and reads it aloud. The potential buyers talk about how they’ve been married for five years and have one child and one on the way, how much they love the house, and how easily they see themselves calling it home for many years to come. “They seem genuine and I do like them, Nick. They’d make this house a home.”

Accept their offer.” He wants this last link to Juliette gone. He wants nothing to do with her.

“Excellent. As soon as I can draw up the paperwork, I will get you and Juliette to sign and you’ll have officially sold your house.”

“Good.” With luck, he’ll never have to see Juliette again.
Betty bites her nails, wondering if she dares offer her services to Nick, considering her friendship with Juliette. “One last thing and I understand if you decide against it but I would love to help you find a new house.”

Nick isn’t sure he wants to deal with one of Juliette’s friends. His realtor is going to know that him and Roe are a couple, since they’ll be buying the house together. Would Betty tell Juliette? “I don’t know. With all the issues with Juliette and you being friends with her, I don’t think it is a good idea.”

Betty sags, knowing that Juliette lost her a sale. “I understand, Nick.” She can’t blame Nick, she is Juliette’s friend. “I could recommend a few others, if you like?”

“Sure, Betty, that would be great.”

Betty gives him the name and numbers of several realtors.

“Thank you. I do appreciate it.”

“You’re welcome, Nick. Any of them will be able to help you find the right house, you can trust them.”

Nick exhales, relieved that it is almost over. Soon, Juliette will be out of his life forever. Being punched in the face by the crazy woman who once claimed to love him put things in perspective. He dodged a major bullet. Imagine if he had proposed to and married her? What a disaster that would have been. Fates had blessed him by giving him Roe, even with all the drama and craziness that came with it. Smiling contently, Nick calls Monroe.

“Nicky.”

His smile widens at the adoration he hears in Roe’s voice. “Hi Love. I’ve got good news.”

“Well, spill.”

“We’ve accepted an offer on the house.”

Monroe howls, the bitch is almost out of their lives. “That’s wonderful news, Love.”

“Betty offered her services to help find us a house—”

Monroe growls, “Isn’t she friends with Juliette?”

Nick rolls his eyes, “If you had let me finish, you would know that I turned her down. I don’t want Juliette to know anything about us or our home.”

“Sorry.” Monroe apologizes sheepishly, he let his wolf’s possessiveness get the better of him. But Nick’s words have settled his wolf down and the wolf is feeling quite smug at the moment. Nick is theirs and he wants nothing to with that woman. She’s not a threat any longer.

“Betty did give me names of other realtors. Maybe if you have time, you could call one of them? Set up a time for us to start looking?”

“Course I can, Love. Give me their information and I’ll call one of them today.”

Nick thanks him and then gives him the info. They need to find a sanctuary before the babies come. A place with enough space for their growing family, somewhere Roe can claim as his new territory and protect his family.
For the next visit with Dr. Owens, Roe has Nick wear sunglasses to hide his Grimm status. No need to freak anyone out again, they’d gotten lucky last time. No one got violent or hurt. They likely wouldn’t be that lucky again. Nick makes it out of the waiting room without incident.

The nurse brings them into the examination room to wait for the doctor.

“Nick, Monroe, good to see you both,” greets Jack, shaking both of their hands. He is happy to see Nick looking less shocked and green.

“Dr. Owens.”

Jack shakes off the formal greeting. “Please, Jack is fine. How are you feeling, Nick?”

“Good, considering,” Nick gestures to his stomach, “all this.”

“Coping alright?”

Nick really doesn’t want to get into how he almost killed Monroe. Regardless, it had been the wake-up call he’d needed. He loves Roe and Roe loves him. He’s pregnant and Nick accepts that, even looks forward to it as weird as it sounds. “Surprisingly, yeah.” Nick instinctively touches his stomach where his and Roe’s children are growing.

“I am happy to hear that. Well, how about we do an ultrasound. See how far along you are and whether your pregnancy will follow Humans or Wesen.”

Nick’s definitely hoping for Wesen. Three months less being pregnant, yeah, he prefers that. He reaches out for Monroe and soaks up his comforting feeling of strength.

Jack marvels at the screen. Nick Burkhardt is unique and unexplainable medical miracle. A male Human, a Grimm that not only is mated to a Blutbad but goes into heat and is successfully impregnated. And now the confirmation that Nick’s pregnancy is developing in line with Wesen biology, not Human.

“Well?”

“You are one of a kind. You keep surprising me.”

“Does that mean?”

Jack smiles and nods. “Your pregnancy is too far along to be developing like a Human’s.”

Monroe grins and squeezes Nick’s hand, saying with awe, “A Wesen pregnancy. Five months. Less than half a year and we’ll be meeting our pups.”

In a daze, Nick mumbles, “Holy crap. Less than six months.” He isn’t sure he is ready to be a parent. Five months is all the time they have to prepare. “Can you tell how many?” Nick trails off, nervous to know the answer.

“Three.”

“Three pups!” Monroe puffs out his chest in pride. “We’re having three pups, Nicky.” While he’d be happy no matter how many pups there are, Roe is glad that there are only three for Nicky’s sake.

Nick blinks, stunned at the announcement. *Three. There are three babies growing inside me. Holy
The realization is terrifying. He and Roe will be parents of three pups in less than half a year. Can they even do this? Raise three children at once? Protect them from the danger all around them? “How are the hell are we going to protect them, Roe? I’m a Grimm and you are a Blutbad! People want both of us dead. Our children will become targets,” Nick rambles hysterically, fear written all over his face. Having children terrifies him but losing his children? That scares him more than anything else.

“Shh, Love. They will be protected. Between us and the Eisbär Wächter, our pups will be protected,” Monroe promises against Nick’s neck.

“How are we going to protect them, Roe? I’m a Grimm and you are a Blutbad! People want both of us dead. Our children will become targets,” Nick rambles hysterically, fear written all over his face. Having children terrifies him but losing his children? That scares him more than anything else.

“Promise they’ll help?”

“Nicky, Baby,” Monroe points to Nick’s stomach, “you are carrying the first ever half-Blutbad, half-Grimm hybrids inside of you. Our pups are going to be unique, the first of their kind. I know it, I feel it. The EW will not be able to resist. They will be as driven to protect our pups as we are. I promise.”

Nick shudders, relieved by Roe’s reassurance that their children will be safe. “Okay. I trust you. If you trust them, I can too.”

“If my opinion matters, you can trust the Eisbär Wächter. Their entire purpose is the protection of their charges, for as long as they are needed. They would die for your pups without hesitation,” Jack adds, bringing his presence to their awareness.

Nick smiles in thanks. Then he smacks Roe hard on the arm.

“Ow! What was that for?”

“Three babies! Are you kidding me? As if just being a pregnant man wasn’t enough? Three fucking babies, I’m going to be huge and it’s. ALL. YOUR. FAULT,” Nick shouts, hitting Roe to accentuate each word.

Jack snickers, this is one of his favorite parts of being a doctor: watching bearers scold and yell at their mates and watching their mates take it.

“You don’t love our pups? Each one of them?” Roe tries.

Nick’s eyes narrow, not falling for the guilt trip this time. “Are you insinuating that I don’t love our children?”

Monroe gulps, the guilt trip tactic backfired spectacularly. “No. I would never—”

“Wrong. You just did.”

“Um. I love you?”

Nick growls.

As fun as it is to watch, Jack clears his throat to stop them before things get out of hand. He has no desire to break up a fight between a pregnant Grimm and his Blutbad mate. “Would you like to hear their heartbeats?”

Monroe nods frantically, hoping to get out of this without pissing Nick off anymore than he has already.

“Nick?”
Nick sighs loudly, releases the tension from his body. “Okay.”

The audio proof of their children makes both of their hearts melt. Their pups are alive, their hearts beating strongly. They are real. Neither can deny it.

Jack finishes the exam, confirming that the fetuses are healthy as Nick is. “Everything looks good. We cannot determine sex yet but if you would like to know, we can do that during the next appointment.”

Nick and Monroe look questioningly at each other. Roe tentatively suggests, “I think we should know. With three pups, it’s best to prepare not only for clothing and such but mentally.”

“I agree.”

Soon, the appointment is finished and Nick dons his sunglasses again.

“When will we know the Eisbär Wächter have accepted us?”

Roe reassures Nick, “Any day now, Nicky.”

“And you’re sure they won’t reject us?”

“They won’t. They’ll jump at the chance to protect our pups. They’ll fight among themselves for the honor to take responsibility for our pups’ safety.”

“They better,” Nick grumbles. “And don’t think I’m not still mad at you. I love our pups but you on the other hand are in the doghouse.”

Monroe keeps silent, refraining from digging himself into even deeper trouble.

“And no sex.”

Roe’s mouth gapes open, ready to protest.

Nick points an accusatory finger at his mate. “One word and you can forget about sleeping in our bed tonight.”

His mouth snaps shut and he painfully swallows his words. *Nicky’s gotta cool down soon, right?*

*Three pups, fuck.* Nick looks up at the sky. *Couldn’t you give me a little slack?*

Monroe keeps silent until they enter the house. “You know you have to tell Hank now. Carrying triplets means you have to be even more careful.” He doesn’t care if it gets him deeper in trouble, Hank needs to know.

Nick sighs. “I know.” He hates to throw another crazy thing at Hank but he can’t delay any longer. Hank needs to know.

NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR

It takes Nick a few days to get up the nerve. He brings Hank to the trailer on the pretense of expanding Hank’s knowledge of Wesen. Hank keeps surprising him with how well he deals with everything thrown at him, better than Nick ever has. The question is how will he deal with this bombshell? Closing his eyes, Nick takes a deep breath. “Hank?”

“Mmmh?” Hank answers distractedly, continuing to read through Nick’s books.
“I have to tell you something.”

Goosebumps rise over his arms, his chest filled with apprehension at the grave tone of Nick’s voice. “What is it?” His thoughts flip through all the awful possibilities. “Are you sick? Has something happened with Monroe?” A sick feeling settles in his stomach. “Is it about Sean?”

“No, no. Nothing like that. It’s good news, Hank. Just...unexpected and perhaps shocking.”

Hank’s brows wrinkle in confusion. What could be happy but shocking news? “Oookaay.”

Nick runs his hand through his hair nervously.

Hank watches, concerned at Nick’s obvious distress. “Hey Nick, whatever it is, you know I have your back, right?”

Nick laughs a little hysterically. “I really hoped so.” The look of confused worry on Hank’s face is enough to get Nick talking. “You remember how I said Roe and I were talking about kids?”

“Yeah.” He thinks Nick and Monroe talking about kids isn’t as crazy now as he had then but it still seems a bit sudden. However, the whole Wesen mate thing and going slow do not go hand in hand. It’s understandable at least.

*How the hell am I going to explain this. Do I just blurt it out?*

“Nick?”

“Roe and I are, we are going to, I am. Fuck, this is hard.”

Hank stares at Nick, baffled and having no clue what is going on.

“Okay. Here’s the thing, in less than six months, well, Roe and I are going to have triplets.”

Hank’s eyes go wide and his mouth drops open. “You’re what? T-Triplets? How is that even possible? The adoption process takes a lot longer than that. Wait, are you and Monroe fostering triplets?”

“No. They’ll be ours.”

“But how?” A part of him questions why Monroe and Nick are moving at lightning speed. Having triplets is a tremendous responsibility, especially as first time parents. Yet, for the most part, he understands. Being a Wesen mate and the bond that comes with it, makes things different.

“That’s the thing,” Nick admits hesitantly. “Turns out male Wesen can get pregnant, not that Monroe bothered to tell me.”

Hank’s mind blanks. *Oh my god. Sean can get pregnant?* Panic floods his veins. *Fuck. We haven’t been using protection. What if he’s pregnant? Holy shit, oh my god.* Hank gives himself a mental slap, stopping his inner freakout in its tracks. *Calm down, Hank. Breathe.*

Nick holds his breath, waiting for Hank’s reaction but his partner appears to be too freaked out to say anything. “Hank?”

Several deep breaths later and Hank has calmed enough to consider what Nick is trying to say. “Are you saying Monroe is pregnant?”

“Uh, no.” That’d be impossible, considering that Roe’s never bottomed.
Unable to keep the question inside, Hank blurts, “You’re not going to tell me Sean’s pregnant, are you?” *I am not ready for that, please don’t say Sean’s pregnant.* Hank’s mind doesn’t even consider why Nick would know about Sean being pregnant before him.

“What? No. Why would Sean be...” Nick’s eyes widen and his mouth drops open. “Oh. OH, um, no. It’s actually me, you know, that’s, uh, knocked up.” Hank tipped Sean? Color him surprised.

“You, you? But you’re like me, you’re Human, not Wesen. You can’t be pregnant!” *If Nick can get pregnant, can I?*

“Apparently, that doesn’t matter when you’re mated to a Blutbad. True mates are always fertile.”

Hank’s gaze darts to Nick’s stomach. “You’re really pregnant? Like pregnant, pregnant? With an actual baby?”

“Yeah,” Nick confirms, “with triplets actually.”

“Holy fuck, Nick,” Hank curses, stunned by the news.

“It’s weird, right?”

Dazed, Hank nods. “Incredibly so.”

“I freaked the fuck out myself, several times actually.”

Hank’s shock breaks enough to feel amusement at Nick’s reaction. “Didn’t handle it so well?”

Nick snickers, “Definitely not. Would you?”

“Hell no. I’m a dude!”

“Yeah, that’s what I said. Doesn’t mean much in the Wesen world. They call ‘em bearers; it’s accepted and normal for them. Me, I’m still struggling to wrap my head around it at times.”

“How does it work? You know, with you being Human? Where does the baby even grow?” Hank asks, curious.

Nick shrugs, “Hell, I don’t know. My doctor doesn’t seem to know either. It shouldn’t be possible but that didn’t stop me from getting pregnant. Seems I’ve grown the necessary parts. How that happened, no one knows.” Nick’s mind flashes back to when he and Monroe first mated. Roe had said that his body ‘readied’ itself for their mating. Maybe that’s what he meant by that; his body physically changed to prepare for their mating, enabling him to become pregnant.

Despite fighting it, Hank’s face scrunches with disgust at the idea of Nick growing ‘necessary parts.’ He isn’t sure how to feel about the possibility that he could grow those same necessary parts.

Nick doesn’t fault Hank for his reaction, it isn’t like he wasn’t nauseated and freaked out himself when he learned about his new parts.

“You didn’t, like, notice new parts growing?”

“No. I felt weird sometimes but I figured I was just getting sick. I noticed going into heat more than the new stuff growing inside me.”

Hank’s brows rise dramatically. “Heat?”
Nick looks sheepish. “Yeah, apparently Blutbaden mates go into heat sort of like animals I guess.”

“Are we sure you’re Human? Heat, pregnancy, doesn’t sound like a Human to me.”

“I was Human before Monroe, so yeah, I’m pretty sure.”

Hank rubs his forehead roughly. “Back to this ‘heat.’ What exactly does that mean?”

“Sex. Lots of and lots of sex. Remember when I took that unexpected vacation?” Nick sees the recognition in his eyes. “Yeah, that’s when I went into heat.”

Gulping, Hank nods sharply. He’ll have to ask him. “So that’s when it, er, happened?”

“Yeah.”

Hank doesn’t want to think about Nick getting pregnant or going into heat or the possibility that could happen to him or to Sean. “So, triplets?”

“Yeah. Wasn’t thrilled to hear that, I assure you. Roe’s still in the doghouse,” Nick says with a mischievous smirk.

Hank grins back, having an inkling as to what he means, he guesses, “Withholding sex?”

Nick giggles, “Yup. Roe’s going crazy. Imma have him begging for it by tomorrow. I just know it. I am very much enjoying it. A little payback is sweet.”

Hank laughs, Monroe deserves to squirm a bit, especially since it seems he didn’t bother to tell Nick it was possible. Hank sobers, Sean didn’t tell him it was possible either. He cannot help but wonder if he could get pregnant too. “Our lives are fucking weird.”

“That’s the understatement of the goddamn year,” Nick drawls sarcastically. “Not long ago, I was normal, well, normal-ish. Who would have thought that becoming a Grimm would be the least weird thing to happen to me this year?”

“Hey, I was completely normal before this. Just a regular guy.” *Now I might grow lady bits and be able to get pregnant.*

Nick smirks, “Who secretly watched gay porn?”

“I blame Sean. It has to be his fault. I was straight before him.”

“Those bastards turned us gay.”

Hank nods sharply. It is completely their faults. But then, he grins, it isn’t like he minds. He meets Nick’s eyes. “Their fault or not, I’m not complaining.” The sex is more than satisfying and feeling loved completely is worth all the strange shit that comes along with it.

Nick grins back. “I do plenty of complaining.”

“Would you change it? Any of it? If you could?”

Nick soberes, considering it seriously. Would he, if he could? Go back to being straight, with Juliette, living a normal, pregnancy-free, mate-free life? Wish away the existence of Monroe and their children? The answer is obvious, surprising but clear. Nick answers with a tinge of awe, “No, I really wouldn’t. Not a bit of it. Roe brought craziness into my life. But he makes me happy, loves me unconditionally.” He touches his stomach reverently, “And we are going to have three beautiful
children together. I may not be super thrilled about getting enormous but I can’t regret the lives growing inside me that are half me and half Roe.”

“I know what you mean. I wouldn’t give Sean up for anything, not even if it means being pregnant with triplets as insane as that sounds.” He can’t believe he said that but deep down, he means it. Hank nervously clears his throat and asks, “Do you think it’s possible for me to, you know? Or for Sean?”

Nick hadn’t considered that and shrugs, “I dunno. Maybe? According to the doc and Monroe, I’m the first male Human, Grimm or otherwise, to get pregnant. I’m not sure what that means for you. Blutbaden bonds are different than Zauberbiest’s are, maybe that means your body won’t change like mine has. Sean may have more of an idea. As for Sean’s, er, fertility, I’d suggest you ask him.”

“Can things get any weirder?” Hank doesn’t know what to feel about the possibility that he or Sean could get pregnant. His emotions are a tangled mess.

“I don’t doubt they can anymore. What could be weirder than this, I don’t know. But the possibility is there.”

“What’s it feel like?”

Nick hums thoughtfully as he considers how to answer. “I didn’t feel any different at first but then I was pretty deep in denial. It’s harder now. I’m starting to show. I have heard their heartbeats, saw their little bodies on the ultrasound. It is real; they’re real. I’ll be able to feel them moving, kicking, inside me soon. It’s insane, completely and utterly insane, but it’s also incredible.” Nick is surprised to admit he’s being truthful. “Don’t tell Roe that, I’m not done punishing him yet.”

Hank laughingly promises, “I won’t.” Despite his amusement, he is thinking hard about what Nick said. Maybe being a pregnant male is strange but Nick seems to be in awe of it and looking forward to becoming a parent. “I’m happy for you, Nick.”

“Thanks, Hank. That means a lot, especially since I don’t have any family of my own. You’re like my brother.”

“Brother from another mother,” Hank teases, sticking out his fist.

Nick grins, bumping his partner’s fist.

“You’re going to be a father, that still blows me away.”

“I know. We have like five months before they arrive.”

“Wait, five months? You haven’t been together for three months.”

“Wesen pregnancies are usually six months or so.”

Hank asks confused, “But you aren’t Wesen.”

“Tell that to my body. I’m developing like a Wesen bearer, not a Human.”

He shakes his head, marveling at how his knowledge and awareness of the world has expanded in such a short time. “How have they hidden this from us Humans for so long? It’s amazing.”

“Well, Roe and probably Sean would know more details about it than I would but I imagine it’s ‘cause their survival is reliant upon keeping their existence a secret. Sure, Humans aren’t as advanced
as Wesen but can you imagine what would happen if their existence was suddenly revealed? Mass
chaos, violence, death, fear. It wouldn’t be good.”

Hank can see it in his mind. Saying it wouldn’t be good is a massive understatement. It’s the type of
thing that could destroy the world. “Let’s hope it never comes to that.”

Both men get lost in their thoughts, drifting through all the changes they have encountered recently
and wondering what the future will hold for them and the world.

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and wondering what the future will hold for them and the world.

“I had an interesting conversation with Nick at the trailer tonight.”

Sean looks up from his book. “Oh? What about?”

“Nick’s pregnant.” Noting the lack of genuine surprise on Sean’s face, Hank accuses, “You knew.”

“Yes.”

“Were you ever going to tell me?”

Sean’s expression turns regretful. “It wasn’t my place.”

“But what about us, Sean?” Hank lowers his voice to whisper, as if someone could overhear them
despite being alone, “We haven’t been using protection.”

Sean inclines his head, accepting that they haven’t been using any form of protection.

Hank bites his lip, questioning anxiously, “You aren’t, are you?”

“I’m not pregnant, Hank.”

“But you could be, in the future.”

Sean admits, “It’s possible. How likely it is, I don’t know. My level of fertility isn’t something I have
considered before.”

Hank challenges, “Don’t you think that I could get you pregnant is something I should know?”

“You didn’t know about the Wesen world for much of this relationship.”

“And whose fault is that?”

“Mine,” Sean says truthfully. “It’s not like I could just blurt something like that out. You would have
thought I was crazy or if I woged that you were crazy.”

Hank wonders aloud, “Were you ever going to tell me?”

“Of course I was. I was just waiting for the right time. You needed to know the truth about me but I
needed to make sure you’d listen. I was afraid I’d lose you.”

Hank’s expression softens, understanding why Sean was reluctant to reveal the truth and afraid of
rejection. “Until the...incident and then you had no choice.”

“Yes.” Sean closes his eyes, remembering the desperation and fear he’d felt. The memory is
banished as he opens his eyes, seeing Hank’s beautiful face. Thank God it worked out alright.
Hank straddles Sean’s lap, their faces close enough to feel the warmth of each other’s breath. “Keeping anything else from me, Love? Any other secrets you’re hiding away that you need to get off,” Hank caresses Sean’s pecs, “your chest?” He smirks at the change in Sean’s breathing.

“N-No.”

“Good.” Hank laps at the muscles on Sean’s neck. “Now, tell me honestly, is it possible that I could become pregnant?”

Sean shuts his eyes, shivering as Hank kisses up his neck, catching his teeth on Sean’s earlobe and tugging it gently. “I-I don’t know, Pet. Honestly. Nick’s the first H-Human male to ever mate and be impregnated b-by a Wesen of any kind.” Sean stutters as Hank’s hot mouth continues to tease him. “Before Nick, I’d have said not but he’s changed things. He’s shown it is possible. What that means for other Humans, for you, no one can predict. You aren’t a Grimm and I’m not a Blutbad. We’re not Nick and Monroe but if it could happen to them, well, it’s not impossible. Our mating is as unique as theirs is. I shouldn’t be able to have a Human mate and you shouldn’t be able to be the mate of a Wesen. I cannot predict what will happen. I don’t think anyone can.”

“So what are we going to do about it? Hm?”

Sean whimpers in protest when Hank leans back, his wicked mouth leaving his skin. Amused at how easily he can wrap Sean in lust, Hank prods Sean. “Well?”

“Well, what?” His mind full of Hank and all the things he wants to do with him and have done to him in return.

“What are we going to do?”

Too focused on wanting Hank’s mouth back on him, he asks absentmindedly, “About?”

Hank rolls his eyes. “About the possibility of pregnancy.”

“Oh, well, I guess we can use condoms if you want,” Sean proposes, avoiding Hank’s eyes.

Hank is intelligent enough to realize Sean doesn’t want to. The question is why. “You don’t sound too thrilled, Love.”

Sean shrugs, still refusing to look at Hank.

“Why don’t you want to use condoms?”

“If you want them, we will.”

“That isn’t what I asked, Sean, and you know it. Talk to me, please,” Hank coaxes.

Sean squeezes his eyes shut, embarrassed at his reaction. “I don’t want any barriers between us. You’re my soul mate. It’s foolish, I know, but the thought of a condom separating us, of never feeling your cum inside me or mine in you, makes my chest hurt.”

Hank cradles his beloved’s face in his hands. “Hey, it’s not foolish. I feel it too. The bond is rebelling against it, isn’t it?”

Sean nods minutely.

Hank kisses Sean tenderly. “The question is what if one of us gets pregnant? What happens then?”
Looking into Hank’s beautiful eyes, Sean can’t lie. “I’d be thrilled. A piece of you and a piece of me, our love personified. A child we could shower with love.”

“You’re serious. You want a child.”

“Not any child, our child. Maybe it won’t happen but I’d be happy if it did.”

“And if we can’t?”

Sean reaches up and strokes Hank’s cheek. “There’s always adoption or surrogacy.”

Surprising them both, Hank answers, “Okay.” He wants a family with Sean, whether it is tomorrow or ten years from now.

Hello?

“Monroe Neumann?”

“Yes?”

The formal voice continues, “Mr. Neumann, I am contacting you on behalf of the Eisbär Wächter.”

Monroe goes rigid, his chest fluttering with hope and apprehension.

“We have reviewed your application and Mr. Burkhardt’s medical records thoroughly.”

He knew they would need to confirm Nick’s pregnancy. A male Grimm being impregnated isn’t something the EW was simply going to accept without proof. Monroe tightens his hold on the phone, waiting anxiously for the news.

“The EW has accepted your and Nicholas Burkhardt’s application.”

A surge of joy and relief shoots through Roe’s body. “Thank you.”

The man’s voice warms, “No need, Mr. Neumann. It is an honor for the Eisbär Wächter to provide protection to your three pups.”

Monroe is staggered by the reverence in the man’s voice. The man knows how influential and important their pups will be. They are game changers and as such, their lives are incredibly valuable to the Wesen world. “We would not place our pups in anyone else’s hands.”

“The EW are most honored by your trust. With their last breath, they will protect your pups.”

A wave of reassurance goes through Monroe. He knows how seriously the EW take their duty. They will die for the pups, without hesitation or regret, and he could not ask for more.

“Mr. Burkhardt’s pregnancy is developing quickly. We must start the process as soon as possible. The guardians must be chosen and in place at the latest by the fifth month.”

Monroe sends up a thankful prayer for the EW. Nick and their pups will have the EW’s added protection when he is most vulnerable. “What do we need to do to get started?”

“A list of applicants must be compiled. The competition to be a guardian of your pups will be fierce, only the best will be considered.”
Roe smirks smugly, his pups are the first of their kind and infinitely special. The competition to be chosen will be fierce.

“Once the field is narrowed to fifteen candidates, you and your mate will come in to interview those remaining. Two advisers will be present to aid you in making a decision. I recommend that each pup have his or her own guardian to ensure their safety.”

“Good. Work quickly but efficiently. Inform us when you are ready.”

“Of course, sir. Again, the EW thanks you for this honor.”

Monroe hangs up and immediately dials Nick.

“Burkhardt.”

“Nicky, the Eisbär Wächter called. We’ve been accepted.”

Nick closes his eyes and exhales loudly, sagging with relief. “Thank god. What happens next?”

“They’ll contact us once they have a list of applicants for us to choose from.”

“Oh.”

“They’ll be safe, Nicky. The EW will make sure of it.”

Nick fists his hand to stop himself from reaching down to cup his stomach. “They better,” Nick growls dangerously. Anyone that hurts his pups better pray they die before Nick can get a hold of them.

Days later, Roe and Nick go to meet their new realtor, Tamara Nelson, at her office to discuss what they are looking for in a house. As Monroe shakes hands with her, he woges. If she is Human, she won’t see anything but if she is Wesen, it would probably make things easier. Tamara woges back and she’s a Drang-Zorn. Good, this will makes things easier. She will be able to understand his requirements.

However, when Tamara looks over at Nick her eyes go wide with fear. “Grimm!” The urge to flee is near overwhelming.

Monroe shifts in front of Nick, throwing his hands up in a placating manner. “He won’t hurt you. He’s my mate.”

Nick peeks out from behind him. “I’m not here to hurt anyone. You don’t attack me and we won’t have problems. We just want to find a house.” It still is weird to watch the fear wash over Wesen when they realize he’s a Grimm. Almost like he is the monster and not them, although granted it seems Grimms of the past were pretty monstrous to Wesen of all kinds. Nick understands why they fear him, even if he isn’t like his ancestors.

Tamara’s eyes move from Monroe to Nick, evaluating them both. They appear sincere. She sniffs discreetly. The men aren’t lying, she can smell the mating bond on the Grimm. She breathes even deeper and is shocked to have her suspicions confirmed. The Grimm is pregnant. She can’t believe it. Tamara gasps, saying with incredulity, “The rumors are true.”

“What rumors?” Could their mating already be out in the Wesen world? How did they find out?
Monroe interrupts before she can answer. “Why don’t we take this inside.”

Tamara leads them to her office and shuts the door. She swallows nervously. “Word going around town is that a Blutbad mated a male Grimm. But the newest one is that the Grimm and the Blutbad were spotted at an OB/GYN’s office.”

“The Fuschsbau couple,” Nick concludes. They are the only ones that would know, unless… “You don’t think the medical staff was the leak?”

Monroe shakes his head. “The clinic is very conscious about confidentiality of their patients. It’s why I chose them. It has to be the Fuschsbau couple we saw.”

Nick turns back to Tamara, “How are people reacting?”

She can’t crush the last dreads of instinctive fear that being in a Grimm’s presence and answers honestly, “It’s varying. Some think it’s a joke. Some hope it’s true, believing that the Grimm may be less likely to slaughter Wesen indiscriminately. Purists believe if it is true, their mating and pregnancy is an abomination.” Tamara clears her throat anxiously, unsure whether to warn them or keep silent. “I would watch your backs. There will be those that want you all dead.” She looks over at Nick, “Um, more than usual, I mean.” Being a Grimm, he’s already got a target on his back. Being pregnant, however, has put him in greater danger.

Monroe straightens to stand intimidatingly tall. “No one will hurt Nick or my pups.” He and Nick know that people will come after them, wanting to eliminate Nick and the pups. The EW will ensure the pups are safe, as for Nick, Monroe can only do his best to protect him. He hopes that Vivian’s visions can help him keep Nick safe.

“Have you spoken to the Eisbär Wächter?” Tamara asks, looking over at Nick and wondering if the Grimm knows about the EW.

“They have recently accepted us,” Nick informs.

Noticing the way that the Grimm looks at her, like she is a regular person and not a monster, Tamara blurts out, “You’re the Grimm everyone has been talking about. The one that lets innocent Wesen live, aren’t you?”

Nick shrugs, confirming nonchalantly, “I guess so.”

Tamara meets Monroe’s steady gaze. Nick may not understand how unbelievable that is but Monroe does. Wesen have been slaughtered by Grimms indiscriminately for centuries. A Grimm that is willing to see Wesen as something other than monsters is unheard of. All Wesen fear Grimms because in their eyes, every Wesen is the same. Monsters undeserving of life or mercy. Nick Burkhardt just might be different.

“He isn’t like the rest. Nicky’s a good man, a good Grimm. He only wants to protect the innocent, whoever that may be.”

Only time will tell if he’s telling the truth. Tamara makes a decision, she’ll help them find a house. Burkhardt cannot be like the others. He’s mated to not just any Wesen but a Blutbad and he’s pregnant. That can’t be faked. “Why don’t we get back to the reason for this meeting? What do you want in a house?” She looks over at Monroe. “Besides the usual Blutbaden needs?”

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

It takes a while before Hank can get up the nerve to call his oldest sister Abigail. Hank isn’t certain
how she will react but knows if anyone reacts badly, Abigail is the most likely. When she married Bruce, she converted. Bruce may be a laid back guy but his religious beliefs are extremely traditional. Hank being gay is going to conflict with Abigail’s beliefs. Hank hopes her love for him will be enough for her to overcome that.

He asks about her family, using small talk to calm down a bit before bringing up the reason he called. “Abi, there’s something I wanted to share with you.”

“Good news, I hope,” Abigail comments with a smile.

“Yes, good news. I-I met someone. The person I have been looking for my whole life. The perfect person for me, the one I’m meant to be with for the rest of our lives.”

“Tell me about her.” Her tone is emotionless, Hank’s declaration meaning nothing to her until she knows more. Her brother has a terrible track record, she is skeptical of his declaration that he’s found his soul mate.

Hank clears his throat awkwardly. “Well, his name is Sean.”

Abigail asks sharply, “His name? *His* name? You’re dating a man? What, you’re gay now? What the hell, Hank!”

“Yeah, I guess I am.”

She shakes her head. “Oh, Hank. You cannot be serious.” Her little brother’s desperation has reached critical mass. Sighing internally, she resigns herself to saving her little brother from himself once again. Abigail promises, “You will find someone.” She won’t allow a brother of hers to be a disgusting cocksucker. It’s bad enough Faith is a shameless whore. Hank’s brow creases in confusion. “But I have found someone, someone who is exactly what I have been looking for my whole life. Didn’t you hear me?” He pauses, his tone hardening as he declares, “His name is Sean.”

“No, you haven’t,” Abigail states dismissively. “Your desperation to find a partner has reached a new low, Hank. Just because you haven’t found the right woman doesn’t mean you should give up. You do not need to lower yourself to pretending you are in love with some random man.”

Hank is stunned silent at Abigail’s casual dismissal of his relationship with Sean and how utterly pathetic she thinks he is. Abi believes he’d sleep with a man he isn’t attracted to. “Sean is not some random man. I care about him.”

“Dump the man and find a woman you can truly love.” Abi makes a decision, she’ll take care of this for Hank. “Leave it to me, I will find you a good woman.”

Hank splutters in outrage, “I am not desperate! I love Sean.” He cannot believe his sister believes he needs to be with someone with such desperation that he’d jump into a relationship with anyone, including a man, simply to not be alone. “And I don’t need your help!”

“All you need to do is open your eyes. Why do you think you can’t get any good women to date you? You come on too strong and scare them all away. It’s no wonder you have to date all those awful women. But worry no longer, I will find you a good woman that can handle your tendency to go too hard, too fast,” Abigail promises, her tone condescending.

Hank feels the words hitting him like a physical blow. “I can’t fucking believe you! What the hell, Abi? You don’t even know anything about it, about him, about us! How can you dismiss my relationship with Sean so easily?” Hank is shaking with both shock and indignation. His sister would rather believe that he is desperate enough to sleep with a man, despite being straight than consider
that he wants to be with Sean. That he has chosen Sean, willingly and eagerly. Rage and sadness battle within him. Not one question about Sean or their relationship. No, instead Abigail made assumptions about him and about Sean based on nothing more than her superior attitude and Hank’s history.

Abigail doesn’t understand why Hank is upset. “Calm down, Hank. I am only telling you the truth. We both know that the others are too nice or afraid to say anything but you need a reality check. I don’t need to know anything about him to know this guy is just another mistake, like all the rest of the people you date or marry. It’s better that you’re just that desperate. At least you’re not really a fag. I know best and I’m willing to help you. I will send you the contact information of therapist; she can help you deal with your issues and make you realize you’re not a faggot. Then I’ll help you find someone you deserve.”

Hank cannot believe this, how can Abigail say awful these things to him? Is she trying to hurt him? He knows she’s deeply religious but to call him a faggot in such a disgusted tone? How can loving someone be so wrong? Sean makes him happy and he can’t understand why that is such a sin in Abigail’s eyes. It’s too fucking much and he cannot deal with this. Hank growls darkly, “Sean is what I deserve. He is the best thing that has ever happened to me. He loves me and I love him. How can that be wrong? He makes me happy. Doesn’t that mean anything to you?” He rubs his forehead wearily, if Abi can’t be happy for him, then he doesn’t want anything to do with her. Loving Sean is not a sin, no matter what Abigail believes. Hank’s fury sparks, enraged by how badly Abi reacted to his news. “If you can’t accept that, accept me and Sean, then that is all that needs to be said. Because I do love him and if that makes me a faggot in your eyes, then so be it!”

“No brother of mine is going to be fucking cocksucker! If you don’t dump that fag, you are dead to me and to my kids! Got that, Hank? You’re tainted now. A dirty, sinful fag. Repent before it’s too late. Is your beloved Sean worth going to hell for?” Abigail sneers.

The hateful words slam into him with the force of a bullet and Hank breathes in sharp and painfully.

“Don’t contact me unless you get that stick out of your ass, Abigail.”

Abigail’s eyes narrow, realizing that instead of forcing Hank away from that man, she has pushed him away from her. She tries to stop him, focused on saving her brother from his sinful ways, “Hank, wait—”

“Fuck you Abigail.” Hank slams down the phone, suppressing the urge to throw his phone across the room. His anger dies quickly anda sense of loss overwhelms him. Her hate hurts as does losing her but the pain won’t force him to abandon Sean. Hank won’t let Abigail ruin their relationship. But right now, all he needs is Sean. He needs his mate.

NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR

“Hank,” Sean greets warmly. “I just—“

“I need you.”

Sean freezes at the sound of pain in Hank’s voice. “Pet? What’s wrong?”

“Please,” Hank sobs.

“I’m coming, Hank. Hold on, Baby. Just listen to the sound of my voice, okay?”

Whimpering softly, Hank utters an agreeable sound and then curls into a ball.
Sean murmurs words of comfort and love as he drives frantically home. He doesn’t know what happened but something hurt his Hank. Parking half-haphazardly, Sean rushes inside, talking to Hank every step of the way. The first glimpse of Hank breaks his heart. His brown eyes wet with tears and his face full of pain. Sean surges forward and gathers Hank into his arms. “Oh, Pet. What happened?”

“I-I called my s-sister, Abi.” Hank buries his face into Sean’s neck, the familiar scent of his skin comforts him. “I told her about us.”

Sean hugs Hank tight, rubbing his back in soothing strokes.

“She dismissed us, you. Didn’t even ask about you. Just assumed that I was desperate enough for love that I’d date a man even if I’m straight.” Hank shakes his head in disbelief and sadness. “I’d have understood if she’d been surprised or doubted the suddenness of it. But to simply dismiss everything without taking a single moment to try to understand? Abi didn’t even try to listen.”

He hates that Hank’s sister hurt him like this. Hank has an enormous heart and Abi stomped all over it. “I’m sorry, Love.” He swallows his anger and the urge to spit venom at the bitch for hurting Hank.

“She treated me like a child, like a stupid little boy who has done something incredibly dumb. She called me a disgusting faggot. Told me to leave you or I was going to hell.” Even with the gaping hole left by the loss of his sister aching in his chest, Hank’s anger boils to the surface. “How dare she!” He pulls out of Sean’s arms, physically shaking with rage, and then starts to pace.

Sean’s eyes narrow in anger, watching Hank stalk back and forth. How fucking dare Abigail spit such hate at Hank. That bitch threw homophobic slurs at Hank, at the brother she should love without condition. Abigail hurt Hank deeply and that is absolutely unacceptable. No one should be allowed to hurt his love.

Hank rants, “She is my sister. Abi is supposed to love and support me. But did she? No. She didn’t take a fucking second to listen to me. To let me share my happiness with her. No! Instead she judged me, called me awful names. I am her only brother. Does she not want me to be happy? Isn’t my happiness and well-being more important that her homophobia? Shouldn’t it be?” Then Hank slumps. His anger has burnt out, leaving him with only sadness.

Sean rises from the couch, wrapping his arms around Hank and rocks him comfortingly. A part of him wants to track Abigail down and tear her apart for hurting his mate but he has to restrain himself. Killing Hank’s sister is not the answer, not yet anyway. Slapping some sense into her would be nice though.

Hank closes his eyes and savors the embrace and how Sean’s touch fills him with strength. Not a single of his ex’s had affected him like this. He was supposed to fulfill their emotional needs but none had seemed concerned about fulfilling his. But Sean is different. Sean takes care of him in a way Hank hasn’t experienced before. He likes it. He and Sean are equals; Sean takes care of him and he takes care of Sean. None of his other relationships were like that. He gave and they took.

“I love you, Hank. So very much.”

Hank’s smile is a little bittersweet. “I love you, too.” Nuzzling Sean’s skin, he vows, “I don’t regret you.”

“Even with what happened with your sister? What could happen with your mother and your last sister?” Sean challenges softly.
Hank leans back, cupping Sean’s face in his hands. “You are my soul mate and I am yours. Simple as that. I can’t deny it and I don’t want to. You, Sean Renard, make me happy and that is all that should matter to my family. Abigail forced me to choose between her and you. I will choose you, always.”

Sean presses his lips to Hank’s sweetly, murmuring against his lips, “And I will always choose you.”

Hank and Sean turn toward Hank’s ringing phone. Hank drops his head to Sean’s shoulder, “She’s calling again.”

Sean rubs his back. “You don’t want to talk to her? Tell her off?”

“Not yet. I need time. It hurts too much and I am too angry. She would only try to change my dirty, sinful faggot ways,” Hank sneers, “which I’m not gonna do. Not even for her.”

Hearing those nasty words coming out of Hank’s mouth makes Sean want to rip out Abigail’s heart and watch the life bleed from her eyes. She doesn’t deserve Hank. “Take as long as you need. It will give Abigail time to think as well. Maybe she’ll come around.” Sean isn’t confident that she will, however. Few that can react with that type of hate are going to suddenly reverse their position. “Just know that I’m here for you.”

Hank closes his eyes and hugs Sean tight. “I know.” He at last has a partner that loves him and will be there for him. He won’t give that up, not even if it means losing Abigail.

Chapter End Notes

Monroe got a last name, yay! Nick will be learning it sometime in the future. Neumann is German for new man.
Hank stares at his phone, trying to work up the nerve to call his mom after the disaster with his sister. He knows she gets home from her trip today and wants to catch her before Abigail gets a hold of her. His mom should find out from him, not from Abigail.

Sensing his fear, Sean pulls Hank into a hug and holds on until Hank’s muscles lose their tension. “I’m here. I won’t leave, okay?”

Hank hides his face in Sean’s shoulder, terrified that he’ll lose his mom too. He loves her deeply and it would crush him if she hated him for loving Sean. As much as he wants to stall more, Hank realizes he can’t chance it any longer. Every second he waits is an opportunity that Abigail could get to her first. He breathes Sean’s reassuring scent in and then pulls back, kissing Sean’s lips lightly. “Thank you.”

Seeing that Hank is ready, Sean says, “I’ll be in the other room, if you need me.” He wants to give Hank privacy but be close enough to comfort him should the worst occur.

Hank takes a deep breath before calling his mom, praying that she will accept him.

“Hello,” Deborah greets cheerfully.

“Mom,” Hank breathes.

Deborah smiles happily. “Hank! How are you?”

Smiling at the joy in her voice, he answers, “I’m doing well, Mom. Did you have a good time on the cruise? You sound happy.”

“I still can’t believe the four of you got me a cruise for my birthday but I had a great time. Got some sun, lots of good food, made some new friends. It was perfect. Thank you again for making me go.”

“You deserved it, Mom.” It’s bittersweet to think about the birthday party where he and his sisters presented their mom with the ticket for the cruise. It could be the last happy memory he has with Abigail. Pushing that depressing thought away, Hank asks his mom to tell him all about the cruise. He listens attentively with a smile, trying to memorize the happiness in his mom’s voice and fervently hoping that this won’t be the last time he hears it.

Deborah chuckles as she realizes she’s been gushing about her trip for near a half hour. She waves her hand in front of her face. “Enough about me. Let’s talk about you. Anything exciting happen while I was gone?”
Hank laughs a touch hysterically. He attempts to say yes but all that comes out is a slur of gibberish.

“Hank? Is something wrong?” Deborah asks, sounding concerned.

“You haven’t talked to Abigail yet, have you?”

Deborah grips her phone tightly with worry. “No. Is she hurt? The kids? Bruce?”

“No, they’re fine.”

“Then what is it? Why do you sound,” Deborah pauses, searching for the correct word, “worried. Or are you afraid?”

Hank paces in front of the windows, stopping to stare out them sightlessly. “I—” he shudders before soldiering forward, “I shared something personal with Abigail and she reacted poorly.”

“What did you tell her?” Deborah asks. First, she must know what Hank revealed, then she can determine whether Abigail’s reaction was justified or not. Knowing her daughter as she does, likely she overreacted or made a hasty judgment before hearing the whole story. Abigail can be especially harsh concerning her siblings’ personal lives.

Hank reaches out a trembling hand and presses it to the glass. *This is it. Either Mom will support me or I’ll lose her too.* Laying his forehead against the cool glass, Hank closes his eyes and says, “I met someone.”

“You have? Someone special?” Deborah asks, warmth and excitement in her voice. She loves Hank and wants him to find the happiness she had with Darrell. Her son has encountered too much heartache in his personal relationships.

He smiles involuntarily, picturing Sean in his mind. “I have. Really special. Perfect for me, Mom. The person I’ve been searching for my whole life.”

“Oh, Hank. That’s wonderful!” Deborah doesn’t waste time on doubts or cautioning Hank to be careful with his heart. If he believes that, she will too. “Tell me about her.”

Hank sobers, wondering if he should get it over with or try to show his mom who Sean is before dropping the gay bomb. “Tall with beautiful green eyes and short, dark hair.”

“She sounds stunning.”

“Yes,” Hank admits. Sean is sexy as hell. “Probably out of my league.”

Deborah shakes her head. Hank continues to be blind to his worth thanks to his ex’s. “Not a chance, Son. You’re a prize and anyone that can’t see that is blind.”

Hank smiles softly at his mom’s defense of him. “Thanks, Mom.”

“Does she appreciate you like you deserve?”

“Yes, definitely. Cherishes and loves me with whole heart.”

Deborah hugs herself, thrilled that Hank at last has a partner worthy of him. Hank’s been in love before, perhaps too many times, but he sounds different this time. Hank believes it more and sounds more confident. “I’m so happy for you, Hank. She sounds divine and the kind of woman I always wanted for you. When can I meet her?” She knows she probably shouldn’t request more days off of work having just finished an extended vacation. Eager to meet Hank’s new girl, especially one that
makes Hank sound positively smitten, Deborah makes plans. *Maybe I could drive down after I
finish work on Friday?* Realizing that Hank hasn’t given her a name yet, she asks, “What’s her
name?”

*This is it. The moment of truth.* Hank presses his back to the floor length windows and slides
down them to the floor. “Sean. H-His name is Sean.” He brings his knees up to his chest and braces
himself for his mom’s reaction. But he’s met with nothing but silence from the other end. Hank
grows more tense as the silence drags on, his fears running wild and panicked. When he can’t take it
anymore, he stutters, “M-Mom?”

The fear in Hank’s voice snaps Deborah out of her shock. But she doesn’t know what to say, how to
feel. *Hank is gay?* Her only son, her supposedly straight son who has multiple ex-wives and even
more ex-girlfriends, is dating a man.

With quivering lips, Hank declares, “I love him, Mom. I love him more than I’ve ever loved
anyone.” He gulps, pressing his forehead against his knees, dread increasing as the silence
lengthens. Hank whispers, “Sean loves me, Mom. He makes me happy.”

Deborah sighs her son’s name, a part of her wishing that Sean never came into her son’s life. Then
she feels immediately guilty. How can she for a moment wish Hank hadn’t met the person that he
loves more than he ever has, the person that makes him happy?

Afraid of hearing the same hurtful, hate-filled words that Abigail spit at him, Hank interrupts before
she can say anything more. “I’m not giving him up. Not even for y-you. I don’t want to lose you but
if you make me choose—”

She can’t let him continue. “Hank!”

His mouth clicks shut. Saying that much had been hard but he means every word.

Deborah vows quickly, “I would never ask you to choose.” She’s always had a special relationship
with her only son and she can’t imagine losing that, especially over who Hank chooses to love.

“Y-You won’t?” Hank asks tentatively.

“I...I admit I’m shocked but not in the way you think.”

A part of him is thankful not to hear screaming obscenities but the other part of him is confused. “I
don’t understand.”

“I have suspected you were gay or at the very least bisexual for years. I waited for you to talk to me
about it and thought about talking to you about it but then you started dating girls and never admitted
to me or your sisters that you were attracted to boys.”

“You what? For years?” Hank splutters, stunned to the core. “How could you--I didn’t know--you
couldn’t--”

A ghost of a smile curves her lips and Deborah says, “First, you need to know that I would never
stop loving you. You are my son, Hank, and loving Sean or anyone else is not going to change that.”

Hank’s heart leaps in his chest. In a weak, tiny voice, he asks, “Promise?”

Deborah’s smile is tender and a little sad. “Of course, Baby.” She wishes she was there with him,
needing to hug her boy tight and calm his fears.
A violent shudder runs through Hank’s body. His mom still loves him.

“After you started dating girls, I didn’t know how to approach the subject and wasn’t sure I should. But it has been in the back of my mind since before you were a teenager.”

“But…” Hank is baffled by this, unable to fathom how his mom suspected he wasn’t strictly straight since he was a pre-teen. He doesn’t remember, at least consciously, that he looked at other guys that way. How could this be buried from him for all this time and how the hell did his mom see it decades before him?

“Hank, do you remember your best friend, Robert?”

Not sure where she’s going with this, Hank admits, “Yeah. He moved away when I was twelve, I think.”

“You were half in love with him.”

“I was not!” Hank protests.

Deborah rolls her eyes, remembering how Hank mooned over Robert. “You really were.” She has a feeling had Robert’s family not moved, Hank would have realized his attraction to men a lot sooner.

“He was my friend, that’s all,” Hank says, his voice starting out confident but quickly turning to unsure. “Right?”

“If he hadn’t moved away, I am 99.9 percent sure he would have been your first kiss.”

Hank’s mind runs through his memories of Robert, searching for this hidden crush his mother seems certain he had. Strangely enough, looking back with open eyes, he remembers an inexplicable happiness when he was around Robert and that he watched him a lot. Plus, the grief he felt when Robert moved away probably was an indication of his deeper, unconscious feelings. Grudgingly, Hank admits, “Okay, maybe I had a little crush on him.”

Deborah scoffs about the little part but lets it go, turning the conversation back to Hank and his love. Despite not being exactly happy about Hank being in a gay relationship, Deborah knows what Hank feels for Sean is strong. She hears it clear as day in his voice and Deborah can’t and won’t deny it.

“Do you realize how you sound when you talk about him?”


With tears in her eyes, she admits, “Like your father when he talked about me.” Deborah can still hear it in her mind: the warmth, the joy, and the love in his voice as Darrell talked about her. She hears the same in Hank’s voice when he talks about Sean. That kind of love and happiness is precious. It’s the kind she’s always wanted for all her children.

“Really?” Hank asks earnestly. It’s what he has been searching for all this time, what his parents had: a deep and unshakable love. To this day, his mom says she loves his dad and that he will always be the love of her life.

“So you want to be happy and if Sean does that, then how can I be anything but happy?”

Tears well in his eyes and Hank lets out a little sob, the tears trickling down his cheeks. He had been terrified of losing his mom.

Deborah’s heart squeezes at the sound of Hank’s relieved tears. It makes her heart ache to realize
how terrified he was of her rejection. “Oh, Sweetie.”

Hank hastily wipes away his tears, trying to pull himself together. “Thank you, Mom. It means the world to me that you accept me and Sean.”

“You’re happy and that is all I’ve ever wanted.” She feels the same about her daughter, Faith. Deborah doesn’t understand her views but accepts her. Faith is happy with her free spirit approach to sexual relationships and that’s what matters.

Pulling himself together, Hank wonders why his mom never said anything to him before about what she suspected, especially considering how accepting she is about Sean. “Why didn’t you say anything to me before? If you’ve known all this time?”

“I thought about it, especially watching you going through so many failed relationships.”

“Why didn’t you then?”

Deborah sighs and declares simply, “You wanted to become a police officer.” This isn’t what she wanted for her son; Deborah wanted Hank to find a nice woman, get married and have children. To be normal. Life is hard enough without being different. Society may be more accepting of homosexuals but they aren’t exactly considered normal or equal, legally or socially. Discrimination is still alive. Being a gay police officer is not going to be easy. Maybe his co-workers will accept him but what if they don’t? She doesn’t want him hurt. This is why she never talked to Hank about what she suspected. Being gay in law enforcement can be dangerous. Nonetheless, Deborah won’t ask Hank to give up Sean simply because she fears for him. She cannot deny him the chance to find the kind of love she had with Darrell. She can only pray that no one harms her son because of his sexuality.

Hank understands why she kept silent. While law enforcement has made strides against discrimination, it’d be naive to think that all the homophobic, racist, sexist, and prejudice officers are no longer present. Yet, Hank trusts his fellow officers to have his back. Him being in a gay relationship doesn’t change that. Nick already knows and is perfectly fine with it. And Wu is openly bisexual. Realizing that any unhappiness or hesitation his mom has about his relationship with Sean is tied to her fear for him, Hank reassures, “You don’t have to worry, Mom. I trust the people I work with. No one has ever given Wu a hard time about being bisexual or refused to back him up in a dangerous situation. His ex-boyfriend used to come to the station and no one batted an eye about it. I’ll be safe.”

Deborah deflates, her fear and worry dissipating. Hank will be safe. Smiling hopefully, she changes the subject and asks, “Please, tell me more about Sean.”

Hank smiles easily. “He’s great. Smart, kind, loyal, and a big sap, at least with me. I think he’d find a way to give me the moon if I asked.”

Deborah laughs, picturing a green-eyed man lassoing the moon for her son. “How did you meet Sean?”

“Well, we’ve actually known each other for a while. He’s—um—Sean is my captain.”

“Sean is your boss?”

Hank laughs uncertainly. “Um, yeah.”

Deborah shakes her head in exasperation, wondering aloud, “What is it with my two youngest? Both dating their bosses.”
“Y-You know about Becca?”

“That she’s dating her boss, who’s significantly older than her? Yes, I know.”

“She finally told you?”

Deborah shakes her head. “No, she has not. I’m still waiting for her to get up the courage.”

“You’re not mad?”

“That both of you are dating your bosses? No. I can’t say that it doesn’t make me uneasy. A break-up for either of you could be disastrously messy.” Both her children love their jobs...*And apparently their bosses.* She worries that a break-up could force them to move to a different firm or station. “Have you thought about that?”

“I have, Mom. I’m not blind to the risks, neither is Becca. I am willing to accept the consequences if things fall apart. Becca is too.”

She hopes that doesn’t happen but at least both realize what could happen and are willing to deal with it if necessary. Trying to lighten the mode, Deborah teases slyly, “With Sean being your boss, does that mean you get sent to his office for your frequent bad behavior?”

“Oh my god, MOM!” Hank shouts, scandalized.

Deborah giggles merrily at her embarrassed son.

Hank shakes his head and mutters, “I cannot believe you just said that.” His mom and Faith are too alike in their tendency to be blunt and bold. “Faith is too much like you, you know.”

She knows that despite the differences between herself and her daughter, they are alike in personality. “Has she talked to Sean yet?”

Sighing, Hank says, “Yeah. Threatened to cut off his balls if he hurts me.”

“That’s my Faith,” Deborah exclaims with pride.

Hank grunts. He understands his family’s protectiveness, considering his track record, but he doesn’t have to be happy about it.

“How does Nick feel about this? About you and Sean?” If Hank can’t trust his partner to have his back, she’s going to be frantic with worry. Nick doesn’t seem the judgmental type but one never knows.

Hank chuckles. “He’s fine with it. Nick can’t exactly be against it.”

Deborah creases her brow in confusion. “What do you mean?”

“He’s dating a man too. They’re very serious. They are buying a house together and in the process of adopting kids.”

She blinks rapidly, utterly shocked. “He’s what?” Deborah cannot believe Nick’s serious enough with his man to be willing to adopt children already.

“Yeah.”

“But what about Juliette?” Last she heard, Nick was in a serious relationship with Juliette.
Hank shrugs, not that Deborah can see that. “They broke up. Nick and Monroe, that’s his guy, fell hard for each other. Nick’s really happy.”

Deborah doesn’t know what to say.

“Pretty weird, huh?”

“The timing is rather...strange, I must admit.”

Hank isn’t offended. “It is. But at least Nick and I can go through this together.”

That does make her feel better. Hank will have Nick to talk about about being in a gay relationship for the first time. Nick will have Hank’s back and vice versa. Plus, with Sean being their boss, they’ll have the support and protection of their captain as well. “When can I meet him?”

“You want to meet him?”

“Of course I do.”

Hank is torn between beaming happily and shaking with nerves. “W-Whenever you want.”

“How about this weekend? I could come after work?”

“Okay.” Hank’s nervous, not that he doesn’t think his mom will like Sean. *But what if she doesn’t?*

“Has anyone else met him yet?”

“No. Everyone knows except Becca. I haven’t called her yet.”

Deborah recalls what Hank said about Abigail. She has a feeling she knows why Hank was terrified to tell her. “What exactly did Abigail say?”

Hank clenches his fist, her hateful words echoing in her brain. He can’t repeat those, not to his mom. “Nothing good. I was hoping I got to you before she did.”

That’s what she was afraid of. “I’ll talk to her.” She’s deeply disappointed in Abigail’s reaction to Hank’s news. Deborah is thankful she heard this from Hank and not Abigail.

He doesn’t say anything, despite believing Abigail is a lost cause. Hank doubts his mom talking to her will help; that kind of spewing hatred doesn’t simply disappear with a parent’s scolding.

“I’m sorry about what she said, Hank.”

“It’s not your fault.” Hank’s simply thankful that she doesn’t feel the same way Abigail does.

“Doesn’t mean I can’t be sorry. Just remember that you have the rest of us. We love you.”

“Thanks Mom.”

“Why don’t you call Becca? I know she’ll be happy you found someone. And then I’ll see you Friday night, okay?”

“Okay.”

“Love you.”
“Love you too.”

Hank sits silently for a minute, letting relief and joy rush over him. His mom accepts him and wants to meet Sean. Then he calls Becca.

“Hey Hank,” she greets.

“Hey Sis.” Just the sound of her friendly voice makes him smile. Maybe Abigail hadn’t gotten to her either.

“Congrats by the way.”

Hank’s brow creases in confusion. “For what?”

“For finding the love you’ve been searching for your whole life.”

“Oh, Abigail called you.” Despite Becca’s lack of judgment thus far, he still fears she’ll reject him.

Becca laughs darkly and admits, “Yup. She always was a pain in the ass but Bruce’s outrageously traditional beliefs have turned her into a real bitch.”

Hank’s mouth opens and closes without a sound escaping, stunned.

“Hank? You still there?”

“Yeah,” he croaks.

Becca softens her tone, saying gently, “You know I love you, right? Always will.”

Hank squeezes his eyes shut, letting out a shuddering breath. Abigail’s reaction had shaken his confidence significantly and made him fear that his mom and Becca would do the same. To know that they still love him is overwhelming.

“Always.”

Silent tears of gratitude trickle down his face. He has the support of Faith, Becca, and his mom. “Becca, you don’t know what that means to me,” Hank promises, his voice thick with emotion.

“I do. I was afraid to tell you about Jacob, maybe not as much as you were to tell the family about your boyfriend, but I was afraid. You were great when I told you. Maybe not exactly thrilled that I was dating my boss, who’s fifteen years older than me, but supportive.”

Hank admits to himself, she’s right. He wasn’t ecstatic to hear about Jacob. “You sounded happy. I wouldn’t ruin that for you, despite my personal worries.”

“I know. That’s why you are the only one I’ve told and the only one that’s met Jacob. I knew you’d support me. I really appreciate that, so does Jacob.”

Hank remembers meeting Jacob. The man had been visibly nervous to meet him, although he hid it well. Jacob turned out to be a nice guy, a bit stuffy at first but once he relaxed, Hank was able to see why Becca fell in love with him. “You really should tell Mom. If she can accept me and Sean, I don’t think she’ll have to problem with you and Jacob.”

“You think?”

“I know.” Hank smiles to himself. *Because she already knows.* “And why haven’t you told Faith
yet?”

Becca purses her lips. Faith intimidates her a bit. She doesn’t think Faith will attack or reject like Abigail did with Hank. Becca is simply a little apprehensive about her reaction. Although her heart is always in a good place, Faith can be blunt and isn’t afraid to voice her opinion. “What if she gets mad about Jacob being my boss?”

“Bec, Faith will worry about you dating your boss, same as I did, same as she is for me. But if you are happy, she will be too. Give her a chance to see how happy he makes you.”

“Okay. Wait, why is Faith worried for you?”

Hank realizes that Becca doesn’t know about Sean yet because Abigail doesn’t know. “Turns out you are no longer the only one in the family dating their boss.”

Becca is stunned to silence. She can’t believe it, she never thought Hank would date a superior, not usually his style, but then dating guys isn’t either. “You’re dating your boss?”

“Yeah. Faith’s a bit worried about that, although she threat—er—talked to Sean. That settled her down some.”

Becca laughs, thinking of Faith and her many talks with prospective boyfriends or girlfriends. It drove her crazy growing up but deep down she always appreciated Faith’s willingness to protect her, not that she’d admit that in a million years.

Hank clears his throat. “Before you tell Faith, I would warn Jacob about her. Faith will probably feel the need to threaten him...as I said she, uh, did that with Sean. Oh, and make sure Jacob can take the threat. She’ll respect him more if he accepts the threat without freaking out.”

“Good idea. Jacob can handle her threats.”

“Then you’ve got nothing to worry about.” Hank doesn’t bring Abigail up. If Becca decides to tell her, she can, but he isn’t going to recommend it.

Feeling better about telling her mom and Faith, Becca’s thoughts turn to her eldest sister. Abigail can be extremely judgmental and bossy, especially concerning their personal lives. She has no intention to tell her about Jacob in the near future. “About Abigail—” Hank sucks in a sharp breath. “I can only guess the awful things she said to you.” What Abigail said to her was awful, she can only imagine the venom she spewed at Hank based on what Abigail had said to her about Hank. “I’m sorry about what she said; it must have been painful to hear. Keep in mind that Abigail is wrong about everything. Don’t listen to anything she says. If you are happy, that is all that matters. You deserve to be happy and if this Sean guy does that for you, then I am happy for you both.”

“Becca, thank you. That means the world to me, to us.”

She smiles in response. “Tell me about him,” Becca asks. She listens intently, a smile on her face, as Hank gushes about Sean. Her brother is happy. She cannot understand how Abigail could have ignored that when he told her.

Realizing he’s been bragging proudly about Sean a little too long. Hank quickly says, “Mom’s coming up this weekend to meet Sean. You and Jacob could come too, if you can make it.”

“She is?”

Hank beams, remembering what his mom had said. “Mom said she wants to meet him, said I sound
just the way Dad did when he talked about her.”

Becca’s smile is genuine, although with a tinge of sadness. “Wow, Hank. High praise.” Her parents had loved each other immensely.

“Yeah.”

“I’ll talk to Jacob and see if we can make it.” Of course she’ll have to let her mom know about Jacob first but having Hank’s beau around would take some of the pressure off.

“Okay, hope to see you both this weekend. Love you.”

“Love you too, big brother.”

Hank rises from the floor, feeling a hundred pounds lighter. “Sean!”

Sean rushes into the room, fearing the worst. He halts in his tracks, a gobsmacked look on his face at the joy on Hank’s face. “Pet?”

Hank throws himself into Sean’s arms, his emotions scattered and unpredictable. He laughs slightly hysterically, clutching tightly to Sean. Hank tucks his face into Sean’s neck, inhaling that familiar, comforting scent of sandalwood. “Mom and Becca. They don’t hate me.”

Sean hugs Hank tighter, grateful that Hank won’t be losing any more family over their relationship. “They accept us?”

Hank kisses Sean’s neck lightly, leaning back to meet his love’s green eyes. “They do. They’re happy for me. Happy that I am happy.”

Sean smiles and presses his lips to Hank’s in a sweet kiss. “I’m glad, Hank.”

“Oh and my mom is coming up this weekend to meet you. Becca and Jacob might come too,” Hank adds nonchalantly.

Sean feels a little flutter of nerves in his stomach. “This weekend?”

“Yup,” Hank says with a grin. “You’ll have to pull on that infamous Renard charm.”

He’s meeting Hank’s mother. This weekend. Stomach churning with nerves, Sean takes a deep breath and pushes his nerves away. “Absolutely.”

Nick takes the offered tissue and wipes his mouth, sighing as his stomach continues to churn.

“Better?” Monroe asks. He watches as Nick lurches forward, vomiting into the toilet. *I guess not.*

Nickgroans, resting his forehead against the cold porcelain. “I hate you so much right now.” He feels like he’s puked up a lung and like his stomach is at war with the rest of his body.

Monroe makes a sympathetic noise and rubs Nick’s bare back soothingly. “I know.” He can’t fault Nick. His poor mate had been certain he was immune to morning sickness until their mating. “I’ll go see Rosalee today, okay? She’ll have something to settle your stomach.”

Nick doesn’t respond, too busy dry heaving, nothing left in his stomach. Roe strokes his hair gently while Nick waits several minutes to make sure the urge to vomit has lessened. “You’d better or
you’re sleeping outside.” Then he orders Roe to help him up. Nick looks down at his curved belly, stroking his hand over it softly. He still can’t believe that three little lives are growing inside him.

Monroe presses against his back, his big hands cupping Nick’s stomach tenderly. He is fascinated by the physical evidence of their pups and cannot wait to watch it grow. “I love you, my gorgeous mate. Our pups are growing strong within your protective womb.”

Nick wrinkles his nose. It’s no less weird to realize he has a womb than it was when he first found out he was pregnant. “You better fucking love me, you giant ass. I’m suffering here for your offspring, which I did not ask for by the way. Next time, you can get pregnant.”

Monroe hides his smile by nuzzling Nick’s neck, dragging out a small moan out of his reluctant mate. “Of course, Nicky,” he lies easily. Monroe is willing to let Nick believe the lie, at least while he’s pregnant.

Nick turns in Roe’s arms, glowering up at him. “You are a fucking liar. Can you even get pregnant?”

Monroe opens his mouth, preparing to lie again.

“The truth, Roe.”

His mouth snaps shut. “Fine. No. I can’t get pregnant. I’m the Dom in this bond.” As long as the Dom is male, like him, they cannot become pregnant.

“Figures.” Nick glares at the floor, muttering to himself, “Why couldn’t I have been the Dom?”

Monroe cautiously wraps his arms around Nick. He keeps silent, realizing that anything he says will only serve to make things worse.

Nick’s stomach flutters as the potion changes his curved belly to flat. *Ugh, that is going to take some getting used to. At least it works.* He’s glad that the potion was in his stomach long enough to work before he threw up. Repeatedly. Nick pokes his stomach curiously, despite the flat appearance, he can feel the slight curve of his belly. “Weird. It feels the same. Here, feel,” he grabs Roe’s hand and brings it to his stomach.

He strokes Nick’s stomach, frowning at the flatness under his fingertips. “It feels flat to me. It must only feel the same to you, Nicky.”

“Really?”

“Yeah.”

“Huh.” Nick supposes that makes sense considering he’s the one that took the potion, not Roe. *This is going to feel really strange when I get huge.* He pushes that thought away. Pulling on his clothes, Nick starts feeling more like himself. He’s back into the cop and Grimm mindset now. He still feels nauseated but he does his best to ignore it. Nick kisses Roe goodbye but is pulled back. Monroe yanks his shirt aside and bites Nick’s shoulder. Used to it by now, Nick barely notices the sharp pain of Roe’s fangs piercing his skin. Instead, he feels great pleasure as the bond hums happily at a visible claim of their mating. Nick rolls his eyes, asking fondly, “Feel better you possessive bastard?”

Monroe grins, unashamedly revealing his fangs, the tips red with Nick’s blood. He admires the bite before lapping up the traces of blood on his mate’s skin. Monroe doesn’t like letting his mate, especially his pregnant mate leave his sight but he has no choice. He may be the Dom in the relationship but Nick isn’t some sniveling Sub. Ordering Nick to quit his job and stay safely at home is a surefire way to get attacked by a furious pregnant Grimm. No matter how much he desires Nick
at home and safe, he’s not stupid enough to try it. “Be careful, okay?”

Nick cups Roe’s bearded cheek, vowing, “Always. Hank’ll have my back. Don’t worry.” He appreciates Roe respecting him enough to trust him with his and the pups’ safety. Granted with his Alpha power, Monroe might even be able to accomplish forcing him to quit his dangerous job but it would only serve to make him resent his mate. Nick kisses Roe one last time before heading out.

He skips getting coffee, which thanks to being pregnant he shouldn’t be drinking anymore. Even if he wanted a small cup, his stomach rebels at the mere thought. Resigned, Nick walks into the station free of caffeine.

Sipping his coffee, Hank greets, “Morning.”

Nick grunts and flops into his chair, staring jealously at the coffee in Hank’s hand.

“Or not. Something happen?”

Looking around at the busy room, Nick determines no one is listening to their conversation. “Morning sickness.”

“Mornin—” Hank looks confused for second, then shifts uncomfortably in his chair. “Oh, um, right. That’s—dude, that’s rough.”

Nick rubs his belly, trying to soothe the nauseous feeling away. “No shit. It’s bad enough I can’t have coffee. Now I have to deal with that plus puking my guts out every morning.”

Hank’s eyes flick from Nick’s tired gray eyes to his stomach and back. “That is...” he trails off uncertainly.

“Yeah, try living it. Roe’s going to get me something from Rosalee’s shop.”

Thinking of him or Sean in a similar situation draws Hank’s eyes to Sean’s office. He is in no way ready for that thought. Hank has rolled with a lot of punches lately but getting knocked up? He can’t deal with that right now. *Sean better get used to bottoming, ‘cause if anyone is getting pregnant, it won’t be me.*

Nick rubs his temples. “Can we talk about something else?”

*Hell yes!* Hank is happy to change the subject. “My family knows about Sean and I.”

“And?” The look on Hank’s face makes Nick’s gut tighten. “Hank?”

Hank hates the feeling of betrayal and pain at the thought of Abigail. “Everyone is happy for me...except Abigail.”

*That bitch. She doesn’t deserve Hank.* Nick fists clench, fearing that Abigail was nasty about her rejection. Hank’s had problems with her before and that was when he was just a straight guy with terrible taste in women. “Her loss, man.” For once, he’s thankful he doesn’t have any family alive.

Hank looks over to Sean’s office, watching him doing paperwork at his desk. Despite how much Abigail’s rejection hurts, Sean is worth it. Hank’s smile is bittersweet. “It is.” He doesn’t need someone in his life that is filled with hate and judgment. More than anything, he is disappointed in Abigail. Hank thought her a better person. “I blocked her number. She keeps calling. Not to apologize of course but to try to convince me to get help.”

“For sinning, I guess.”

“Isn’t it supposed to be God that judges the world, not arrogant Christians?”

Hank shrugs. He doesn’t understand it anymore than Nick does. How he loves can incite such rage and hate is beyond him. Shoving Abigail from his thoughts, he focuses on the fact that the rest of his family cares more about him than they do who he loves. “Faith,” Hank chuckles a little remembering his conversation with her. She was the one person he never doubted would embrace his new relationship. “She was excited, to say the least.”

Thinking of Faith, Nick imagined she was. Faith is...she’s something else. She’s a free, open, and loving person. He would’ve been shocked had she rejected Hank, especially considering her view on sex and relationships. “I imagine she was. I bet she’s gushing to everyone around her about her newly gay brother.”

Hank gulps; he hadn’t thought of that. He admits to himself that Nick is probably right. Surprisingly, it doesn’t bother him. “She wasn’t too happy to find out who he was though.” In case anyone is listening, Hank is careful to avoid saying anything that would identify Sean as a Renard. He doesn’t care if his colleagues find out he’s in a gay relationship, he simply doesn’t want to make trouble for Sean.

“Was he around?”

“Yeah.”

Nick smirks. “She threatened him, didn’t she?”

“Of course she did. Told him she’d cut off his balls if he hurt me.”

“That’s Faith for ya.”

They look at each other and laugh. People are always surprised when Faith goes from free spirit to scary protector.

“What about your mom and Becca?”

Hank smiles. “They took it well. They’re happy for me. Mom’s even coming up this weekend, possibly Becca and Jacob too.”

Nick smiles back, happy that Hank has the support of most of his family.

“Mom just got back from her cruise, so she’s coming after work on Friday.”

“Ah,” Nick says, realizing that Hank’s mom would likely have come sooner if she hadn’t just returned from vacation. “Wait, I thought Becca hadn’t told anyone about Jacob but you.”

“Turns out Mom already knows. She’s been waiting for Becca to tell her. Hopefully by now, Bec called Mom and told her herself.”

Nick laughs, remembering Hank saying once that his mom is like a bloodhound for secrets. “I don’t know why any of you try to hide things from her. She should have been a detective with how easily she discovers what the four of you are hiding.”

Hank nods, he’s thought the same himself. Before he can reply, his phone rings. “We’ve got another
murder.”

Nick finishes later than he’d hoped but quickly calls Roe and finds out he and their realtor, Tamara, are on their way to another property. They are waiting outside when he arrives. Roe gives him a tentative smile, clearly remembering this morning’s unpleasantness. Nick offers him a begrudging smile back. He still isn’t happy about the morning sickness. *More like never ending sickness.* It wasn’t until late afternoon that he could stomach anything, even then all he could eat was crackers. At least it’s disappeared for now. As Tamara opens the door, Nick notices the tension in her back. He imagines it must be difficult to turn her back on a man she knows is a Grimm. It will take time to dampen that instinctual fear.

As they peruse the house, neither of them feels this is the house for them. The house has an odd layout and the backyard is too small. With three pups, they’ll need some space to get their energy out. They see one more house before calling it a night.

Once back home, Monroe is quick to show Nick the tea he got from Rosalee. “She said it should help and if not, she has other options you can try. Rosalee said it’s specifically for male bearers since their morning sickness is often more severe.”

“It had better work,” Nick mutters. He can’t deal with that shit every morning and afternoon. “I almost threw up at a crime scene today.” *And hadn’t that been fun.* The next several months are going to be difficult if he can’t look at dead bodies without wanting to vomit. “I think this whole men being able to be pregnant thing is freaking Hank out a bit. He looked a little green about it.”

“Probably’s afraid of it happening to him,” Monroe says.

Nick nods his head, realizing Roe’s right. If he can get pregnant, that means it isn’t impossible that Hank would be able to as well. Although Nick guesses that Hank is less likely considering he’s all Human and isn’t mated to a Blutbad. “Hank has had a lot to deal with in a short time, I don’t blame him for be leery of adding babies to the mix. Although, at least he doesn’t have to worry about litters, right?”

Monroe chuckles, confirming, “True. It’s rare for Zauberbiests to have multiples, especially anything more than twins.”

“Let’s hope for Hank’s sake, he doesn’t have to deal with that until he’s ready.”

Monroe reaches out for Nick, wrapping an arm around his back, but doesn’t say anything. He wonders what Vivian knows about Sean and Hank’s future. Monroe wouldn’t be surprised if a pregnancy happened fairly quickly between them. Zauberbiests and Hexenbiests don’t have sexual powers for nothing; they can be quite fertile. But maybe they’re using some kind of birth control. Wesen mating bonds tend to push against the use of condoms as if the barrier was a threat to the bond but maybe Sean being only half Wesen lessens that instinct. If not, he wonders what they could use for birth control. Monroe’s unsure if Wesen birth control would work on Hank, as for Sean, he’s a hybrid. His biology is complicated to say the least. Either way, he can only hope things will work out the way they should. Turning his thoughts back to his mate, he asks, “How are you feeling now?”

“Okay. No nausea at the moment, thank god. All I could eat today was crackers.”

“How about some broth then, something easy on your stomach?”
Nick sighs as Roe strokes his hair. “Yeah, that sounds good.”

“Why don’t you take your potion?”

Nick nods absentmindedly. Feeling the slight curve of his stomach while seeing a flat stomach is disorientating to say the least.

Monroe kisses Nick sweetly, then goes into the kitchen and takes out a container of frozen vegetable broth. He fills a bowl with hot water and sets the container inside it to thaw.

Nick goes upstairs and takes his potion. Ten minutes and he’ll be back to normal or at least what passes for normal now.

Seeing Nick enter the kitchen, Monroe holds up the buns and asks, “Buns okay?”

The sight of the soft buns doesn’t make his stomach protest. “Yeah.” Watching Roe move around confidently in the kitchen, Nick finds his mind wandering back to his conversation with Hank and how he told his family about Sean. It has Nick wondering about Roe’s family. Roe never talks about his family. Hell, he doesn’t even know Roe’s last name. It’s weird, almost as if Monroe is deliberately keeping the name a secret. “Hank told his family about Sean.”

“Did he?” Monroe asks distractingly.

“Yeah. His three sisters and his mom.”

“How’d that go?”

“Everyone but Hank’s oldest sister is happy for him. Hank didn’t say what Abigail, that’s his oldest sister, said to him but I imagine it was ugly. She can be a real judgmental bitch, always thinks she’s right. Religious nut as well, very traditional. Never understood those crazy people. Why would a god who supposedly sacrificed his only son to save the world from sin be happy about his believers being consumed by hate? Makes no fucking sense.”

Monroe stops to look at Nick. “I don’t think it is something a rational person can understand. Wesen have those types too. Something strange can happen with strong beliefs, they can easily turn from faith to hate. Why that is, I can’t imagine.” It seems a trait found in all people, Wesen and Human alike. “That’s rough about Hank’s sister.” He knows how much familial rejection can hurt; he had to deal with that when he became a Wieder Blutbad. “How’s Hank holding up?”

Nick shrugs. “Seems alright. His mom is coming here Friday to meet Sean. His younger sister and her boyfriend might come too.” He watches Roe closely, trying to see if he reacts to this suspiciously.

“Good. It’ll be good for Hank. They’d have to be blind to miss how crazy Sean is for Hank.”

Nick wonders if Roe is deliberately avoiding talking about his family. The direct approach is likely best. “What about you, Roe? What about your family? You never talk about them.”

“Neither do you,” Monroe retorts defensively.

Nick shakes his head. “The difference is my family is dead. I’ll never see them again and they certainly can’t meet you. Which I admit is probably for the best. Grimms, you know.”

Monroe has to agree; Nick’s family probably would’ve simply killed him and dealt with Nick’s reaction afterward. He sighs, knowing this was coming but he doubts he’d ever be truly ready for
“My family is...complicated.”

“And by complicated, you mean what?”

“My parents are very traditional Blutbaden as are my sisters, except Wynn.”

“And you’re not.”

“Not anymore. They did not react well when I become Wieder.”

Nick asks softly, “They rejected you, didn’t they?”

“Yes. Being a Wieder Blutbad in their eyes was akin to not being a Blutbad at all.”

“Was?”

Monroe shrugs. “They came around...eventually. None of them are happy about it and likely never will be, but I am at least part of the family. I love them but it can still be hard to be around them or talk to them.”

Nick’s first impulse is to blurt out something rude like ‘I guess I don’t have to worry about meeting them’ but refrains with effort. Unable to think of what to actually say, Nick keeps silent.

They stare at each other, both attempting to determine what the other is thinking without success.

“My parents...” Monroe trails off, lost in imagining how his parents would react to Nick being his mate. Not well, he’s guessing. Would they try to kill Nick? Monroe admits to himself that they probably would. His sisters too, along with their mates.

He has a feeling he knows what Roe is going to say and he’s surprised to realize that the thought of Roe’s parents rejecting him hurts. Nick doesn’t know them and Monroe isn’t close to them either. Still, it hurts to think that Roe’s parents would hate that Roe is mated to him, a Grimm. It hurts that their pups won’t know their grandparents, especially since Nick’s parents are long dead. Roe’s family is the only blood family his pups will have. “They’d hate me, I know.”

At Nick’s soft, resigned words Monroe stalks over to him and pulls him into a hug. He can’t lie and give Nick false hope. “I’m afraid they would. It’s why I haven’t told them.” He presses his nose against Nick hair and breathes deep. The scent of his mate invades his senses. “Even if they did—do, you are my mate, Nicky, and nothing they say or do can change that. You are mine and I am yours. We are our own pack now. You, me, and our pups.” His parents won’t ruin this for him. Nor will his sisters. Nick is his true mate, he and his wolf know this. No one can make him believe otherwise.

Nick hugs Roe tighter, the tiny sliver of fear that Roe would abandon him for his pack family disappearing. “Good. I can’t do this alone;” he murmurs. *And I don’t want to.* *He mentally shudders at the thought of raising three Blubad/Grimm hybrid pups by himself.*

“Never, Nicky. Besides, I’m sure my brother and my sister, Wynn, will be open to meeting you. They’re not Wieder but they aren’t as traditional as the rest of the family.” Monroe’s hands frame Nick’s face, then he kisses each cheek, his eyelids, and finally his lips. “I’ll tell you all about my family, okay? But first you need to eat.”

“Okay.”

Nick starts to eat the bowl Roe places in front of him without protest. The vegetable broth is hot and soothing; he cleans up the first bowl with his bun. Seems Nick finally has his appetite back. Monroe
refills Nick’s bowl and offers him another roll. Once they finish eating and clean up, they settle onto the couch facing each other.

Monroe sighs softly, not looking forward to this conversation but he knows it has to happen. He stares across the room at a picture of him and Nick. Monroe comforts himself by rubbing his thumb over the bonding bite on Nick’s neck. Then he begins, “My family’s name is Förster. I know that means nothing to you but to Wesen, to Blutbaden, it’s an old, powerful name. It stands for tradition, for the old ways, for strength and power, just like my family does. It means something to Blutbaden. Not much has changed in my family since my grandparents came from the old country. We aren’t exactly known for change.” Monroe gives Nick a wry smile at the blatant understatement. The Förster family fights change like a bucking bronco. “In German, it signifies the keeper of the forest and in the old days, Blutbaden were the rulers of the forest. We were known to be smart and strong and unafraid to attack to protect our land and our packs. The name Förster also is a job description, such as a person in charge of hunting animals, such as deer or wild pigs. Very apt for describing Blutbaden.” Monroe pauses to think deeply about his family’s name, one he no longer identifies with. “As a pup, I was proud of my name, proud to be part of such a prestigious history,” he admits.

Nick watches the small smile fade from Roe’s lips and it saddens him. “But after that day, after what I did,” Monroe says, tone full of guilt and disgust, “I couldn’t use that name anymore. My parents, my grandparents couldn’t and didn’t understand why I felt the way I did. They still don’t. Instead, they told me stories of familial ancestors that had killed Humans, whether to protect the pack or simply for sport. They wanted those stories to show me that I wasn’t alone, that other Förster family members had killed Humans like I had.” Monroe shudders at the memory. He recalls how the stories made him feel. He didn’t feel pride or camaraderie. Instead, he’d felt overwhelming disgust and shame. “After that day, I wasn’t like them anymore. I couldn’t think and act and be like them. Förster meant pain, guilt, and shame to me and still does. Monroe Förster is dead; I buried him long ago.”

Nick reaches out to stroke Roe’s bearded cheek. Monroe leans into the caress, taking strength from Nick’s touch. Nick turns his compassionate gray eyes on Roe, asking him silently to continue. “I never used Förster again. I decided that I needed a fresh start, a new beginning. And that meant I needed a new name, something I wouldn’t be ashamed of. I knew that I couldn’t tell you my surname without first telling you the entire story even if it meant nothing to you.”

“So you just didn’t tell me,” Nick surmises. “Yeah,” Monroe confirms, rubbing the back of his neck uncomfortably. He could omit saying his family’s surname but telling Nick his new one without explanation would have felt like a lie.

Nick smiles at Roe, happy that he’ll finally know the story of his name. “Tell me, what did you choose?”

“Neumann,” Monroe says, then spells it out. “I needed to be a new man and with Neumann, I could be.”

“Monroe Neumann,” Nick repeats, tasting it on his tongue.

Monroe gives Nick a soft smile. “Yeah. Neumann was my fresh start. It helped me separate who I was from who I am.”

Nick takes Roe’s face in his hands, thumbs stroking his bearded cheeks. “You should be proud, Roe. Proud to be a Neumann, to be who you are. I know I am.” He kisses him lightly. “And I know they
will be too,” Nick promises, looking down at his stomach.

“Thanks Nicky. That—that means a lot to me.”

Nick shifts closer, fitting his body against Roe’s. Something about their bond makes Nick happier when he’s touching Roe. He questions softly, “Do you think you’ll tell them? Your parents? Your siblings”

Monroe thinks of his parents; they continue to hold out hope that he’ll embrace his family’s history and traditions again. That he will carry on the Förster name proudly and with honor but he never will. He rubs Nick’s barely there bump, thinking of their pups. Monroe won’t raise them like he was raised, driven to obsession by the hunt. He doesn’t want them to go through what he had to, living with the guilt of hurting or killing someone. Or worse, grow up to be callous and cold and think nothing of killing Humans. Monroe doesn’t want them to believe themselves superior to Humans. With luck, being part Grimm will help them with controlling their inner wolf and their teen years won’t be fraught with the type of lack of control he experienced. He turns his thoughts back to his family and Nick. Will he? Should he? Monroe realizes that he can only delay and avoid it for so long, eventually his parents will find out he’s mated. He needs to tell them about Nick and the pups before they find out from someone else or worse, they come to visit without warning. “I’ll tell them.”

“You’re sure you want to?”

Monroe laughs. “Of course I do, I’m proud of you and of the pups we are having. I refuse to hide you and them from my family. It will be their choice whether or not they can accept us. Besides, they’ll find out eventually. We may not see each other often but they do come to visit me, although mostly it’s my brother and my sister, Wynn. My parents don’t visit often and neither do my two other sisters.” Monroe closes his eyes, allowing all his senses to take in this moment: the softness of the couch underneath him, the weight and heat of his mate against him, Nick’s woodsy scent invading his sensitive nose, and the smooth, warm, silkiness of Nick’s skin under his fingertips.

The loving, pride-filled words make Nick feel good. “You mean that, don’t you?”

“I want to tell them, Nick, even if it means I lose them. Because I love you and you make me unbelievably happy and I want to share that with them. Maybe they won’t be able to accept you and the pups but they should at least get a chance to decide for themselves. I have you and the pups, that’s all I need to be happy. Anything more is a bonus.” Monroe slides his hand down Nick’s side, smiling as Nick arches into the caress like a cat.

“You have three sisters then? And a brother?” He can’t imagine that, having grown up as an only child.

Monroe nods, a smile on his lips. “Yeah. It was me, Wynn, and Amanda, then Madeline and Cameron came a few years later.”

“You’re a triplet?”

“Yes, just like our pups will be. Blutbaden have triplets often, especially for the first pregnancy.”

“Are you close with them?”

“I’m closest with Wynn and Cameron, both are easy to get along with. Wynn’s the family peacekeeper, calm and tough when she needs to be. She’s pretty much the only reason Amanda and I didn’t kill each other growing up. Amanda and I always butt heads because we both have strong Alpha qualities, have since we were kids. Madeline is an Alpha herself but more mellow in
temperament. We don’t have much in common though and she lives in New York City. She is always busy. Cameron is the friendliest of us. Loves pretty much everyone and everyone loves him, it’s impossible not to.”

“Does that mean Wynn and Cameron are like me?”

“Yes, they are the Submissive mates of their bonds,” Monroe confirms. He’s glad that the two siblings he is closest to are like Nick. That aspect will help them connect. Nick hasn’t met any Blutbaden mating pairs and has only encountered one male bearer like himself.

“They’re mated then?”

Monroe nods. “I’m the last to find my mate. Cameron found his mate, Austin, when he was still in high school. Austin was his student teacher, actually. Wynn found Evan on vacation in Canada.”

Getting lost in his thoughts, Nick doesn’t respond to Roe. Nick likes that he’ll have that in common with Wynn and Cameron. While he’s accepted his place in their bond, he’d likely feel more comfortable with his place if he saw others like him, especially another male Sub. The power dynamics of Blutbaden mating are vastly different than what he grew up seeing. Having the option to see how two other Blutbaden mating pairs interact, how they are similar or different from he and Roe would be invaluable.

Nick wonders how it was growing up in the Förster family. Pack dynamics appear complicated and messy. But then maybe it’s just families; Hank’s family isn’t any less messy and they are Human. Siblings are a foreign concept to him, Nick never had cousins around either. His dad was an only child like him. His aunt, Marie, never married. Nick wonders if she would have married if not for him. All he had for most of his life was his aunt and she was antisocial to say the least but then perhaps she wasn’t. He doesn’t truly know; she did manage to hide all her Grimm activity from him. Nick barely remembers how normal families work. How is he going to deal with meeting Roe’s family? Especially knowing that the majority of them will hate and want to kill him. It probably won’t help his case that his aunt killed Roe’s great-grandmother by cutting off her head and placing it on a stick. Suddenly, Nick’s not sure this is a good idea. “Maybe you shouldn’t tell them.”

Confused, Monroe asks, “Who? My siblings?”

“Your whole family. I mean, you said Aunt Marie murdered your great-grandmother, then put her head on stick. On a stick! They know that. Your family’s gonna know who I am. They’ll want to kill me twice as bad; not only for being a Grimm but also for being Aunt Marie’s nephew.” Nick has flashes of what could happen when Roe’s family meets him and it is bloody and violent. He hugs himself tightly and then places his hands over his belly protectively. Fear and panic run through his veins. Nick doesn’t want to die but he doesn’t want to hurt Roe’s family either. Yet, he’d do it to protect his pups. “I don’t want to have to hurt them, Roe.”

Sensing the growing panic and dread in his mate, Monroe soothes, “Shh, I know you don’t, Love. I won’t let that happen. I’ll make sure they know who and what you are, Nicky. If I believe they are a danger to you or our pups, I won’t let them near us. I promise. It will work out.” Nick and the pups will always come first in his life. He’d die to protect them, he’d kill.

The promises aren’t enough to quell the fear inside him. “My aunt killed your great-grandmother, don’t you think they’ll want revenge? Plus, I’m a Grimm. A Grimm! They already hate me and they don’t know I exist yet,” Nick challenges.

Monroe tugs Nick closer to him, wrapping him securely in his arms. “My family will not hurt you. I won’t allow them to. The past is the past.” Marie is dead and his family has nothing to fear from
Nick, not unless they attack him.

“You can’t protect me all the time, Roe. You don’t have to. I am a Grimm and I have our pups to protect. I’m more afraid of having to hurt them, than I am them hurting me. I don’t want to but I will if I have to.”

“You’re afraid I’ll hate you,” Monroe concludes.

Nick closes his eyes, dreading Roe’s response. “Yes.”

He leans back, allowing their eyes to meet. “Never. I could never hate you. Yes, they are my family, the pack I was born into. But they aren’t my pack anymore. You are. You and our pups. I would kill them to protect you and our pups. I’d mourn their deaths but I’d rather them dead than you or the pups.”

Staring deeply into Roe’s brown eyes, Nick says in awe, “You really mean that.”

“Of course I do. Even my family would understand. Mates are sacred to Blutbaden. Maybe they won’t agree or like that you are my mate but deep down each of them would understand that a serious threat to you or our pups would be met with unflinching violence. They’d do the same for their mates or pups.” Monroe brushes the hair back from Nick’s forehead tenderly. “They may hate Grimms but they will respect our mating, as long as they are open-minded enough to realize that you are my mate.” Not wanting to worry Nick, he doesn’t voice his concern that they’ll be too blinded by fear or anger to use their senses.

Monroe considers his options. He’d rather tell Cameron and Wynn in person. Over the phone will probably be best for the rest of the family. It would be foolish to go to New York City simply to tell Madeline. Telling Amanda in person would probably get bloody. As for his parents, well, he told them in person about becoming Wieder and he remembers all too well how that had gone. “I’ll call Cameron and Wynn and see if we can get together this week.” Monroe wants Nick to have someone like him that he can talk to through his pregnancy and his brother and sister are perfect. They can take Nick under their wings. At Nick’s worried look, Monroe smiles easily. “It’ll be fine. They’ll be happy for us, especially once they know about the pups. Once they know, we’ll set up a time for you to meet them.”

Nick is apprehensive but trusts Roe. “Okay.”

“Good. You’ll like them and it will be good for you to have other Submissives and Bearers to talk to.”

He admits to himself that it will be. Roe has been great dealing with his ignorance and his less than graceful manner of plowing his way through unfamiliar waters. But he’s the Dom in the relationship and sees everything from his own perspective. Cameron and Wynn are like Nick and could help him feel more comfortable in his own skin.

“Inter-mating is so complicated, much like intercultural mating can be for Humans. Combining two worlds into one is bound to be messy, not only for the couple but for their families too. I can see why Wesen mate with their kind. Much less drama, confusion, misunderstandings, problems, and opportunity for rejection. Or in our case, blood, violence, and possible death,” Nick says. His and Roe’s relationship has not been smooth sailing. Jumping straight into Blutbaden mating has been fraught with problems. Most prominent of those was when his rejection almost killed Roe. He imagines that bringing in Roe’s family won’t be any easier. He’s seen how Wesen react when they find out he is a Grimm. It’s either deep-seated fear or raging fight to the death violence. Blutbaden aren’t the fearful sort and Nick’s guessing Roe’s family will choose the second option. For once,
Nick is, if not happy, at least relieved that his family members are all dead. Judging by what Marie did to Roe’s great-grandmother, it would have ended with someone’s death. Nick is glad to avoid that.

Monroe sees Nick’s point but it doesn’t mean he agrees with it. “Easier, safer, maybe. But better? Absolutely not. I’d face anything for you, Nicky. Including any that oppose our mating, whether that is my family or the Secundum Naturae Ordinem Wesen.”

Nick’s brows crease in confusion. There is too much he doesn’t know about the Wesen world. Will he ever catch up? “The what?” he asks, not even attempting to echo the gibberish Roe said.

Monroe says slowly, “The Secundum Naturae Ordinem Wesen. They are an ancient Wesen organization founded in the middle ages; they’re obsessed with keeping Wesen pure. Inter-marriage and inter-matings, like ours, is a sin against nature and Wesen alike. They will not be happy about our mating.” He doesn’t care what they think though. They can hate him from afar but if they dare to attempt to hurt Nick or his pups, he’ll rip out their throats. No one will hurt his pack. Pushing that thought aside, Monroe makes a mental note to start looking for the perfect ring for his Nicky. Perhaps once they are settled into their new house, he will ask Nick to marry him. Nick has had to deal with a lot of changes thus far and Monroe doesn’t want to overwhelm him. If Nick needs more time, he’s willing to wait as long as he needs.

“Great. More enemies. Are you sure anyone is going to be happy about our mating?” Nick questions, sounding resigned.

“You have to take the good with the bad, Nicky. There are always people against change and that’s what we are: change. Our mating, our pups. We are changing the world, both yours and mine, in one fell swoop and I believe for the better. Some people fight change and some embrace it. We’ll see both; it’s foolish to expect otherwise. But we’ll have each other and our pups, our absolutely unique pups. I know that they will make the world, both worlds, better. I believe that and that’s because of us, because we are meant to be, just as our pups are meant to be.”

Nick presses closer to Roe. He fears for their pups because like Roe, he believes they will be important and like everything good, people will seek to destroy them. “I’m afraid for them.”

“The Eisbär Wächter will protect them, as will we. They will be safe, Nicky, I promise.”

He prays Roe is right. “I’ll feel better when I can meet the Eisbär Wächter and evaluate them for myself. They better be as good as you say.”

“They are or I wouldn’t trust them with our pups.”

Knowing how protective Roe is over him, Nick concludes that they must be or they wouldn’t get within a hundred feet of the pups.

Chapter End Notes

A special thanks to Wing on Ao3 for eagerly answering my questions concerning German names and words, as well as volunteering to be my German consultant (which clearly I need desperately).

I’ve already selected the three guardians, complete with names and pictures.
Focused on the pocket watch in front of him, Monroe works slowly and carefully. Hearing Nick’s footsteps stop in the doorway, he says without bothering to look back, “I called Cameron and Wynn. We’re meeting up tomorrow.”

Adam’s apple bobbing, Nick nods nervously. He’s worried about it all day. Even the case he and Hank had couldn’t keep his mind off it. Roe’s family is the only blood family their pups will ever have. Nick wants them to have extended family. To have grandparents and aunts and uncles and cousins. To have support and role models to learn and grow from. To have what he didn’t have growing up. *Holy shit, what if we die? Who the fuck is going to care for the pups?*

“Stop worrying, Nick.”

“I’m not.”

Monroe turns to meet Nick’s gaze challengingly.

Nick looks away, unable to bear his scrutiny. He’s scared and he hates it. This isn’t the life he expected but he loves Roe and their pups. Nick doesn’t want any of them to have to be isolated because he’s a Grimm. He doesn’t want Roe to lose his family because of him. Worse is the thought of obtaining more enemies. He, Roe, and the pups have enough enemies, they don’t need Roe’s family after them as well. Plus, if the worst happens, they might be the only choice for the pups.

“It will be fine. Wynn and Cameron will be happy for me and for us,” he reassures. “Have faith.” Then Monroe refocuses on finishing the watch.

Nick stares at his mate’s gentle touch. How someone as large and muscular as Roe can work with delicate grace on all the intricate parts of clocks, he doesn’t know. “I’ll try.” Knowing they have another house hunt schedule with Tamara tonight, Nick leaves Roe to complete his work. He whips up something to eat before they leave.

As Nick comes in, Monroe looks up and starts putting away his tools.

“Food’s ready.”

“Thanks, Nicky.” They eat quickly and head toward the next house Tamara scheduled.

Waiting for them on the front porch is Tamara, her smile only a little tense at the sight of Nick. “Good evening, gentlemen. Ready for another house? I think you are going to like this one.”

The house does have nice curb appeal and is close enough to a wooded area for Monroe and the pups to go running whenever they feel the urge. However, it looks a little small for their growing family. Inside, the first floor is open but the rooms are small. Upstairs, they find a decent master bedroom but no ensuite bathroom. Instead, they’d have to share with the pups and the guardians. Not ideal.

“The house is nice enough, but.” Nick looks over at Roe and continues, “this seems a little small for three kids, doesn’t it? What do you think, Roe?”
Monroe agrees. “The two other bedrooms are tiny. Fitting the triplets in one of the bedrooms isn’t possible, even as mere pups. And the Eisbär Wächter have no chance of squeezing into the other room unless you are planning on them sleeping on top of each other.”

Tamara smiles, having expected the two men to bring that up. “I realize that. The lower price of this home gives you some room to work with. The backyard is sizable, you could build an addition to create the space you need. Or you could convert the unfinished basement into bedrooms.”

“You must be joking.” He turns to Roe. “She must be joking.” Nick shakes his head in exasperation. “You can’t see it but my belly is growing. Fast. No way in hell am I dealing with pregnancy and construction at the same time. Being a Grimm and a detective and pregnant are enough to contend with. Adding the stress of construction is the last thing I want or need.”

Monroe hides a smirk. He doesn’t blame Nick in the least.

“Okay, no major renovations.”

“Definitely not,” Nick agrees firmly.

Monroe asks, “Do you have another house lined up for us to see tonight?”

“Yes. Just follow me and I’ll guide you there.”

Getting into Roe’s Bug, Nick realizes something. “What are you doing with your car? Three car seats won’t fit in it.”

“She’s a classic, Nick.”

“So you’re keeping her.”

“Once the pups are old enough, they’ll be able to fit.”

Nick rolls his eyes, not sure that will be true, especially if they inherit Roe’s stature. Even so, it will take more than a few years before they are out of car seats and boosters completely. “We’re going to have to figure out if three car seats can fit in my jeep. Even if they do, we’ll still need another vehicle. Unless you’re giving the Bug to me.”

Seeing the look on Roe’s face, Nick has his answer. “New vehicle it is.” Overwhelmed by all they still have to do, he groans. “How the hell are we going to be ready in time? We have to get a new car, new house, sell your house, move, pick guardians, buy baby things—” Suddenly, it’s too much and Nick can’t breathe.

Monroe hears his mate’s ragged breathing and immediately pulls over. He takes Nick into his arms. “Breathe, Nicky. Breathe.”

With his head buried in Roe’s chest, Nick brings himself back under control. “How are we going to do this, Roe?”

Barely hearing the muffled words, Monroe says simply, “One step at a time. We have Tamara for the houses. I have a friend that sells cars. As for the rest, we’ll get it done. Hank and Sean can help us select the guardians. Wynn and Cameron can help with the baby stuff.” He inhales Nick’s scent, smelling both the woody scent of Nick and the fresh scent of the growing pups.

Roe’s solid support draws him out of his panic attack. Nick pulls back and turns his face away, embarrassed by his freak out.
Monroe caresses the bond mark. “Everything will work out, I promise. All this stress isn’t good for the pups, Nicky. You trust me, right?”

Staring out the window, Nick mumbles, “Yes.”

“Good. Then trust me to ensure you and the pups have everything you need.” Monroe turns Nick’s head toward him with a finger under his chin and gently kisses his soft lips. “Love you.”

“I know.” It’s one of the things that keeps him going. “I love you too.”

Monroe’s phone rings and Tamara’s name pops up on his screen. “Hello.”

“Hi Monroe. I noticed you aren’t behind me any longer. Is something wrong?”

He looks over at his mate. “Not anymore.”

“Okay. I’m still on the same street, I’ll wait on the side until you catch up.” Once they are behind her again, Tamara takes them to the house. The house is on the outskirts of Portland. Monroe loves the woods surrounding the house and the relative isolation. Tamara grins internally at the expression on Monroe’s face. “The nearest neighbor is half an acre east of here.”

Monroe grins, loving the thought of having a true territory.

“Let’s go check out the inside,” Nick says. He doesn’t want to get his hopes up. With trepidation, Nick walks through the first floor with Roe. He’s impressed by the expansive kitchen, nice sized island, and new-ish appliances. The living room is large enough to fit a couple of couches or one massive L-shaped one. Nick can picture him and Roe sprawled out together on the couch, their pups on the floor playing with toys.

Entering the next room, Tamara says, “I think this would be a good place for Monroe’s workspace.”

Monroe nods, picturing his work table and all his tools in the room. It’s bigger than the one he has now. Nick can see Roe in the room, working diligently, hunched over a clock. The room beside it is a half bath.

They head upstairs to check out the bedrooms and bathrooms. The master is spacious with a luxurious ensuite bathroom. It would be a nice retreat for them. The other bedrooms are good sized, plenty of room for the triplets. Above the second floor is a large loft. In the future, it’d be the perfect space for the triplets to have a bit of privacy but for now, it would be a fitting place for the guardians. The basement is unfinished but does have good potential. They could put a bedroom or two down there, maybe a playroom or a future hangout spot for the pups. The more they see, the more they both like the house. It has room for the triplets and their guardians, as well as room to grow.

Standing out back, looking at the spacious yard, Nick looks at Roe. This is the house for them. It’s isolated and sizable enough for their growing family. He can see their pups running around in the yard without restraint. It feels like home, their home. They can be safe here. “This is it, Roe. This house is meant to be ours.”

Monroe grins, hugging Nick tightly. “I think so too, Nicky.” He turns to Tamara. “We don’t need to look any more, Tamara. This is the one.”

Tamara does a mental celebration dance. She flashes a brief smile, happy for them and for herself. “This house has been on the market for six months, a couple of offers have fallen through. The seller is motivated. I think we can get a good deal on the house.”
“We’ll trust you. Just get us the house.”

“Of course,” Tamara answers Monroe.

Relaxed but a touch nervous, Monroe steps into the cabin he shares with Wynn and Cameron. The three of them bought it years ago as a retreat for them and their families. Monroe hugs both of them hello. Cameron is a leaner, shorter and prettier version of Monroe. Wynn is a willowy 5’8”, her naturally brown hair is dyed blonde this time and she’s shaved one side of her head. Monroe tugs Wynn’s long blonde locks gently. “Interesting choice, Wynn. Looks good on you.”

She flips her hair teasingly. “I know. Evan loves it, calls me his warrior princess.”

Monroe chuckles softly. “How are your pups doing? Your mother-in-law taking care of them?”

Wynn nods. “Evan’s working. Rose is happy to take them. She’s a godsend.” She laughs, admitting, “I’m equally happy to have a break.”

Cameron grins and teases, “A break? From my angelic nephew and nieces?”

Rolling her eyes, Wynn scoffs. “Angelic, right.”

“What about you, Cameron? Austin have the kids tonight?” Monroe asks.

“He should be done soon. They’re at his sister’s until then. Austin’s plan is homework, then make some cookies.”

Monroe marvels, “I can’t believe your triplets are eight already.” Cameron had mated and had children before any of the rest of the siblings, despite being the youngest.

“I know. They’re growing up so fast. In third grade already,” Cameron says. Looking at his big brother, he questions, “When you are going to have pups of your own, Monroe?”

Monroe laughs awkwardly, rubbing his neck. “Yeah, about that.”

Wynn and Cameron narrow their eyes suspiciously. “Why exactly did you want to meet up?”

“You haven’t given up, have you?” Cameron asks.

“No, of course not,” Monroe denies. The wait has been more than worth it. He got Nick. “I, well, I found my mate.”

They stare at him dumbfounded for a moment before surging forward and hugging him. “Congratulations! We’re really happy for you.”

Cameron cannot believe Monroe has finally found his mate. He’s the last of the siblings, having had to watch each of them mate and have children. Finally, it is his turn and he deserves every bit of happiness he finds with his mate. “Tell us about your mate. We want details, Bro.”

“His name is Nick. He’s a detective in Portland. He, uh, suspected me of a child abduction case and questioned me. That’s how we met. I knew right away he was my mate.”

Cameron flashes a smile at the unusual introduction between Monroe and his mate, Nick.

“It’s been awhile since we mated.”
“Define awhile,” Wynn demands firmly.

While happy for Monroe, Cameron also realizes he’s hiding something. “Why are you reluctant to tell us about your mate?” Blutbaden love to brag about their mates, especially after recognizing them for the first time. “Why didn’t you call us right away? You two were the first people I told about Austin and Wynn was the same with Evan. What’s wrong?”

Monroe avoids his siblings’ eyes. “The thing is, Nick, well, he’s…” not knowing how else to say it, he simply blurts it out. “…a Grimm.”

The responding silence in the cabin is deafening.

“That’s not funny, Monroe.” Wynn is worried, wondering why he would make up such a ridiculous lie.

“I know it’s not. Trust me, I do. It’s the truth. Nick is a Grimm. His aunt was Marie Kessler, the one that killed our great-grandmother.”

Cameron rubs his temples, trying to make sense of it all. “You’re telling us that your mate is a Grimm. But not just any Grimm but the nephew of the Grimm that killed our great-grandmother?”

Wynn shakes her head in disgust. “Are you insane? What is the point of telling us such a lie about your mate? Humans, Grimm or not, cannot be a Blutbad’s mate.”

Monroe had known they’d be skeptical, which is why he brought proof. In a quiet but confident voice, he promises, “I’m not lying. Nick is a Grimm and he is my mate. Nicky went into heat and we mated. He’s pregnant.” He can’t help but puff up a bit in pride.

They try to wrap their brains around it but it’s impossible. Everything they know about Blutbaden through history tells them that what Monroe is saying cannot be true.

“He’s Human, male. He can’t get pregnant, even if he’s a Grimm,” Wynn states, a hint of impatience in her tone.

He pulls out his proof, Nick’s medical records and an ultrasound of the pups, and hands it to his siblings. Monroe watches closely as Cameron and Wynn scan the documents, then go back and reread more carefully. Disbelief is reflected on their faces, precisely what he expects to see; he’d look the same in their place.

“That’s not possible,” Cameron mutters, staring at the papers as if expecting the information to suddenly change but it stays the same.

Bearer: Nicholas David Burkhardt  Species: Human, Grimm  Sex: male
Father: Monroe Einhardt Neumann  Species: Blutbad  Sex: male

Cameron shakes his head. “How?”

Nothing Monroe has said or showed them makes any sense. It should be impossible. Every aspect of it. Blutbaden do not mate outside their species; even if they could, it would be another Wesen. Not a Human. Definitely not a Grimm. A male Grimm. Procreation is too important to Blutbaden for the wolf within to choose a Human male as a mate. They haven’t evolved as Wesen have. Their men can’t bear young. But Monroe has medical records proving otherwise. Monroe would have had to have lost his mind to falsify medical records, to take the lie this far. Blutbaden don’t joke about mates; they are too important.
Wynn doesn’t want to believe it. “You are serious? You’re mated to a Grimm? And he’s pregnant?”

“Yes,” Monroe answers confidently.

She stares at her brother critically, taking the light in his eyes and the contentment in his face. Monroe’s happy, truly happy, and she hasn’t seen that in far too long. Not since before the incident. “You’re happy.”

Monroe smiles, thinking of his feisty mate and their growing pups. “I am.”

Cameron smiles reflexively. “I don’t claim to understand this or how it is possible. But if you are happy, then I am happy.”

“As am I.”

Monroe gratefully accepts a hug from his siblings. “I don’t blame you for being reluctant to believe me. It’s never happened before. Blutbaden mate with Blutbaden. That is how it has always been and how we expected it to always be. But Nick changed things. He is my mate. I sensed it from the first moment we met and it has never wavered. He is mine and nothing and no one can change that. Nicky was meant for me.”

Focused on the single question Wynn needs answered, she asks, “How are you not dead?”

“Or your mate? How are you together with a Grimm?” Cameron adds, stuck on the same point: Grimms and Blutbaden don’t mix, ever. Either they kill each other or stay away from each other. Neither can exist in the same space without violence.

“Nicky’s a different type of Grimm. He didn’t know anything about our world until he became a Grimm this year. He wasn’t raised knowing we were the enemy. No learned hatred or prejudice of Wesen. Once he found out I was innocent, he had nothing against me.”

Neither Wynn nor Cameron can fathom a Grimm like that. Their experience, limited though it may be, has shown them that Grimms are Blutbaden killers and do not possess a compassionate bone in their bodies.

“He had no Grimm to learn about our world from. All he had was books and Grimm weapons his aunt left him.” Monroe shrugs. “And me.”

“You helped him? A Grimm?” Wynn questions, baffled at the mere thought.

Monroe shrugs. “He is my mate. How could I not help?”

Cameron’s expression reflects his confusion. “But how? How could you accept that a Grimm was your mate?”

“Remember how you felt when you met Austin for the first time?” Monroe asks Cameron.

Nodding, he answers, “Yes.”

“Could you have denied him? No matter what or who he was. Could you have denied your instincts?”

Cameron finally understands. It’d have been easier to cut off his own arm than it would be to deny Austin. His instincts, his senses, his wolf told him with certainty that Austin was his mate. “No, I couldn’t.”
“Nick being my mate was more important than him being a Grimm.”

“Were you worried that he’d deny you?” Wynn wonders. “He’s Human and they don’t have mates nor mating instincts like we do. They’re in and out of relationships like crazy.”

Monroe remembers how he felt in the time before he claimed Nick. “I had some worries but the more time I spent with him, the more I realized that he felt something too. Nick was in a relationship when I met him but soon, I stopped smelling her on him.”

“He didn’t immediately dump his girlfriend and you didn’t kill her?” Cameron asks in disbelief. “Wow, Monroe. Either you had serious faith in him coming to you or your restraint knows no bounds.”

“My wolf wouldn’t choose the wrong mate. It was hard to know he was with her but I had faith he would be mine. I would have lost him if I attacked or killed her; Nick wouldn’t have understood why. I had to be patient even if it happened slower than I hoped. Nicky’s body changed for me and he went into heat. And I knew it was finally time to claim him as mine.”

Wynn’s amazed. Her brother is breaking traditions. Of all her siblings, Monroe is the best suited for bucking traditions. He did it in becoming Weider and he’s doing it again with his mate. “How is your mate dealing with this?”

“It’s been hard on him but he’s coping as best he can. He was Human before, ignorant of Wesen. Then suddenly he’s thrown into our world. He’s a Grimm, learning about Wesen. Our mating was a lot for him to deal with. The heat, the mating, and the pregnancy.”

Wynn says, “Wow, he must have freaked out.”

Putting himself in Nick’s shoes, Cameron mutters softly, “I know I would.”

Monroe chuckles, admitting, “He did. Has more than once, not that I blame him. His world was rocked with our mating. Human males don’t have mates, don’t go into heat, and certainly aren’t capable of getting pregnant.”

“I still don’t understand how he got pregnant,” Cameron admits.

Monroe concedes with a shrug, “Neither does our doctor. The moment I realized Nick was my mate, things change. Our mating brought change, not only in Nick, who has the body of a bearer now, but in our world.”

Wynn and Cameron understand what he’s saying. A male Blutbad mating with a male Grimm breaks the long held truth that Blutbaden only find true mates with Blutbaden. And the Grimm’s sudden biological change brings up more questions. The most important being: are Nick and Monroe an exception or the beginning of an evolution.

Analyzing her triplet’s face, Wynn guesses, “You believe you and your mate are only the beginning, don’t you?”

“I know it. Nick’s boss and his partner have mated. A Zauberbiest and a Human. They are soul bound. And our pups, they will be the first of their kind. There’s never been a Blutbad-Grimm hybrid before.”

Cameron scrunches his face, wondering, “Has there been any sort of Grimm hybrid before?”

“Don’t think so,” Wynn answers thoughtfully.
Cameron’s expression turns worried. “Aren’t you worried about that? Your pups will be targeted.” It isn’t a question; once it gets out that Grimm hybrids exist, they will be targeted.

Monroe’s facade of absolute confident breaks at his Cameron’s obvious concern. He’s held it together for Nick, not wanting to add his worries to Nick’s, especially considering all his mate has to deal with. But he is afraid for his pups. “I fear for them. They’ll be incredibly vulnerable as they grow. Nick and I both have enemies. Mating only makes that number larger. Having pups…” He cannot finish the thought aloud but his thoughts voice his fear that having pups were a mistake. He loves them with everything he has but wonders if he is wrong to bring children into a world that will seek their deaths. “Their existence alone will be seen as a threat. To Grimms. To Wesens. To Humans. They will face threats on all sides.” Monroe looks to his right, staring out the cabin window. “I will do everything I can to protect them but I can’t guarantee their safety.” He feels Cameron’s comforting arms wrap around him and Monroe almost breaks. Wynn’s arms join Cameron’s and then Monroe does break. He cries in the tender arms of his siblings, releasing every fear and emotion he buried inside to keep strong for Nick.

Cameron strokes his hair comfortingly as if he was one of his own children. “No parent can guarantee their child’s safety, Monroe,” he soothes. “It’s futile at best and reckless at worst to believe differently.”

Kissing his temple, Wynn’s heart aches for her brother. “Your pups are a gift, created by the love you and your mate share. Don’t let fear lessen the joy and happiness you feel for your pups’ birth. You have so much love to give, Brother, and those pups could not find a better father and protector than you.”

Monroe can feel her words shiver over his skin.

“Wynn’s right. This is a joyous occasion and fear has no place here. Fate brought your mate to you. Believe fate will provide the protection your pups will need.”

*Cameron is right. Fate brought me Nick. Fate meant for us to have our pups. If I believe that they will bring change, I must have trust in the guardians, in Nick, in myself, and everyone fate puts into our lives to protect them.* Something loosens inside him at the realization. Monroe takes a deep breath, holding it for several beats and then releases it slowly. A weight lifts from his shoulders. He straightens, slowly easing out of their arms. “Thank you, both of you.”

“You know we’re always here for you. No matter what.”

Cameron nods in agreement. “Just as you are always there for us.”

“We know you. You’ve always been protective and we know you’d do anything to protect your mate,” Wynn says.

“You were wound too tight, trying to hide all your worries from your mate because you think he needs you to be strong and sure when he’s weak and insecure.”

His brother and sister see right through him. They know exactly what he’s been doing. Nick is still reeling from everything involved in their mating and the pregnancy. Nick’s stressed enough, he didn’t want to add any more stress. “You two know me too well.”

Wynn and Cameron look at each other and smile. “We do. That’s why I’m going to tell you something all Dominants should know.”

Cameron’s smile turns into a grin and he continues Wynn’s thought. “Submissives aren’t weak.”
“I know that,” Monroe interrupts.

Wynn challenges, “Then why are you hiding your worries from him? You and Nick should be a team.”

“Nick has enough to worry about,” he protests weakly.

“Yes, he does but that’s exactly why you should share. You are mates, partners in life. It’s you two against the world. Nick doesn’t need to be appeased, he can handle your worries. Just imagine how he’s going to feel when he finds out you’ve been keeping things from him,” Wynn shoots back. Before Monroe can answer, Wynn continues, “You said he’s a detective, right?”

Monroe nods, not sure where Wynn’s going with his question.

“Plus, he’s a Grimm. Monroe, your mate is a protector by nature. He needs a partner, not a protector,” Wynn explains.

Shaking his head, Monroe furrows his brow. “But he is my partner.”

Cameron decides to employ another tactic. “Your Nick, he’s used to be strong, in charge. He’s a detective and a Grimm. He’s used to being powerful. Until you and then suddenly he’s a Submissive. Probably for the first time in his life. That couldn’t have been easy for him. If you treat him like he needs protection…” Cameron trails off, giving Monroe the opportunity to finish the thought.

Monroe only wanted to lessen Nicky’s load; he hadn’t considered how Nick would feel or react to him hiding his worries. He strokes his beard, regret and guilt flaring in his gut. Because Cameron’s right once again. “Being a Submissive hasn’t been easy to accept for Nick and the last thing I want is for Nick to believe that I don’t respect him or believe he’s weak.”

“Then show him. Show him that you trust him and his opinion. Show him that you aren’t without doubts and fears and worries. Trust him with your vulnerabilities. That is what he needs most,” Cameron explains.

Wynn agrees, nodding her head sharply. “Nick is bound to be overwhelmed right now and feeling vulnerable himself. If he can see that you aren’t invulnerable, then perhaps he’ll feel less reluctant to expose his own vulnerabilities.”

Monroe’s head bobs slowly. They’re right; protection isn’t what his Nicky needs most. No, he needs to know Monroe isn’t perfect or without worry or fear. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. “I love you guys. You both are going to be so good for Nicky. Say you’ll meet him. I promise he won’t hurt you.”

“If you’d have asked that yesterday, I would have thought you crazy. But I see how much you love him and I trust you. So, yes, I’ll meet him,” Wynn says with a touch of reluctance. Blutbaden don’t willingly meet Grimms; any that would either have a death wish or are certifiably insane.

Monroe beams. “Thank you, Sis.” Although he understands Wynn’s viewpoint, Monroe has never seen Nick like that. To him, he isn’t a Grimm first and his mate second. Nick is his mate first and foremost. He doesn’t view Nick the way he does other Grimms. Nicky is his love, his mate, his soul, his everything. He can’t see him as a threat. “Nick won’t harm you. He doesn’t want to hurt any of my family and he won’t. Not unless he’s attacked first.”

“Promise?”
He turns to Cameron. “Yes.” Monroe answers confidently. “Nick didn’t want me to tell the family at first. And you know why?”

“Why?”

“Because he feared having to hurt or kill one of you to protect himself and the pups. He was afraid that I’d leave him because of it.”

Both of their expressions are sympathetic. For Blutbaden, it’s an accepted truth that mates are held sacred above all else.

Monroe’s smile is pained. “That’s why I want you to meet him so badly. Nick needs to see other Blutbaden mates, to learn about us. I want to destroy that insecure part of him that fears I’ll leave him.”

“You can count on us, Monroe. I’ll talk to Austin.”

“And I’ll talk to Evan.”

“And then we’ll meet him. Help ease him into our world,” Cameron finishes.

Monroe sighs, relieved. “Thank you.”

Theresa Rubel, aka Trubel, watches from the bushes as the monster and the other man come back to the house again. She wonders if the shorter man knows what the other ‘man’ is. Truthfully, she doesn’t really know herself; all Trubel knows is that they have faces and sometimes bodies of monsters and when they see her, they try to kill her. These monsters with strange, animalistic faces are everywhere. She can’t escape them or their violent reaction to her.

If the monster decides to attack the other man, she knows he won’t have a chance. The first time she’d been attacked, she only survived by luck. It’s a shock to the system to see real life monsters right in front of you. And the monsters are strong, fast, and deadly. She is frankly surprised she is still alive herself.

Wondering if she should find somewhere to sleep tonight, Theresa is about to leave when the two men come out. She watches as they head into the woods and quietly follows, trying to stay far enough away that the monster won’t smell her.

Trubel loses sight of them for a moment as they go deeper into the woods. Then she hears what she’s feared she would: the sounds of fighting. *I knew it. The monster lured the man out into the woods to kill him.*

Theresa yells as she charges forward, pulling out the knives she stole recently to protect herself. She bursts through the trees and lunges toward the monster, yelling, “Get off him, you monster!”

The monster’s face turns back to Human and he looks surprised as he dodges her attacks. “What the hell?” he says, sounding confused.

Trubel bares her teeth, ignoring him. Instead, she continues to lunge at him, using the skills she’s learned over the years to try to stab the monster. Theresa is determined to survive and with luck, save the other man from the monster as well. Suddenly, the knives are ripped from her hands and she’s wrestled to the ground, her arms wrenched behind her back. *Shit.* She fears this is her end. The monster will take advantage of her weakness and kill both her and the man.
Nick is shocked by the sight of a furious young woman charging toward Roe with knives in hand, screaming like a banshee. He has no idea who she is but he doesn’t care. She’s after his mate. Nick rips the weapons from her hands and tackles her, pulling her arms behind her back. He leans on her wrists, pinning them to the ground. Nick looks over at Roe, his heart pounding. “You okay, Roe?”

Monroe swallows, still looking baffled but appears uninjured. “Yeah, Nicky. I’m fine.”

Nick leans over the woman, hissing, “Who the fuck are you?”

“No shit, you’re trouble. What is your name?”

She wiggles, stilling when he growls and presses her harder into the ground. “My name is Trubel. It’s a nickname.”

“What are you doing here? Why did you attack Monroe?”

Trubel sneers. “I was trying to save your ass, you moron. That thing,” she says, jutting her chin at Monroe, “is a monster.”

Nick looks at Roe, then back at the woman called Trubel. “Why do you think he’s a monster?” he asks suspiciously.

Trubel remains silent.

Nick nudges her. “Tell me why you think he is a monster.”

“You won’t believe me.”

“Try me.”

Trubel huffs a sigh. “He’s not Human.”

Nick’s brows rise in surprise and shares a glance with Roe. “What is he then?” he asks, wondering if she’s going to say he’s Wesen or Blutbaden.

She drops her head in defeat. “I don’t know what he is. Just that he’s not Human. His face,” Trubel says, pausing before admitting, “can change.”

Monroe looks at Nick, both of them thinking the same thing. “Let’s get her up on her knees, Nick.” Together, they lift the struggling woman up to her knees.

Trubel sneers at them in an attempt to hide her fear.

Monroe grips her chin, forcing her to look at him. Then, he rolls his head and woges.

Trubel tenses, preparing for an attack. Monroe fights against his instinctive desire to roar or attack at the sight of her eyes turning black, which taints his words as he growls, “She’s a Grimm.”

Nick loosens his hold in shock and only just grabs Trubel before she can escape. “She is?” He looks at her. “You are?”
Trubel tries to rip herself away but can’t. “I don’t know what that is,” she says, sounding frustrated. “The monsters like him always call me that but I don’t know why. I don’t know what it means.”

“You don’t know what a Grimm is?” Nick asks.

She huffs, resigned to being trapped with a monster and a stranger. “No. Monsters call me it before they either try to kill me or run like I’m the devil incarnate.”

“That’s because to them, the ‘monsters’ as you call them, you are,” Nick explains. “The monsters you are referring to are called Wesen. Monroe, here, is a type called a Blutbad.”

Trubel stares at Nick. “How do you know that?”

“Because I’m like you. I can see Wesen, their true form, just as you can. We are called Grimms.”

“I’m not crazy?” Desperation oozes from her.

Nick’s expression turns sympathetic. “No.” How hard it must have been to see something no one else can and be compelled to question your own sanity.

She sags in relief. *I’m not crazy. There are others just like me. I’m not alone in this.*

Nick feels for her. He was lucky enough to find Roe early on, which helped him deal with being thrust into this new world. It seems Trubel wasn’t as fortunate. Obviously, she’s had to go through this alone. No one to confide in; no one to help her deal with it or understand it. No one to help her survive. She must have felt painfully alone. Nick wants to help her. He’s counting on her need for knowledge overriding her fear. “If we let you go, will you stay and listen? We’ll tell you everything you want to know about this. And I promise Monroe will not harm you.”

Trubel glances at Monroe, who does his best to look harmless, and considers her answer carefully. But she can’t pass up this opportunity. “Okay.”

Just as Nick had hoped, Trubel appears too desperate for knowledge to want to run. He and Roe release her, she scrambles back a few steps and then stops.

“What’s a Grimm?”

Nick isn’t surprised that her first question is about who and what she is. “We are an ancient order. I’ll spare you the history lesson. Suffice it to say, Grimms are protectors. Historically of humanity. We protect Humans from Wesens, typically by killing the Wesen in whatever way necessary.”

Monroe scoffs.

Nick glares at him, then continues his explanation. “It passes down through blood, the ability to become a Grimm. Although not everyone becomes one. My mother and my aunt were Grimms.”

“Actually, no. My parents died when I was eleven. I was raised by my aunt after that. Neither of them told me anything about Grimms growing up.”

Trubel’s forehead creases in annoyed disbelief. “Seriously?”

“Yeah,” Nick says with a shrug. It is what it is, he’s not bitter about it. Nick knows from Vivian who he could have been had he learned from his aunt. He’s relieved not to be that man.
“Did you at least get to talk to your aunt about it once you saw your first mons—” Trubel glances over at Monroe before finishing, “I mean, Wesen?”

“Yeah, a bit. I thought I was hallucinating when I suddenly starting seeing ‘monster’ faces on regular people. Marie, my aunt, dropped the bomb about my heritage. Told me I was a Grimm, that’s why I saw people’s faces change. That’s just how it happens, I guess. One day, you’re a regular person, the next, you’re a Grimm.”

Trubel nods. “I was a kid when I saw them for the first time.” She stares off into space, remembering it clearly in her mind. Trubel looks at Nick, a thoughtful expression on her face, likely realizing for the first time she can talk about what happened with someone that will believe her. “A local handyman asked me for help but the moment I stepped inside the garage, he grabbed me. His face changed before my eyes. I couldn’t believe my eyes But then he attacked me and it didn’t matter anymore if I believed it or not. It didn’t matter that I didn’t understand what was happening. All I knew was that he wanted to hurt me and if I wanted to survive, I had to fight back. I grabbed a screwdriver to defend myself. Somehow, I managed to fend him off without killing him. He was the first but he wasn’t the last.”

*She must have been terrified.* Nick can’t imagine it. Being just a child and seeing a real life monster before your eyes that then tries to kill you. *How has Trubel kept herself sane all these years? Seeing but not knowing?* His Grimm traits triggering was tame in comparison. Despite realizing it’s meaningless, Nick apologizes. He can’t erase her memories and he suspects she has too many similar memories.

Trubel shrugs off Nick’s apology, having long ago accepted her life being fraught with danger. “Not your fault. Just the way things are.”

Nick can practically hear her thinking “at least for me.” The hard life the young woman in front of him must have had is humbling. She is maybe twenty years old if that. Nick feels guilty for how he reacted to the changes in his life this year. He’s dealt with a lot but he knew what and who he was. Nick also had Roe beside him. Trubel knew nothing and had no one. *Until now.*

Confirming what she already knows, Nick says, “The life of a Grimm is dangerous.”

“No shit,” Trubel shoots back.

“Life of Wesen isn’t exactly all sunshine and roses either,” Monroe challenges quietly, feeling the need to insert his perspective as the only Wesen present.

Nick smirks at both their replies but quickly sober. “Trubel, I can help you to understand who we are and what we do. I think it’s safe to say you’ve had a lot of bad experience with Wesen.”

Trubel gives a sharp, bitter bark of laughter. “That’s a bit of an understatement,” she mutters.

“I’m sure you think they’re all like that. Violent. Dangerous. But you’re wrong. I admit quite a few of the Wesen I’ve encountered have been dangerous and violent, murderers even. Yet, I’ve also met Wesen that are just like regular people. They want to live their lives, try to raise their children to grow up to be good people. They don’t want to hurt anyone. Some Wesen are prey for other, more predatory Wesen.”

Trubel concludes, “They must be the runners. I met a few of those. Though mostly just the ones that try to kill me.”

“I’ve been a Grimm less time than you have but what I do have that you lack is knowledge. I have
books from my ancestors, a bit of knowledge from my aunt before she died, my own experience, and Roe’s too of course.”

“You’re offering to what? Mentor me?” She asks in a suspicious tone.

Nick wonders when was the last time someone offered to help Trubel in even the slightest of ways. She’s a hardened young woman, used to only relying on herself. “Yes, that’s exactly what I’m offering. You are always going to be a Grimm. There’s no changing that. If circumstances had been different, you would have been trained and taught by your family, whoever you inherited the Grimm blood from.”

Trubel snorts. “That would have been helpful.”

“Yeah, it would have been. For both of us,” Nick admits, although he does know the possible downside of that training: being turned into a merciless cold-blooded killer. He sighs. “Look. I want to help you. I have a trailer filled with books from my Grimm ancestors. You can spend all the time you want with them. They have names, descriptions, strengths and weaknesses of the types of Wesen, how to kill them if known. The trailer is filled with weapons and all sorts of crazy but useful things in bottles.”

Trubel’s eyes light up with interest before returning to her default suspicious expression. “What are you getting out of this?”

Nick and Monroe share a look, both wondering what they should tell her exactly. Probably not ideal to blurt out Nick’s pregnancy. “Having another Grimm around can’t hurt.”

“What Nick isn’t saying is that having another Grimm like him can’t hurt. Nick isn’t like other Grimms. He isn’t looking to slaughter every Wesen he comes across like other Grimms have done for centuries. You see us as monsters but Wesen feel the same about Grimms. To us, you are our greatest threat,” Monroe explains. “But Nick is giving Wesen hope. If some of that could rub off on you, we’d have at least two Grimms that would be capable of showing mercy to Wesen.”

“We have a guest room you could stay in,” Nick offers.

“You want me to stay with you. Both of you.” Trubel eyes Monroe carefully.

He offers a reassuring smile. “You’re welcome to stay with us.”

Trubel doesn’t appear too sure about staying in the same house as a Wesen but she has nowhere else to stay and needs to learn about the Wesen and Grimm world. There’s no greater place for her to do that than in Nick and Monroe’s home. “What exactly is your deal? The pair of you?”

Another look flashes between the men. It’s not an easy thing to explain to someone that knows nothing of their world. “A good portion of Wesen have destined mates. Blutbaden, what I am, are one of them. We take our mates seriously and to reject or deny your mate is unthinkable. Nick is my mate.”

Trubel looks back and forth in disbelief. “How does that work with him being a Grimm and you being Wesen? Aren’t you supposed to be mortal enemies or something?”

Monroe grins. “We are. But he’s my mate and that makes him more important than anything else. Including the centuries-old feud between our people.”

“You’re real life Montagues and Capulets.”
Monroe chuckles. “I suppose we are. I warned Romeo that Juliet would be the end of him but he wouldn’t listen.” Then he walks away, leaving Nick and Trubel stunned.

“Is he being serious?”

Nick shrugs, smiling at his mate’s retreating back, answering, “He’s older than he looks.” He follows Roe, still smiling.

Trubel stands frozen, unsure what to think about anything. Simply trying to process their offer, their relationship, and Monroe’s declaration. Shaking off her confusion and shock, she scrambles to catch up. Trubel watches with interest as Monroe stops to wait for Nick, face softened with fondness as he gazes at Nick.

Monroe hugs Nick, kissing his temple lightly. He waits for Trubel to approach before speaking. “Made a decision yet?”

She stares back and forth between the two men. Her mind working like crazy.

“I’ll take that as a no. I know you don’t know or trust us. You have no reason to. We’re strangers to you and I look like the monsters you’ve been battling for years. I can promise that you are worth far more to us alive than dead.” He turns to stare at Nick and says without looking away from his mate, “Nick is my life. And I would be thankful if Nick had another Grimm watching his back. Another pair of eyes, ones that can see Wesen as he can, could be the difference between life and death in the coming months.”

Nick knows how much Monroe worries about him and the pups he carries, especially with only Hank as backup. He breaks their gaze to address Trubel with a shrug and a smile. “He worries. I’m not only a Grimm, which is dangerous enough. I’m also a homicide detective. My partner knows what I am and what Roe is. He knows about the Wesen world but he can’t see them. He doesn’t have the Grimm traits that we do that help us fight Wesen either. We’re stronger and faster, have better reaction time and instincts than regular Humans do. This arrangement can benefit us all. I have another Grimm to help deal with trouble Wesen. You gain knowledge, training, and a place to stay. And Roe gets a bit of reassurance by me having a Grimm at my back.”

Trubel takes a moment to think about it. As they said, it’s a win-win. “Okay.”

Nick is a bit surprised at how easily she agrees.

“I want to see the books you talked about.”

Theresa Rubel reels from what she’s learned. She knows what she is and what the monsters are. For the first time in her life, she knows she isn’t crazy or alone in her abilities. Nick is like her and he isn’t the only one. People like her have existed in the world for centuries, successfully hiding from the ignorant world. Theresa has never realized how good it feels to know that. She’s lived in a private war for years, having no knowledge of how or why. Through Nick and Monroe, she now understands. She is a Grimm and the enemy is Wesen. It’s a war of survival and protection. Theresa thanks her lucky stars that she spotted Monroe and decided to follow him and Nick into the woods.

She isn’t ready to completely let down her guard but her instincts tell her that Nick and Monroe can be trusted. That’s quite the revelation for him considering who Monroe is. Yet, she saw the love in the big man’s eyes for Nick. He’s a man that would do anything for Nick. As he said, she is more useful to him alive than dead.
On the drive to the trailer, she and Nick get to know each other a bit better. They share some Wesen experiences. Theresa finds the names for the Wesen Nick’s encountered to be strange and concludes the terminology will take a bit getting used to. Nick even has some names for the Wesen she has encountered, based upon her descriptions of them.

“Well, here we are,” Nick announces. “Come on in.”

Theresa follows him, gaping as she steps inside. The little thing is stuffed full. Nick shows her the weapons first and wow, are there a lot of them. Ancient ones and new ones. It’s incredible.

“Pretty awesome, right?”

Looking over the weapons, Theresa nods. “Yeah.”

“We’ll have to test some of them out. See what type of weapon fits you best. I prefer a gun or a crossbow myself.”

Theresa bites her lip, her eyes drawn to the big machete. “I’d prefer a blade of some sort. I had some top of the line blades a while back but I lost them in a fight. I haven’t had a chance to replace them with ones of the same quality yet.”

“Well, judging from the way you’re staring at that machete, that’s the one you want to use,” Nick says, amused. “Take it. It’s yours.”

Theresa’s lips quirk up into a grin. “You’re sure?”

“Yup.”

“Thanks.” She takes the machete and its case. Theresa has to restrain herself from giving it a few swings, at least until she gets back outside.

Nick smiles at her apparent joy at the weapon. “Have you ever shot a gun?”

“No.” Wesen, at least the ones that have attacked her, tend to do so with their natural weapons: claws, fangs, supernatural strength, etc. She’s never had the chance to shoot a gun.

“Grimms seem to have natural fighting skills, so I would guess it won’t take you long before you’re a crack shot. Even if you decide guns aren’t your thing, you’ll at least have that as an option if you need it in the future.”

Theresa nods. She is more drawn to hand to hand type weapons but knowing how to shoot can’t hurt.

“Oh, enough about weapons. Let’s dive into the books. I haven’t read through them all either. Mostly, I have been learning about the different Wesens as I encounter them. Roe’s knowledge helps a lot to identify Wesen I don’t know. Rosalee helps too.”

Theresa half listens as she opens a book. It’s amazing. Drawn images and handwritten information fill the pages. “Who’s Rosalee?”

“Oh, she runs a local spice shop. Mostly Wesen clientele. She is a Fuchsbau.” Nick rummages around until he finds the book he’s looking for. “Looks like this.”

Theresa looks at the drawing. Fuchsbau look a bit cute and cuddly.

“We’ll probably see her soon; I’ll introduce you.”
She isn’t worried about meeting this Rosalee. She’s faced much more dangerous Wesen in the past.

Theresa jumps into the books, devouring the information eagerly. She doesn’t know how long she loses herself in the books before she is brought out by the sound of Nick’s stomach growling loudly. Theresa looks up and Nick looks embarrassed at the interruption. Before she can say anything, her own stomach growls. They look at each other laugh.

“We’d better get back. I’m sure Roe has something good waiting for us. Take a book to study at the house, if you want.”

Theresa scans a couple of books before taking one. “Thanks.” With machete in one hand and book in the other, she feels happy and hopeful. Things are looking up for her.

Chapter End Notes

Well, I spent an entire day mapping out the rest of this story and a good chunk of the sequel (yes, there definitely will be a sequel), something I’ve never tried to do before. This story will have at minimum seven more chapters. I’m guessing more because I had seven more things planned for this chapter. The process sparked some new, good ideas. I just might have found Wu’s pairing. It won’t happen for a while though.

The other thing I got done is I picked pics for all the characters. I’ve made cover art of them for a chapter, so you can see how I see them. As always, feel free to image them however you like, whether that be as the canon actors or whoever. I’ll post the art soon.
This is how I see the characters. As always, if you want to picture them as the actors from the show, feel free.
Meeting the Family

Chapter Notes

Pflichttreue are white panther-like Wesen. They tend to be smart, fearless, and extremely loyal. Balam are jaguar-like Wesen. Their behavior is explained within the chapter.

My biggest Sean/Hank fan is to blame for the first scene with Hank and Sean. You know who you are.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After they eat, Nick shows Trubel her room, for the time being, leaving her to get settled. Then he trudges toward the bedroom he shares with Roe. Being pregnant makes the days feel longer. Nick strips his shirt and pants off the second he closes the door. He heads straight for his potion and throws it back like a shot; Nick sighs in relief as his body changes back. “I don’t know if I’ll ever get used to that.”

Monroe smiles, admiring the now visible swell of Nick’s belly. “Feels weird?”

“You have no idea. I look different but my body feels the same.” He can’t imagine how it will feel when he’s at the end of his pregnancy. It’s something he tries to avoid thinking about. Nick tiredly drags his body over to Roe, enjoying Roe’s eager hands rubbing his stomach.

“How’d it go with Trubel?”

He sprawls out on the bed. “Good. She’s eager to learn. No surprise there.” The more knowledge a Grimm has the better his or her chances to survive. Both he and Trubel are smart enough to realize that. Trubel will be an eager pupil as long as she doesn’t let free win and run.

Monroe curls around Nick, his hand lying protectively over their growing pups. Nick glances at him to see adoration plain on his face and he smiles softly at the sight. Roe will be a great father.

Monroe is persistent, which will be an asset as a parent. Nick has unfortunately seen it in action recently. It’ll be great for dealing with the pups but it wasn’t exactly fun for him having it turned on him. He’d done his best to avoid talking about Roe’s getting together with his sister and brother and was successful for a short time but eventually, Roe had enough. Nick was stunned that they took it fairly well and that they accept him as Roe’s mate. Yet, he was most taken aback by Roe’s confession of his fears. Knowing that he isn’t the only one afraid of the threats to the pups is validating. He feels better knowing that he isn’t the only one that fears for their triplets.

“I’ve been looking through the Guardian list,” Monroe whispers between kisses to Nick’s bare skin.

Nick has glanced through the list but nothing more than that. “And?”

“A few standouts,” Monroe states. “Maybe this weekend we could narrow down the list together? Then next week, have Hank and Sean come over to help us chose three.”

Nick nods. Choosing the Guardians is a good step in feeling more secure for when the pups come. Word hasn’t spread much about his pregnancy in the Wesen world but it will get out. They need to be prepared for that eventuality. *Between me and Roe and Trubel and the Guardians in the house,*
the pups should be quite safe.* Suddenly, Nick realizes something. *Trubel.* Nick had hoped to ease Trubel into things but with his pregnancy rapidly growing, it isn’t going to happen. “We’re going to have to tell Trubel. She can’t find out by accident, which seems likely with her living with us. She needs to know about the Guardians and the threats that will be coming our way when word spreads.”

“I’m afraid you’re right. Let’s hope she can deal with it.” What they’ll do if she can’t, Monroe has no idea.

“If she could survive her life thus far without going insane, she can deal with a little male pregnancy.” Nick sighs, his eyelids feel heavy. “We’ll tell her tomorrow. Let her have a good night’s rest before we drop the pregnancy bomb.”

“Okay, Nicky.” Monroe pauses, thinking about tomorrow. “Are you taking her to work with you?”

“Yeah. I’ll talk to Hank and Sean in the morning. With their okay, we’ll pass her off as a criminology student.” Trubel isn’t comfortable enough to stay home alone with Roe, not yet at least, and shadowing Nick she’ll learn plenty about the Wesen world. Nick moves Roe around until he finds a comfortable position and immediately falls asleep.

Monroe wakes up at the sound of movement in the house. He checks Nick, who is sleeping soundly. He strokes the swell of his stomach lightly and eases out of bed. Monroe prowls silently downstairs, his woged red eyes glowing in the darkness. A growl rumbles in his chest at movement in the living room. Then he spots someone. “Going somewhere?” Monroe inquires in a deep voice.

Trubel freezes, her bag slung over her shoulder. She turns slowly to face him, subtly moving into a fighting stance.

Monroe doesn’t comment on her posture and readiness. He blinks and his eyes go back to normal. He flicks on the light and wonders aloud, “Leaving us already?”

She clears her throat, forcing herself to meet Monroe’s eyes. “Thinking about it.”

He relaxes against the wall, his eyes roaming over his clocks. “You aren’t a prisoner here. If you want to leave, that’s your choice.”

Trubel releases the breath she has been holding. “I can just leave then. You won’t stop me?”

“I won’t stop you but don’t do it in the middle of the night without saying anything to Nick. He wants to help you and sneaking out in the middle of the night while he’s sleeping isn’t the way to repay that, even if you are going to refuse his help.”

She nods sharply, realizing he’s right. “Alright.”

“May I ask why you’re leaving? Is it me?”

Trubel appears reluctant to speak to him.

Monroe feels bad for the eighteen-year-old. She’s been thrown to the wolves and probably distrusts Nick’s offer to help. “I won’t hurt you.”

“Why should I believe you? All Wesen seem to do is want to kill Grimms,” Trubel bites out bitterly. She has every reason to distrust Monroe and none to believe him.
“Nick is why you should believe me. He knows my past, all the ugly details, including the one that made me change who I am and wanted to be. He knows who and what I am now. Nick wouldn’t have you stay here if he didn’t trust me with you. He’s a protector and he will protect you, even if you don’t trust him to.”

Trubel stares at him. “You really love him.”

“Yes,” Monroe states simply. “Without him, I am nothing.” He feels no shame in admitting that because it is the truth. Nicky and their pups are his life.

She’s never seen love like that between two people before. Her short life has been filled with examples of hate and of selfish fleeting love, not the lasting, devoted love that Monroe has for Nick or that Nick has for Monroe.

“You don’t trust us, either of us, and I don’t expect you to. Not right away at least. But know we are offering to help you. We can teach you about Wesen, what they are, how to identify them how they behave, their strengths and weaknesses, how to defend yourself from them, how to kill them. We are offering you more than a place to live and food to eat. We are offering you the knowledge that can save your life.”

Trubel shifts her weight uncomfortably. She realizes that this chance may be her only chance to learn about who she is and who her enemy is. Her only chance to learn from someone like her and to have another Grimm protecting her back.

Monroe holds her gaze and concludes softly, “You have to learn to trust someone, sometime, Trubel. Or else you are going to live a very lonely life.” The ‘and a very short one’ is left unsaid. Not waiting for a response, Monroe says a quiet goodnight and leaves Trubel standing in the living room to decide whether she is going to run or stay and learn.

Monroe looks up from the book he’s reading when Nick and Trubel walk in. “How was the first day?”

Nick and Trubel share a look. “Eventful.”

Monroe figured, judging by the time they dragged themselves in. At least they both came home, relatively unscathed. “There’s food in the fridge if you’re hungry.”

Nick drops himself tiredly in Roe’s lap while Trubel investigates the fridge. He lays his head on Roe’s shoulder, relaxing in his embrace. Nick sighs when Roe’s fingers start to work the tension from his neck and shoulders.

“Sean must have okayed Trubel working with you and Hank.”

Groaning as his muscles relax under Roe’s strong fingers, Nick answers, “Yeah. He seemed almost relieved to have someone else to watch Hank’s back.”

Monroe sits Nick up to better massage his muscles. “Does Trubel know about Sean?”

“Yup, although he didn’t woge for her.” Sean has more self-control than most Wesen he’s encountered. If not for Hank, Nick probably still wouldn’t know Sean is Wesen.

“Probably for the best. Zauberbiests aren’t the easiest to look at unless you’re a fellow Zauberbiest or Hexenbiest.”
Nick shudders, remembering the look of Sean’s woge. “Don’t know how Hank takes it, knowing what Sean looks like when he woges. It’s…” he searches for the right word, “disturbing.”

Monroe shrugs. “He loves Sean. He probably wonders the same about you and me.” He feels Nick twitch under his fingertips. Monroe glances over, not seeing Trubel. He leans close to Nick. “I bet I could fuck you woged and you’d cum like an eager virgin.”

A shiver runs down Nick’s spine, picturing it easily in his mind. It shouldn’t make him hot but it’s Roe. Everything about him, even him woged face, inflames his lust. *Maybe Hank feels the same about Sean.*

Chuckling darkly, Monroe taunts, “You like that idea.”

Nick doesn’t attempt to deny it, not with hormones flooding his body. “Yes.”

“Big strong Grimm getting taken by his wolf,” he teases haltingly. His fingers sneak under his shirt and tweak Nick’s nipple.

Nick moans and grinds his ass slowly into Roe’s lap.

“Naughty, naughty, Nicky. Do you want Trubel to hear you? See what a wanton creature you become under my touch?”

He is a breath away from throwing caution to the winds and begging Roe to fuck him right here. Then Nick hears Trubel moving around in the kitchen. “Damn it.” He groans in resignation. “Later.”

“Promise. We can play little red riding Grimm later,” Monroe vows huskily.

Trubel walks in, stops short and stands awkwardly near the couch, lust tangible in the air. “Uh, I can take a walk or something?”

Nick waves off her offer. “There’s something we wanted to talk to you about actually. Take a seat.”

Theresa sinks into a chair and eyes them warily. “What did you want to talk about?”

Monroe and Nick exchange a look. “We were going to wait to tell you about this but we can’t. You’re going to find out and it’s best we tell you before you discover it by accident,” Nick explains. Her finding out by accident would be a disaster.

His words only serve to make her feel more on edge.

Nick turns to Roe. “Show and then tell? Or tell and then show?”

Monroe thinks about it. “Tell. Then show.”

Trubel appears ready to flee, wondering what the hell they are going to tell her. After their relative nonchalance at revealing the Wesen world to her, she wonders at their apprehension and reluctance at sharing the information they are hiding from her.

“Wesen biology works differently than ours does.” Nick winces slightly, realizing that technically his biology is more Wesen now than Human.

“Okay,” Theresa responds, wondering where the hell he’s going with this.

Monroe takes over. “In the Wesen world, gender and biology are more...flexible and inclusive. We have evolved in ways that Humans have not.”
Fed up with them dancing around the issue, she challenges, “Just tell me. All this vague shit is getting old.”

“Wesen males are able to become pregnant,” Monroe states frankly.

Trubel bursts out in laughter at the absurdity of that declaration. “Real funny, guys. You got me. What did you actually want to tell me?”

Nick and Monroe share another look. “We’re serious.”

She turns to Nick. “Come on, he’s kidding, right?”

Nick purses his lips and looks away, unable to maintain eye contact with her. “No.” He firms his resolve and meets her disbelieving eyes. “Wesen men can get pregnant, they’re called bearers.”

Trubel tries to picture it but can’t wrap her mind around it. “That’s just bizarre. How is it possible? More importantly, how the hell have Wesen hidden this knowledge? People would notice if a bunch of men were walking around pregnant. I know there are men that look pregnant but you’re saying there are actually pregnant men. You must know how insane that sounds.”

“Trust me, I know how crazy it sounds,” Nick says.

“Bearers are equivalent to a hermaphrodite in Humans. In addition to their male sexual organs, they also have the ones necessary for creating and supporting life.”

Nick continues, “As for how they’ve hidden it, bearers take a potion that makes the bearer’s body look normal. Bearers don’t walk around flashing their pregnant bellies. When he is home, he takes another potion to undo that, taking away the illusion and showing how his body actually looks.”

“So magic?” Trubel questions. “Magic exists?”

“Yes. Sean and Wesen like him can do magic,” Nick confirms.

Theresa shakes her head. “I don’t know what’s stranger, the idea that Wesen men can get pregnant or that magic exists. The Wesen world keeps getting weirder and weirder.”

Nick rubs the back of his neck. “I know what you mean.”

Her expression remains skeptical. “Why are you telling me this anyway?” She looks between the two men. “Monroe isn’t pregnant, is he?”

Nick laughs uncomfortably. “Not exactly.”

Trubel’s eyebrows rise in surprise. “Not exactly?”

Monroe wraps his arm around Nick. “I’m not a bearer.”

Confused, she tries to make sense of what they’re trying to say. “You’re not a bearer and Nick’s Human, so who is it? Your boss?”

“Nick.”

Shocked, Theresa’s gaze lands on Nick. “But he’s Human, not Wesen.”

“He is but he’s also a Blutbad’s mate. My mate.”
“Is that supposed to make sense of this crazy shit? Because let me tell you, it’s really not,” Trubel bites out frustration.

Monroe calmly explains, “His body changed for me, enabling him to bear my pups.”

“He’s pregnant?” Trubel turns her piercing eyes to Nick, who blushes under it. “You’re pregnant?”

Monroe puffs out, every inch of a proud daddy. “He is.”

Theresa scrutinizes every inch of Nick’s body, looking for a sign of it.

Nick straightens. “You won’t see anything. I took the potion this morning but I’d really like to take the other potion. It messes with my mind; I don’t feel any different, even if I look different, which is makes it supremely disorienting.”

She nods slowly, trying to deal with what’s been said.

Nick gets up and grabs his potion from the bedroom. Taking a breath, he goes back downstairs. Nick strips off his shirt, revealing his flat stomach. “Ready?”

Watching intently, Trubel nods. An obvious but complicated expression, a bit of apprehension at them telling the truth and a bit of hope that it’s all a lie, is on her face.

He drains the potion, sighing when the magic hiding his pregnancy dissipates. It’s good to have his body look like how it feels again. Nick hears Trubel’s gasp at the sight of his burgeoning baby bump.

Eyes not leaving the bulge, Theresa asks, “Can I touch it?”

“Sure.”

She reaches out tentatively and tests his warm skin. Seeing makes her more inclined to believe but she needs to touch it. To make sure what she saw can be believed. Theresa feels the bump under her fingertips and it feels real. As unbelievable as it seems, they are telling the truth. “Wow.” Trubel pulls her hand back.

“Yeah, I know. It’s a lot to take in,” Nick says.

Theresa finally tears her eyes from his belly to meet his eyes. “More so for you than me, I’d imagine.”

Nick laughs, his hand ruffling his hair. “You’re taking it rather well, considering.”

“Well, I’m not the guy pregnant with a Blutbad’s baby,” Trubel answers matter-of-factly.

“If only it was just one,” Nick mutters.

Theresa’s eyes go wide. “Twins?”

Monroe says proudly, “Triplets. Blutbaden always have triplets for the first pregnancy.”

“Whoa. That’s a lot to take on.”

Nick grumbles, “Oh, I know. Not for Roe, he expected it but me? I didn’t even know it was possible. Then BAM! Guess what? You’re preggers. Then as a one-two punch, I find out it’s triplets. Apparently, Blutbaden go all out on the first try for kids.” Roe rubs his stomach lovingly and Nick
sighs.

“Congratulations?” Theresa offers uncertainly.

“Thanks. It’s still a lot but,” he shrugs and says with fondness, “they’re our pups. Roe’s ridiculously proud.”

Monroe grins, cupping the pups’ temporary home gently. “I have ample reason to be proud. Our pups will be amazing and one of a kind, Nicky. You can’t deny that.”

Nick shakes his head, giving Roe a fond look. “No, I can’t deny that.”

Pulling out of her shocked state, Trubel states, “You two are disgustingly lovey.”

“I know,” Nick says with a grin. “Wait until you see Hank and Sean outside of work. They may rival us.”

“Heaven help me,” Trubel says with a roll of her eyes.

Sean grabs hold of Hank to stop his frantic pacing. “Calm down, Pet. It will be fine.”

“You don’t know that. And shouldn’t you be the nervous one?” Hank challenges, frustration and worry leaking out in his tone.

Sean hugs Hank close. “I can be very charming when I want to be.”

“That’s your plan? Charm my family into liking you?”

“Yup. Worked on you, didn’t it?”

Hank rolls his eyes. “It wasn’t your charm so much as your sex appeal. You seduced me, plain and simple. I wouldn’t advise that method for my mom and Becca.”

Chuckling darkly in Hank’s ear, Sean teases, “All I needed to catch you was my dick, huh, Pet?” He turns Hank around, grinding into his delicious plump bottom and drawing a deep moan from Hank. “You don’t need charm, do you, Pet? Just my fat cock shoved into your pretty hole.” Sean emphasizes his word with a hard thrust against Hank’s ass.

Hank arches back into Sean, his cock throbbing at the dirty talk.

Sean’s hands hold Hank against him and he rocks his hips. “Maybe that’s what you need to calm you down. Want me to fuck you right here? Have you filled with my cum when your mom comes?” Hank shivers as Sean’s teeth capture his earlobe and tug on it. “Fuck you right against the front door, her waiting on the other side.”

The image is wrong but that doesn’t stop him from wanting it. Sean has made him throw his inhibitions out the window until all he can think about is Sean and how good he makes him feel. Hank closes his eyes, encouraging him to thrust harder by grabbing his ass and pulling Sean into him harder. “Sean.”

Sean twirls him around, walking forward until Hank’s back hits the front door, pressing his body against Hank’s. Both of them groan at the contact, kissing roughly until they are forced to break apart panting. Sean smirks wickedly, sinking slowly to his knees. Hank watches him with lust-darkened eyes, forgetting all about his mother’s imminent arrival. Sean nudges the bulge in Hank’s pants with
his nose, teasing him until Hank’s hands grip the back of his head.

“Stop teasing, you fucker.”

Sean snickers quietly at the desperation in Hank’s voice. He quickly releases Hank’s cock from its confines, stroking it firmly. “So eager for me.”

“Always,” Hank admits easily.

He licks at the head of Hank’s cock, savoring the taste of his pre-cum. “Delicious.”

Hank groans loudly, leaning back into the door as Sean starts to suck him. “So good.” Sean’s mouth is perfection and Hank can’t get enough of it.

Sean unzips and starts stroking himself in pace with his mouth.

Neither takes notice of the time that goes by or the noises they make as Sean pleasures Hank, only cognizant of their approaching orgasms.

“Close, Sean. God, your mouth. Feels so good around my cock.”

Sean moans around his mouthful.

“Wish I could cum all over your face.”

Sean pulls off, his hand stroking Hank. “I want you to.” He looks up at Hank. “Then I’d flip you around and fuck you into this door. Make you howl my name.” Sean sucks Hank’s sac into his mouth. “Or maybe I’d fuck you with my tongue. Make you cum again just from me rimming your ass. I know how much you love that.”

Hank moans, “Sean.” His head drops back, banging against the door; his desire is too intense for him to feel the pain. “Gonna cum.” Sean sucks hard, hurling Hank over the edge and he shouts Sean’s name hoarsely. A trickle of cum drips down Sean’s chin while he swallows the rest. Hank yanks Sean up, licks the cum off his chin, and captures his lips, chasing the taste of his own cum. Sean guides Hank down to his knees. The eager look on his Pet’s face is nearly enough to make him lose control. Without prompting Hank opens his mouth and Sean strokes himself furiously in front of that sweet mouth, wanting more than anything to see Hank’s pouty lips smeared with his cum. Sean groans and Hank takes the head into his mouth. Sean shoots his cum into Hank’s mouth and watches through his lashes as Hank drinks down his cum. Sean crumbles to the floor.

They both sigh, tangled together awkwardly on the floor.

A beat later, the doorbell rings and the two men freeze. Hank looks at Sean in horror, mouthing, “My mom!” He shoves his cock back into his pants. Hank frantically tries to make his clothes presentable and not like he and Sean just sucked each other off.

Sean, however, lazily tucks himself away as if he has all the time in the world and watches Hank’s panicked behavior with amusement. He’s not embarrassed but then, Zauberbiests are rather blasé about sex.

Hank is freaking out in his mind, hoping fervently that his mom didn’t hear anything. *Oh my god. What if she heard us?!* The thought makes his panic increase tenfold. *Breathe Hank! Maybe she didn’t hear anything.* He turns to Sean, who has a smug afterglow on his stupid, stupid face. Hank smacks him, whispering snappishly, “Stop it!”
“Stop what?” Sean asks languidly.

“Looking like you just got fucked!”

Sean’s smile widens. “But I did.”

“I know that, you giant asshole!” Hank hisses. “How do I look?” He examines his clothes fretfully as the doorbell sounds again.

Sean refrains from saying what he’s thinking, that Hank looks well fucked. “Wonderful.”

Hank eyes him suspiciously. He takes a deep breath and pastes a smile on his face. Hoping against hope that his complexion will hide his blush, Hank opens the door. “Mom, welcome,” Hank says with false brightness. She doesn’t appear horrified, which gives Hank hope that she didn’t hear anything.

“Welcome, Mrs. Griffin. A pleasure to finally meet you.” Sean considers kissing her cheek but judging from where his mouth just was, he decides that would be inappropriate.

Deborah raises a brow at the word pleasure.

Hank freezes as two pairs of eyes settle on him. Swallowing reflexively, he realizes he still has the taste of Sean’s cum on his tongue. Hank blushes; he can’t believe he has cum in his mouth with his mom staring at him. *This is worse than when she caught me making out with Trisha on the couch when I was sixteen.* He squirms under their gaze. “Um.”

Deborah looks pointedly at Sean.

“Oh. Um, Mom, this is Sean. Sean, this is my mom, Deborah.”

She takes Sean’s offered and shakes it. “Nice to meet you, Sean.” She scrutinizes the man that her son is in love with. Deborah smirks at Hank.

Hank flushes, embarrassed at his mom’s appreciative look. *Don’t say it. Don’t say it.*

“Snatched yourself a hot one.”

Hank slaps his face with his hand, moaning, “Mom!”

Deborah laughs at her son’s embarrassment.

When he gets the courage to peek out between his fingers, Sean’s grinning smugly. Hank is torn between wanting to slug him and hiding from the pair of them.

“No wonder you can’t keep your hands off him.”

“Oh my god, MOM!”

“What? Clearly, you can’t,” Deborah shoots back calmly. “And neither of you are particularly quiet by the way.”

Hank wishes the ground would open up and swallow him whole. He buries his face into the couch and prays for the sweet release of death.

Sean laughs. “I see where Faith gets her bluntness.”
Hank changes his mind, he’s going to murder Sean. *It’s his damned fault for being so fucking sexy anyway.* Looking at the pair of them, neither repentant or ashamed. Hank isn’t sure he can deal with the two of them at the same time. *How am I going to deal with them, plus Faith at the same time?* Hank shudders at the thought. His family and Sean together are going to be the death of him.

Deborah grins. “She is her mother’s daughter.” She turns to her thoroughly embarrassed son. “I like him.”

Hank scoffs. “Of course you do.” Giving in, he smacks Sean’s arm. “Ouch.”

Sean smirks. “Shouldn’t I being saying that?”

*Asshole.* *Wesen bastard.* Hoping to drag the conversation away from embarrassing topics, Hank asks, “How was your trip, Mom? You must have got out of work on time.”

She obviously knows what he’s doing but doesn’t call him on it. “My trip was fine. Work was fine. They were all jealous about the cruise.”

“You deserved it.”

Deborah nods. “What about you, Sean? You ever do something like that for your mom?”

“Of course. My mom’s all I have. Last Mother’s Day, I booked her a two week long trip to Paris. It was worth every penny.”

Deborah’s eyes lighten with approval at Sean’s generosity toward his mother.

“Are you hungry, Mom? Sean’s a terrific chef.”

“Is he?”

Sean shrugs. “I like to cook. We haven’t eaten yet, either. Why don’t you both take some time to catch up while I cook?”

Hank and Deborah watch him leave.

“Tall drink of water you’ve got, Hank.”

Sighing, Hank nods.

Deciding to let Hank off the hook, at least for now, she tells him about her conversation with Becca.

*Goodnight boys,* Deborah says going toward the guest room. “Thank you for a wonderful meal, Sean.”

“My pleasure, Deborah.”

She steps over the threshold but stops and leans back out the doorway. “Speaking of pleasure. Do try to keep it down, would you?”

Sean smirks, tugging a flushed Hank closer. “Of course, Deborah. We’ll ensure not to wake you.”

Chuckling, Deborah closes her door with an audible click.
“I hate you,” Hank pouts. It isn’t fair he’s the only one being embarrassed.

His smirk widens into a grin. “No, you don’t. You love me.”

Hank crosses his arms over his chest. “Doesn’t mean I have to like you. I should banish you to the couch.”

“Aww, Pet,” Sean croons, snuggling against him. “You know I can’t sleep without you beside me.”

Hank huffs in response. “Would serve you right.”

Sean nuzzles his neck. “I thought tonight went well. Your mom seems to like me.”

“Because you double team me, taking pleasure in my embarrassment, the pair of you.”

Sean hides his smile, leading his pouting mate to their bedroom. “Maybe I just like to see you blush.” He shuts the door, giving them more privacy.

Hank faceplants it onto the bed, mumbling into the bedding. “Can’t hear you, Love.”

He turns his head. “I can’t believe my mom heard us.” Hank still can’t believe his good sense was overridden by his lust for Sean. “Which I completely blame you for.”

“You didn’t have any protests when I was sucking your cock.”

“Of course not! What guy would protest? Especially considering how skilled your mouth is,” Hank shoots back, sounding disgruntled. He wishes he could erase the whole night and start over. *Oh, fuck. Faith. She’s never going to let me live this down when she finds out.* Hank groans and turns his face back into the mattress.

Sean moves onto the bed and strokes his back soothingly. “It’s not the end of the world. So we had sex and your mom heard it. So what. She already knows we’re having sex.”

He turns his head and glares at Sean. “Knowing and hearing are completely different.” Frustrated by Sean’s lack of reaction and less than sympathetic attitude, Hank challenges, “How would you feel if it had been your mom?”

Shrugging, Sean doesn’t understand what the big deal is.

“Seriously?” Hank stares at him baffled. “You wouldn’t care if your mom heard you having sex?”

Sean shakes his head. “Not really. Maybe it’s a Zauberbiest thing. We’re sexual creatures.”

Hank takes one last stab at it. “What about if you heard your mom having sex?”

Sean shrugs. “Have before. We had tight quarters sometimes when we were on the run.”

He groans, giving up. He won’t be getting any help from Sean in dealing with his mom’s and Faith’s bluntness concerning their sex life. “Can you at least try to keep the details of our sex life to yourself. My family may know we’re having sex but they don’t need to know anything more.”

“I’ll do my best,” Sean agrees, bemused.

“At least the rest of the night went well,” Hank mumbles to comfort himself.
Sean turns him onto his back. “Yes, it did.” He kisses Hank sweetly. “I like your mom. She’s real, tells it like it is.”

“That she does. Sometimes it’d be nice if she didn’t,” Hank admits with a sigh. “I wonder how Jacob will do tomorrow. Becca is the baby of the family, Mom’s bound to be protective.”

Sean doesn’t bother to point out that Deborah is protective over all her children. “He should expect to get threatened at least once.”

“Yeah….” Hank nods. “Wait, did she threaten you?”

Sean starts undressing his distracted lover. “Yup.”

“What? When?”

He tugs Hank’s pants off. “When you were in the bathroom. Suffice it to say, my balls have been suitably threatened. It’s a good thing we’re soul bound or I would be a little afraid.”

“I can’t believe she did that,” Hank groans.

“She loves you and you’ve been hurt before. She doesn’t want it to happen again. I understand. If anyone hurt you, I’d,” Sean stares off into space, finishing his thought inside his head, *I’d kill them. Tear ‘em limb from limb.*

Hank’s eyes widen at the fierce, predatory expression that flashes on his face. He often forgets that Sean isn’t Human. He’s a predator, with predatory instincts, especially where he is concerned. “You don’t have to protect me,” Hank tells him softly.

Sean smiles down at his mate, dragging his thumb back and forth on Hank’s cheek. “I know you’re more than capable of taking care of yourself. That doesn’t mean I won’t do everything I can to protect you.” He pecks Hank’s lips, once, twice. “You are my mate, more precious to me than anything else in this universe. I need you alive, Hank. I can’t live without you. I won’t.”

Hank shivers from the intensity burning in Sean’s eyes. It makes him feel as if he is the air Sean breathes. Deep down, he knows that Sean would without hesitation or guilt kill for him. Hank is aware enough to realize that he would do the same for Sean. “I can’t either. So if I can’t die, neither can you.”

“Deal.” Sean throws off his own clothes, needing to feel Hank’s skin against his as he drifts asleep.

Hank jerks awake at a firm knock on the door. He groans, hoping the noise will cease and he’ll be able to go back to sleep. Half-awake, he sleepily nuzzles the back of Sean’s neck. Another sharp knock. “What?” he asks with resignation.

“I made breakfast. It’s almost ready,” Deborah says, sounding far too cheery for the time in Hank’s opinion. He shoves down the instinctive urge to whine about it being too early to wake up on a Saturday. Hank grunts in response, having no intention of getting up. Too focused on going back to sleep, he doesn’t hear the door open.

Unseen, Deborah flicks her eyes to Sean, who has an amused smile on his face at Hank’s stubborn reluctance to open his eyes. “Time to get up, Hank. You can snuggle with Sean later, let him go and let’s eat breakfast.”
Hank tightens his hold on Sean. “Don’t wanna.”

Sean chuckles at the pouting tone and Hank squeezing as if he’s his favorite teddy bear about to be taken away.

Deborah rolls her eyes. “He did the same thing to his beloved stuffed dog when he was little and didn’t want to get up,” she tells Sean.

Sean smiles at the thought of him being a replacement for Hank’s stuffed dog from childhood.

Hank hides his face in Sean’s neck, praying his mom will leave him alone if he doesn’t look at her.

“Hank Marion Griffin.”

Hank immediately slaps his hands over Sean’s ears in a hopeless attempt to prevent him from hearing his middle name. “Mom!” he screeches, sounding like an outraged, embarrassed teenager.

“Your middle name is *Marion*?” Sean asks through his laughter.

Covering his face with his hands, Hank wants to curl up and die. He doesn’t tell anyone his middle name, for obvious reasons. His sisters blackmailed him into doing many things in his desperate attempt to make sure no one knew during school. Hank had wanted Sean to remain blissfully ignorant the rest of their lives. *But nooo, Mom just blurts it out.*

“Is there a reason for choosing Marion, Deborah? Besides the obvious hilarity of embarrassing your son for the rest of his life, of course.”

Deborah says defensively, “Marion is a beautiful name.”

Sean interjects, “For a woman, you mean.” He glances over and spots Hank fruitlessly attempting to hide under the covers.

“My grandmother’s name was Marion,” Deborah sniffs haughtily.

“Yet, you chose Hank to name after her. Not one of your *three* daughters?” Sean smirks.

Deborah challenges, “It didn’t fit Abigail or Faith.”

“But it fit Hank? Your only son?” Sean rubs Hank’s back soothingly. “You could have dropped the N and used Mario instead. Or dropped the M and A and gone with Rion. Or given one of your daughters a variation of the name.”

Hank exhales frustratingly. His parents just had to name *him* Marion. He’s a man, it’s embarrassing to be named Marion.

Deborah peeks at the lump that is her son hiding under the covers like a child. She admits with a sigh, “My pregnancy with Hank was...difficult. I was extremely emotional and the person I wanted to be there with me wasn’t because my grandma died the previous year. In my hormone driven state, I decided to honor her by giving the baby her name. Even after I found out he would be a boy, I’d made up my mind and wasn’t going to change it. I about killed Darrell when he refused. Nothing would persuade me otherwise. He would be named Marion. Darrell eventually gave in.”

Hearing the story, Sean is sympathetic. *Could have been worse, Deborah could have insisted on Marion being his first name.* He tugs the blankets down and pulls a resistant Hank into his arms. Sean hugs him close, promising soothingly, “I won’t tell anyone or tease you about it, okay?”
“Promise?” Hank mumbles into his skin.

“Promise.”

Hank sags in relief. He’s insecure about his middle name and he can imagine the problems that would result if Sean teased him about it. “Thank you.”

Deborah smiles at the sight of Sean comforting Hank. “I’ll leave you to get ready.” She ducks out swiftly, shutting the door softly.

“I can’t believe she did that,” Hank complains. “I was hoping you’d never find out.”

Sean dips Hank’s head back, locking eyes with him. “Hey, stop fretting. I don’t care about your middle name.”

“You don’t think less of me?”

“Absolutely not.” Sean smirks. “If I had any doubts about your manhood, they’ve been suitably put to rest by now.”

Hank rolls his eyes but smiles.

Sean kisses Hank’s cheek and gets up to brush his teeth. He’s done in the bathroom by the time Hank drags himself out of bed. Sean opens the bedroom door, stopping at the threshold. “And,” Sean vows with a cheeky wink, “I promise, no girly names for our sons if we have children.” He laughs at the memory of the stunned look on Hank’s face as he moves toward the kitchen.

Hank opens the door to find a happy Becca beside a stoic Jacob.

“Hank,” Becca squeals, launching herself at her brother.

He chuckles, squeezing her tightly. “Hi, Baby Sis.” He’s missed her and from the way she’s hugging him, she missed him too. Becca finally pulls back, a wide grin on her face. Hank sticks out his hand to Jacob. “Good to see you again, Jacob.”

“You as well, Hank,” Jacob rumbles.

“Nervous to meet Mom?”

Becca rubs Jacob’s arms soothingly. Jacob clears his throat, admitting grudgingly, “A bit.”

Hank hits his arm companionably. “Think of her as an important client or a predator, don’t show weakness.”

Jacob’s lips thin. “Thank you so much, Hank,” he responds sarcastically.

Hank smirks. Jacob is a successful businessman, not at all used to feeling nervous. Another part of him is also hoping against hope that Jacob’s presence will keep the attention off him. He’s been embarrassed enough and his mom hasn’t been with them for a full twenty-four hours yet.

“It will be fine, Jacob. Just, don’t flinch, okay?” Becca warns.

“Come on, it’s best not to leave Sean and Mom alone. Who knows what those two could be up to.” When Jacob picks up their overnight bag, Hank waves him off. “Leave it. We’ll get it later.”
Sean and Deborah look up when they walk in.

The hitch in Jacob’s gait is nearly indiscernible when he spots Deborah.

“Mom!” Becca runs into Deborah’s arms.

Deborah’s glare hits Jacob over Becca’s shoulder. His head twitches instinctively and his eyes flick around to Sean and to Hank before going back to Deborah’s. A beat later, his head twitches again.

Sean’s eyes widen imperceptibly when Jacob’s nerves result in a brief loss of control and he woges. No one else is able to see it but him. Sean gives no indication of what he sees, using his own ironclad restraint to keep his reaction out of his face and body language. However, he’ll corner Jacob at some point for a discussion.

Hank quirks his head to the side, noticing something off in Sean’s body language. He’s not sure what and he doubts anyone else can see it. Hank looks around the room, trying to figure it out but spots nothing unusual. He shoots Sean a questioning look and Sean waves him off, indicating he’ll tell him later. He makes a mental note to ask him about it tonight when they’re alone.

“Mom, this is Jacob,” Becca says, subtly pulling Jacob toward her.

Jacob offers his hand, greeting politely, “Nice to finally meet you, Ma’am.”

Deborah shakes his hand firmly. “You as well, Jacob. My daughter speaks highly of you, despite the time it took her to actually tell me about you.”

Jacob puts his arm around Becca, smiling down at her with love in his eyes. “Becca is a wonderful woman and I’m blessed to be with her.”

Deborah nods approvingly. “Yes, she is. And Yes, you are.” She abruptly changes the subject. “Do you have children, Jacob?”

“No,” he answers honestly but warily.

“Would you like to someday?”

Jacob looks at Becca, who smiles encouragingly. “We’ve discussed that possibility, yes.”

Her gaze turns predatory and Deborah smiles with a sickening sweetness. “Hurt her and you’ll never have the chance.”

With effort, Jacob doesn’t flinch despite the threat and maintains eye contact with her. “Understood.”

Becca, Hank, and Sean silently watch the stare down.

Deborah nods before looking away, satisfied with Jacob’s resolve and response.

“Why don’t you take Becca and Deborah to the Japanese Garden? Take some time for the three of you.”

The woman grin and nod. “Yes, let’s.”

“What about you and Jacob?”
Three sets of eyes go back and forth between Sean and Jacob.

Sean reassures, “We can entertain ourselves for an hour or two.”

“Don’t worry about us. Have fun.” Jacob kisses Becca and Deborah’s cheeks.

The women happily follow Hank out the door with no more than a distracted wave to the two men left behind.

Sean waits until they are out of sight to pin Jacob with his gaze. “You and I need to talk.”

Jacob quirks a brow in question.

“I know what you are.”

Taking the time to consider the accusatory statement, Jacob scrutinizes Sean. “Should I know what you are referring to?”

Sean leans against the wall nonchalantly. “You’re a Pflichttreue.”

A flicker of surprise flashes in his eyes before it disappears. “That’s quite the mouthful. What pray tell is a...whatever you said?”

“Pflichttreue.” Sean looks down at his nails, carelessly inspecting them. “Are we going to continue to play this game or are you going to admit to what you are?” Silence meets his challenge. Sean locks eyes with Jacob. “I saw you woge. Bit nervous were you when Deborah’s eyes caught yours?”

“What are you?” Jacob bites out. “You’re not a Grimm, I saw your eyes when I woged, you’re not a Grimm.”

“I’m not a Grimm,” Sean confirms. *Although I do know one quite well.*

“You’re Wesen,” Jacob states. “Like I am.”

Sean gestures yes and no. “Technically, I’m a hybrid. Half-Zauberbiest.” Suspicious, Jacob woges. Sean suppresses the urge to roll his eyes but woges back. “With that out of the way, can we continue?”

Jacob twitches his head, ending his woge. “Yes,” he answers stiffly.

“Does Rebecca know?”

“Of course not. Does Hank?”

“Of course he does. Hank is my soul mate,” Sean professes nonchalantly.

Jacob gapes at him in shock. “Soul mate?”

“Times are changing, Jacob. Hank is my mate, our souls are linked for life.”

“Wesen don’t have Human mates.”

Sean raises an eyebrow. “No? I guess I should inform Hank’s partner of that.”

Jacob’s expression clouds with confusion.

“He’s mated to a Blutbaden and I can assure you, he is not Wesen.” Sean watches as Jacob jolts
back, his shock akin to a physical blow. Every Wesen knows how seriously Blutbaden take mating.

“That’s not possible.”

Sean understands Jacob’s shock, however, it doesn’t mean he can’t be amused by it. “Truly? Maybe I should tell them that.”

“The Blutbad must be mistaken, have some sort of mental illness.” Jacob is grasping at straws, unable to absorb the drastic changes taking place in his world.

“Hm…” Sean considers Jacob’s idea. “Hank’s partner went into heat and is now pregnant. Any explanation for that?”

Jacob is stunned by that proclamation. “A male? A Human male? Pregnant? It’s not…”

“Possible?” Sean finishes.

He nods wearily.

“Welcome to the start of a new world of possibilities. He is pregnant, a Wesen doctor confirmed it. Not that the doctor has an explanation for how it is possible,” Sean admits frankly.

Jacob rubs his face roughly, attempting to wrap his mind around the new possibilities.

“Wrapped your head around that yet?” Sean asks with a smirk.

“Not really.”

“Unfortunately, that’s not all.”

Jacob sighs. “How can there be more?” he mutters to himself. “What else?”

“Hank’s partner? He’s a Grimm.”

Adrenaline spikes inside Jacob and he woges, his head whipping around as if expecting a trap.

“The Grimm isn’t here,” Sean soothes, understanding Jacob’s instinctive terror.

Jacob isn’t reassured and continues his vigilance.

Sean waits patiently for Jacob to calm down and stop expecting Nick to come jumping out, machete in hand.

Determining he’s safe, for the moment at least, Jacob turns back to what Sean said. “Wait. Are you saying what I think you are?” he questions, filled with disbelief and skepticism.

“Yes. A Blutbad impregnated a male Grimm.”

Jacob loses his composure, visibly taken aback by the declaration. “And here I thought meeting Becca’s mom was going to be difficult. This is worse.”

Sean gives him a sympathetic look. “It’s a lot to take in.”

“Talk about the understatement of the year,” Jacob scoffs. “How the fuck did that happen?” He wonders, *If that is possible, what else is possible?*

Laughing, Sean admits, “It’s quite the story. Suffice it to say, neither man is typical of their species.
Nick wasn’t raised a Grimm and Monroe, he’s Wieder.”

“This Grimm, he knows what you are?”

“Yes.”

“And he doesn’t try to kill you?”

Sean shrugs. “Nick’s a different kind of Grimm. Unlike many of his ancestors, he possesses a brain and a capacity for mercy and compassion.”

Jacob’s distrust is evident.

“He is different. He doesn’t kill unless he has to. Nick is capable of seeing Wesen as people, not animals.”

Jacob’s suspicion lessens but a healthy bit of wariness remains. “How have you kept this from spreading?”

“The knowledge of Nick’s mating and pregnancy?”

“Yes.”

“Luck,” Sean admits. “It’s only a matter of time before it spreads. The only question is whether or not it will be dismissed as impossible.”

“Some will. I would have. I still wouldn’t believe it possible if not for the look in your eyes. I want to deny it but you speak the truth as difficult as that is to admit.” Jacob pulls his thoughts away from the baffling truth about the Grimm and the Blutbad. “Hank is okay with all that?” he questions, gesturing to Sean’s face.

“Hm…”

Bringing up the true reason he wanted to talk to Jacob alone, Sean challenges, “What happens when you find your mate?”

Pain bleeds from Jacob. He takes a breath to push away the emotion and pain that wells up at the question. “I already found my mate. She was… A Balam killed her after she was in a car accident.”

“Another Balam was hurt in the accident?”

“Yes. Not fatally but that didn’t matter to her. She killed my mate.”

Sean’s gaze softens with sympathy. “I’m sorry.” Balam are intensely protective of family and have a tendency to act without thinking, especially when a family member is harmed.

Jacob accepts the sentiment with a nod. “I loved her deeply. Laurel was my mate and she left a hole inside me. But Rebecca, my sweet Becca,” he says, a happy smile spreading over his lips. “She fills my heart and my life with joy and love. She isn’t the mate Fate chose for me. However, she is the mate I chose.”

“You’re going to have to tell her the truth.”
Jacob closes his eyes with a sigh. “I know. She needs to know all of me. Becca has been talking
to children and I’ve been putting it off. We can’t— she can’t make the decision about children unless
she knows that they could end up like me.”

Sean sees fear on Jacob’s face. Pflichttreue are known for being fearless but the thought of losing his
chosen mate frightens Jacob. He’s lost one mate already and Sean can’t blame him for being afraid of
losing another. “Rebecca appears to have a good head on her shoulders. She has chosen you, loves
you. Give her a chance, she might surprise you. I’ve come to find out that Griffins are a tough
bunch.”

“They are,” Jacob admits with a smile. “Deborah made sure of that.”

Sean nudges Jacob. “Enough talk. How about we have a beer and relax before they get back.”

“NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR

“When Jacob met Mom, you saw something. What was it?”

Sean glances back at Hank lying on his side on the bed. “You noticed that.”

“Yes,” Hank answers.

“No one else noticed?”

Hank shakes his head. “They can’t read you like I can.”


“Well?” he asks expectantly.

Hoping that Hank won’t react angrily, Sean tells him. “Jacob is Wesen.”

Hank surges up instinctively as if to stalk to the room Becca and Jacob share and rip him away from
her. “What is he?”

“Pflichttreue.” At Hank’s pointed gaze, Sean elaborates, “They’re panther-like. White fur with black
markings.”

“I don’t care what he looks like, Sean. What kind of Wesen is he? Should I be worried? I need to
know for Becca’s sake.”

Sean may be sibling-less but understands the urge to protect loved ones. “Pflichttreue are incredibly
loyal. I talked to Jacob. He sees Becca as his chosen mate, he’ll protect her with his life. Pflichttreue
are fearless. He’d go against anyone and anything without hesitation to protect her. He won’t hurt
her, what he is won’t hurt her.”

“You’re sure? Wait. You talked to him? When?” Hank’s eyes light up with understanding. “You
manipulated us into leaving the house to get Jacob alone.”

Sean shrugs, neither confirming nor denying anything. Not only does Hank care deeply for Becca
but she’s part of Sean’s family now. He needed to make sure Jacob was trustworthy.

Hank accepts Sean’s lack of response without challenge. “What did he mean by chosen mate?”

“Fate chose his first mate but he chose Becca.”
“Where is his fated mate then?”

“Dead. Murdered by another Wesen. A Balam."

Hank reaches out, needing to touch Sean’s bare skin. “That’s rough. This Balam, why he’d do it?”

“She actually. Balam are exceptionally protective, irrationally so, of family. Jacob’s mate and the Balam’s mate were in a car accident. The Balam’s mate was hurt, non-fatally but she took it very personally.”

“That’s nuts. And tragic. Remind me never to mess with a Balam.”

Sean chuckles. “There are worse Wesen out there.” He sobers quickly, “And with Nick’s propensity of finding them, you will be encountering them. Try to be careful.”

Hank smiles reassuringly. “I will. I have reason to be; I have you.”

“Good. I don’t want to lose you.”

“I feel the same, so you have to be careful as well.”

Sean pecks his lips. “For you, always.”

“Love you,” Hank says seriously.

“Love you too,” Sean vows, pulling Hank tight against him.

They lie together comfortably and silently until Hank asks, “You’re certain Becca is safe with Jacob?”

“Hundred percent. He loves her. Plus, he knows that if he hurts you, he’ll not only have Deborah and you after him but also me, Nick, and Monroe. Perhaps he doesn’t fear us but he isn’t stupid either. Jacob isn’t foolish enough to not respect the threat we are to his survival should he hurt her.”

“You told him about Nick and Monroe?”

“Yes.”

“Good.” Hank snuggles against Sean and closes his eyes, confident that Becca is safe.

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

“With Trubel’s help, we’ve narrowed down the list to fifteen,” Nick explains.

Monroe spreads the remaining fifteen’s profiles over the table. “We would be grateful if you would help us narrow it down further. We respect both of you and want your honest opinions.”

Hank glances down at the folders in front of him, wondering how this has become normal for him. Looking around at his partner, Roe, Sean, and even Trubel, he realizes he doesn’t much care. He’s happy. Nick is happy and pregnant. If he can do something to help, he will. “Okay.”

Sean starts flipping through a file. “They must have fallen all over themselves when they heard about the babies.”

“They did,” Monroe says proudly. “This list is their best and all of them want to protect our pups.”
“Nick stares blankly at the profile in front of him, having read through the fifteen what feels like a million times already. “We want the best. The three that will ensure our pups’ safety.”

“Variety is a solid strategy,” Sean suggests.

Monroe nods in agreement, catching exactly what Sean is saying. “A bit of everything: power, brains, speed.”

“Precisely. Have a well-rounded set of guardians.”

With Nick off in la-la land and Sean and Monroe talking, Hank turns to Trubel and asks, “How are you dealing with all of this?”

Theresa shrugs. “Better to know what the hell’s going on than being in the dark and wondering if I was batshit crazy.”

Hank cannot imagine how she felt during all those years alone. She’s only eighteen and she’s already been through a lot.

“Must be weird for you, not being able to see what Nick and I do.”

Hank mimics Trubel’s shrug. “I’ve worked in law enforcement long enough to be able to roll with the punches. I need to be able to, being Nick’s partner. Must be him being a Grimm because we get all the weird shit.”

She smirks. “Be glad for that. Imagine if one of your other detectives got a Wesen case. How many cases would your department have unsolved? How many killers left out there because they don’t know that ‘ordinary’ people can turn into monsters with a twitch.”

He hadn’t thought about that. Without Nick’s knowledge and ability to see Wesen woge, Wesen killers would go free and likely if other detectives got close to the real killer, they’d be killed. Even when he and Nick can’t legally prove the person committed the crime, they are able to...deal with the situation, by whatever means are necessary. “Good thing we have Nick then. And you too.”

Trubel offers a tiny smile, someone being thankful for her presence doesn’t happen to her. Wesen fear and hate her, they want her dead. Humans, they see her as a troublemaker, a criminal, a misfit. They just want her gone.

It’s nice fitting in for once. She isn’t a freak here. If anyone is, it’s Hank for being an ordinary Human.

She focuses back the profile in her hand. Theresa can’t put her finger on it but something about this one doesn’t feel right. She throws it aside and grabs another. Theresa was surprised to be included in this decision. Granted she’ll be living with whomever they choose but Nick and Monroe trust her instincts. It’s still weird for her to think about Nick being pregnant. “Did you freak out when you found out about Nick?”

“About him being a Grimm?”

Theresa shakes her head, her hands making a gesture to represent a pregnant belly.

“Oh, his pregnancy.” Hank glances over at Nick, who appears a bit overwhelmed at the moment. “It was a shock, to say the least. Especially considering what his fertility could mean for me or Sean.”

He pats his stomach thoughtfully, no more ready to be pregnant than he was when he first heard it was possible.
“You? Is that possible?”

“Don’t know for sure. Before Nick, it was impossible. What’s to say it couldn’t happen to me? Now the idea of that freaks me out, more than anything else. People that turn into monsters, no problem. Becoming a pregnant man? I don’t think I’m ready for the level of weirdness.”

“You and a lot of men,” Theresa provides.

Hank agrees, “Yeah. Wonder if there will be more like Nick. A global change.”

“Well, you two are both mates of Wesen and Nick is having three Grimm-Blutbad babies. I’d say this is just the beginning. Imagine when the triplets are grown up, what changes will happen in our world and in theirs during that time.”

Hank is feeling like Nick looks. “I’m just going to take it one day at a time.”

“The mantra of my life.” Every day she makes it out alive is a good day. “We’d better get back to it. Doesn’t look like Nick is going to be any help.”

Nick has the same profile in his hand since they started and is staring at it with a blank expression, obviously off in his own world. It’s doubtful he’s read a single word of the profile.

“You alright there, Nick?” Hank questions, concerned.

Nick startles out of his daze. “What?” He looks over at Hank and Trubel. “Oh, yeah. Sure. It’s just a lot to take in. New house, new vehicle, the Guardians, the pups, you,” he says to Trubel.

Theresa gives him an understanding smile. She’s still reeling a bit from all the new changes in her own life.

“We’re here for you, man,” Hank promises.

Nick offers a distracted smile. “Thanks.” He shakes out of his mood and focuses on the profile in front of him.

Chapter End Notes

I have the next chapter all written and edited. I plan on posting it in the next week or two.
“Ready?” Monroe asks, settling a supportive hand on the small of Nick’s back.

Nick takes a deep, if slightly shaky, breath. “Yeah. I’m ready to do this.” He turns to Trubel, thankful she agreed to come along. He may have only known her for a short time but she has superb instincts. It’s why she’s still alive.

Theresa warily follows them into the building as if expecting for an ambush.

A small, elderly man with a strong presence greets them at the door. “Welcome, Mr. Neumann.” He shakes hands with Monroe, then offers a hand to Nick. “Welcome, Mr. Burkhardt.”

Nick takes the offered hand, replying hesitantly. “Thank you, Mister…?”

“Schaefer.”

Monroe smiles. “Thank you for seeing us, Mr. Schaefer. We’re honored to have been chosen.”

Schaefer inclines his head. His keen eyes land on Trubel. “Welcome, Miss.”

Nick puts a settling hand on Trubel’s back. “This is Miss Rubel. She’s…” Nick glances at her, “like me. I’m mentoring her. We are hoping you would allow her to be involved in the interviews.”

Mr. Schaefer’s eyes don’t flicker at the presence of a second Grimm. “Of course, Mr. Burkhardt. Please, follow me.” He turns his back to the two Grimms without fear and leads them to a comfortable interview room. “Please take a seat.”

Monroe and Theresa sit on either side of Nick, protectively surrounding him.

Looking at the briefcase in front of Monroe on the table, Schaefer asks, “Did you bring the candidates’ profiles with you? If not, we have copies.”

Monroe nods, “We brought them but we’d appreciate a copy of each of the profiles for Trub—er—Miss Rubel.”

“Of course.” Schaefer grabs a prepared stack and passes it to her.

Monroe opens his briefcase and takes out the stacks of profiles. He hands the rejected profiles to Mr. Schaefer. “These are the one we eliminated.” Monroe separates the profiles into two piles and puts one in front of Nick and one in front of himself.

“If your party is ready, I will bring in the first candidate.”

Monroe checks with Nick and then Trubel via eye contact. Confirming they are ready, he nods. “Bring in the first candidate.” As Mr. Schaefer leaves, Monroe squeezes Nick’s hand. “Our three are here today. I feel it.”

Nick clings to Roe’s hand and rubs his stomach with his other hand. He doesn’t notice the weird look Trubel gives him for rubbing the air in front of his abdomen.
The first candidate walks in with a grace many people her height lack. Anna Frisk dwarfs Nick and Trubel, rivaling Monroe at 6’5” with a toned body. She smiles politely before taking a seat. “Thank you for considering me, Mr. Neumann and Mr. Burkhardt. I’m Anna Frisk. I’m 27 years old. I’ve been training to become a Guardian since I was seven.” Her cool brown eyes find Trubel’s. If she’s curious about her presence, Anna gives no indication.

Monroe asks about Frisk’s training. Nick and Trubel remain silent but both watch Frisk intently.

After Roe finishes talking to her about her protective skills, Nick asks a question important to him, “How are you with children?”

Anna hesitates almost imperceptibly before answering, “I will do everything I can to protect my charges.”

That isn’t what Nick asked but it is a telling answer. Granted, Guardians are protectors; they aren’t meant to be child-care providers necessarily. Yet, the pups will spend a significant amount of time with their Guardians. Nick isn’t sure about having a Guardian that seems uninterested in children. Anna Frisk would be a constant presence in the pups’ lives from birth and Nick questions whether Frisk’s protective qualifications outweighs her lack experience or interest in children.

Monroe thanks her for her time and Anna Frisk leaves. The second has a deal-breaking answer that eliminates him without question. The third sets off an unexplainable but instinctive alarm in all three of them and is promptly eliminated from the running. The fourth strolls in with a charming smile on his face. He sticks out his hand to Monroe. “Nice to meet you, sir.” He places his other hand over their clasped hands. Then does the same to Nick and Trubel, although he offers the wary female Grimm a brief kiss on her hand. Stunned by the gallant greeting, it takes her a moment to pull her hand away.

“My name is Fabian Pedroso and I am honored to be considered as a Guardian to your most precious ones,” he says, bowing gracefully to the three. His build is similar to Sean’s, tall and muscular. Sitting down, Fabian invites, “Please, ask me anything.”

Trubel narrows her eyes, upset by being thrown by the kiss. “Why do you want this?”

“An excellent question,” Fabian smiles disarmingly, “Miss…?”

“You may call me Trubel.”

Fabian’s green eyes twinkle. “Miss Trouble, what an unusual but fitting name.”

Nick and Monroe watch the interaction between the pair with interest.

“Just Trubel. It’s…” Theresa looks away from Fabian’s memorizing eyes, “a nickname. It’s not my last name, so no miss, got it?”

Fabian’s smile widens into a grin. “Of course, Trouble.”

“Are you going to answer the question or not?” Theresa bites out.

“I’m sorry, I seem to have forgotten the question.” Fabian’s eyes light up with interest, staring at Trubel’s face. “What was the question again…Trouble?” His smile brightens at the nickname.

Theresa feels like screaming in frustration. “Why do you want to be…”

Before she can finish her question, Fabian kicks his chair back hard enough for it to slam into the
wall, then flips over the table landing behind Trubel and putting his arms around her to pin her to the chair.

Nick and Monroe gaze at him, impressed but not fearful.

Fabian meets their eyes, his voice calm and controlled despite Trubel’s furious struggles to get out of his arms. “Charm is a weapon, which used correctly can be exceptionally effective. It can disarm, through lust or bashfulness or like with this lovely young woman, through frustration and annoyance.” He releases her and steps back.

Trubel scrambles off the chair, facing him, unnerved by how easily he gained the upper hand against her.

He bows respectfully to her and then prowls gracefully back to his seat, bringing it back to the table. “To answer your question, Miss—Trouble,” he emphasizes her names before continuing, “I want this because it’s all I have ever wanted. From the day I could walk, I wanted to protect those weaker than I am. Children are incredibly vulnerable in their youth and innocence. Only the lowest of the low would attempt to harm a child but there are men, women, Human, Royals, and Wesen, that dare to sink to that level. And I want to be the one to stand between the scum of the world and innocent children.”

Theresa appears suitably impressed by the passion in his voice, despite being used to demonstrate Fabian’s greatest weapon.

Fabian turns to Nick and Monroe. “I likely will never have a mate or biological children. My destiny is to be a Guardian. My charges will be my children, I will love and care for them as if they were mine. My first priority is their safety. My second is their happiness.”

Fabian is the first candidate to speak of the importance of the children. The previous three were more about the honor of being Guardians, the prestige of protecting the first Grimm-Blutbad hybrids. Fabian shows no indication that he cares how monumental the pups will be or of the status he would obtain by being their Guardian.

“I love children. I helped raise my siblings and mentored many children throughout the years I have been waiting and training. If you offer to entrust your pups into my care, I will not let you down. I’ll use every weapon in my arsenal to keep them safe and happy. That is my vow.”

Nick, Monroe, and Trubel share glances at the end of his speech. “Thank you, Fabian. You are obviously passionate about protecting our pups,” Nick says.

Nodding, Fabian responds, “Thank you for considering me.”

As the door shuts, Nick says, “I like him.”

“He is a skilled disarmer,” Theresa admits reluctantly. “He uses charm as a weapon, almost like a siren, to manipulate people. He coaxes you to let down your guard because of the emotion he sparks in you. And by the time you figure out the danger, if you do at all, it is too late. He would be a powerful weapon to have on your pups’ side. And I imagine he’s more than capable of changing his method and using intimidation instead of charm. He has strength and height, both can be used for intimidation. Fabian is dangerous.”

Monroe scans Fabian’s profile. “Physically, he has both strength and speed. Trained in a variety of fighting styles and proficient with a number of weapons.”

“Naturally good with children, genuine and caring,” Nick reads. “He’s like the perfect child
The candidate’s profiles, including their personality traits, are determined by a combination of professionals within the Eiszähr Wächter committee to ensure accuracy. “I like him. He feels right.”

Monroe agrees, “Yes. He’s already connected to the pups without ever meeting us or them. He cares for them.” To himself, Monroe admits he does not enjoy the charm Fabian possesses. For the pups’ protection, it is wonderful. But the thought of Fabian living with them, interacting with his Nicky, riles his possessive instincts. Fabian could be a threat to his relationship with Nick. Monroe says nothing about it though, knowing he’ll only sound like a jealous idiot.

“I believe him,” Trubel admits, a tad reluctantly. “I believe he’d die to protect them. Without hesitation or regret.”

Nick and Monroe both nod. “Plus, he cares about them, about their happiness. Their protection isn’t his only priority. They won’t be just a job to him.”

“They’ll be his life, his purpose,” Monroe finishes. *But he better keep his charm far away from my Nicky.* *He peeks at Nick in his peripheral vision. Far, far away.*

“He has a good chance to be one of our three. A very good chance.”

Despite his possessiveness, Monroe knows Nick is right. Fabian is likely meant to be one of their Guardians. He kisses Nick. “Our first serious Guardian candidate.” He pushes his chair back and kneels beside Nick’s chair. Monroe turns to Nick and lays his hands on his glamored stomach. “Hear that, pups? We might have found your first Guardian. I bet you three will love him if we choose him, just as he will love you.” Monroe kisses his belly through his shirt, feeling pride and relief at possibly selecting their first.

Theresa clears her throat, breaking the sweet moment. “Two more to go.”

The next candidate gets crossed off the list when he gets a little too friendly with Nick, despite Monroe growling possessively beside him. Trubel quickly escorts the man out before it turns into an all-out brawl. Perhaps he’s simply naturally flirty but not noticing the neon flashing sign that screams *back off* is a red flag. Anyone that oblivious isn’t a good choice for Monroe and Nick. They need someone with good instincts, someone capable of picking up on subtle clues. That skill could save the pups’ lives in the future.

The sixth and seventh candidate both prove themselves qualified but something about the women is lacking. They aren’t unique and their pups need special Guardians. The three keep the two in the running but none of them are scrambling to put either on the top of their list.

The moment the next person walks in, they straighten in their chairs. His appearance makes an impact. Striking hazel eyes, warm brown skin, strong features, and plump lips surrounded by a neatly trimmed beard. He isn’t the tallest candidate they’ve seen but he is over six feet of pure muscle. He is built for power and the three of them can nearly feel it radiating from him.

Monroe meets his intimidating stare head on.

The man is stoic as he shakes hands with the three. He sits down, the chair creaking under his weight, and continues to stare without saying a word.

“I am Monroe,” he says. Pointing to Nick, Monroe continues, “This is my mate, Nick, and his protégé, Miss Rubel.”

He nods at the introduction. In a deep, smooth voice, he says, “My name is Cypress Hart.” His eyes
move between the three before settling on Nick.

Nick fights the urge to shift under his striking gaze. “What is your best asset?”

Cypress rumbles, “In terms of protection? Brute strength.” He flexes his muscles and the material of his shirt strains to contain them.

Monroe doesn’t doubt that is the truth. “What is your best asset in other terms?”

Cypress drops his stoic act for the first time and smiles. It changes his whole appearance. This version is approachable. “Humor, fun.”

“You can be fun?” Trubel asks skeptically.

He grins. “What built guys can’t be fun?”

“You came in here looking like a stone-cold killer and you claim to be fun?” Trubel challenges in disbelief.

Cypress wiggles his eyebrows teasingly. “I’m a man of contradictions.”

Trubel rolls her eyes.

“I happen to be the favorite uncle among my nieces and nephews.”

“What’d ya do? Bully them into saying that?”

Cypress sobers. “I would never threaten an innocent child.” Before Trubel can speak, he continues, “That before, it’s an act. To show what I can do, what I can be to protect my charges. Who you saw before is simply a persona, a facade. Nothing more, nothing less. It is not who I am.”

“Then who are you?” Nick inquires.

Cypress glances between Monroe and Nick. “Just a big kid that never grew up, hiding in the body of an ex-football player.”

Nick and Monroe appear skeptical.

“Look, I know I don’t look like it but I love kids. I’m really just a giant teddy bear, a big softie when it comes to children. Whatever my charges want to do I’m willing, eager to do. Whether that be playing ninjas or having tea parties or ninja tea parties. They want me to dress up in a bright pink princess dress complete with a wig and a tiara. I’m up for that. I’ll dress up as whatever they want, providing it doesn’t hamper my ability to protect them. I’m not worried about looking foolish. If it can bring a smile to a child’s face, that’s what matters,” Cypress vows sincerely.

Nick is impressed. “You mean that.”

“Of course I do,” Cypress says with a grin. “I don’t want to be a Guardian because I want to fight. I want it because of the kids. Ensuring they get to grow up, play, have fun, be normal kids. That’s why I want this.”


Cypress lights up, gushing, “I love holidays. Halloween is my favorite. Candy and dressing up, the best! Christmas is a close second.” Smiling sheepishly, he admits, “I can get a little crazy on
decorations. My Christmas villages seem to grow every year.”

“Fantastic! I have boxes and boxes of decorations. I cover every inch of the house, it’s great. Imagine combining our stuff,” Monroe says excitedly.

Cypress looks at Monroe in awe, he’s found his heart brother.

“Do you have a train set? I have a—”

Nick puts a hand up, “Wait, back up a second. Wesen celebrate Christmas?”

Monroe and Cypress gape at Nick. “Of course we do,” they say together, sounding offended.

“We love Christmas,” Monroe states.

“Maybe not everyone,” Cypress concedes. “But neither does every Human.”

Nick stares at his mate, taken aback by this new, child-like side of him. Then what Roe said flashes through his mind. “Every inch?”

“You’ll love it,” Monroe promises confidently, patting Nick’s hand.

Nick wonders if he will, his mind picturing their home looking as if Christmas threw up all over it. With a tight smile, he lies, “Sure.” The smile he receives from Roe makes it all worth it. *Even if I find out I hate it, I’ll pretend I love it for Roe.*

Monroe turns back to Cypress and then the two of them are in their own little world, talking about holidays and decorations with what seems like an unhealthy amount of enthusiasm.

Trubel leans over to whisper to Nick. “Monroe really likes holidays. That’s...unexpected.”

Nick nods absently. “It’s news to me.”

“Like Christmas?”

He peeks at Roe, whose hands are fluttering animatedly as are Cypress’s. Nick answers quietly, “Not really. I remember Christmas being a big deal with my parents. They tried to make it special for me. But once they died, Aunt Marie wasn’t much into Christmas. What about you?”

“Nope. Celebrated a few Christmases with foster families but most either didn’t have the money, energy, or inclination to put on a celebration for Christmas. Soon enough I was on my own.” Trubel stares at the wall blankly, memories of those tough years running through her mind. “Not much time to think about presents when you’re wondering where your next meal is coming from.”

Nick pats her back sympathetically, realizing he was lucky. He had Aunt Marie to take care of all his needs, even if she wasn’t the most maternal person. “Well, if you stay with us until Christmas, I guess expect an all out celebration. Seems Roe won’t take anything less.”

Theresa shrugs noncommittally. “Maybe.” She barely allows herself to think of tomorrow, much less that far into the future.

Not surprised, Nick doesn’t waste time trying to get a more definite answer out of her. Deciding Roe has had more than enough time to chat with Cypress, Nick breaks up their bromance. “Thank you, Cypress, for your time. We will be considering you seriously when we make our final decision.”

Cypress startles in embarrassment at getting caught up during the most important interview of his life.
Nick waves off Cypress’s apologetic expression. “Don’t worry about it.” He smirks. “It was fun to see Roe get excited about something besides the pups or clocks.”

“Or you,” Theresa adds.

Latching onto one aspect, Cypress leans forward in interest and asks, “Clocks? Are you a collector?”

Monroe says proudly, “I’m a clockmaker. I fix clocks for a living, although I can’t help but collect my favorites as well.”

“What is your favor…” Cypress trails off at Nick’s expression. He stands up and shakes each of their hands firmly. “Thank you for this opportunity.” Then he leaves before he can embarrass himself further.

Monroe waits until the door closes to say, “I like him.”

Exasperated, Nick shakes his head. “Of course you do. You found the twin you didn’t know you had.”

“The pups would love him.”

“As much as you would?” Trubel asks, chuckling.

Nick laughs and high fives Trubel. “Nice one.”

Monroe crosses his arms, put out for being teased for his and Cypress’s easy camaraderie.

“No pouting, Roe,” Nick scolds playfully.

Monroe asks almost fearfully, “You did like him though, right?”

“I did. He’d make a fantastic Guardian for our pups. And considering how you and he get along, Cypress would fit smoothly into our household and our family.”

Ready for the next candidate, Nick signals to Mr. Schaefer.

The ninth guardian candidate’s appearance is even more startling than Cypress’s. She walks in with confidence to spare but what all three notice most is the distinctive and intricate black, tribal-like tattoo covering her throat, from her chin down to her collarbone. Golden bronze skin with dark blue eyes, a nose ring in her right nostril and wavy lavender hair. She shakes each of their hands firmly with a strength that belies her 5’2” frame. “My name is Zuri Nikitovna Siyanna,” she says with a trace of a Russian accent. Zuri has the aura of an intense warrior with keen intelligence obvious in her eyes.

Taken aback by how intimidating she looks, neither Monroe nor Nick says a word. Trubel, on the other hand, grins. “I’m Trubel.”

Zuri’s expression does not twitch at the unusual nickname. “A pleasure.”

“I think you’ve stunned these two dumb,” Theresa says with amusement.

Zuri glances between the two men, assessing them silently.

Monroe and Nick both remember reading her profile. She’s the only Eisbär Wächter hybrid in the guardian program. She’s been at the top of her training classes from the day she entered the program, which has made her a bit of an outcast among the other trainees. The trainers nor the Guardian
committee know her true hybrid status or all of the weapons in her arsenal as a result of her hybrid status. Extremely close-mouthed about herself, no one knows much about Zuri other than what she’s willingly offered. She’s a mystery.

Whatever she is, whatever she’s hiding, Zuri Nikitovna Siyanna is an exceptional warrior. The type they want protecting their pups. The only question is can they trust her?

Nick settles his nerves and puts himself into detective mode. “Why are you secretive about yourself and your past? What are you hiding?”

Zuri stares back unperturbed. “My past is my own. Who I am is my own as well.”

“No, it’s not. You are asking us to trust you; to trust you with our pups but aren’t willing to trust us,” Nick challenges.

Monroe growls, his eyes woging red. “I don’t care what kind of power you have.” Monroe plants his hands on the table and leans forward. “Your profile may say you are the most powerful candidate they have but this is my family.” He swats her profile folder and pages fly everywhere.

Zuri doesn’t flinch. “You don’t have to like me,” she looks from Monroe over at Nick, “neither of you.” She calmly gathers the papers in front of her into a neat pile. “You don’t know me and I don’t know you. I don’t care that you’re a Blutbad or that you two are both Grimms. What I care about are your children. Trust takes time to develop, for me especially.”

Trubel nods in understanding. It’s obvious that Zuri’s childhood wasn’t all sunshine and butterflies either.

“I have power, a lot of it. And I am offering it to you freely. I can’t make you trust me, nothing I can say can do that.”

The answer is honest, none of them can deny that.

“You are free to ask around about me. Many will have nothing good to say about me. Others may be honest enough to say I am a skilled Guardian candidate but few will say they like me. Being popular among my peers means nothing to me. I’m here to protect my charges. Period.”

Not sure what to say to that, they remain silent.

Zuri stands, looking down at them. “You know my qualifications. If you have any questions for me, feel free to ask. I welcome any professional questions. Thank you for your time.” She bows respectfully without dropping her eyes. Then leaves without another word.

The silence at her exit is weighty. Several minutes pass as Monroe and Nick think over the interview. Zuri is unlike any of the other candidates, in personality and in her skill level.

Monroe wraps an arm around Nick’s back. “What do you think of her?”

“She’s powerful, incredibly so. Granted, she isn’t the most personable of people,” Nick observes. “And she is hiding things.”

“She is. But I believe she’s honest.”

Trubel adds, “I identify with her. She finds trust hard and I get that. The way my life has been in the last several years, it makes it hard to trust. I came with you and Monroe because I was desperate. Not because I trusted you.” And as Monroe knows, she tried to leave that first night. Without his speech,
she would have left. She would have regretted it later but trust is hard.

Monroe can understand where Zuri is coming from. He wasn’t eager to share his own past with Nick despite loving and trusting him completely. Monroe would be as resistant as Zuri is to share the secrets of his past with a perfect stranger.

“The question is can we trust her to protect the pups? She has the power but is her heart in the right place? That’s what I’m not sure about. My instincts are pulling me in two different directions, one saying to choose her and the other saying to stay as far away from her as possible. I don’t know which to listen to,” Nick says, rubbing his temples wearily.

Monroe tugs his close and Nick lays his head on his shoulder. “We’ll figure it out. We have time to think about it.”

Nick sighs tiredly, the interviews taking their toll on him.

“Do you want to take some time before the final interview?”

Breathing in Roe’s scent, Nick shakes his head. “Nah. Let’s get this over with.” Looking at the last profile, Nick waves for Maya Chang to be brought in.

She enters with a smile, shaking each of their hands with calloused palms.

“You’re our last interview. Tell us about yourself.”

“My name is Maya Chang. Most of my family are professionals of some sort. My mom and younger sister are both doctors. My dad is a judge and my two brothers are both lawyers. So I’m the black sheep of the family you could say,” she offers with a smile. “Not really though, they’re all proud of me. I’ve known basically since I was born I wanted to be a Guardian. I could feel it in my blood. My parents got me into training as soon as I asked. I was the youngest person there when I started.”

Nick looks down at her profile. “It says you started when you were just three years old.”

“You’ve never wavered?” Monroe asks. “Your profile says you are a skilled mix-martial artist and if you wanted to, could make a good living doing that.”

Maya waves it off. “That’s just training. To keep me sharp. No, my dream is the same one I’ve had since I was born. I want to be a Guardian and being chosen to be one of your children’s Guardians would be a tremendous honor. The threat around your children will be persistent and aggressive. Placing myself in between them and the threat is my purpose. Giving my life to save theirs is a sacrifice I am willing to give.”

Monroe is impressed by her dedication. She’s trained since she was a toddler, never wavering from her goal. Maya knows exactly what they are asking her to do and he believes she would sacrifice her life for the pups’.

Nick’s eyes start to droop. The brief nap and meal after work had helped get him through the long hours but the work day combined with the interviews is catching up with him. Being on the potion the entire day and much of the evening isn’t helping his energy levels either. He leans against Roe and closes his eyes. Nick relaxes when Roe’s arms help support him.

Maya watches with sympathy. “I appreciate this opportunity. I hope you will consider me as a candidate.” She offers them each a small bow and a smile, leaving quickly and quietly.

“Tired, Nicky?”
“Mmm yeah.”

Monroe kisses his temple. “Let’s get you out of here then. We have a lot to think about but not tonight.” He supports Nick as he stands, taking much of Nick’s weight. Monroe thanks Mr. Schaefer, who offers his own thanks for trusting the Eisbär Wächter to be the guardians of their pups.

Nick falls asleep on the drive home. Monroe carries him inside and into the bedroom. He wakes Nick enough to get him to take his potion, brush his teeth, and go to the bathroom. Then he carries his again sleeping mate and tucks him in.

He goes downstairs to find Trubel getting herself a snack. “Thank you for today. It means a lot to us that you came with us. We value your opinion and your instincts.”

Theresa shrugs, downplaying the importance both put on her presence during the interviews. “No big deal.”

Monroe doesn’t contradict her, despite knowing for them all it was significant.

After work the next day, they all get together to talk about Nick and Monroe’s choices. The two men, plus Trubel, fill Sean and Hank in about the interviews.

“Based on the interviews, we have two standouts that I think the three of us are all comfortable with,” Nick explains. “Fabian Pedroso and Cypress Hart. The third Guardian is what we are having trouble with.”

Monroe promises, “We don’t need to make our decision tonight but we’d appreciate being able to talk about the candidates with you. Each of you will have contact with the Guardians we choose. We value your opinions.”

Hank questions, “No issues or concerns with your top two then?”

“Well,” Monroe starts.

Surprised, Nick asks, “What? Who?”

“Fabian Pedroso.” Monroe folds his arms defensively. “Something about him rubs me the wrong way.”

Nick inspects Roe’s expression for clues. “Why do I have a feeling it has to do with his charm?”

“I don’t know what you are talking about.”

“Is!”

Monroe looks away. He remembers how easily Fabian mesmerized Trubel and an insecure part of him wonders what would happen if he turned that charm on Nick. It isn’t that he doesn’t trust Nick nor does he believe Nick will be susceptible to Fabian’s charm. *But what if he is?* The mere thought of seeing Nick with someone else makes his insides go cold. It’s irrational and stupid but the tiny seed of insecure fear is stubbornly persistent.

Nick turns Roe’s face to his. “Hey.” He says nothing more, letting his eyes do the talking for him. Nick pulls him closer to rest their foreheads together. “Do you trust me?”

“Yes,” Monroe answers simply.
“Then stop worrying. The Guardians are for our pups and Fabian is a top choice for a reason. I believe he’s capable of protecting our pups the way we need.”

Monroe nods, conceding that the pups’ safety is more important than his insecure fears.

Sean gives the couple a moment before challenging, “First instinct, who do you choose for your last Guardian?”

“Zuri Siyanna,” Monroe answers.

When Nick doesn’t answer, Sean nudges, “Stop thinking, Nick. Who popped into your mind first?”

Nick reluctantly answers, “Zuri. But Maya Chang is a great choice too.” Before anyone can comment, he rushes on, “Anna Frisk could be a good Guardian as well...except she seems to have little actual interest in the pups.”

“Why are you denying what your instincts are telling you and Monroe, Nick?” Hank asks softly.

“Just like during the interview, my instincts are contradictory where Zuri is concerned. She is the most powerful candidate we have. I don’t doubt her ability to protect the pups. What I doubt is whether she is worthy of our trust,” Nick confesses.

Monroe nods. “I fear the same. Zuri has many positive traits.” He counts them off on his fingers. “She’s a genius, literally. A brilliant strategist, and a competent leader. She has the perfect mix of strength, speed, and flexibility.”

“Top of her class in about everything a person can think of. Skilled mix-martial artist and proficient in a number of weapons,” Nick adds.

Hank states, “She sounds perfect. Why are you doubting her trustworthiness?”

Nick justifies, “She’s secretive. About herself. Her past. Her powers.”

“Is her secretive nature that significant of a negative?”

“I don’t think so,” Trubel mutters darkly.

Nick disagrees. “I’m not sure. She’s hiding a lot; what I want to know is why she’s keeping these secrets.”

Monroe continues his thought, “If we choose her and one of her secrets harms one of the pups... I don’t know how we’ll forgive ourselves.”

Theresa is sympathetic to Nick and Monroe’s fears but she has faith in Zuri. Her instincts tell her that Zuri is a must have. “I think she’s just reserved and wary. She doesn’t know how many interviews she’ll need to endure before being picked. Can you blame her for not wanting to spread her secrets to every prospective employer?”

Nick hadn’t thought of that before.

“Sometimes the element of surprise is the only thing between you and death. By withholding knowledge of all her powers, Zuri is ensuring she has a few tricks in her bag that no one will expect,” Trubel asserts.

Monroe strokes his beard thoughtfully. He can’t contend that Trubel doesn’t make a valid point. He looks over at Nick questioningly.
Nick nods reluctantly, seeing her point. “Okay, I can understand that. Doesn’t mean I’m ready to commit to choosing her as our Guardian.”

“Tell us about the other candidates then. What do they bring to the table? How would they fit in with your top two? What are their weaknesses?” Sean challenges.

Taking the opportunity Sean is providing to talk it out, Nick says, “Anna Frisk is physically similar to Fabian. Tall and strong. Intimidating.”

“Without the personality or people skills,” Theresa mutters out the side of her mouth.

Nick mock scowls but doesn’t contradict her assessment.

“Are her skills different from Fabian?” Hank asks.

“Yes. He has manipulation, charm especially, something Anna does not possess,” Nick says. “She appears to be a good choice for the Guardian leader. She’s smart and strategic.”

Monroe argues, “But what else does she have?”

Nick doesn’t have an answer.

“Let’s not forget her lack of interest and experience with children. Our pups will spend a lot of time with their Guardians. Do we really want someone that our pups might not like? Someone that may not even like our pups, much less love them?”

Sighing, Nick conceding easily. “No.”

*One candidate down,* Sean thinks. “Other candidates?”

“Maya Chang,” Monroe says. “She’s been training to be a Guardian since she was three.”

“She’s very dedicated. To being a Guardian and to protecting our pups. I believe she’d die to protect them.”

Theresa adds, “She is diverse and could fit in well with your top two. Maybe not as well as Zuri Siyanna.” Her preference for Zuri is obvious in her voice. “I think a team without her is a mistake.”

Theresa shrugs. “But that’s just my opinion.”

Remembering what he read in Zuri Siyanna’s profile, Sean says, “I have to agree with Trubel. Zuri Siyanna is the biggest asset you have. Secrets or not, her power is immense. The threats to your children will be numerous and tenacious, she has the power to stand strong against whatever and whoever is thrown at her.”

Nick and Monroe take the advice with a nod. Her power is what keeps drawing them back to her. The strength of it is undeniable and hard to resist.

“What do you think?” Nick asks his partner.

Not knowing exactly what will come after Nick’s children, Hank advises, “She does seem to have more power than your other choice. I understand your hesitation about her, I do.”

“But?”

Hank gazes at Nick, concerned, “We’ve seen a lot of bad Wesen since you’ve become a Grimm. If Wesen or any threat, goes after your children, wouldn’t you want someone that has great power?”
Nick’s expression is thoughtful but he admits, “I’m not ready to choose yet.” He looks at Roe. They definitely have some serious thinking to do.

“Have you made a dec—” Hank cuts off abruptly at Trubel’s frantic gesture. Nick is too distracted trying to wake up without coffee and attempting not to think about choosing Guardians to notice Hank’s awkward half question.

Nick thanks his lucky stars when Wu calls them with a case. He doesn’t want to think about the Guardians any longer. He and Roe feel tremendous pressure to choose the correct people. Their pups’ very lives hang on their decision and neither wants to get it wrong.

Arriving at the scene, Nick and Hank step toward Wu with Trubel hovering watchfully in the background. “What do we have?”

“Another weird one,” Wu says. “Some sort of mass animal attack. Five dead.”

Nick and Hank trade a quick look.

Checking his notes, Wu says, “All but one have been identified. One is a known drug dealer, who goes by the name Nitro. The second is a known prostitute, Natalie Bellerose, and the third is her john, Vic Peters. The fourth is a homeless veteran named Joe Stevens. The unidentified woman is likely a drug addict, judging from the track marks on what’s left of her arms.” He walks them over to the two bodies. “This is the john and the unidentified drug addict.”

They pull back the sheets to look over the two bodies relatively close together. Both are a gruesome sight. Vic Peters has his pants tangled around his legs, likely why he didn’t get far once the attack began.

“As you can see by these bodies, the animals decided to make a meal out of the victims,” Wu says dryly.

Theresa looks over the bodies stoically, the man brutally torn up and the woman less so.

“Peters fought hard, which is why he’s got more wounds than the woman. Coroner thinks she was too high to give much of a fight.” Wu points at the man. “It’s good his wallet was intact or we might not have been able to identify him.”

Theresa adds, “His pants around his ankles was a double-edged sword.”

Wu’s eyes narrow at her comment.

“What? They got him killed but also protected his wallet, making it possible to identify him. Kind of hard to get fingerprints when he doesn’t have hands.” She looks down at the body. “No face either.”

Wu rolls his eyes. “Unlike him, we do have eyes.” The patronizing ‘little girl’ at the end goes unsaid but it’s heard all the same.

Trying to diffuse the situation before it gets out of hand and turns into a snark off, Nick asks, “Where are the other bodies?”

Wu glares at Trubel before turning back to Nick and saying in his typical drawl, “They were chased to exhaustion and ended up quite spread out before they were caught.”
“Were all the bodies in this condition?” Hank inquires.

Wu nods. “All of them had parts of them eaten, which was done while they were alive.”

“Eaten alive?” Trubel blurts out.

Wu stares at her dead-eyed. His suspicion of her since she was introduced to him hasn’t wavered.

Neither Nick nor Hank knows what Wu’s issue with Trubel is. Wu has good instincts and probably realizes Theresa Rubel isn’t exactly what she seems. Yet, they can’t tell Wu the truth. He wouldn’t understand and they can’t explain it.

Wu addresses Nick and Hank, flipping open his notebook, “Preliminary examination show each victim had multiple broken bones that appear to be caused by crushing bite of a powerful animal. The coroner could not be sure about what type of animal but hypothesizes it is some sort of large hybrid dog with a large wide mouth.”

“Any witnesses?” Hank asks.

“In this area? No one saw nothing,” Wu says with a roll of his eyes. “A patrolman found the first body. While securing the scene we found another body, we did a thorough search after that and found the three other bodies.”

Nick and Hank take the time to interview the patrolman that found the first body. He had little to add, seeing no one in the area. No doubt others had stumbled upon the bodies but those people predictably chose not to call the police. They walked to the other bodies, which were in similar condition. Whatever this is, none of them, aside from Wu, believe it was an animal attack. Once separating from Wu, they quickly check in with Monroe.

“There is a number of dog-like Wesen but from your description of the attack, the bodies, and the bite wounds, it may be an Abartige Aasfresser,” Monroe suggests, stroking his beard thoughtfully.

Trubel wonders, “You ever run into one of those?”

Nick shakes his head. “Never heard of them.”

“That their name is German for deviant scavenger. They’re hyena-like in appearance and behavior. Pack animals with a thirst for blood and flesh. Traditionally, they feed off high-risk victims. Prostitutes, vagrants, runaways, drug addicts, and the like. People that won’t be missed.”

*Great.* Nick guesses, “So this pack could have been killing like this for a long time?”

“Yes. That they left the bodies half-consumed and laying around to be discovered is troubling. Abartige Aasfresser are more likely to hide their ‘leftovers’ or take it home with them. Leaving five bodies out for someone to find is atypical. They aren’t spooked by the thought of getting caught. They abandoned their...meal for another reason.”

“Such as?”

Monroe hypothesizes, “Could be a fight with another pack, although I’d expect there would be obvious signs of it at the scenes. Another possibility is a mental issue with the leader or even with the whole pack. Or worse, it could be Umkippen.”

“What is Umkippen?” Hank rubs his forehead wearily. This case keeps getting weirer and weirer.
“Wesen have two sides, their Human side and their Wesen side.”

Trubel, Nick, and Hank nod, already knowing this.

Monroe continues, “However, woging too many times and too frequently can cause their Wesen side to start to take over. Abartige Aasfresser have been known to get obsessed by their blood lust and are more susceptible to Umkippen than other Wesen.”

“I’m guessing this Umkippen is bad?” Nick asks, resigned.

“Yes. Their Wesen side takes control and any humanity they possess can be permanently lost if the Wesen doesn’t obtain help, whether through death or medical treatment. The time their Wesen is in control, the Human inside is gone. It’s a blackout and they have no memories of what they have done.”

They all have seen what Wesen can do while their Human side was present. Imagining what a Wesen is capable of without their humanity intact is a terrifying thought.

Monroe warns, “Be careful. Be vigilant. If you have an Abartige Aasfresser suffering from Umkippen, he or she will be incredibly dangerous. If the whole pack is suffering from it, it’ll be worse. Like a pack of rabid, blood thirsty animals.”

With grave nods, Nick, Hank, and Trubel take his warning to heart. “We will.”

“Maybe I should go with you,” Monroe proposes.

Nick grabs Roe’s arm. “No, I have an extra pair of eyes in Trubel and we know to be wary. We’ll be fine.”

“Excuse us a moment.” Monroe leads Nick away for a private word. He cups Nick’s face gently. “Promise me you will be cautious. I don’t want you or the pups to get hurt. Abartige Aasfresser rely on a sense of smell, Nicky. They’ll smell you and the pups growing inside you. They’ll see you as perfect prey, vulnerable. More so if they are driven by their Wesen side alone.”

Nick holds Roe’s wrists, trying to reassure him with his touch. “Hey, it’s going to be fine. I know what to expect. I’m a Grimm, Roe. Trubel’s a Grimm. And while Hank’s Human, he’s not ignorant or defenseless. They won’t realize that until it is too late. You know We’re far from vulnerable.”

Monroe rests his forehead against Nick’s and sighs, closing his eyes. “I’m afraid.”

Nick swallows around the lump of emotion in his throat. Since Roe talked to his siblings, he’s been more open about his concerns and fears. “I know. I’ll be careful.”

“I know,” Monroe answers softly. He kisses Nick’s sweet mouth. “I love you.”

Nick smiles. “I love you too.”

With great reluctance, Monroe releases Nick and watches him leave. He isn’t sure how he’s going to survive the rest of Nick’s pregnancy with the danger Nick is constantly in.

NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR

Heading back to the station, Wu has a list of people with complaints about violent and dangerous dogs for them. By the fifth stop, they are starting to get frustrated at the realization they are wasting their time. But it needs to be done. They have no other leads, no idea where this pack of Abartige
Aasfresser could be holed up.

“How are we going to find these perps before they kill again?”

Hank looks around as if seeking answers in the trees surrounding them. “I don’t know Nick. This list isn’t helping and we can’t exactly search for people that look akin to humanoid hyenas.” He gets in the passenger seat, Trubel drops into the backseat, while Nick walks around the car to open the driver’s door.

Without a moment’s warning, a pack of five woged Abartige Aasfresser burst out of the trees. Snarling, they head straight for Nick, their behavior attempting to provoke him into running. Nick pulls out his gun, Hank jumps out of the car with a shotgun in hand, and Trubel leaps out with her machete.

Before either man can fire a shot, the pack of Abartige Aasfresser freeze and start screaming. They fall to their knees, writhing in agony before going still.

Nick, Hank, and Trubel gape at the five in shock, wondering what the hell just happened.

“Watch them,” Nick orders Trubel. He and Hank scan their surroundings. Nick’s gaze stutters to a stop at the sight of Zuri Siyanna standing barely ten feet away, looking utterly calm. “Did you?”

Zuri’s eyes flick to the five dead Abartige Aasfresser. “Yes.”

Nick looks down the bodies. “How?” He glances back to Zuri but she’s vanished. His eyes dart around, seeking her position but can’t spot her anywhere.

Having a feeling, Trubel says, “She’s still here. Watching over you.”

“That’s the Zuri you were talking about? The one you aren’t sure you can trust?” Hank questions.

Still trying to find her, Nick answers without looking at him. “Yes.”

“I’d say you have your answer.”

Nick nods absentmindedly. Zuri must have been shadowing him from the moment they left the Eisbär Wächter building. She saved his life, all their lives. How, Nick has no idea but she killed them without even touching them. She’s demonstrated she has a dedication to him and the pups that far surpasses expectations. They hadn’t shown any indications they would choose her, despite that she chose to protect him and the pups. Zuri has proven herself to him and Roe will agree with him. Nick’s gained a protector, whether he likes it or not, and judging from what he’s seen of Zuri thus far, he is pleased to have her at his back. Roe will be relieved. Zuri is exceptionally good, no one felt her presence, not once. Considering their honed instincts, that is saying a lot.

Pulling away from thoughts of Zuri, Nick is surprised to find himself comforted with the knowledge she is nearby and will keep his pups safe. Before she saved him, he’d questioned her loyalty and trustworthiness. Not anymore. Nick trusts Zuri to protect him and the pups. He allows himself a brief caress of his stomach before turning back the job. “We better call this in and figure out what to say happened.”

Only a few houses around here and most have their views of the street blocked by fences or trees. Not a soul comes out to investigate the commotion and they doubt anyone saw anything.
Nick parks in the driveway, leaving his jeep running. “You remember how to get to the trailer?”

“Yeah,” Trubel assures. “Thanks for letting me use your jeep, Nick.”

“No problem. Feel free to bring a book or two home with you. Not all of the entries have translations.” Nick thinks about that. “Maybe we should get Roe and Sean to start English translations to add to the books.” He makes a mental note for the future. “Come home when you’re hungry, Roe will have something ready for you.” Being a transient, Trubel is thin from lack of nutrition and an inconsistency with meals. Nick’s glad she isn’t shy about eating their food since she needs it.

Theresa rolls her eyes, Nick is already leaning toward the father/older brother role at times. “I have some money, I’ll pick something up and take it to the trailer with me.”

Nick turns off the jeep. “Nope. Come on, we’ll pack you something if you insist on eating at the trailer.”

“But—”

He holds up his hand, halting her protests. “No way am I allowing greasy fast food in the trailer with irreplaceable books that are centuries old.”

“Fine,” Theresa concedes. Nick’s right about not ruining the books; they aren’t ones you can simply go to a bookstore and buy another copy. They are invaluable.

The moment they step inside, Monroe is there visually checking Nick over.

Nick spreads his arms wide. “See, totally fine.”

Theresa sneaks by the two men and scrambles to the kitchen. She makes a heaping sandwich, grabs some raw vegetables, an apple, and a handful of cookies. Theresa throws all of it in a bag and snatches a bottle of pop on the run. She heads for the door, again sidling past the two men and escaping out the door.

“Why did Trubel run out of here like a bat out of hell?” Monroe notices Nick’s sheepish expression. “Did something other than what you told me happen today?” He asks sternly.

“Well,” Nick starts. At Roe’s pointed glare, he continues, “Yes. We did close the case, unofficially at least, just as I told you when I called.” After they figured out their story, Nick quickly called Roe and gave him a brief explanation of what happened. The arrival of the coroner gave him a perfect excuse to cut their call short. The three of them had stuck with the story they’d concocted before the other officers arrived and thankfully they bought it. Nick has gotten used to being creative, to say the least, with his reports since becoming a Grimm.

Monroe crosses his arms over his chest. “I hear a but coming.”

“I may have left out that we didn’t actually have anything to do with stopping them.”

Despite Nick’s unharmed appearance, Monroe demands, “Strip.”

Stunned by the order, Nick says, “What?”

“Strip. I want to make sure you’re unharmed. If you’re hiding an injury from me—”

Nick throws up his hands, palms facing Roe. “Stop.” Angry at Roe for believing him irresponsible
enough to hide something that significant from him, especially while he’s carrying the pups. “I wouldn’t do that.”

Monroe sags, the offended tone hitting him where it hurts. He releases a shaky breath. “I’m sorry. I worry about you and the pups and it makes me put my foot in my mouth.” He smiles. “Well, more than usual.”

Nick snorts. Roe does have the tendency to put his foot in his mouth. “It’s a big foot too.” He lifts Roe’s hand, kissing the middle of his palm. “You’re forgiven.”

Monroe softens at the touch, smiling as he pulls Nick in for a tender kiss.

Nick fondly scratches Roe’s beard. “I’m going to take my potion and then I’ll tell you what happened today.”

“How about we take a soak afterward? Or you could soak and relax by yourself. I could give you a massage afterward, either way.”

Grinning at Roe’s thoughtfulness, Nick gives him a kiss in thanks. “I’d like that.” He goes to the bedroom with a smile on his face. Roe may not always say the right thing but he’s generous with his care and his love.

He finds Roe relaxing on the couch. Laid out on the coffee table is a serving tray filled with Nick’s latest cravings: a jar of pickles, a bowl of fresh fruit, a salad, hot sauce, and chocolate sauce laid out on the coffee table.

Nick’s stomach rumbles. He ignores Roe’s amused smile and prepares his snack. The bowl of fruit gets soaked with pickle juice, the salad is covered in chocolate sauce, and the pickles are covered in hot sauce. Nick starts with the salad, moaning at the taste. In between bites he switches to either the fruit or the pickles. Roe wisely keeps silent. Nick finishes the salad quickly. “Thank you, Roe.”

“Anything for you and our pups.”

“Even if I wake you up at three in the morning because of some weird craving I need to satisfy?” Nick asks, stuffing a briny strawberry in his mouth.

Monroe promises, “Even then.” With luck, they’ll have the ingredients in the house but if not, he’ll do whatever necessary to get what Nick needs.

Putting it off long enough, Nick begins explaining, “We were running down the list of people with dangerous dog complaints. We didn’t expect to find anything because we already knew the attacks weren’t real dogs but Wesen.” Roe nods, not breaking his silence. “As we were leaving, five of ‘em burst out of the trees. Hank and Trubel were already in the car.” Unsurprisingly, Roe surges up and starts pacing. Nick continues, unfazed. “Hank and Trubel got out quick, Hank with his shotgun in hand and Trubel with her machete. I pulled out my pistol. They were crazed, seeming not to care about the weapons pointed at them. They were coming for me, trying to taunt me into running. They wanted to chase me down. I had to fight the instinctive urge to run, knowing that’s exactly what they wanted me to do.”

Monroe growls low, his eyes bleeding red and his hands clenching into tight fists. His exact fear come true, them targeting Nick because of the pups.

“Then they froze. All five of them,” he says, still in disbelief.

He stops pacing, surprised by the awe in Nick’s voice.
Nick stares off, reliving the memory. “They started to scream like they were in excruciating pain. Fell to their knees and convulsed in pain until they went still. All five died before our eyes without a touch from anyone.”

Monroe starts pacing again, his mind furiously trying to determine whether who or whatever killed the Wesen is a threat to Nick or an ally.

Nick pins Roe with his stare. “It was her. She killed them. I don’t know how but she killed all five of them from ten feet away. Her hands were empty, Roe.”

He grabs Nick’s arms and pulls him up. “Who, Nicky? Who killed them?”


Monroe’s eyes go wide, completely stunned by the answer. His arms go around Nick and he holds him tight, needing the reassurance of Nick’s warmth.

Nick returns the hug and mumbles against Roe’s shoulder, “She must have been following me this whole time. Shadowing my every move and none of us suspected a thing. I saw her standing there, waiting for me to see her. She could have disappeared before I spotted her but she didn’t. I think she wanted me to know that she would protect me. When I turned away for a second, she disappeared.” He eases back enough to meet Roe’s eyes. “I couldn’t see her or feel her, neither could Hank and Trubel, but she was there, protecting me and the pups. I know it. She still is. She’s out there right now, hiding in the shadows protecting us.”

Monroe swallows painfully, thinking about what could have happened if she hadn’t been there. Five bloodthirsty Abartige Aasfresser against two Grimms and a Human, it could have gone very wrong. Even if they won the fight, Nick or the pups could have been hurt. The pups would have been the prime target and a vulnerable one. Monroe is eternally thankful Zuri’s quick action prevented Nick and the pups from coming to harm. He closes his eyes and allows the familiar feeling of Nick pressed against him comfort him.

“I don’t know what would have happened if she hadn’t been there, Roe. You were right about them experiencing Umkippen; they were lost.” Nick admits to himself that he’d been scared. Not for himself but for the pups. Most Wesen encounters have an animalistic feeling to them but those five were only animals. Not a shred of humanity left in their eyes.

Wiping away the unnoticed tears from Nick’s cheeks, Monroe sends up a silent prayer of thanks. Terrifying though she may be, especially considering what just occurred, she has the power to protect the pups and Nick. Whatever other powers she keeps in her bag of tricks is likely to be as powerful as what she’s already revealed. They need her to be on their side. “Zuri Siyanna has proven herself. She is meant to be our pups’ Guardian.”

“She has,” Nick agrees. “I have a feeling she’s chosen us, whether we like it or not.” Whatever she hides, Nick knows she’ll protect them and that’s all he needs to know to trust her.

Nodding, Monroe concedes he’s right. “She seems the type to just do what she wants. So we can either give her permission to protect you or deny her and have her disregard our rejection and do it anyway.”

“Stubborn woman.”

Monroe smiles. “Exactly the kind of Guardian our pups, and you, need.”

Nick can’t deny that. He gently shoves Roe onto the couch and straddles his lap. His baby bump
pressing against Roe’s belly. Nick links his fingers behind Roe’s head. “We ready to choose then?”

Monroe would rather be thinking of other things but indulges his mate. “I am.”

Squirming in Roe’s lap, Nick says, “Me too.”

“I think we can agree that Zuri is our first choice.”

Nick agrees. “Yes. Whatever she is hiding, will come out eventually. But I trust she will come forward with anything that could endanger the pups.”

“Or you,” Monroe adds.

Nick tightens his hold on Roe’s neck. “Or you.”

“Any of us,” Monroe compromises.

“Zuri is a gift, Roe,” Nick vows seriously. She’s more powerful than he imagined and she is prepared to use all of her power to protect his family.

Monroe consents he’s right. “She is. She has it all. Strength. Intelligence. Speed. Power. Fate has blessed us with her and the Fates wouldn’t allow us to refuse her. The Fates and Zuri made sure of that.”

Nick’s thankful they hadn’t throw away the best Guardian they could ever have. “I wonder if Vivian predicted this.”

Monroe hasn’t thought about the Seer for a while. “There’s a good chance she did.”

“Why hasn’t she contacted us again?”

“Seers are a…” Monroe searches for the correct term, “a particular breed. Timing is vital to them. Vivian will contact us when she feels we need her help.”

Nick has heard that before but it doesn’t make the waiting any easier.

“I know it’s frustrating, Nicky, but there’s nothing we can do but wait.”

Sighing unhappily, Nick says, “I know. Doesn’t mean I have to like it.”

Monroe laughs. “No one likes it, Nicky. Not even me.”

“Really?”

“Really.” Monroe pushes Nick’s shirt up and cups his growing belly. “She knows things about our pups. About the threats that want to harm or kill them. She knows things that can help us be ready for the attacks. Of course I want to know what she does.”

Nick smiles, grateful that Roe isn’t trying to shield him any longer. He needs Roe to be open with him. He isn’t some little helpless Sub that needs to believe Roe is some robotic superhero that doesn’t feel fear or worry.

Monroe continues to lovingly rub Nick’s belly. “We are choosing your Guardians, my precious pups. They will protect from everything and everyone that seek to harm you. Zuri Siyanna is your first Guardian. She is your Alpha Guardian, always listen to her, Pups. She is powerful and will protect you.” He kisses his palm and presses it against Nick’s skin. Monroe looks up and smiles at
the tender expression on his love’s face.

“I love you.”

He tugs Nick forward, kissing him gently and whispering against his lips, “I love you too, Nicky.”

Nick says, “I know who I want. Do you?”

“Yes. Question is, do we agree?”


At the same time, they answer:

“Cypress and Fabian.”

“Fabian and Cypress.”

Monroe and Nick grin at each other. While they’d discussed the Guardians before and put Fabian and Cypress at the top, they hadn’t eliminated Maya Chang yet. Being on the same page means they have one less thing to worry about.

“I’m surprised you picked Fabian.”

Monroe sighs. “He’s a good fit, considering the other two. Zuri isn’t the best with people but Fabian is. He’s a master manipulator. And he’s great with kids like Cypress is.”

“I wonder how Zuri is going to be with the pups. She’s not the most personable of people.”

Monroe proclaims, “The Fates chose her, Nicky. She may not be like Cypress and Fabian are with the pups but I have faith the pups will love her.”

“We have our three Guardians.” Inhaling deeply and releasing it slowly, he feels confident in their choices. “I feel good. It feels right; they feel right.”

“They do.” Monroe caresses Nick’s stomach. “Hear that, my little ones? We have chosen your Guardians. You’ll love them and they’ll love you.” He tips his head back and smiles at Nick. “Shall I call Mr. Schaefer tomorrow and tell him the news?”

Nick nods. “Yeah.” He leans forward, lying against Roe.

Monroe strokes his back. “Ready for that soak?”

He hides his smile from Roe, breathing hotly on Roe’s neck. “I have a better idea.” Roe shivers faintly, making Nick’s smile widen into a grin. “I thought we could get a little…” he pauses dramatically before finishing huskily, “dirty first.”

The lustful tone travels through Monroe’s veins, leaving fire behind.

“Would you like that, Roe?” Nick asks seductively.

Monroe growls, “Hell yeah.”

Nick starts unbuttoning Roe’s flannel shirt, kissing each inch of skin he exposes. Roe’s breathing has already changed by the time Nick spreads open his shirt and pulls it out of his pants. Monroe returns the favor, lifting Nick’s shirt over his head.
“You’re beautiful like this, Nicky.” Monroe’s hands following his eyes, caressing the expanse of pale golden flesh in front of him.

Looking down at himself, Nick disagrees, trying to dismiss the compliment with a laugh, “You’re blind.”


Nick’s self-consciousness about his body disappears for the moment. He can’t deny that he is beautiful to Roe, not with the way he’s looking at him and the eagerness in his touch. Nick rubs Roe through his pants, savoring the hardness under his fingers. Roe desires him, even with his growing belly. Nick slips off his lap, stripping off his own pants and sinking to his knees in front of Roe. With nimble fingers, he works open Roe’s pants. Nick licks his lips in anticipation at the sight of the delicious bulge. Unable to resist, he presses his face against it and breathes in the smell of Roe’s arousal. A tap on his hip and Roe lifts up; Nick tugs his pants down to his ankles. Nick’s hands slide up his hairy legs as he mouths at Roe’s cloth covered cock.

Monroe closes his eyes and buries his fingers in Nick’s hair. A wet spot forms on his boxers, a combination of pre-cum and saliva. Monroe slides a hand down his bare back, pushing under the band of his pants and boxers to tease the valley between Nick’s cheeks. Nick groans, arching his back to push into the touch. They urge each other on, teasing more as their craving to be touched grows. Nick eases Monroe’s boxers down and his cock springs out, slapping against his abdomen. Nick grips the base, holding Roe’s cock steady. He laps at the tip and swirls his tongue around his cock.

“Nicky,” Monroe sighs. As much as he loves Nick sucking him, he wants to focus on Nick. “Stand up for me.”

Nick sucks Roe’s cock into his mouth, bobbing up and down leisurely.

“Nicholas,” Monroe warns.

He continues defiantly until Roe breaks under the pleasure and guides Nick to swallow him whole with a hand on the back of his head. Only then does he pull back, a trail of saliva clinging between mouth and cock. Nick grins at the lustful look Roe shoots him.

“I should punish you for that, my little Sub.”

Nick shrugs, saying nonchalantly, “You seemed to like it.”

Monroe stares down at his luscious mate. “Oh, I did and I planned on returning the favor. But if you don’t want me to…”

Perking up at the thought, Nick surges to his feet, yanks off his boxers, and stands between Roe’s legs. His weeping cock points invitingly toward Roe’s mouth.

Chuckling at Nick’s eagerness, he obediently leans forward and takes Nick into his mouth. He sucks slowly, one large hand rolling Nick’s balls firmly.


Monroe sucks harder, Nick’s pre-cum coating the inside of his mouth.

Nick hisses in pleasure, “Yes, yes.”
Bobbing his head, Monroe takes Nick to the edge. Then he eases back, preventing Nick from cumming.

Nick whines. “Please. Fuck, please. Make me cum.”

Unable to ignore his pretty begging, Monroe wets two of his fingers with saliva and pushes them into Nick’s welcoming heat. He wraps his lips around Nick’s cock and swallows him down. Monroe finds and presses against his prostate with his fingers. The dual sensation brings Nick back to the precipice quickly and this time, Monroe pushes him over. Nick cries out and cummings with Monroe swallowing it down, milking every drop from his cock. Monroe carefully helps him onto his lap and Nick sprawls inelegantly in his afterglow. Waiting for Nick to come down from his dazed high, Monroe caresses Nick’s bare skin lightly. When Nick starts to stir, Monroe asks, “Want to take that soak now?”

“Not done with you yet.”

With a limp Nick in his arms, Monroe questions in amusement, “Sure about that?”

“Yup. Just gimme a minute. ’S your fault for sucking my brain through my cock anyway.”

Monroe chuckles. “Didn’t like that? Guess I won’t do that again.”

The teasing threat jolts Nick back into awareness. He sits up in Roe’s lap. “I liked it very much, as you well know.” Nick smirks and wraps his arms around Roe’s neck. “Maybe I should show you how much.”

Cock twitching at the thought, Monroe tries to play it cool. “Maybe you should.”

Nick wipes the false unconcerned look off Roe’s face the second he starts stroking his cock. He swipes his thumb over the weeping tip. Teasing Roe with slow strokes and light touches, Nick gets Roe warmed up. He moves off his lap, kneeling on the floor to tug off Roe’s forgotten pants and pulling his boxers down and off. Nick rifles through the side table for lube, coating his fingers. Putting a foot on the couch beside Roe’s leg, he reaches behind and works himself open.

Monroe watches Nick’s fingers disappear inside him with focused intent. He licks his lips in anticipation. Imagining how hot and tight it will be to be inside of Nick once more, Monroe grabs himself and starts to stroke.

Barely resisting the urge to slap his hand away, Nick scolds, “None of that. Be a good boy and I’ll reward you.” Roe’s eyebrow quirks up amused. “Or I could take that nice long soak you’re offering. Alone.” Nick’s eyes gaze pointedly down at Roe’s straining cock in a clear challenge.

Not wanting to lose out on a chance to be inside his mate’s perfect heat, Monroe shakes his head.

“Good.” Nick finishes stretching himself quickly. “Ready for your reward?”

Looking at the sexy nude body before him, Monroe answers enthusiastically, “More than ready.” He slumps down on the couch and spreads his legs, drawing Nick’s eye to his eager cock.

“Shameless,” Nick teases.

Monroe’s lips curl up and he shrugs. “For you, absolutely.”

“Let’s keep it that way,” Nick growls possessively. “I’m going to ride you so good.” He climbs onto Roe’s lap and Roe moans in anticipation. Knees planted on the couch beside Roe’s, Nick reaches
back to grab Roe’s cock but Roe’s hand is already holding it steady. Using Roe’s legs for balance, Nick sinks down slowly until his ass rests against Roe’s fist.

Monroe peels his hand off unhurriedly, brushing against Nick’s soft skin and Nick seats himself completely. The two sigh, eyes instinctively closing at the feeling of completion they have at being connected once more. Nick forgets about feeling self-conscious about his growing belly, reveling in the feeling of Roe inside him. Then he starts to ride, slow and steady, with Monroe’s hands holding his hips. He can feel Roe watching him with lustful eyes and he opens his. They stare intently at each other. Nick rocks his body slowly in Monroe’s lap, watching the lust and love flare in his eyes. He moves faster with Monroe’s help. Nick wraps his arms around Roe’s neck, moaning at the slide of Roe inside him.

Monroe’s hands wander over Nick’s skin, touching and caressing the body he loves.

Nick slows to a stop when Roe’s hands move to his stomach. Insecurities rising, he wants to hide. He’s getting fat and he’s only going to get fatter and uglier as time goes on.

“Beautiful, Love. You’re so beautiful. I wish you could see how gorgeous you are to me,” Monroe gushes. He thrusts up into Nick. “See what you do to me, Nicky. Make me hard and eager. I want to bury myself inside you forever. Show you how beautiful you are, nurturing our pups inside you. I’d keep you like this for always if I could. My pups filling your belly; my cock filling your perfect hole.”

Overwhelmed by his hormones and Roe’s words, Nick slumps forward and buries his face in Roe’s neck. Monroe cradles his body securely and starts fucking him, whispering words of love intermixed with all the filthy things he wants to do to him. Nick latches his teeth onto Roe’s shoulder. Monroe growls at the pain and slams Nick harder onto his dick. Nick clings to him, then leans back and starts moving his hips again. They move together, smooth and effortlessly.

Monroe’s eyes bleed red and he growls, “Close, Nicky. So close.”

His eyes closed, Nick thrusts down harder. “Yes. Let me feel you. Fill me, Roe. Need it.”

Monroe yanks Nick down, holding him still as his knot locks them together. Nick squeezes around him deliberately in pulses until Monroe can’t take it anymore. He howls, the sound a strange mix of human and wolf, and cum inside of Nick.

Nick opens his eyes to watch Roe orgasm. The red Blutbad eyes connect with his and the sight goes straight to Nick’s cock. Staring at Roe’s predatory eyes, Nick cries out and cums without a touch. He slumps forward again, keeping his ass still to prevent pulling on Roe’s knot.

When he comes down from his high, Roe is giving him a particular look. Feeling defensive, Nick challenges, “What?”

Monroe lifts an eyebrow at his tone.

Cursing Roe’s knot for locking them together, Nick crosses his arms over his chest and looks away.

“You liked it. You came untouched,” Monroe says, his voice calm and unaffected as if asking to pass the milk.

Nick turns back. “Of course I liked it. When have I ever not liked your cock in my ass?”

“That’s not what I’m talking about and you know it.”
Shrugging, Nick lies, “Don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Monroe holds Nick’s chin, holding his defiant eyes. “I mean this.” He woges his eyes red. Nick struggles to keep his expression stoic but his cock gives him away by stirring valiantly at the sight. Monroe’s smile is predatory, just like his eyes, and Nick shivers in delight at the glimpse of sharp fangs in addition to the glowing red eyes. Monroe woges his arm and trails his claws carefully down Nick’s frozen body. Nick’s breath shudders in his chest when his claws caress over the curve of his ass. Monroe spreads Nick’s thighs, moving the sharp claws down one vulnerable inner thigh and then the other. Nick’s muscles quiver under the touch. “Tell me you want this, Nicky. Say it.”

Nick shakes his head. He won’t, he won’t admit it. But then Monroe wets his woged hand with Nick’s cum. Monroe wraps it around his shaft and Nick is lost. “Oh, fuck,” Nick cries out. The feeling is different, Roe’s palm is more calloused and his Blutbad fur brushes against his cock with each stroke. Nick feels the power, the danger in the hand around him and it lights a forbidden fire within him. He looks into Roe’s eyes, fearing what he’ll see there. Monroe’s eyes echo the same lust in his. “Roe.”

“Tell me,” Monroe growls.

Nick arches in Roe’s hand. “I want this.”

“Want what?” Monroe asks, stroking firmly but carefully. His own cock stirs back to life inside of Nick, his knot still locking them together. His woged state making Nick hot, makes his own desire flare up.

“You. I w-want to see your eyes. Your glowing red eyes. Y-Your fangs. Your fur. I want to see the wolf inside you, Roe.” Nick throws his head back, overwhelmed by the sensations running through him. He cannot deny the urge to move any longer and starts cautiously moving his hips.

“That’s it, my mate. Fuck your cock into my fist,” Monroe coaxes. He leans over Nick and drags his fangs over his neck. Nick again freezes, his pulse quickening. Monroe can taste his arousal in the air. With his other hand, he tilts Nick’s neck and laps at his jugular vein, the blood pumping through it like mad.

Instinctive fear and lust war inside Nick. A little scrap of Roe’s teeth, that’s all it would take. Yet, his fear is crushed by desire for and trust in Roe. He’s leaking all over Roe’s woged hand, soaking it with pre-cum.

Monroe sucks lightly on Nick’s vulnerable vein. “Do you trust me?”

Without hesitation, Nick answers, “Yes.”

Pleased, he grins against Nick’s skin. “That’s good, my mate. I would never hurt you. Or our pups.” Monroe closes his mouth around Nick, where his neck meets his shoulder. Nick tries to arch into the pressure of his fangs against his skin but Monroe holds him still with one hand. His fangs won’t break Nick’s beautiful skin, not this time. Monroe strokes Nick harder, adding a twist at the end. Monroe releases his bite a second before Nick breaks apart in his arms. The sight is more than enough to make Monroe cum a second time. Nick is limp in his arms, passed out from the intensity of his orgasm. Monroe cradles him with care until his knot deflates. He carries Nick upstairs and lays him on the bed. He starts the bath, when he returns Nick’s eyes are open.

Nick blushes at the new kink he’s apparently developed.

“The bath is filling. Ready for a soak?” Monroe asks.
Looking up surprised, Nick gapes at Roe momentarily. He expected him to challenge him on what happened but Roe appears content to leave it lie for now. “Yeah, I’m ready.”

When the tub is ready, Monroe steps in first and then Nick settles against him. They wash each other tenderly. Afterward, they soak and relax, talking about mundane things and of the future.

Getting out, Nick is ready to simply go to sleep but Monroe insists on giving him a massage. He’s not stupid enough to refuse. Nick falls asleep before Roe reaches his lower back. Monroe massages Nick’s whole body before tucking his mate securely into bed.

Monroe goes downstairs and cleans up the mess they made of the couch. A key sounds in the lock ten minutes after he finishes. Monroe greets her, noticing her wariness. “Hello Trubel. Enjoy the books?”

Taken aback by his normalness, Trubel answers woodenly, “Yeah. Did—did Nick talk to you?”

“About Zuri and what happened? Yes.”

“Oh.” Trubel appears confused.

Monroe guesses, “You expected me to be mad at you. For not protecting Nick.”

“Young,” she admits.

“I’m not. Nick wasn’t hurt and that’s all I care about.”

“Okay.” Trubel still seems a bit surprised by his lack of reaction. “I’m going to go outside for a bit. Keep an ear out?”

Trubel nods. “Sure. I’m just going to get a snack and go to my room. I’ll have my machete ready. Just in case.”

“Thank you.” Monroe nods at her and slips out the door, leaving Trubel looking confused as he leaves.

He goes to the side of the house. Standing in the light, Monroe says Zuri’s name softly and waits for the woman to show herself.

Zuri steps out the darkness and approaches Monroe in a smooth, confident stride. Acknowledging him with a respectful nod, she greets, “Mr. Neumann.”

“Miss Siyanna.” Monroe stares at her critically. “You saved my mate and my pups today. Why?”

Not flinching under his gaze, Zuri answers simply, “It is my duty.”

“But it isn’t. The pups aren’t your charges. Neither is Nick. You haven’t been chosen.”

Unfazed, she counters, “I haven’t been rejected.”

Monroe cocks his head. “Is it that simple in your mind?”

“Yes,” Zuri assures confidently. “As soon as you and Mr. Burkhardt considered me as a Guardian, your family has been mine to protect until I am told otherwise.”

“Have you done for all your prospective charges?”
Zuri averts her eyes and starts scanning their surroundings for threats. “No other family has considered me before.”

Monroe reads a wealth of information in that simple declaration. He wonders how many times she’s been rejected. After finishing her scan, she dares to meet his eyes again. Monroe sees little in her eyes to tell him what she’s feeling.

“Until your family is protected by your chosen Guardians, I will shadow them.”

She isn’t giving him a choice, not that he’d refuse but it seems that is what she expects. More than that, she expects them to reject her, despite saving Nick and the pups’ lives today. Monroe’s heart aches a bit at how little hope she has. She must be lonely and frustrated at continually being overlooked. “Thank you for saving them,” Monroe says sincerely.

If she’s surprised by the thank you, Zuri hides it well. “It is an honor to protect them.”

Monroe can hear the ‘for as long as I am able’ that is left unsaid. “We have chosen our Guardians.”

Zuri’s eyes shut a second too long before she opens them again. “Okay. When I see Mr. Burkhardt is suitably protected, I will leave.”

He lifts his arm to touch her and she flinches away before his fingers come in contact with her skin as if expecting an attack. Monroe lowers his arm without a word. Zuri truly is unused to physical contact that isn’t threatening. “You are our first Guardian, Miss Siyanna.” For the first time, Monroe can read the emotion in her expression. She’s absolutely stunned by his announcement. Zuri stares at him, unable to say a word. “We hope you will accept. You’ve proven yourself more than capable and your dedication is unmatchable.”

Zuri swallows visibly and gathers herself. “I am honored, Mr. Neumann,” she says with a respectful bow.

“Please, call me Monroe. We will be spending much time in each other’s company.”

“Monroe then. Feel free to call me Zuri,” she says haltingly.

Monroe waves his hand toward the house. “Please, come inside. Nick’s sleeping and Trubel’s in her room. I can make up the couch for you. No need for our Guardian to sleep outside.”

Zuri nods stiffly. “That would be acceptable. Thank you.”

Monroe leads her into the house. Both of them catch a glimpse of Trubel checking them out from the stairs before going back to her room without a word. He takes her to the kitchen and starts taking out some leftovers. “How hungry are you?” Monroe stops her before she can deny being hungry. “You’ve been following Nick around for days. You probably have been living off energy bars and such. You need some real food.” He piles food on the plate and heats it up. She takes the plate gratefully and eats every bite without complaint.

“Thank you. That was good.”

Monroe jokes, “Well, can’t have our Guardian starving, now can we?”

Zuri’s lips twitch a bit. “I suppose not.”

He quickly makes up the couch with sheets, blankets, and a pillow. “The bathroom’s over there. Both bedrooms are upstairs. Nick and mine is the last door down the hall. Trubel’s is the first. If you
need anything, let us know.”

Zuri nods.

“Night.”

“Goodnight, Mr.—Monroe,” Zuri says softly.

Anticipating snuggling up to his mate, Monroe ascends the stairs quickly but is stopped when he reaches the top.

“Thank you, Monroe. For giving me a chance.”

Monroe looks back. Her body language is almost timid. “I am trusting you with my precious loved ones. You’ve proven yourself able to do so. I have faith in you, as does Nick.”

Zuri’s eyes glow with emotion. “I won’t let you down.”

With one last look, Monroe declares, “We know.”

Chapter End Notes

I am doing National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) during November for the first time. I likely will not have another update for the rest of the month as I will be solely concentrating on writing.
Nick tiredly plops down at the kitchen table, rubbing the sleep from his eyes while he waits for Roe to bring him breakfast.

“Good morning, Mr. Burkhardt.”

He looks up and takes Zuri’s unexpected presence in with a simple blink. “Morning.” Nick straightens and rubs his hands together when Roe places a heavenly smelling plate of food in front of him. He breathes in deeply, then digs in, thanking God and Rosalee for his lack of morning sickness.

Not much of a morning person, Theresa drags herself into the kitchen and drops gracelessly into the chair beside Nick. She grunts her thanks when Monroe places a full plate in front of her and starting eating. Knowing how much Nick misses coffee, she’s been drinking strong tea to get her morning caffeine fix.

Stomach full, Nick finally addresses Zuri. “Thank you.” He meets her eyes determinedly. “For yesterday, I mean.”

“As I told your mate, it is my duty, Mr. Burkhardt.”

Nick smiles in amusement at the formal manner she is speaking to him. “Going to call me Mr. Burkhardt forever?”

“If that is what you wish.”

“Definitely not. It’s already getting old. How about I call you Zuri and you call me Nick? Sound good?”

Zuri nods sharply. “Yes, Nick.”

“Good.” More awake and alert with food in his belly, Nick eyes Zuri. “I take it Roe told you.”

“Yes.”

“Did he tell you you are Guardian Alpha?”

“No, he did not,” Zuri says with a tinge of surprise in her tone.

“Well, you are. You’ll lead the others. Can you handle that?”

Zuri again nods sharply. “I will not fail you.”

“If we thought you would, we wouldn’t have chosen you,” Nick says simply. “I don’t need you to like the other Guardians or for them to like you but the three of you will need to be a team and I expect you to figure out how to do that.”
Zuri accepts his demand without protest. “I will make it happen.”

When Nick finishes with work, Monroe calls Cypress and Fabian over. He already called them this morning to tell them they’d been chosen and both reacted with great excitement and gratitude.

The two men arrive together, big smiles on their faces until their eyes find the unsmiling Zuri standing in the background.

Watching their reaction, Monroe apologizes, “I forgot to tell you this morning. We chose Zuri Siyanna as our Guardian Alpha.”

Cypress and Fabian’s eyes go wide at the news. Fabian recovers first, donning a charming smile, he greets respectfully, “Guardian Alpha.”

Zuri acknowledges him with a nod. “Guardian Beta.”

Cypress takes a subtle breath. “Guardian Alpha.”

Zuri greets him in the same manner as she did Fabian.

Monroe breaks the tense moment by explaining, “Zuri has been invisibly shadowing Nick.”

Cypress and Fabian look at each other and then at Zuri.

Too exhausted to play mediator, Nick decides he going to take a nap and let the three Guardians work things out for themselves. Monroe and Trubel follow his lead, each leaving to do their own thing.

Alone, the three stare at each other for a minute. “May I call you Fabian? And Cypress?”

They nod, giving permission.

“Monroe and Nick chose the three of us and selected me as Guardian Alpha. I know that neither of you like me and I accept that.” Zuri halts their false protests with a sharp hand motion. “Don’t pretend otherwise. No one likes me, I know that. However, you must respect me and my leadership.”

Cypress sober, a pained expression on his face at her bluntness. “I do respect you as I’m sure Fabian does. I understand why they chose you to be Guardian Alpha. You’re powerful and incredibly smart. You are the perfect choice.” He sighs. “I don’t dislike you; I don’t even know you. However, I will admit to being...wary of you.”

Zuri accepts his declaration easily. Most people are instinctively wary of her; she’s learned to accept and expect it.

Fabian considers attempting to charm Zuri but decides against it. Her learned wariness will neutralize any attempts he’d make to charm her, especially when they are strangers. “I agree wholeheartedly with Cypress. They were right to choose you because you are the ideal choice for Guardian Alpha.” He looks over at Cypress and says, “I think I can safely say that neither Cypress nor I expected to be Guardian Alpha.”

Cypress nods in agreement.

*One less thing to worry about.* Zuri thinks.
“We’ll follow your lead. The rest… We’ll figure it out,” Cypress says.

Fabian adds, “We have time to learn how to function as a team. Cy and I, we’ve trained together. We know each other well enough to work well together.”

“Good. That will help.” Zuri is drawn to her memories of training. “I am sure you’ve heard rumors about me. Some of them are true, some aren’t.” Taking a steadying breath, she admits, “I have been an outcast for most of my life. I’m used to it because it is all I know. I don’t expect that to change. My focus is protecting this family, not making people like me.”

Cypress’s expression turns compassionate. *How lonely a life she’s lived, always on the outside looking in.* He says quietly, “That’s our focus as well. All we want is for them to be protected.” Cypress glances between Fabian and Zuri. *And maybe in the process the three of us can become friends, maybe even family. If anyone needs companionship, it’s Zuri.*

“First orders? Would you like me to help you shadow Nick?” Fabian asks. With a sideways glance at Cypress, he adds, “Big guy Cy isn’t exactly the covert type.”

“And you are? You’re not exactly tiny yourself, Fabian.”

Zuri stops their squabbling by clearing her throat. “No, I do not require either of you to help shadow Nick. However, you can stay with Monroe while Nick’s working. Watch over him and help him, should he need it.”

“Yes, Guardian Alpha,” Cypress acknowledges.

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Monroe halts Nick’s pacing by pulling him close. His arms wrap around Nick from behind and naturally settle over his stomach. “Calm down, Nicky. You don’t have to be nervous. They’re going to love you.”

“What if?” Nick bites his lip, trying to soothe his anxiety.

Monroe rocks side to side gently, trying to comfort Nick. “Nothing is going to happen but if it does, we have Zuri, Cypress, and Fabian here. They will protect you and them.” They both decided it was best for Trubel to be absent. Having two Grimms at once would only make the situation more stressful.

Nick’s eyes flick over to their three Guardians. They are serious and imposing looking. Fabian breaks his stoicism to wink playfully at Nick, making him laugh and Roe growl.

Nick exhales and drops his head, the tension bleeding out of his muscles. *I can do this.* He trusts the Guardians to keep them all safe. Nick trusts Roe’s judgment. Leaning back against Roe, he attempts to remain calm as they wait for Roe’s siblings and their mates to arrive. Being a Grimm adds an element of danger to meeting the family Nick could do without. Meeting the family is supposed to be nerve-wracking, not life-threatening. He hopes they get out of this unharmed, or at the very least, alive.

Monroe squeezes Nick. “Come on, love.” Nick follows him to the couch, sitting beside Roe to wait.

Nick jolts at the sound of the sharp rap on the door. “This is it.” Taking a shaky breath, Nick centers himself and nods.

Despite having faith in his family, Monroe opens the door with Nick protectively hidden unseen
behind him. Unsurprisingly, Evan and Austin are doing the same for their mates. For a tense moment, the three Alpha Blutbaden stare at each other, hovering protectively in front of their precious Submissives. “Welcome.” In a sign of trust, Monroe steps aside, exposing his mate first. Nick stands firm under Evan and Austin’s fierce dissecting stares. Neither is as intimidating in size as Monroe but he knows what hides under the surface. Nick refuses to flinch when Evan woges and leans threateningly close. He bares his wicked canines at Nick, daring him to react. The Grimm in him quivers at the challenge, wanting to meet it. With carefully measured restraint, Nick’s welcoming but inscrutable mask doesn’t flicker. Evan relents, twitching his head back to his human face. He stares a moment longer at Nick, then shifts his gaze to Monroe.

“Thank you for inviting us.” Evan steps inside.

Wynn smiles warmly to Nick. “Hello, Nick. I’m Wynn. Don’t mind my mate, Evan. It’s an Alpha thing.” She leans close and whispers, “They can’t help themselves. You’ll get used to it.” She pats his arm as she moves to hug her brother.

Nick’s eyes travel back to the remaining two standing on Roe’s stoop, although Cameron remains behind Austin. Whereas Evan lacks subtlety, Austin has a quiet intensity about him. He is the kind Nick guesses is constantly underestimated, then he flips a switch and takes his opponent off guard. Nick will not make that mistake. “Welcome, I’m Nick.” His arms hang relaxed at his sides.

Cameron moves out from behind Austin and walks forward. The muscle in Nick’s jaw flutters, revealing his anxiety. To Nick’s shock, Cameron wraps his arms around him in a warm hug. Nick stands still like a block of ice, gaping a little when Cameron eases back. “Welcome to the family, Nick. I’m Cameron,” he says with a friendly smile. “This is Austin, my mate.” Cameron pulls Austin inside.

Austin sticks out his hand and Nick shakes it. “Nice to meet you.”

Studying Nick for a long moment, Austin replies, “You as well.”

Monroe hugs each of them, greeting them with smiles and words of welcome. “Thank you all for coming. It means a lot to us, Nick and I both.” Noticing his family wariness at the sight of the three Guardians, Monroe makes a sweeping motion with his arm. “These are our Guardians. This is Zuri, Fabian, and Cypress. Zuri is our Guardian Alpha.”

Evan looks suitably impressed. “I’ve never met a true Guardian before. An honor to meet you three.” He shakes their hands firmly, looking over his shoulder to Nick and then back to the Guardians. “Take care of him and Monroe and their pups for us, okay?”

Zuri nods sharply. “We will.”

Cameron claps his hands and smiles. “Well, this is going great. No attacks or maiming. Nice and civilized. Who would have thought? A Grimm and a bunch of Wesen.” He laughs lightly. “Wonders never cease.”

The room falls dead silent, the Guardians subtly ready themselves to protect Nick if it becomes necessary as many sets of eyes flick to Nick.

Monroe’s hearty chuckle dissipates the heavy tension in the air. “I think we have things under control, Guardians. Cypress and Fabian, feel free to go back to the house. Zuri, I’d offer you the same but you won’t.”

Fabian and Cypress turn to Zuri, who nods permission. The two men quickly say goodbye and
leave. “I will be outside, if you need me.”

“Thank you, Zuri.” Nick smiles at the trust she shows in Roe’s family as she exits the door quietly.

Monroe urges his family into the living room. “Come, sit. Make yourselves at home.” He sits in his chair, tugging a blushing Nick into his lap.

From Evan’s lap on the couch, Wynn looks at Nick. “How are you coping with this, Nick? It must be very strange for you.”

Glancing at Roe, Nick shrugs. “I’m dealing alright. Bizarre has become my normal over the past year. Roe could tell you I had my share of freakouts. It has been a lot to take in. Finding out I was a Grimm, learning about Wesen, mating with Roe, the whole dynamics of Blutbaden mating, and the pregnancy. Finding out I’m having triplets.” Nick laughs without humor.

“You never knew you were a Grimm? Your family never told you?” Evan asks, a disbelieving expression on his face.

Nick shakes his head. “Never had a clue. The first time I saw a Wesen,” his eyes move over the four, “it was a Hexenbiest by the way, I couldn’t believe my eyes. Freaked me out, to say the least. My aunt, a Grimm herself, didn’t live long after I saw my first Wesen. If I didn’t have her books and stuff and Roe, I don’t know if I’d be alive right now.” He avoids saying his aunt’s name, not wanting to remind them of her slaughtering their great-grandmother.

“Your lack of knowledge of the Wesen world may have made it possible for you and Monroe to mate. Otherwise, one of you would likely be dead by now instead of being alive and mated with triplets on the way,” Austin says in a quiet manner.

Monroe and Nick trade a look. It’s a conclusion they’ve both considered before. “I didn’t need my family to train me, not once I met Roe. He’s made me into the Grimm I am today.” He meets each of their eyes for a steady beat. “I’m not like those other Grimms. I don’t see Wesen as animals needing to be slaughtered. I’ve met bad Wesen, evil, violent, dangerous Wesen. But I’ve also met good Wesen. Normal, everyday, helpful, kind, compassion Wesen that want to live their lives in peace like everyone else. Wesen are like Humans in there are good ones and bad. Other Grimms may see Wesen as black and white but there are more gray areas than I expected.”

Wynn shakes her head. “You really are different.”

Monroe puffs his chest up proudly, boasting, “He really is. A Grimm our world needs, someone who will protect all life, Wesen and Human alike.” He breathes in Nick’s intoxicating smell, like the woods and Monroe, deep. Scenting it is reassuring, the scent shouting Monroe’s claim on Nick. It says Nick is his. “Didn’t I tell you our world was changing, Sis?” Monroe settles his hand on the growing pups; they are the future, the visual proof the world is changing.

Nick rests his head against Roe’s neck, letting his warmth calm his nerves as four sets of eyes settle on his stomach.

“This is really happening, isn’t it? You and Nick are having hybrid pups. Sired by a Blutbad and a Grimm.” Evan runs his fingers through the length of his hair, sweeping it back from his face.

Monroe eases Nick’s shirt up to expose his little bump. His big hand spreads over it possessively. “It is happening. Our pups are growing, healthy and strong, inside of Nick. They will be the first of their kind, utterly unique.”

Again in a nervous gesture, Evan brushes his fingers through his hair and sighs audibly. “You don’t
take the easy route, do you, Monroe? They’re going to be coming at you from all sides. Grimms. Wesen. Humans, if they find out."

Monroe tugs the shirt down to cover Nick’s bump and grabs his hand in comfort. “That’s why we have the Guardians. Nick is also training another Grimm. She is staying with us. We will do everything we can to ensure we are all safe.”

Nick closes his eyes to center himself, then opens them. Fierce determination burns in his gray eyes. “We cannot guarantee that we will survive, me or Roe. Our Guardians know that our pups are the most important. If,” he swallows around the huge lump in his throat, “if we die, we are hoping you,” Nick looks straight at Wynn and Evan, “would be willing to take care of them.”

Monroe’s voice burns with intensity. “We would be grateful if you took them and raised them as your own. The Guardians will go with the pups, wherever they go but we’d prefer if they went with family.”

“It’s a big responsibility, we know and we will understand if you want to refuse. My partner and his mate are a viable option if you decide you aren’t willing to take on the responsibility.”

Wynn and Evan share a long look. “Why us? Why not Austin and Cameron?”

Monroe has a simple answer. “You are my triplet, Wynn. I shared our mother’s womb with you and that bond is unbreakable.”

“In addition, Evan’s family is large and according to Roe, accepting and very close. We hope they will adopt the pups as family as well. All we want is for them to live and be happy. They could do that with you and Wynn.”

Turning to Cameron and Austin, Monroe explains, “It isn’t that we don’t trust you or believe you would love and protect the pups just as much as Wynn and Evan. It’s—”

Cameron holds up a hand. “Stop. You do not need to explain. Neither I nor Austin is offended that you selected Wynn and Evan. It’s about the pups and their safety. Evan’s family and his training will offer them better protection than we ever could.”

“Thank you,” Monroe says gratefully.

Evan clears his throat lightly. “Could we have time to think about it?”

Monroe nods. “Please, take all the time you need. We don’t expect an immediate answer.”

Nick relaxes into Roe’s lap and quietly watches Roe interact with his family. Touching his stomach briefly, he smiles. He likes all of them; Wynn, Evan, Cameron, and Austin are good people. He feels a bond forming between them and has no trouble imagining trusting them with the pups by the time they are born. Nick is comforted that the pups will at least have some family. Though suspicious and wary at first, Roe’s siblings and their mates have accepted him. Nick likes them and he thinks they might like him too. How the rest of Roe’s family will react is a mystery. Nick has a feeling these four will be the easiest of any of Roe’s family. The thought of meeting Roe’s parents is almost enough to take his breath away.

Watching Evan and Wynn, Nick realizes they are a lot like him and Roe. Overt possessiveness and protectiveness is something Evan and Roe absolutely share. Like Roe does with him, Evan is constantly touching Wynn, especially her claiming bite. Nick isn’t sure if it is his presence or whether
it is typical for Evan to constantly thumb the mark. Evan has a more aggressive personality than Roe, blunt and straightforward but not cruel. Wynn has him wrapped around her finger, which is quite amusing to watch. Nick likes Wynn a lot. She’s a strong, spunky, compassionate woman. Pushed, Nick believes she’d push back. Hard.

Nick’s eyes move to Austin and Cameron. They are an entirely different type of couple. Austin is quiet, although not shy. Watchful is the word that comes to mind. He’s intelligent with an inner intensity and strength. Nick can imagine how passionate he could be when he lets that intensity out. Cameron is sweet and sociable. He’s impossible not to like. The type of person that can make friends wherever he goes. His relationship with Austin is closest to how Nick imagines a Dominant and Submissive type works. Evan’s Dom presence is subtle but there and Cameron appears more naturally submissive than he or Wynn.

What Nick gets out of watching them is being the submissive part of a Blutbaden mating might be more flexible than he thought. Both relationships work, despite the differences in their dynamics. It’s a relief to see. He doesn’t feel like a Submissive, not a stereotypical one anyway. “Are Blutbaden bonds diverse?” Nick blurts out. When all eyes turn to him, Nick feels nerves bubbling up inside him. “In terms of dynamics, I mean?”

An indecipherable look passes between Wynn and Monroe. “Evan, Austin, I have a fantastic new clock. You must check it out.” Monroe swiftly ushers them into his workroom, leaving Nick alone with Cameron and Wynn.

“Well, that was subtle.”

Nick chuckles. “Subtly isn’t Roe’s strong suit.”

Wynn agrees with a laugh. “It’s not Evan’s either. Austin is the only Alpha here that has any skill with it.”

The full force of Cameron’s memorizing blue eyes rest on Nick’s face. “To answer your question, yes, there is diversity. However, all Blutbaden bonds have an Alpha and a Submissive.”

Taking advantage of the opportunity Roe has given him, Nick asks, “All Blutbaden are either Alpha or Submissive?”

“That is simply the way we are born,” Wynn explains simply.

Cameron nods. “It’s our biology. But everyone is not the same. Not all Blutbad Alphas are the brutish, blunt type. Nor are all Blutbad Submissives traditional. Personalities influence the dynamics of our bonds. Take me and Austin. I like being taken care and not having to worry about being in charge. Austin favors being in control and leading our family. I trust him to know what is best for me and our children. I trust him to know the limits and not abuse the power we have gifted him. Austin is too kind-hearted to cross the line, however, if I had to, I would confront him.”

“Being a Submissive doesn’t mean we are under the thumbs of our Alphas. We are not slaves to their whims. I am not saying that some bonds don’t twist into that.” Wynn’s expression turns sorrowful. “Tragically, it does happen; it’s unhealthy. For Blutbaden, the meaning of our bonds is about love and care. Our biology determines our roles in the bond. Alphas take care of their Submissive and their children. They are the protectors. Submissives are the bearers, they bear the children of their mate.”

Nick sighs. “So all I am is some baby-making machine for Roe?”
“Definitely not,” Wynn denies firmly. “Yes, we bear the children but we are more than that. We are the heart.”

“We are the soul; without us, Alphas are empty. It is through us, with us that Alphas feel complete.”

“We are the glue.”

Cameron’s lips quirk up. “Despite their outer toughness, they are often teddy bears with their Submissives. Our Alphas would be lost without us.”

Nick nods slowly. His sweet and gentle Roe would be lost without him. It’s something he fears. If something happens to him, how will Roe live on? Roe was willing to die for him but is he willingly to live without him?

“Alphas are the protectors, plain and simple, but our role is more flexible. Take me in comparison to Cameron. I hold as much power as Evan. He is my family’s protector but I stand beside him just as capable. I run the family.”

Cameron smirks. “She’s the puppeteer.”

Wynn flashes a wicked grin. “Not how I would describe it but yes.”

“I did notice that you’ve got him wrapped around your finger,” Nick says with a smile.

“Everyone does. My mate is good at many things but he does not hide his adoration of me well.”

Cameron holds up his hands. “Listen, I’m going to let you in on a little Submissive secret. Alphas will bend over backwards to please their Subs. They want us to be happy; bringing us pleasure makes them happy. All of them, the healthy ones at least, are wrapped around their Sub’s finger, even if they don’t know it.”

Nick swallows thickly, remembering how willing Roe was to die if it freed him to be happy. He looks up at Roe’s two siblings with wet eyes. “I realize that.” Overwhelmed by the power he has over Roe, Nick’s grips his hands together to prevent them from trembling.

Wynn and Cameron exchange a look, seeing the guilt in Nick’s eyes.

Looking toward Roe’s workroom, Nick admits softly, “He lives for me.” He stares down at his stomach. “For us. Just as he would die for us.”

Wynn and Cameron squeeze each other’s hand in comfort. They rise together, each sitting on one of the arms of Nick’s chair. Wynn takes his hand. “That is a lesson we all have learned, Nick. In their eyes, we will always be more important than they are.”

Cameron puts an arm around Nick. “It’s an excruciating thing to accept but nothing will change it. It’s just the way our bonds work.”

Nodding, Nick permits himself to find comfort in Roe’s siblings’ touch. He doesn’t want to think of Roe trading his life for his or their child’s but Nick realizes it could happen. If Cameron and Wynn are right, it is something every Submissive in a Blutbad bond knows. With the threats they have to deal with, it is more than possible. A ball of dread settles heavily in his belly at the thought of it happening. Nick prays with all his might to any deity out there that the mix of the Guardians, Trubel, and Vivian manage to keep them all safe.

Needing to banish the dread and fear of Roe dying, Nick deliberately changes the subject. “Do
Blutbaden ever have bonds that aren’t Alpha and Submissive?” By Cameron and Wynn’s confused expressions, Nick is guessing not.

“Blutbaden bonds are not flexible.”

Cameron opens his mouth to agree, then stops and looks at Nick.

Feeling the weight of Cameron’s gaze, Nick asks, “What?”

“I just wonder, will that change? What we’ve always known to be true is not a guarantee any longer. You and Monroe have proved that. Before you and Monroe, we knew that Blutbaden mate only with other Blutbaden. We know Blutbaden bonds are made of a single Submissive and a single Alpha but will it remain so? If we think about it, anything is possible considering a Grimm can be the mate of a Blutbad.”

In agreement with her brother, Wynn smiles and nods at him. “Like Monroe said, our world is changing. Our certainties are no longer infallible. The possibilities are endless.”

The monumental importance of their mating is something Nick is more than aware of. “Our mating isn’t the only game changer. My partner is just a regular Human and he’s soul bound to a Zauberbiest. The worlds, Wesen and Human, are not separated in the same manner they once were. Humans may not know about Wesen but that could change. At the very least, more Humans may be exposed to the Wesen world through mating.”

Following Nick’s line of thought, Wynn says, “Judging by you and your partner, Wesen are finding their mates among non-Wesen. The pair of you cannot be the only ones.”

“What if it is a worldwide phenomenon? You may be the only ones we know about but the world is a very big place.”

The thought is a troubling one. “If it is, it might be chaos. Hank, my partner, and I aren’t normal. How we reacted wasn’t normal. I am not the typical Grimm. If another Blutbad discovers his or her mate is a Grimm…”

Sagely, Wynn finishes, “The likelihood of it ending happily is very low. If an Alpha is forced to kill her or his Submissive, that Alpha would not survive long. Failing to protect your Submissive is one thing, difficult for an Alpha but ultimately survivable. Taking the Submissive’s life with your own hands is a different story. Even without the mating being consummated, the grief would be overwhelming.”

Nick scratches the stubble on his face. “What about a Submissive? What happens if a Submissive killed an Alpha?”

Cameron stands up and paces in thought. “A Submissive could triumph over an Alpha, probably easier than an Alpha would over a Submissive simply because of the Alpha’s innate protective instincts. Killing their Alpha, even if it is a Grimm, would be devastating for the Submissive. Could they live with what they’d done? Yes, but it wouldn’t be much of a life. The Submissive would likely always feel an emptiness inside. The Submissive would never have children either.”

“The other option is the Blutbad being killed by a Grimm. Nothing abnormal there.”

Nick admits Wynn is right. His kind killing a Wesen is ordinary, predictable. “I don’t know the effect change will have on the Human part of the world. Hank had Roe and me as well as Sean, his mate, to help him accept what Sean is and the existence of Wesen. Other Humans may not be so lucky.”
Wynn explains, “There is a reason we keep what we are from Kehrseite. Their minds often cannot deal with the shock of what we are. They often go insane.”

“Chaos.” Nick wonders about the changes. *Why now? Why me? Why Roe or Hank or Sean?* He contemplates why. “What’s the point of change? Is there a point? Is this to reunite the worlds or to bring war?”

Cameron and Wynn trade glances. Neither of them have any answers.

Frustrated, Nick growls, “If Vivian would just tell me what she knows, maybe we wouldn’t be in the dark about everything.”

“Vivian?”

Nick drags himself out of his angry thoughts. “Vivian. She is Sean’s aunt, a Hexenbiest Seer. She knows things.”

Cameron says, “But she won’t tell you anything.”

“Not until the right time,” Nick spits out in anger.

Wynn hides her smile. “Seers are...frustratingly obsessed with timing.”

“No shit.” Nick rolls his eyes. He is sick to death hearing about Seers and their timing. He wants to know what Vivian knows.

Cameron offers him a sympathetic look.

“I won’t tell you to be patient. In your position, I would be just as eager to know what she knows. We,” Wynn indicates herself and Cameron with a sweeping gesture, “had to worry about Grimms during our pregnancies but you have much more to worry about.”

Nick stares off in thought. Wynn’s right, which is why having to wait is excruciatingly difficult. Being prepared for what is coming could be the difference between life and death. Emotion wells up inside him. “The pups’ lives could depend on what she knows.”

Monroe hears the soft, anxious confession as he walks back in. “Nicky.” He scoops up Nick and sits down, cradling him in his lap.

Nick hides his face in Roe’s neck. He hates how pregnancy hormones make it harder to control his emotions.

Combing his blunt fingers through Nick’s soft hair, Monroe offers him calm comfort.

He squeezes his eyes shut and confesses, “I’m scared, Roe. What if Vivian is too late?”

Rubbing his cheek against Nick’s hair, Monroe tightens his hold on him. “I’m scared too.”

Without notice by either man, the other couples cuddle together on the couch. They know how it feels to fear for their children but the danger Monroe, Nick, and their pups will be forced to face will be far greater.

\[NB*M*HG*SR*NB*M*HG*SR*NB*M*HG*SR*NB*M*HG*SR\]

After work, Nick takes Trubel and Hank to the trailer. They need to learn more about the Wesen world, especially with Nick’s pregnancy. Zuri is outside, probably hiding unseen in the shadows.
She is exceptionally skilled at hiding. Despite knowing she’s always out there somewhere, Nick never sees her unless she allows him to. How she does that, no one seems to know.

Nick glances over at Trubel, who has her nose buried in a book. She’s blossomed since coming to stay with him and Roe. She’s gained some needed weight from being able to eat regularly and the dark circles under her eyes have started to ease. She’s even lost a bit of her twitchiness, around him, Roe, and Hank at least. Trubel isn’t the tortured, loner she was when they first met.

She is an eager student. When she isn’t training, she’s often reading through the Grimm books. She’s embraced who and what she is with little resistance. Nick isn’t surprised by that in any fashion. Knowing what she is, Trubel no longer has to wonder if she is crazy. Plus, she has him, someone who sees exactly what she does. Knowing she isn’t alone has to be a great comfort. It is to Nick.

Uninterested in reading through his ancestor’s books, Nick turns his attention on Hank. His easy-going partner has taken everything in stride. Nick still marvels at how easy it’s been for Hank to accept. He taps his lips with a finger, wondering if it was easier for him because he had Nick’s knowledge to back up what he was seeing.

Nick lets his mind wander. The past months have been life-changing. Becoming a Grimm. Breaking up with Juliette. Mating with Roe. Going into heat. Getting pregnant. Learning Roe’s past and running away. Meeting Vivian. His mind stutters to a stop. Vivian. Nick shifts in his seat, his back starting to ache something fierce. Pushing the pain away, he focuses on Vivian. It seems like an eternity since he saw her. *When is she going to tell us what she knows? * Every moment that goes by is a chance for them to be blindsided. Even with the Guardians and Trubel, Nick worries about the pups and Roe. No one has targeted them yet but Nick isn’t counting on that lasting forever. They need to be prepared.

“What are you thinking about?”

“Hmm?”

Hank gestures vaguely to Nick’s face. “You have that look on your face. Like a supervillain plotting the death of his nemesis.”

The tension in his face lifts. “Supervillain? Shouldn’t I be the superhero?”

“Heroes don’t plot the murders of their nemesis,” Hank explains seriously.

“I’m more of an antihero anyway, right?”

Hank rubs his chin in thought. “Your ancestors were more antiheroes than you are. Clearly flawed. Believed the means justified the ends. They targeted all Wesen and saw them all as deserving of extermination. Compared to them, you’re Professor X.”

Disgusted, Trubel shakes her head. “Getting a nerd vibe here, guys.”

The sound of Roe’s ringtone halts the conversation. “Hey Roe.”

“Hi Nicky. Where are you? Still at the station?”

“Nah. Trubel, Hank, and I are spending some quality time at the trailer. The more we know and all that.”

“You can never know too much,” Roe says dryly.
Nick laughs. “True, true.”

“I have news.”

“Yeah? What is it?”

“Cypress, Fabian, and I have finished moving our stuff. We are officially moved in.”

Nick’s cheeks hurt from the wide grin on his face. It feels different than when he bought his first house. Perhaps because this will be the home his pups grow up in. “That’s great, Roe.” It doesn’t hurt that Nick didn’t have to lift a finger. The way his back is smarting, he is thankful he doesn’t have to worry about lifting anything.

“Are you soon done at the trailer?”

Looking at the other two, Nick decides they are. “Yeah, we’ll be home soon.” Knowing he’s referring to their first home, his and Roe’s, and not Roe’s house, makes it sound different.

“I’ll be waiting.”

Nick smiles and disconnects. “Let’s wrap this up. Trubel, take a book. You can too, Hank, if you want.” He hustles them outside. Zuri is already waiting for him, she always anticipates his moves. Nick is starting to suspect she’s hiding some precognition abilities. If she doesn’t, he doesn’t understand how she always knows everything before he can even say anything. Nick shrugs, *Maybe I’m just that predictable.* He turns to Zuri, needing to know. “Am I that predictable?”

“Predictable?”

“You always anticipate my moves, always.”

Zuri seems to consider her answer carefully. “No. You needn’t worry. No one will be able to read you with the ease I do.”

Nick shakes his head. “You are psychic, aren’t you?”

Zuri smiles secretively, not confirming but not denying either.

Deciding he doesn’t have the energy to try to delve past Zuri’s formidable defenses, Nick lets it go. As long as Zuri is the only one that can predict him with ease, he isn’t going to worry about it.

Hank stops him as he’s getting into his jeep. “Hey Nick.”

Nick pauses, looking up questioningly.

“You should have a housewarming party. Sean and I could come over.”

“Roe would like that. We could invite some of our friends.” Nick told his close friends about Roe a while back. All were surprised about him dating a guy and he did discover one hidden homophobe, which he has since cut all contact with. The rest have accepted him to varying degrees of comfortability. Despite any uneasiness, they are all happy for him. Realizing something, Nick asks, “Should I avoid people from work? Because of you and Sean?”

Hank scratches his scruff thoughtfully. “I’d have to talk to Sean about it. I don’t want Sean to get in trouble.”

“Let us know, either way.” Their relationship won’t stay a secret forever, the question is whether it
Nick pulls up the house, his and Roe’s house. His spirit lifts at the sight of their new home, the ache in his back disappearing. Roe opens the door and Nick has to fight the urge to do something ridiculous like run into Roe’s arms like they are in some sappy romance.

“Welcome home,” Roe announces with a huge grin.

If Nick has a little extra skip in his step walking toward the house, that’s his own business. He is welcomed home with a lingering kiss and a tight embrace. Nick soaks in the moment, wanting to remember it always. He takes Roe’s hand and together they walk inside. *Our house.*

Before Nick can check anything out, Monroe hands him his potion and Nick takes it with a sigh. “Thanks, Roe.” He doesn’t enjoy the disoriented feeling of the potion, even if it is necessary to hide his pregnancy from Kehrseite.

Nick takes in every inch. The three men had done more than move everything in and unpack since Nick was last in the house. They painted walls and ceilings, added detailed touches, and fixed a few minor issues. Their new massive L-shaped couch fits perfectly in the living room and from how easily both Cypress and Fabian are able to sprawl on it with space to spare, it will be able to accommodate all of them in comfort. Nick can’t wait to plop onto its comfy plushness and pass out after work. Moving onto the kitchen, Nick notes the cabinets newly painted a bold medium blue and the walls are now a mercury gray. Leaning against the island watching Nick, Monroe asks, “Like it?”

Taking another quick look, Nick nods. “It’s amazing what paint can do. It’s like a new kitchen. A new house. You must have spent hours painting everything.”

Monroe shrugs modestly. “Fabian and Cypress have been a great help. They worked after one of them followed me back to the house.” They’ve both been sleeping at the new house since there wasn’t room at the old house for them.

Nick waves at the relaxed men. “Thanks for your help, guys.”

“Our pleasure, Nick. We are at your disposal.”

Fabian flexes his arm. “Good workout too.” He winks at Trubel, who rolls her eyes in disgust and goes upstairs to find her room.

Cypress laughs at Fabian. “She is not digging you, bro.”

“I’m wearing her down. All the ladies fall for my charm, eventually.”

Zuri clears her throat and lifts a brow in challenge.

Fabian straightens hastily like a little boy given the look by his mom. “Guardian Alpha.”

Nick, Cypress, and Monroe snicker at him. No one handles Fabian better than Zuri, a look or a snap of her fingers and Fabian practically stands at attention. She doesn’t take any of his shit, that’s for certain.

“Check the perimeter.”
Fabian’s on his feet in a second. “Of course, Guardian Alpha.” He’s out the door in a flash.

Cypress’s laughter stops abruptly when she turns her serious gaze on him. He clears his throat. “Guardian Alpha?”

“Set up things in the basement, we will train tonight.”

Cypress nods and disappears downstairs.

Zuri turns back to Nick and Monroe. “Continue, please.”

They exchange a look and comply. Zuri has their two Guardian Betas well in hand already.

Nick sniffs appreciatively, the smell of lasagna baking teasing his nose. “Smells good, Roe.”

The timer going off distracts Monroe. Nick watches him take out the perfectly browned lasagna, mouth watering at the sight and smell of it.

“It should sit for a bit before we cut into it. I’m making garlic bread as well.”

“Homemade bread?”

“Of course.”

Nick leans against Roe’s side. “You spoil me.”

“As I should, considering you are pregnant with my pups.”

He tilts his head back to look up at Roe, lips curved in a smile. “It is the least you could do while I’m getting all fat and ungainly.”

“You will not get fat.”

Nick scoffs. “I’m going to get huge. Three Blutbaden inside me, Roe. Three. Sired by you, you big oaf.”

“They will be very healthy and you, my mate, will only become more gorgeous.”

“You won’t think so when I look like a beached whale.” Nick shudders. *I’m going to get so fat.*

Monroe pulls Nick back against him, his big hands finding his little bump. “You’ll always be beautiful to me, Nicky.”

Nick laughs at Roe and himself, realizing they have become that stereotypical expectant couple with Nick complaining about being fat and Roe spouting reassurances about how beautiful he is. Sad thing is he needs it. Some mornings he looks at his stomach and can’t get over how fat and ugly he’s getting. Roe always catches him and makes him feel better, not just with his words but the way he looks at him. Nick can see how much Roe loves his body, whether he’s fit or increasing mass like nobody’s business. He shakes his head at Roe’s consistency with trying to look on the brighter side of things.

“And before we know it, we will have three beautiful, healthy pups.”

At moments the time seems to crawl by but other times, it feels like it is flying by. “I know. Let’s hope we’ll be ready.”
Monroe kisses Nick’s neck lightly. “We will be ready.”

Nick concedes they are making progress. They’ve moved into the house and bought another vehicle for driving the pups around. They have their Guardians, Nick exhales loudly. “We’ll make it.” He turns in Roe’s arms and heads for the stairs. “Let’s check out the rest of the house. I want to see the nursery.” Monroe settles a supportive hand on Nick’s lower back as they climb the stairs together. They ignore the other rooms and head straight for the nursery.

Together, they decided to have the three cribs in one room to start. Blutbaden triplets do better when they sleep in the same room when they are young. Monroe shared a room with Amanda and Wynn until he and Amanda hit puberty. Two Alphas in one bedroom with all those teenage hormones makes for a dangerous and violent mix.

Nick admires the room.

“Do you like the color?”

The walls are a soft gray reminiscent of fog. “I do.” Nick points to the inviting copse of trees painted on the wall. “Who did that?”

“Trubel, she’s got a fair hand. She found out I was looking for someone to paint a forest scene in the nursery. She showed me her sketchbook and I was impressed. It turned out better than I anticipated; my parents did the same for my room growing up. The woods, it’s comforting to Blutbaden children. I’m assuming our children will be the same, even with your genes in the mix.”

The rest of the room is pretty empty. Roe’s brother, Cameron, and sister, Wynn, promised to go baby shopping with them. Nick’s job makes scheduling anything difficult. *It’s going to happen. Even if I have to take a day off of work.* With their help, shopping will go quicker. Both know what he and Roe will need for raising Blutbaden triplets.

Snuggled up on the couch, Hank peeks at Sean in the corner of his eye. He can’t stop thinking about Nick and the house warming. *Am I ready to be out at work? Is Sean?* Hank’s mind flashes through all the changes he’s gone through recently. It should freak him out but it doesn’t. Hank is happier with Sean than he’s ever been. They are soul bound, forever. Worrying about breaking up or getting cheated on or used by his love is a thing of the past. Sean can be trusted with his heart and his soul, just as Sean trusts him with his heart and soul.

“Hank?”

He turns his head toward Sean. “Hmm?”

Looking concerned, Sean says, “You haven’t heard a word I’ve said, have you? What’s wrong?”

Smiling apologetically, Hank answers, “I’m thinking about what Nick said.”

“Has something happened with Nick? Or Monroe? The pups are okay?”

Hank’s heart warms at the thread of worry in Sean’s voice. “Everyone is fine. They’ve officially moved into the new house. I suggested Nick and Monroe have a housewarming. We’re invited to the party, of course.”

“That was fast.”
“Yeah. It helps when you’ve got three strong Wesen working together to get it done.”

Sean’s lips quirk up. “That does help.”

“It does. The housewarming is going to be casual, I’m guessing. Just some friends.” Hank bites his lip anxiously. “Problem is, Nick is thinking of inviting some people from work.” He searches Sean’s face for clues as to how he feels about that. His face is thoughtful but gives Hank no answers. Anxiety builds as Sean keeps silent.

“What are you asking?”

Gaze darting away, Hank answers, “What do you think about it?”

“A housewarming party is a great idea. He should invite whoever he desires.”

“Of course,” Hank says lamely.

They are both dancing around the issue, neither of them wanting to bring it up for fear of what the other will say. “Would you prefer we go separately?”

Hank’s head snaps up at Sean’s stiff tone. Uncertainty quivers in his chest. “Would you?” Hank hates the way Sean’s expression turns stoic, practically feeling him pull away emotionally. Sean’s eyes bore into his and Hank has no idea what he is thinking.

“It would be easier, would it not?” Sean says finally.

Unexpected hurt bursts in his chest and only Hank’s experience as a detective keeps it from his face. “It would.” He thought he would be okay with hiding their relationship but since he came out to Nick and his family, Hank doesn’t want to be obligated to hide in his personal life. The party will have people from their professional lives but the thought of pretending he and Sean are just superior and subordinate rubs him the wrong way.

“Then it’s settled.”

Hank is too furious to notice the unusual bite in Sean’s tone. Needing to get away from Sean before he blows up, he mutters he’s going to take a shower and leaves.

Sean watches Hank walk away from him despite his instincts screaming to stop him. He walks the other way, stopping in front of the floor to ceiling windows to stare out at the city. Sean glances toward the bathroom and the sound of the water turning on. He rests his forearm against the window and drops his head against the glass. Sean attempts to swallow back the hurt, trying to comfort himself. “Give him some time. This is new to him. He’ll come around,” he whispers against the window. In the past, Sean would have been fine with hiding his relationship from his coworkers. Being captain, he tends to keep his personal and professional lives separate. Few of his coworkers know anything about his personal life. Hank is different though. They are soul bound, Hank is his mate. Sean is proud to be with Hank and he doesn’t want to hide his happiness, even if it means it gets out at work.

*But he doesn’t want that. He wants to pretend we’re nothing more than coworkers. He doesn’t want anyone to know about us.* *Not wanting to push Hank into going public before he is ready, he’d told Hank what he thought he wanted to hear. Problem is it turns out he was right. Being right does nothing to make him feel less mad and hurt. With it comes guilt for feeling mad and hurt, which only makes him angrier. squeezing his hands into fists, Sean barely resists the urge to smash them
into the glass. Needing to blow off steam, he writes Hank a note. He changes and goes down to the gym.

Sean’s mind empties as he gets into a rhythm, pummeling the punching bag.

“Would you like to spar?”

Only Sean’s self-control prevents him from taking a wild swing in surprise at the unfamiliar voice. He hadn’t noticed anyone come in. Sean glances over, it’s one of his neighbors, a handsome, stocky guy. “No thanks.” He would probably end up killing the guy with the way his emotions are boiling up.

“Fight with the wife?”

Realizing this guy isn’t giving up, Sean starts unwrapping his hands. “I’m not married.” Lost in his thoughts, Sean doesn’t notice the hopeful look on the man’s face.

“Maybe we could work out together, I hate working out alone.”

Annoyed, Sean wishes the guy would have picked someone else to bother. He grabs his headphones and sticks them in. “I prefer music. You’ll have to find another workout buddy.”

“Sean.”

His head snaps toward the door, finding Hank standing there freshly showered. “Hank.” Sean leaves his neighbor behind without a thought. “I needed to get a workout in. If you want, we could do it together?” He asks hopefully. Sean loves watching Hank work out. *Bring on his slick, sexy muscles and all that exposed skin.* *As a bonus, he’d find it rather difficult to remember his anger and hurt if he’s watching Hank’s beautiful body move.

Hank smiles as the man stalks off. “You realize that guy was hitting on you.”

Confused, Sean looks back and spots his neighbor walking angrily away. He gestures with his thumb. “That guy? He wanted to work out together.”

Hank looks at him like he is an amusing, oblivious child. “He had another kind of workout in mind, I believe.”

Putting aside his anger and hurt, Sean reaches for Hank. “Jealous?” He hopes not, he does not want another misunderstanding like the one with Adalind. His neighbor means even less than Adalind does to him. He’s nothing. Hank, he is everything.

“No.” Hank smiles back when Sean’s hands come to rest around his waist. “I feel a little sorry for the guy. He might as well have been invisible for all the notice you paid him.”

*Now if only he could be this free with the people we work with. Maybe he’s afraid some people will hate him for being gay? Nick never said anyone reacted poorly when he came out about his relationship with Monroe. Knowing that, why would Hank be afraid?* *The thoughts sober Sean’s attitude and he pulls back, forcing a false smile. Hank seems to feel it too because his body language is less relaxed. “How about that workout?”

“Maybe next time. I just wanted to let you know I’m heading home. I need to wash clothes and catch
up on things at him.”

“All are you coming back tonight?” Sean asks nonchalantly.

Hank shakes his head. “Nah, it probably will take a while. I’ll just stay at my place.”

Sean opens his mouth to offer to come over but stops himself, afraid of Hank brushing him off.

“Sure. I’ll see you tomorrow then.”

“Yeah. Tomorrow.” Hank gives him a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

For the second time today, Sean watches Hank walk away from him.

Nick watches the underlying tension between Hank and Sean in confusion. Hank appears greatly relieved to leave the station and thus get away from Sean. Hank is suspiciously deep in his thoughts on the drive to the crime scene. Nick leaves him to his thoughts, although the whole time he is considering what could have happened between the two men. 

“A fight, most likely.” Nick glances back at Trubel; she seems to know something’s up as well from Hank’s body language alone.

Lucky for Hank, their focus shifts to the case as they arrive at the scene with Wu there waiting for them.

“What do we have, Wu?” Hank asks.

His eyes flick over to Trubel and narrow.

Nick mentally rolls his eyes. Wu is far too suspicious of Trubel. It would be much easier for them all if his instincts were less honed. How he knows Trubel isn’t what they say she is, he doesn’t know. Nonetheless, they aren’t about to tell Wu he’s right. With luck, Wu’s suspicions will fade away before he can find out anything incriminating. Nick and Hank need Trubel, especially considering how fast Nick’s pregnancy is advancing.

He turns back to Nick and Hank and read from his notebook. “Vic is Zachary Hayes, thirty-two, history teacher at the high school. Teacher of the Year award winner. Youth leader at his church. All around boy scout.”

“How was he killed?” Hank asks.

“That you is what you two need to find out. Dog found him,” Wu points to the mixed breed dog laying at the feet of a woman. “Ms. Schroeder was jogging with Buck, the dog, when he shot off the path and into a clearing. She found him barking next to the body, then she called us.”

“I’ve run here before, there are plenty of spots along this trail better for hiding a body. This killer wanted him to be found,” Hank says.

No one denies his statement. The killer made no attempt to hide the body, no, he or she, made sure Hayes was found.

As they watch, Buck sits up, nudging Ms. Schroeder shaking hand. Burying her fingers in his fur seems to calm her shaky nerves.

“I talked to her. She didn’t see anything or anyone suspicious.”

“How was he killed?” Hank asks.
“Well, that’s where things get interesting.”

Hank and Nick share a look, both wondering if this is where the hints of Wesen involvement are revealed.

“Mr. Hayes was killed somewhere else and his body dumped here. Our boy scout was tortured.”

They look at the covered sheet, wondering what will be revealed underneath it.

Wu continues in his characteristic dry tone, “Most notably, they cut off his penis. While he was still alive.”

Nick and Hank hold back a wince while Trubel’s eyebrows raise in surprise.

“Mr. Hayes was also burned, stabbed, and strangled. He has deep wounds on his wrists and ankles from restraints.” Wu pulls back the sheet to expose the naked body to their eyes. “An all out torture buffet.”

The three flinch minutely at the sight of Zachary Hayes. He is covered in blood and wounds, the lack of pooled blood on the ground shows he didn’t die here. The most noticeable thing, however, is his own severed penis shoved into his mouth.

Nick swallows reflexively. *Don’t have to guess what the UnSub did with that then.*

“Someone really hated this guy,” Trubel says. She barely resists rolling her eyes at Wu’s no, shit look.

“People like this guy, who seem too good to be true, almost always are.” She glances at Nick, the only person she has ever met that is exactly as good as he seems.

Nick meets her eyes, understanding passing between them. He knows she’s seen a lot of bad things and her history had made her certain he would reveal his true colors. Nick likes to think the time she’s spent with him and Roe has proven that he is genuine.

“More than that, monsters hide in people like this guy.” Looking over the body, Hank pities the poor bastard but suspects his pity will be unwarranted. “We need to find out what Hayes was hiding. This was personal. The killer wanted him to suffer.”

Nick nods thoughtfully. For once, the case is normal with no hints of Wesen involvement. If a person could consider cutting off a man’s penis while he’s alive and torturing someone to death to be normal.

They take the time to talk to Ms. Schroeder but as Wu said, she has nothing of substance to add. She remembers nothing out of the ordinary. With no other witnesses, they leave the scene to the medical examiner’s office and the crime scene technicians.

Warrant in hand, they descend on Zachary Hayes’s home. Hank whistles at the sight in front of them. “This place is torn apart.”

Carefully moving through the room, Nick agrees, “Judging from this mess, they were desperate to find something, whatever it is.” Nick and Hank glove up and start searching the house, while Trubel watches them work.

“Jackpot,” Wu exclaims from Hayes’s office.
Leaving the living room, they find Wu sitting in Hayes’s desk chair with a laptop open.

Wu looks up as they enter. “Found a hard drive taped to the underside of the desk. Whoever searched this place must have missed it.” The hard drive is plugged in and from the screen, it appears to be filled with video files. An unusually somber Wu announces, “Here’s the dirty secret the victim was hiding.” With slight hesitation as if bracing himself, he clicks open a video file.

A bed fills most of the frame. A thin teen lays naked on the bed, his movements sluggish. Zachary Hayes crawls over him, clothed only in briefs. The teen struggles as Hayes caresses his body and begs him to stop, his voice slurred. Hayes cuts off his pleas with a forceful kiss.

Bile burns up Nick’s throat at the sight of the poor, drugged boy. It takes everything in him to swallow it down.

Trubel balls her hands into fists, memories from her past flashing through her mind. She had the power to fight back but this poor boy hadn’t and the rest of his life will be marred by this shameful secret.

Wu cuts the video before Hayes can remove his briefs. “There are dozens more like this, marked by a name and date. The few I checked so far have been the same. Hayes has been raping boys for years.”

The burning anger in Wu’s voice echoes Nick’s. Golden boy Zachary Hayes has scarred too many innocent young boys. He isn’t surprised Hayes had gotten away with it for this long. The shame, fear, and helplessness his victims must have felt, especially being male, allowed Hayes to continue preying on young boys without consequence. Nick wishes Hayes would have had to face what he did, even the torture he endured wasn’t enough in his book. If anyone touched one of his pups like that, he would do much worse to them. He and Roe would make them suffer for weeks, long after they started begging for death.

“Someone caught up with him,” Hank says. Sadly, they all know one of Hayes’s victims is the most likely suspect.

“We better finish searching here. We’ll have to search his classroom and the church, if he has a space of his own.”

Crime Scene takes the computer and the hard drive. The rest of the house is searched thoroughly. Behind the locked basement door is where Hayes took his victims.

“He soundproofed the walls,” comments a technician.

His victims could have screamed and no one would have heard them, just as he no doubt screamed without hope of being heard.

Shattered alcoholic beverages litter the room. A couch and a large television are set up, stacks of pornographic movies cover the TV stand. They all can imagine what happened here. Unfortunately, it isn’t a unique story. A pedophile hiding behind the facade of a seemingly moral, self-less, religious man puts himself in the perfect position to find his victims. Monsters love to hide behind pious facades. A technician opens a door and finds a small, windowless room, the one where the video was shot and where he was tortured. Blood splatters the walls. The video camera is found hidden in the bookshelf facing the bed.

A technician checks the camera. “We’ll check the footage carefully but it doesn’t appear that the murder was recorded.”
Hank, Nick, and Wu watch silently as the technicians process the room. Each of them feeling like they’ve failed all the victims Hayes consumed in secret.

“His possible victim pool is extensive, the school and the church would provide him with ample victims.”


No one contradicts her and the silence is telling. Pedophile cases are always hard on everyone involved. Children, whether young or teenagers, are innocent and should be protected, not taken advantage of. Pedophiles are the scum of the Earth, something both cops and inmates can agree upon.

Thinking of the innocents involved, Nick wishes they didn’t have to stir up all the bad memories for Hayes’s victims but it must be done. They have to work his murder just like everyone else’s. Hayes being a pedophile and rapist doesn’t give his killer a free pass. If only to himself, Nick admits he has no sympathy for Hayes. He deserved to suffer far worse than he got. *No one will touch the pups,* *the Guardians would never allow anyone to be alone with them.* *Turning his thoughts back to the case, Nick doesn’t anticipate many of Hayes’s victims to feel anything but satisfaction at the news of his death. His victims have suffered in silence, who would believe them even if they came forward? Only with his brutal death will the truth come out. The videos should help identify victims.*

With heavy hearts, Nick, Hank, and Trubel trudge to Hayes’s classroom to search. Wu goes back to the station to start looking through Hayes’s computer and hard drive.

They call ahead to inform the principal, Anita Lopez, about Hayes’s death. She meets them at the entrance, spouting words of shock and regret.

*Just wait until you find out the monster hiding behind Zachary Hayes’s facade. You won’t be feeling sorry about his death then.* *Nick thinks of the victim’s parents and feels a pang of sympathy for them. *The betrayal of their trust will be painful.* *

Once the bomb about Hayes is dropped, people will be shocked beyond disbelief. No one ever wants to believe that a man they liked, admired, and called a friend was a living, breathing monster. Him being someone they trusted with children, possibly even their own, will only make it harder. While Hank and Nick know she is wasting her sympathy, neither bothers to tell her that.

“Here is his classroom.”

Hank thanks her and with reluctance, she leaves them alone. Crime Scene starts with his desk, the most obvious spot for any incriminating evidence. Hank searches through the classroom’s closet while Nick looks over the rest of the room.

“This might be something,” one of the techs says.

It’s a list of names, all male. “We need to find these men and talk to them.”

Sharing a look with his partner, Hank sees Nick is thinking the same thing he is. This might be a list of victims or even boys Hayes planned on abusing in the future.

Nick jots down the names on the list after Crime Scene bags it up. They leave the technicians to finish the search and head to the principal’s office. Nick hands the list over to Lopez. “Do you recognize any of these names?”
Anita scans the list. “They are all students here, freshmen if I’m not mistaken.”

“Are they all in Mr. Hayes’s class?”

She brings them to the secretary. She hands over the list. “Could you check Mr. Hayes’s class lists for these students?”

“Of course, Anita.” The secretary checks her records. “Three out of the four have him.”

“Thank you, Nancy.” Anita leads them back to her office. “Does that help, Detectives?”

Hank offers her a slight smile. “Yes, thank you. Is it possible for us to speak to these students?”

Anita shakes her head. “I cannot allow you to speak to them without the consent of their parents or guardian. I can give you their parents’ names and contact information.”

“We’d appreciate that. Before you do that, are there any students that were close to Mr. Hayes?”

Lopez’s eyes narrow in suspicion. “If you are insinuating improprieties between Mr. Hayes and his students…” The stoic expression on both Nick and Hank’s faces takes her aback. “You’re not? Zachary could not have—” Anita pales. “He won Teacher of the Year. The students love him.”

Neither of them says a word, letting the principal draw her own conclusions.

Anita must see the certainty in their eyes because she turns green, sick at the thought of her star teacher taking advantage of his position. “Oh my god, no.” Horror colors her eyes and in a flash, Anita grabs her waste basket and vomits. With shaky fingers she grabs a tissue and wipes her mouth. Anita collapses into her chair. “You are sure?”

“We cannot reveal evidence on an ongoing case but…yes, we are certain,” Hank says gently.

Her eyes flutter shut. When they open, they have a hard edge to them. “If I had known,” she bites out, her voice falling away as tears fill her eyes.

If Anita Lopez had known what Zachary Hayes had done, she likely would have killed him herself. However, it’s doubtful she knew. Anita would have to be an amazing actress for her reactions to appear as genuine as they do.

“Anything I can do, please let me know. If you find victims,” Anita shudders, “among my students, advise them that we will offer counseling, free of charge, to any who desire it.”

Hank nods. “We will.”

“Let me get the contact information for you. I…I will include the names of students that are close to Mr. Hayes,” she spits out his name venomously, “and their parents’ information.”

“We appreciate it,” Nick says.

She has the secretary gather the information and is quick to hand it to Hank. “Is there anything else?”

Shaking his head, Hank thanks her again, promising to let her know if there is anything more she can do. With the printed list, they leave the school.

From the back seat, Trubel states, “If Lopez had known, she might have killed him herself.”

“I have a feeling she wouldn’t have hidden it though.”
Nick nods. “I think she’d have been proud of it, of protecting her students.”

“Problem is I don’t believe she knew,” Hank says.

Sighing, Nick agrees. “I don’t think she did either. Her reaction was genuine.” He trusts his instincts in this.

They head over to the church. Searching the church yields nothing. The pastor is much like Anita Lopez in his regret over Hayes’s death. The pastor offers a list of the teenagers in Hayes’s youth group and their contact information without question.

“The kids loved him. He was great with them. Zachary was very driven to bring young people to the Lord.”

They don’t bother telling him that everything he knows about Hayes was a lie or what kind of man led the youth of his congregation. The pastor and the church’s congregation will find out soon enough.

“NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR

“What have you found, Wu?”

He looks up from the computer, his face absent of his usual spunk. “Twenty-five victims and counting.” Drew’s lips tighten. “We are working on making identifications from the videos using the names and dates from them and their faces to find matches. Hayes has been doing this for at least twenty years.”

Nick’s chest goes tight. *So many victims.*

“It’s going to take time.” Sorrow flickers in Wu’s eyes. “Do you remember the suicide last week?”

Hank answers, “Fourteen years old. Stole his grandfather’s pistol and shot himself in the head.” It wasn’t their case but his picture was on the news and in the paper.

“He was in several videos,” Wu says quietly.

Nick’s body tenses, furious at the loss of an innocent life because of that dead bastard’s selfish, sick need. Hank shuts his eyes at the confirmation. His hands fist, bloodlust uselessly raging through him. Neither has a doubt Hayes’s abuse led to the teenager’s suicide. To be a fourteen-year-old boy with no hope, whose only escape is death is such a tragedy. The boy’s parents will have to be informed. It may bring them understanding of why their son killed himself but it will do nothing to lessen their grief.

“Have you checked Hayes’s phone?”

Drew nods and pulls out printed papers, handing them over. “Hayes received several threatening texts. One of the threats was traced back to a phone number registered to a Erik McAllister. The threats from McAllister focused on someone named Rick.”

Nick flips through the information, one of the threats reads: Stay away from Rick you bastard or I’ll make sure everyone knows what you’ve done. Several others echo the same sentiment. “Connection to Hayes?”

“He went to the school Hayes teaches at.”
“A past victim? Any idea who Rick is?” Hank asks.

Wu says, “Erik McAllister has a thirteen-year-old son named Richard.”

It’s obvious what he and Hank need to do. “We need to speak to him.”

Phone in hand, Wu answers, “I’m sending his home and work addresses and contact information to your phones.”

Their phones sound, receiving the text.

“Do we know if Rick is on one of the tapes? Or his dad, Erik?”

Wu shakes his head. “We haven’t come across either. However, his video collection,” he sneers, “is extensive.”

They watch as Wu inhales deeply in an effort to regain his control. Seeing their unflappable colleague affected is disturbing.

More centered, Wu adds, “We also traced another of the threatening texts.”

“Another victim?” Nick questions.

“This one was from Colleen Robertson, warning him that if he didn’t stop, she would make him.” Wu looks at Nick and Hank. “There are no females on any of the videos.”

Hank strokes his facial hair thoughtfully. “Sister? Mother?”

“I checked, Colleen Robertson is nineteen years old. She has no siblings and no children.”

Nick and Hank exchange a look. “She must know one of Hayes’s victims. We need to talk to her as well.”

“I already sent you both her information.”

“Any indication what Hayes did about the threats?” Hank asks.

Wu checks his notepad, “He called both back, each call lasted several minutes.”

Nick “With Hayes dead, only Robertson and McAllister know how he responded to the threats. The question is, are they going to tell us? One of them could be the murderer.”

“McAllister is a more likely suspect. He’s older and Hayes targeted his son. If he was a victim in the past, he could have snapped when his son was threatened by the same man that abused him,” Hank supposes. “It took a lot of rage to torture Hayes to the extent he was. As a father, McAllister has the capacity.”

“We can’t rule Robertson out but she is only nineteen. I don’t know if she would have the kind of resolve and rage needed to do what was done to Hayes.”

Nick and Hank do some research on the case. Neither can believe Hayes has gotten away with this for as many years as he has.

Wu comes to their desks, tablet in hand.
Hank asks, “What do you have for us?”

“A few things. Eric McAllister was one of Hayes’s victims; Hayes is his godfather. Hayes had a whole file of videos of Eric. Must have been one of his favorite victims, he has more videos than anyone else by a mile. It went on for years.”

Hank’s eyes squeeze shut. “Damn it. His son?”

“None have been found with him yet.”

Nick feels for the McAllister. Hayes should have been someone he could trust, instead he abused him. “He has motive, he must have hated Hayes. If he tried to go after his son…” His fingers curl painfully into tight fists. “I would have killed him, if it’d been me. He has a lot of reasons to want Hayes dead.”

“We also discovered that after the threats, Hayes watched a particular victim’s video or videos repeatedly. After Eric McAllister’s threat, Hayes watched the entire file of videos. After Robertson’s threat, he watched a series of videos with an unidentified boy.”

Hank glances at Nick. “He watched the video of the victim that threatened him.” It’s enough to make him sick.

Instead of being discouraged or scared by the threat, Hayes had used it as an excuse to watch and relive the victim’s rape. The sick bastard got off on the threats. It’s too much and Nick bolts to the nearest bathroom, bile burning his throat as he vomits. Finished, he spits into the toilet. Nick wipes his mouth with the station’s rough, flimsy, cheap toilet paper and flushes it all down. He steps out and washes his hand.

Hank goes into the bathroom. “Nick? You alright?”

Nick looks at Hank. “If he wasn’t dead, I’d kill the fucker myself.”

“I would too. Bastard got off easy, if you ask me.”

Leaning against the wall, Nick admits, “I wish we could just let his killer get away. Hayes deserved to die and the killer, they are probably one of his victims.”

“I know, Nick. But the killer made his choice when he killed Hayes, it’s our job to catch him, regardless of how we feel personally.”

Emotion burns Nick’s gray eyes shining silver. “I just think about,” he looks down at his stomach, “you know.”

Hank’s heart squeezes in sympathy and he reaches out to touch Nick’s arm. “I know.” It’s hard enough to think of any child being victimized but Nick must be picturing his own child being victimized in the same way. That makes it much harder.

Nick gets a sinking feeling in his stomach as they approach McAllister’s office. “Mr. McAllister? We’re detectives with the Portland PD.” They flash their badges. “Could we speak to you somewhere privately?” Nick and Hank exchange a brief look at the lack of reaction from their suspect.

McAllister loosens his tie and waves them into his office. Shutting the door, he inquires, “May I ask
what this is about?"

Nick is tempted to answer “don’t you know?” but refrains. “We’re here to talk to you about your
godfather, Zachary Hayes.”

Rage flashes in McAllister’s eyes before it disappears behind a cold, stoic wall. “I haven’t seen him
for years. I don’t know what I could tell you about him.”

“Don’t you want to know why we need to talk about Mr. Hayes?” Hank asks.

“What does it matter? I don’t want anything to do with him.”

“Why is that?”

“We argued years ago, we haven’t spoken since.”

They know the real reason but it seems McAllister isn’t going to make it easy on them. Nick
challenges, “But you have spoken to him recently. You sent him a text threatening him to stay away
from Rick. Your son, Richard, we presume?”

McAllister’s hands fist but he remains silent.

“Not only that but he called you after. You spoke for three and a half minutes,” Hank adds.

“I didn’t like the way he looked at Rick. I just wanted him to stay away from him.”

“We think it was more than that. We found the hard drive,” Nick announces softly.

McAllister’s eyes go wide.

Hank says, “He taped it under his desk. You must have missed it when you searched his house.”

“We know about the videos. We know what he did.”

“You killed him, didn’t you?” Hank asks gently.

McAllister stares at him. He straightens and admits proudly, “I did. He deserved everything he got.
He thought I was just going to let him do that to my boy, that I’d do nothing to stop him. The sick
bastard gloated, gloated! But I stopped him; Rick is safe.”

Nick wishes it wasn’t true, just as he wishes he didn’t have to arrest McAllister. “You are under
arrest for the murder of Zachary Hayes.” He reads him his rights as Hank cuffs his hands, a sick
feeling in the pit of his stomach. That feeling grows worse when they get McAllister into
interrogation. McAllister tells them how it started. His grandfather suffered a stroke and his parents
wanted to go to him. Not wanting him to see his grandfather in his fragile state, they left him in the
care of their next door neighbor, trusted friend, and godfather, Zachary Hayes. McAllister found out
who Hayes truly was that week, as he was cuffed to a bed and raped repeatedly. He was twelve. The
abuse went on for years. He was too afraid to tell anyone, including his parents. It’s a terrible story
and now, Rick McAllister loses his father and all Hayes’s silent victims have to pick up the shattered
pieces the pedophile left behind.

Monroe senses something is wrong the moment Nick comes home. He looks from Trubel’s pale face
to Nick’s weary one. “What happened?”
Trubel doesn’t speak, simply trudging up to her room.

“Nick?”

Nick launches into his arms, his body trembling. Monroe swings him into his arms and carries him to their room, shutting the door firmly behind them. “Talk to me.”

Hiding his face in Roe’s chest, Nick mumbles, “It was awful. I kept picturing our pups. I’d have killed him too. I would have! Monsters, Roe. There are monsters fucking everywhere. What the hell are we thinking bringing children into this shitstorm?”

“Nicky, you’re not making sense.”

“Oh, god, I don’t know if I can do this. Even with everyone, how are we going to keep them safe? There’s too much evil lurking out there, waiting for a chance to strike.”

Monroe hugs Nick close, rocking his body in an effort to comfort. “You can do this, Nicky. You can’t let evil win by giving in. We have to fight.” He doesn’t know exactly what happened but Nick can’t give into fear. It’d be too easy to drown in it. Nick is shaking in his arms, salty, frantic tears spread wetness over his chest. All he can do is give him comfort while Nick works through whatever happened. Monroe repeatedly tells Nick he loves him and the pups as he rocks him, stroking his hair.

Pulling himself together, Nick’s tears finally halt. “Pedophile case. God, Roe. He raped dozens of young, vulnerable boys. He’s gotten away with it for years. No one suspected. No one had a clue! Except his victims. How the hell did he get away with this for so long?”

“Someone must have come forward, if you know what he did now?”

“One of his past victims, his own godson, tortured and killed him. Otherwise, who knows how many more there would be. He wanted to do the same to his godson’s son, Roe. That’s what pushed him over the edge.”

Monroe takes a shaky breath, careful not to hurt Nick in his rage.

“He deserved it, Roe. The bastard deserved what he got and worse. I wish I could let McAllister go, I didn’t want to arrest him. In his place, I would have done the same, worse probably. Anyone that hurts the pups? They’re going to die, painfully,” Nick promises darkly.

Monroe’s eyes flash red, “I swear it on my life, Nicky.” Anyone that touches their pups is going to be rend limb from limb.

“Do you think we’ve made a mistake? Our world, worlds really, are filled with monsters, both Wesen and Human. How can we keep them safe from every evil?”

“Never. Our pups could never be a mistake. Yes, there are monsters in the world but there is good, too. And we have many eyes looking out for our pups. The Guardians would die to protect them, as would we.”

“I know,” Nick admits softly.

“We have to have faith. We cannot let fear win. Our pups, they are a blessing. We can’t let fear taint our joy or their lives and happiness.”

Nick makes a small sound of agreement. After a minute, he asks in a small voice, “Can we lay down and cuddle?”
“Of course we can.” Monroe strips his mate and then himself. They crawl into bed and hold each other tight, safe for the moment in their own little world.

Pedophile cases are never easy to forget. As police captain, Sean feels as if he’s failed Hayes’s victims. Hayes operated in his territory and he would have kept raping young boys unchecked. Exhausted, Sean drops wearily on the couch next to Hank. The heat of his body radiates through his suit, comforting him.

“How did the meeting go?”

“As expected. No one is happy and plenty of pointing fingers.” Sean drops his head back.

“How did the meeting go?”

“He glances over at the drink in Hank’s hand. “Glenlivet Whisky, aged twenty-five years. Quite expensive,” Sean admits.

“Should I have left it alone?”

“Mmm?” Realizing Hank took what he said as a reprimand, Sean waves his hand dismissively. “No. Drink whatever you want; that’s what I have it for.” Thinking of the mess Hayes has left behind, he doesn’t notice Hank got up until a glass is pressed into his hand. Noticing the lack of ice, Sean smiles in thanks. The scent of dark chocolate and sultanas hits his nose. Humming in pleasure, Sean takes a sip, savoring the silky sweet taste.

“We should have stopped him a long time ago, Sean.”

Taking another sip, he nods. “I know.” The lives Hayes impacted, the innocence he destroyed. Far too many boys affected by his evil. His death changes little. His victims won’t suddenly forget what happened to them. “At least his victims won’t have to go through a trial; his violation of them doesn’t need to be public knowledge.”

“Except for Eric McAllister. His secret shame is going to be blasted all over, gossiped about at the dinner table.”

“Except for him. He rejected the deal the District Attorney offered; he wants to go to trial.”

Hank sips his drink. “Nick didn’t want to arrest him.”

“Nick sees from a different perspective. He has children on the way, I imagine he considered what he would have done in McAllister’s place. As a parent-to-be, Nick likely understands why McAllister went to the extreme lengths he did, considering the threats from Wesen and Human alike to his soon to be born children. Being a Grimm and having a Blutbad as a mate, he sees from a different perspective. Monsters aren’t restricted to Wesen and he knows that.”

“And I don’t know that?”

“I’m not saying that.”

“Aren’t you?” Hank challenges.

Sighing, Sean tries to calm him before they get into a big fight. “Did you want to arrest him?”

Staring down at his near empty glass, Hank appears lost in thought. “I understand why he did it, I do.
He must have been desperate to save his son from what he went through.”

“I hear a but.”

Hank inclines his head. “But he had a choice. He could have come forward, come to us and gotten justice. He chose vengeance and he has to accept the consequences of that choice. Killing a pedophile, no matter how despicable, does not give you a free pass at murder.”

“It shouldn’t, no. Although few would be able to dredge up sympathy for a dead pedophile, even if he was tortured.”

“I don’t feel sympathetic for Hayes,” Hank argues. Worked up, he paces in front of the couch. “He doesn’t deserve sympathy after what he did.” Hank stops abruptly, meeting Sean’s eyes. “It isn’t about him. It’s about McAllister. He knew Hayes was a monster, knew that he wanted to abuse Rick like he did to Eric. He let Hayes destroy him. McAllister is a murderer now, forever branded by the evil he has done. Instead of raising his son, he’s going to be in prison. McAllister chose vengeance over his son.”

“He did it for his son, isn’t that what he said?”

“Murdering Hayes was the way he chose to protect his son; he ignored the other options.”

Thinking back to their conversation about Nick and Monroe’s housewarming party, Sean proposes, “Love can make people do or say things they wouldn’t normally, especially if it is to protect someone they love.”

“You can say that again.”

Sean’s brow crinkles in thought. *He sounds almost...bitter.*

Hank knocks back the last of his drink.

Concerned, Sean asks, “You alright?”

He silently leans over the bar as if a weight lays heavily on his shoulders.

Sean hates the chasm that has formed between them. He doesn’t know how to bridge it. Telling Hank he wants to be open will only serve to pressure Hank and he’s not ready. He’s admitted that much. Sean feels foolish for feeling hurt. Logically, he knows Hank not being ready is not the same as being ashamed of them. Hank has reacted remarkably well to all the changes Sean has brought to his life. *Why can’t I be satisfied with what I’ve got? Hank loves me. We are soul bound. Why can’t that be enough?* Sean finishes his own drink. Walking up behind Hank, he hesitates for a second, then wraps around his back, his chin resting on his shoulder. “Talk to me, Hank.”

Hank stays silent, stewing in his thoughts.

“Pet?”

Hank rolls his shoulder, unseating Sean’s chin from his shoulder. “I’m fine. Just need to shake off the case.”

“Are you sure?” Sean senses the case isn’t the only thing weighing on Hank’s mind.

“I’m sure,” Hank says with a hint of an edge.

Sean doesn’t believe him for a second but Hank wouldn’t be the first to be messed up after a
pedophile case. “Okay. I’m here if you want to talk about it.”

“I know.”

Seeing the forced smile makes Sean’s stomach churn. He wants to make everything better for Hank, the problem is he doesn’t know how to do it.

Hank disappears into the bedroom, only to come out again less than a minute later. “I’m going for a run.”

“Want some company? I could—”

“No,” Hank interrupts. At Sean’s reaction, he softens his tone. “I just need some time alone to get my head back on straight.”

“Okay.”

Hank puts his earbuds in and glances back once, then leaves the apartment. Sean hates watching him go. Is it real or is he only imagining the distance between them? It seems to be expanding and he doesn’t know how to bridge the gap. Needing to talk to someone, Sean calls his friend, Simone LeBeau.

“LeBeau.”

“Simone.”

“Sean.”

“Are you busy?”

“Never for you, mon ami.”

Relieved she’s available, Sean says, “Can I come over?”

“Of course. I’m on the back patio.”

“Thank you. I’ll be there shortly.” Sean hangs up and grabs his keys.

Parking in her driveway, Sean walks around the house. Simone looks elegant as ever, a glass of wine dangling from her fingers. He kisses both cheeks in greeting, taking the seat beside her.

“Wine?”

With an absent nod, Sean takes the offered glass. They drink silently, staring at the gorgeous view from her back porch.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

Sean releases a breath before forcing himself to speak. “Nick and Monroe moved into their new house and are having a housewarming party.” From the corner of his eye, he sees Simone glance questioningly at him. “They will be inviting people from the station.”

Simone takes another sip of wine. “No one knows about you and Hank.”

“Just Nick.”
Simone states, “You want that to change.”

Sighing, Sean finally admits out loud he does.

“What does Hank want?”

His mind flashes back to their conversation. “We talked about it. He wants to go separately.”

Simone questions, “You’re sure?”

“Yes.” His heart sinks, remembering how much it hurt when he realized Hank doesn’t want their coworkers to know about them.

“You want to be open about your relationship.”

Again, it’s a statement, not a question. Simone can always be counted on to be straight to the point; it’s why he went to her in the first place. “Yes.”

“You told him that?”

Knowing what Simone’s reaction will be if he tells the truth, Sean keeps silent.

“You did tell him, didn’t you?” she questions sharply.

He should know Simone wouldn’t give up.

“Sean?”

Simone’s voice holds an edge; there is no escaping the question. She is too determined to let him wiggle out of answering. Surrendering to her will, Sean admits, “No.” Deep down, Sean is waiting for the day Hank realizes being bound to him for life isn’t what he wanted. The hidden dread weighs heavily on him. Admitting it to Simone would only make it seem more real. Sean doesn’t want it to be real.

Simone rubs her forehead wearily. “You’re an idiot.” She mutters to herself in French, “Why are men such idiots?”

Sean winces at the rest of her colorful cursing. Simone looks at him, her eyes demanding his attention. Exasperated compassion is reflected in her eyes.

“The answer is simple, Sean. Talk to him.”

“Hank has had to deal with a lot because of me. I don’t want to push him.”

“Do not make excuses, Sean.”

Sean protests, “It’s not an excuse.”

“Isn’t it? Look, I am not denying that Hank has had to cope and adapt to a great deal. However, that does not give you free reign to suffer in silence.” Simone holds up her finger, quieting his protest before it leaves his lips. “This is hurting you, don’t pretend otherwise. I know you too well not to see it.”

She is right, much as he loathes to admit it. Sean came to her because Simone won’t let him hide from the truth. “I’m trying to be understanding. He’s not ready.”
“Maybe. Maybe not. Talking to him about how you are feeling is the mature thing to do. What if you read the signs wrong, perhaps he also desires to be open about your relationship with your coworkers? Maybe he hates the idea of hiding as much as you do. You won’t know until you talk to him about it. Hank should at least be aware that it hurts you to hide your relationship with him.”

“I don’t want him to change his mind simply because he feels guilty.”

“Then don’t let him. Be an adult, Sean, and talk to him. Find out what he really wants and why, help him understand what you are feeling. This is what a true, healthy adult relationship is about.” Simone teases, “Something you’d know if you did more than sleep around prior to Hank.”

Sean glares at her but she only laughs.

Sobering, Simone says, “Hank is your soulmate, trust him. Share your pain, lean on him to get you through. You aren’t alone anymore and even if he does want to keep your relationship quiet for now, you still have him.”

Simone is right, yet, Sean still feels resistant to opening up to Hank. It hurt enough discovering Hank wanted to hide their love, he wants to avoid having Hank confirm it. The second time will only be twisting the knife.

“Just think about it, okay?”

Happy Simone isn’t pushing, Sean nods. Something relaxes in him sitting beside his friend while looking at the beauty in front of them. Neither needs to fill the silence, content to simply be.

The sound of Simone’s stomach growling ends their quiet.

The side of Sean’s mouth tilts up. “Hungry?”

“Starved.”

“You forgot to eat lunch again.”

“I had some cheese before you arrived.”

Sean shakes his head with fond exasperation. “Come on, let’s see what I can whip up quick, providing you have anything besides old takeout.”

Simone rises from her chair, sniffs haughtily and glides inside. Sean rolls his eyes behind her back, following her. She’s leaning against the island in her expensive and completely unused kitchen, looking elegant as she always does. Sean digs through her fridge with disgust; he starts tossing expired food. Scanning the items in the fridge, he heads to the pantry. “Do you still have the griddle your sister gave you?”

“Yes.”

“Get it.”

Sean turns back to the pantry, taking out ingredients. He knows the kitchen better than Simone does and quickly gathers everything. Simone comes back with an unopened box. “Open it up.”

He knows better than to ask for her help; he has never met anyone who is as much a disaster in the kitchen as Simone is. She is a brilliant, capable person but the minute she tries to make food of any kind, her brain short circuits. He found that out when he tried to teach her the basics; it ended with a
trip to the emergency room, both times he tried.

Leaning on her elbows, Simone watches with interest. Her complete lack of ability makes her fascinated by people who are skilled chefs.

“How your sister thought a griddle was an appropriate gift for you, I will never understand. However, I’m thankful.”

Simone shrugs. “She’s hopelessly optimistic that I’ll learn not to set fire to the kitchen or almost slice off my finger.”

“She should know better.”

“Probably,” Simone admits cheerfully. “What are you making?”

“Blueberry pancakes.” He tests the consistency, then smiles, “With homemade buttermilk.”

Simone tugs his face down to kiss him lightly on the lips. “Thank you.”

“My pleasure. It’s my job to make sure you have at least one homemade meal each week.”

“And I love you for that.”

Hank’s feet slap the pavement, the hard beat of Linkin Park’s Bleed It Out driving him on. Sean’s words echo in his mind. “Would you prefer we go separately?” Hank run harder. “It would be easier, would it not?” He runs full out until the burning in his lungs forces him to slow. At a walk, Numb blares in his ear, echoing the feeling in his chest. The punishing run has drained the emotion from him. Stopping, Hank leans against a wall, dropping his head back.

“It would be easier, would it not?”

His hands clench at the remembered words. His life has changed irrevocably since the night Sean drove him home. Sean’s words echo in his mind. “Would you prefer we go separately?” Hank run harder. “It would be easier, would it not?” He runs full out until the burning in his lungs forces him to slow. At a walk, Numb blares in his ear, echoing the feeling in his chest. The punishing run has drained the emotion from him. Stopping, Hank leans against a wall, dropping his head back.

“What do I do now?”

Should he talk to Sean? Hank hears his sister’s voice in his voice saying, “Of course you should, you dumbass.” Faith may not be one for monogamy but she is absolutely a believer in open communication. She would rather be brutally honest than suffer in silence. If she was here, she’d no doubt tell him not the repeat the same mistakes he’s made in the past.
Hank doesn’t want his relationship to sour like all his other ones did. What he has with Sean is different, better, and he doesn’t want to lose him. The question is what to do. *Only two choices: keep silence and suffer or talk to Sean and risk losing him.* Neither option is particularly appealing. Either way, Hank is going to have to make a choice soon. Unhappy and resigned, he starts jogging back.
Chaos and Surprises

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sean slouches in his chair, looking morosely out at the night through his wall of windows. With a full moon out, the station has been swamped. Sean doesn’t know what it is about a full moon but Wesen and Human alike go nuts. With the station being hellishly busy, opportunities for sleep have been few and far between. Since Hank left saying he needed time alone, they haven’t spent a moment alone. Sean’s been sneaking in naps in his office. He’d rather squeeze his six feet four inch frame uncomfortably onto the couch than go home to his big bed to sleep alone.

When they meet eyes at the office, Hank tries to pretend nothing has changed but Sean can feel the chasm between them growing wide.

A soft knock on his door brings him out of his dismal thoughts. “Enter.” Sean can’t resist sitting up straighter as Nick and Hank walk in. The tension is palpable and uncomfortable. Sean glances at Hank, their eyes meeting for a heavy moment. He can’t read the emotions churning in his beautiful eyes, no matter how much he tries. Is Hank angry? Scared? Resentful? Does Hank want to wipe his hands of Sean? Does he know how much Sean wants to be open with their relationship? *What does he want from me?* Sean is torn by what to do. He doesn’t want to push and jeopardize their relationship. *But what if things don’t go back normal after the housewarming party?* His fear is the distance between them means the beginning of the end for them.

Nick clears his throat, breaking the awkward silent staring contest.

Sean looks away, turning his attention to the bullpen. Wu is again eyeing the Grimm in training, Trubel, with suspicion. “How is Miss Rubel doing?”

“Good. She’s an eager student.”

“Is Sergeant Wu still giving her problems?”

Nick nods and shrugs. “He has good instincts. He knows she isn’t what we say she is. Unless we tell him the truth, I doubt that is going to change.”

“That’s not a good idea.” Learning the truth can have dire consequences; some minds simply break rather than accept what is in front of them. There is no reason to risk Wu’s life and sanity by telling him.

“I know,” Nick agrees.

Sean forces himself to listen as Nick talks about their newest closed case. When Nick finishes, Sean says, “Good job. One less violent murderer on the streets. Finish up the paperwork and go home early.”

“Thanks, Cap,” Nick says gratefully.

Sean smiles at him but falters when his eyes move over to Hank. Sober, he stares at his soul mate. Hank hasn’t said a single word. His heart sinks at the stoicism; the warm, loving man he’s come to know is nowhere to be found. Whether that is his fault or Hank’s choice, Sean doesn’t know. He lets Hank leave without trying to stop him.
Head in his hands, Sean berates himself for being an idiot. If he didn’t know someone would rush in to investigate, he’d bash his head against his desk to try to knock some sense into his head.

Soon enough he was too busy to mope. Sean dives into the work, the aftermath of the mess the station had endured needs to be managed.

Finally granted a lull, Sean can take a breather. Walking over to his personal coffee pot, he pours himself a cup. Sean looks out over his bullpen and realizes both Hank and Nick’s desks are empty. They must have slipped out while he was busy.

Another night apart, it seems.

*Enough.* No more standing by and letting his relationship with Hank fall apart. Sean dials a familiar number, when the voice on the other line answers, he asks to meet after work.

Taking a deep breath, Sean knocks on the front door. His heart rate surges as the door opens and a muscular form fills the space.

“Come in.”

Sean follows him into the living room and sits down.

“You wanted to talk about something away from the station?”

Nodding, Sean says, “Yes.”

“Sean, are you okay? You seem out of sorts.”

Hunching over in his seat, Sean admits, “I have a problem.”

“A work problem or a personal problem?”

“A bit of both actually.”

“Stay here, I’ll get us a couple of beers and we can figure this out.”

Sean takes the offered beer and immediately knocks back half of it. Alcohol flowing through his veins, he has the balls to look at his friend and Chief of Police, Wade Riordan.

“What’s going on, Sean?”

The open concern on Wade’s face has Sean revealing bluntly, “I found my soul mate.” A Jägerbar, Wade knows not only what he is but who he is. Wade likes knowing he has Sean looking out for the station, its people, and the public because few know of Sean being Wesen.

Bright white teeth flash starkly against Wade’s dark skin as he grins. “Congratulations, Sean.” Being a Wesen himself, Wade knows it is generally hit or miss for hybrids in terms of mates. Some have them, others simply don’t.

Sean thought for years he was one of those who doesn’t, until Hank. “Thank you,” he says quietly.

Wade’s smile fades slowly. He and Sean have known each other for a long time, colleagues that became friends. “Are you not happy? Is it not going well with your soul mate?”
“It has been...” Sean thinks of his time with Hank, “tumultuous. Filled with ups and downs. Mostly ups but he’s had some troubles adjusting.” Sean rubs his face wearily, the separation from Hank is wearing on him. “He’s Human, Wade.”

Wade laughs, thinking he’s joking. His laughter cuts off abruptly when he realizes he is serious. In disbelief, he questions, “How is that possible?”

“It’s a long story, one I don’t want to get into right now. Suffice it to say the veil separating the Wesen world from the Human world is weakening. The Grimm.” Wade knows about Nick and in typical Jägerbar fashion, he remains a bit wary but unafraid. “He’s mated to a Blutbad.” Wade is nearly impossible to surprise, Sean’s never seen it happen before. Until now. A Grimm being the mate of Blutbad is too unbelievable not to surprise any Wesen who hears about it.

After a long moment, Wade pulls himself together. “I’m going to want the full story at some point in the near future but for now, what can I do for you?”

Sean is thankful Wade doesn’t challenge him, believing him about Nick and Monroe’s mating takes trust. “My mate. He works at the station.”

“Your station.”

“Yes.”

“Who is it?”

Sean stares back blandly. He is not about to out Hank without his consent; they are having enough problems, he isn’t going to give Hank more ammunition to use against him.

Wade smirks, expecting the lack of an answer. “Is he worried about getting you in trouble or himself?”

“Both.” Sean isn’t about to admit he doesn’t know but it’s a good possibility it is a bit of both. Personally, he cares more about Hank than himself; Hank likely would feel guilty if Sean’s career was affected by their relationship. Yet, Sean would give his job up in a second if he had to if it meant protecting Hank. He can find another job, he cannot find another soul mate.

“What are you asking for? A promise neither of you will lose your job should your relationship come out? You are in a position of authority over him?”

“Is that what you are offering?” Wade taps his lips thoughtfully but doesn’t answer. Sean’s nerves rise, Wade is in a position of power over both Hank and Sean. His acceptance of their relationship would mean a great deal professionally. Wade is not only his boss but his friend and a fellow Wesen.

He has the perspective to understand why Sean crossed the professional line with his subordinate.

Wade steeples his thick fingers and stares at Sean with scrutinizing eyes. “As a Jägerbar, I comprehend how important the relationship between you and your soul mate is. However, the rest will not. Even the other Wesen will not because your hybrid status is a secret for the most part.”

“I am aware.” He knows how it looks, the boss sleeping with a subordinate. He doesn’t care if they think poorly of him but Hank is another matter. Sean does not want anyone thinking Hank is sleeping with him to get ahead. His Hank is no whore and if someone implies otherwise, Sean is going to have a difficult time stopping himself from ripping said person’s arms off.

“Now, that could change if you and your soul mate were married or at least engaged,” Wade hints without subtly.
Sean stares at Wade with incredulity. “I am not proposing to my soul mate to make my coworkers feel better about our relationship.”

Wade shrugs and says, “Not for them, necessarily, although that would be a perk.”

Sputtering, Sean tries to compose himself to his friend’s obvious amusement. “I am not proposing to make the people at the station feel more comfortable about Ha—my mate and I being together.”

Wade grins at the slip-up and Sean can see the wheels in his stupid head turning, trying to figure out his mate’s name. He already gave him two letters, Sean might as well have given him the name. The only other options are Harvey Ruiz, who’s married and recently adopted another child to make a family of eight, or Greg Harrison, who is an eighteen-year-old child. It takes very little time for Wade to figure it out, especially considering his talent for remembering names. “Dammit. Way to out Hank, you moron.” At least he can count on Wade being tight-lipped and not blab about it.

“Need ideas for the proposal?”

Sean stares at his friend with dead eyes. “If I did, I wouldn’t be coming to you.”

“My proposal was very romantic.”

“Saying to Elena, ‘They look happy, we should do that too’ during her cousin’s wedding is not romantic.”

“That was romantic!”

“Compared to what?” Shaking his head in disgust, Sean adds, “You didn’t even have a fucking ring.”

Wade counters, “She said yes, didn’t she?”

“Not right away. Like the smart woman she is, she made you ask her properly first. Although her accepting your proposal at all does bring her intelligence into question.”

Wade says simply, “She thinks I’m charming.”

Sean snorts, charming is not the word he’d use to describe Wade.

“Also,” Wade woges and snarls, “if you ever imply that my wife is stupid again, I’ll rip your face off.”

He rolls his eyes at the threat. The one thing he can say is Wade loves his wife. “I would never say Elena is stupid.” Never piss off a female Jägerbar, Elena is no exception.

Wade shakes his head and his bear-like features transitioning back into his normal face. “You better not. Now, I believe we have gotten off-topic. You and Ha—” he smirks before emphasizing, “your soul mate, I mean. You have my blessing and support. I will do everything I can to protect both of you.”

“Thank you, Wade.”

“I wasn’t kidding about the engagement. It would help.”

Wade’s calm tenacity drives him mad at times. “I don’t care, I’m not proposing for them.”

Rolling his eyes, Wade challenges, “As if you weren’t already thinking of proposing.”
Again, Sean splutters. “That’s not—”

Wade smirks that annoyingly knowing smirk of his. “You have the ring already, don’t you?”

“That’s none of your business!”

Pumping his fist, Wade gloats, “Knew it! Elena is going enjoy knowing Mr. Aloof has finally fallen.”

“I hate you.”

“No, you don’t.”

Sighing, Sean wishes he did. “I should record you and let people at the station watch. They’d be a lot less afraid of you.”

Wade gives a feral grin, hints of his Jägerbar heritage bleeding through. “It’s better for everyone involved if they fear me.”

“Are you ever going to tell Nick about you?”

“No, you don’t.”

“Not unless I need to and since I have you, I don’t foresee it being necessary.”

*Fair enough.*

Settling back in his chair, Wade says, “A Grimm and a Blutbad. Ready to tell me how that happened?”

Sean shakes his empty beer bottle. “I’m going to need another one of these first.” With another beer in hand, he gets comfortable and begins.

“I’ll keep a lookout for anything out of the ordinary. Keep me in the loop, yeah?” Wade says, slapping Sean on the back.

“Yeah.” It won’t hurt having another set of eyes or two looking out for new changes to the Wesen community. If what’s happened is the beginning as they believe, Nick, the pups, and Hank will not be the only ones. Change breeds chaos; the Human and Wesen worlds bleeding together is bound to result in violence from both sides.

Lost in thought, Sean remembers little about the drive home. His heart sinks as he opens his apartment door. Without Hank, it’s dark and empty and Sean is quickly growing to hate it. *It’s going to change. Soon.* He cannot bear to imagine otherwise. Heading for his office, he sits down and immediately opens the bottom drawer, grabbing the item tucked in the back. Sean sets it on the desk in front of him and stares at it.

A ring box.

Wade had him pegged perfectly.

Taking a deep breath, Sean eases it open. He carefully takes the wide band out and scrutinizes it closely. The first time he saw the ring, he pictured slipping it on Hank’s finger. A platinum band edged with gold. It’s sophisticated but simple, perfect for Hank. Sean closes his eyes and glides his thumb over the cool metal, imagining how the polished platinum will look against Hank’s beautiful skin. More important than the ring physically being on Hank’s finger is what it would symbolize:
commitment. Hank would be his and he would be Hank’s. For him, it would be forever.

Sean slumps in his chair and scrubs his face. *Getting a little ahead of yourself, Sean? Idiot.* Imagining forever with Hank is a moot point when Hank is deliberately avoiding him. The chasm between them has to be closed before he can hope for forever.

Gently replacing the ring into the box, Sean closes it and puts it back in its hiding place. *Maybe someday.*

Sick of standing by and doing nothing, Sean grabs his keys and heads out.

When Hank opens the door, bare-chested and wearing only a pair of skimpy boxers, Sean has to resist the urge to cringe. He’d obviously been sleeping and looks annoyed, sleepy, and exhausted. “I woke you up.”

Hank grunts, checking the safety on the gun he’d been hiding behind his leg, then tucks it in the waistband of his boxers. He rubs his eyes tiredly, which Sean tries to not to find it adorable. Too tired to voice his annoyance, Hank asks sleepily, “What do you want?”

Instead of answering, Sean easily guides Hank inside and back toward the rumpled bed. He carefully removes the gun and sets it on the nightstand. Hank doesn’t fight the guidance, laying back down with a sigh. “Sleep, Love.” Hank is in no shape for the serious conversation he had planned.

“You’ll stay?”

Hank probably is not coherent enough to realize he’s asked but Sean isn’t about to deny his request, not when it is what he wants too. “I’ll stay,” he promises.

Covering up with a sheet, Hank nods, closes his eyes and falls asleep within seconds.

Sean watches him sleep for a minute before turning away. He puts Hank’s gun away, then goes to lock up for the night.

Back in the bedroom, Sean quietly strips down to his boxers and trying not to wake Hank, slowly climbs into the bed. Before he can turn over, Hank sidles up behind him and throws an arm over Sean to gather him close. It seems like forever since he’s been this close to his soul mate and he wants to savor it. Determined not spoil the intimate moment with Hank, Sean pushes thoughts of the serious conversation they need to have into the back of his mind. Tomorrow is early enough to address it; all he wants tonight is to lay with his mate skin to skin. With Hank’s familiar warmth surrounding him, Sean lets himself drift into dreamland.

Opening bleary eyes, Hank checks the time. Thirteen hours. He slept for thirteen hours but damn, he’d needed it. *Now, I need a shower.* Hank’s mind clears enough to realize he should be alone in the bed but isn’t. He can feel slow and steady warm exhaling breaths on his neck. *Sean. How the fuck did he get in my bed?* After a moment, he vaguely remembers answering the door to find Sean. Hank thought it’d been a dream but clearly, it wasn’t. *No wonder I slept so deeply and well.* He hasn’t been sleeping well without Sean in his bed.

Reluctant to leave the warm comfort behind and go back to the awkward distance, Hank allows himself to linger. Sean unconsciously nuzzles his neck and his fingers flex where they rest against Hank’s stomach. Getting hard, Hank knows he has to get out before he does something stupid. He
carefully circles Sean’s wrist and tries to lift it without waking him.

Still asleep, Sean resists and clings to Hank.

Releasing a breath, he waits until Sean relaxes and tries again. Unfortunately, he is less than successful. Hank can feel the instant when Sean wakes up; they both freeze. Awkwardness hangs in the air between them.

“We should talk,” Sean says, breaking the silence.

That is the last thing Hank wants. Nick and Monroe’s housewarming party is in a few hours, he simply wants to get it over with. Maybe, just maybe, things will go back to normal afterward. *And a fucking unicorn is going to walk up with a million dollars strapped to its back,* an inner sarcastic voice taunts. *Shut up!* Can’t he practice avoidance without annoying inner voices ruining his oblivion?

“Hank?”

He forces his body to turn over and meets Sean’s eyes, hating the worry he sees in them. Hank curses his exes and himself for letting his past heartbreak turn him into a coward. *For a few more hours, I can pretend everything is fine before it all crashes and burns.* He doesn’t care what Sean said before about them being soul mates. Deep in his heart, he doesn’t believe they will last. Irrational fear or not, Hank cannot bear to find out he’s right. He needs to pretend; the only way to accomplish that is to distract Sean.

“I think we need to—”

Hank surges forward and swallows the rest of Sean’s words with his mouth. Sean briefly struggles to speak in between kisses but soon returns them with equal fervor. Hank rubs his cock against Sean’s hip and presses his thigh solidly between Sean’s legs, encouraging him to thrust up.

“I need you.”

“God, yes.” Hank yanks open the drawer in his bedside stand and blindly tries to find lube while Sean’s distracting hands pull down his boxers. “Fuck!” All thought evaporates from his mind the moment his cock is enveloped by Sean’s mouth. Forgetting about the lube, Hank reaches for Sean as he sucks him. Hips flex as he thrusts into his delicious mouth. Sean hums, his big hands on Hank’s ass encourage him to thrust deep. Feeling his coming orgasm, Hank yells, “Stop!”

Sean stills, looking up at Hank without pulling off.

“I’m gonna cum.” Sean swallows around him and Hank’s eyes slam shut. “Fuuuck.” Hank tries to convince his brain that filling Sean’s belly is as good as filling his ass; his dick is very happy to let Sean continue but his brain is stubborn. Taking a shaky breath to steady himself, Hank half begs, “I want to fuck you.” His brain adds, *I need to fuck you.*

After a beat, Sean slowly eases off his cock. He turns over onto his belly. Staring over his shoulder into Hank’s eyes, he says, “Fuck me then.”

With a sharp nod, Hank quickly strips the boxers off himself and then Sean. Diving into the drawer, he finally finds the lube and squirts it onto his fingers. Sean moans, eagerly pushing back into his fingers as Hank prepares him.

“Enough,” Sean says hoarsely. “I’m ready.”
Feeling unreasonably like it’s the first time he’s taking Sean, Hank lines himself up and pushes in. Being inside of Sean never fails to amaze him. He is hot and tight, perfect around his cock. *Made for me.*

Sean moans his name, begging him to move. *Fuck, do I love hearing that.* Before he can consciously decide, his hips are already moving. The lust and need in Sean’s voice, begging for his cock, is too arousing to resist. Hank’s fascinated by the sight of the muscles bunching and relaxing in Sean’s long, lean back as they rock together. Eyeing up the sheen of sweat covering his beautiful skin, Hank leans forwards and laps at it, savoring the saltiness on his tongue. Sean arches into him, groaning as Hank licks a long strip up his back. Leaning on his forearm, Sean reaches down with the other hand and starts jerking himself off.

Knowing Sean is getting close by the desperate stroking, Hank speeds up his thrusts. “Let me hear it, Sean. You know what I wanna hear. Give it to me, Baby.” He fucks Sean until he gets what he wants: those eager, needy, filthy noises that leave no doubt Sean loves Hank fucking him. Rewarding him, Hank’s hand joins Sean and together they stroke him until he cums.

Sean slumps forward, breathing hard, while Hank continues to thrust into his body but at a slow, easy pace while he recovers. Sean taps Hank’s thigh, motioning he back away. Hank obediently pulls out. Sean flops onto his back, his legs spread invitingly. Their eyes lock and suddenly, it feels a million times more intimate. Without breaking the eye contact or saying a word, Hank moves into position and slides into Sean’s welcoming body. It’s no longer about fucking but making love.

Hank’s eyes move down to Sean’s toned chest. His hands glide up his stomach, stroking over his skin with familiarity. Sean arches into the touch, hooking his endlessly long legs around his hips, his own hands exploring over Hank’s skin. He pulls Hank down for a slow, thorough kiss.

“Close,” Hank warns.

“Yes, do it,” Sean hisses.

Snapping his hips, he chases his orgasm. Hank’s thrusts stutter and he cums. Sean holds him close through the aftershocks. Knowing how much he weighs, Hank mumbles, “Heavy,” and extracts himself to collapse face down beside his lover. Sean turns over, settling close enough to lightly stroke Hank’s bare skin. He presses a kiss to Hank’s shoulder.

“I love you,” Sean says softly.

Hank squeezes his eyes shut, fighting the urge to shudder at the words. *For now.* He mentally shakes away the thought. “I love you, too.”

“Hank, I...”

His gut tightens. *How am I going to get out of this?*

“...think we should talk.” Sean rests his chin on Hank’s shoulder.

Unless he acts like an asshole, Hank sees no way out of this. “Okay.”

Sean kisses his skin in thanks. “About the part—”

*Saved by the fucking bell!*  

“Hold on a moment.” Sean moves away to find his phone. “Renard.”

Hank turns to watch him. Sean listens for a moment, then his demeanor changes. They won’t be
continuing this conversation. *Thank God!* 

Sean hangs up and turns to face the bed, his expression apologetic. “I have to go in.” 

“Go.” If anyone understands the job, it’s him. 

Nodding, Sean sighs and moves determinedly toward the bathroom. Hank watches him leave, his eyes drawn to his cum trailing unnoticed down Sean’s leg. A part of him mourns the loss, once Sean is done showering, his cum, a physical representation of his claim, will be gone. *Better get used to it,* he thinks depressingly. *Might be the last time.* 

Checking the time, Hank grabs his keys and heads out. *Probably for the best Sean hasn’t called. We get to skip the awkwardness of coordinating our separate arrivals.* If he’s lucky, Sean won’t be able to get away at all and miss the party entirely. 

Hank rests his forehead against the steering wheel, feeling like a great idiot. *What am I doing?* Too afraid of losing Sean, he’s been ignoring the problem via avoidance. Hell, he jumped Sean to avoid talking to him about it. Hank would have done it again if Sean hadn’t been called in. *Or if that didn’t work, faked a heart attack. Anything to avoid that conversation.* If Sean dumped him, he’d never have made it to Nick’s party. His partner would know something happened. 

With every bit of will he possesses, Hank shoves everything away to be dealt with later as he heads over to Nick and Monroe’s. He knows he can’t delay the inevitable. *What the hell is wrong with me, anyway?* Hank’s never had an answer but it must be him considering how many times he’s been dumped. *Fuck, I’m pathetic.* 

Parking in front of the house, Hank pastes on a fake smile. He won’t ruin Nick and Monroe’s party by bringing his relationship problems into the mix. 

Nick answers the door before he can knock, practically bouncing with joy. “Hank! Come in.” Even with the potion, Nick glows in the same manner as pregnant women tend to. 

Hank viciously shoves down the jealousy at the sight of Nick’s happiness. It isn’t Nick’s fault his life is falling apart. “Hey, Nick,” he greets with forced cheerfulness. The brief look his partner gives him makes it clear he was less successful at faking it. Thankfully, Nick doesn’t have the time to interrogate him and they both know it. The look in Nick’s eyes warns him they will be discussing it later. Hank is going to have to remain vigilant, if given the opportunity Nick will corner and interrogate him. 

“Roe! Hank’s here.” 

Monroe yells, “Welcome!” from another room, presumably the kitchen. “Make yourself at home.” 

“The others are in the living room,” Nick says, leading the way. 

Two couples, a man and a woman and two men, sit on the couch. Sort of. The larger partner has the smaller in his lap. 

“Hank, this is part of Monroe’s family. Evan and Wynn and Cameron and Austin.” Nick points each of them out and they offer Hank a wave or a nod in greeting. “Everyone, this is Hank, my partner. Hank, this is Monroe’s—” 

Holding his hand up before Nick can continue, “Let me guess...” Hank scrutinizes them. “Cameron
is Monroe’s brother.” The familial resemblance between the brothers is clear. Wynn and Evan are more difficult. Recalling Nick said previously Monroe has at least one sister, Hank takes a stab at it, “Wynn?”

“Good guess,” she says with a hint of a smile.

Hank smiles back, discreetly checking her out in a detached way. Monroe’s sister, Wynn, is a beautiful, sensual woman.

“I wouldn’t do that.”

Blinking at the warning, he turns to Monroe’s brother and lifts a brow in question.

Cameron points over at Evan. “That’s why,” he explains, his lips twitching in amusement.

Hank follows his finger and finds Evan snarling at him. He throws his hands up in surrender, trying not to further enrage the possessive man. “Nick, tell...” his voice trails off when he realizes his partner somehow managed to leave the room without his notice. *Guess I’m on my own.*

Wynn lays her head on Evan’s shoulder and he melts like a popsicle in the middle of a heat wave. With Evan distracted, she winks at Hank.

“Word of advice, Blutbaden are a mite possessive of their mates,” Cameron says cheerfully.

Glancing from Evan’s mushy but somehow still possessive grip on Wynn to Austin’s more subdued but still clear one on Cameron, Hank says dryly, “I can see that. Should I be ready to break up a fight, should someone’s eyes linger too long?”

Wynn pats Evan’s chest. “He promised Monroe he’d behave.”

“Austin isn’t the brawling type,” Cameron admits. He practically purrs as Austin gives him a scalp massage.

Narrowing his eyes, Hank has a feeling Cameron is right about that. However, not being a brawler does not make him less dangerous than Evan. Hank’s seen others with the same subtle intensity as Austin and every single one of them were dangerous in a sneak attack type of way. He would rather face an attacker head on any day of the week. *Better to see ’em coming.*

Austin and Evan stiffen visibly, their eyes glued to something behind him. Hank turns around to find Trubel walking in with Cypress. Silence reigns, the two Blutbaden staring with thinly veiled suspicion.

*Well, this is awkward.* Hank clears his throat. “Hey, Trubel. Have you met Monroe’s family?”

Trubel offers a tight smile. “I have, yes.”

Nick walks in with a group of people following. The additions bring the tension in the room down, although it does not disappear. The wariness between Trubel and the two Blutbaden remains simmering under the surface. Neither side loses sight of the other.
Hank holds back a wince when Wu comes in with a group from the precinct. The moment Wu spots her, he glares. Trubel stares back at Wu blandly, valiantly ignoring the glares being shot in her direction. *Can’t I just go home? Nick wouldn’t notice, right?* He glances at his partner; Nick somehow knows what he’s thinking because he can see the warning in the jut of his chin.

To keep his mind off the underlying tension, Hank heads over to his coworkers to join their conversation while Nick makes more introductions. Beer in hand, he finally lets himself relax and start to enjoy himself.

The food is delicious as always. Nick is a great host, social and welcoming. Surprisingly, no fights break out. Even Wu has managed to push aside her suspicions of Trubel to enjoy himself.

*Maybe this won’t be as bad as I imagined.*

Walking out of the kitchen, Hank stops at the sound of the doorbell. “I’ll get it,” he calls out. No sense in Nick or Monroe coming over to open the door when he is already here. “Welcom—” Hank’s smile slips off his face at the sight of Sean. He’d hoped it was too late for him to show up. His grip on the door tightens; Hank wants nothing more than to slam the door in his face.

“Hank.” The expression on his face is too complicated to decipher.

Not attempting to force a smile, Hank opens the door wide and invites Sean in. Without a word, he heads for the living room, leaving Sean to follow or not. Sean’s silent presence trails after him.

“Nick.”

Nick’s smile is effortless. “Sean, thanks for coming,” he greets easily. Despite feeling the tension between Hank and Sean, he doesn’t let it show.

Many from the precinct appear surprised by not only their captain being invited but actually coming. He is not known for being social outside of work or at work for that matter. Sean has remained separated from his lackeys, his coming to a subordinate’s housewarming party is out of character.

*Soon enough he can go back to being the untouchable, loner he was before he and I became an us.* Torn between fury and sorrow, Hank leaves the room without a backward glance. He can feel Sean’s heavy, intense stare at his back but refuses to acknowledge it. *If he thinks I’m going to beg for him to stay like some pathetic clinging creature, he’s delusional.* Hank tries to harden his heart against the love he feels for Sean and against the pain he anticipates will consume him once Sean breaks up with him.

He tries to lose himself by mingling but his heart isn’t in it. Needing space to clear his head, Hank goes upstairs. He wanders around a bit, biding his time. Deciding he has been gone long enough, he stops at the bathroom quickly. Washing his hands, he’s startled by the sound of the door opening. “What the—” He scrambles back as Sean stalks into the bathroom, unrelenting determination on his face. Shock quickly turns to anger. “What the hell, Sean!”

“We need to talk,” he demands firmly.

Through with avoiding the inevitable, Hank throws his hands up. “Fine. Let’s do this.” If Sean thinks for one second he is going to show a crack in his armor, he’s in for a hell of a surprise.

Sean shuts the door behind him, cutting off the sound of the party below them. “I don’t want to fight, Hank.”

“Good, let me past and we can forget this.”
“Forget what exactly?” Sean asks softly.

Hank gathers his nerve and stares him in the eyes. *I can’t do it.* He can’t bear to lie and say they should forget them. Sean doesn’t look like a man ready to callously break his heart. Is it possible what Sean said and did was warped in his mind during all the time he spent thinking about it? The fight goes out of him and he sags against the bathroom wall. “Do you still want to be with me?”

The question is met with silence and Hank has to force himself to look up. Sean looks stunned like he’s been surprised by a blow to the head but somehow he pulls himself together to answer. “Of course, I do! You are my soul mate; our hearts are bonded.”

“Then why?”

“Why, what?”

Hank meets Sean’s soft, concerned look and asks the questions he should have asked long ago. “Why didn’t you want to go with me to the party? Why did you want to pretend we are nothing more than colleagues?”

Sean cups his face, thumbing his cheeks tenderly. “I never wanted that; I thought it’s what you wanted.”

“What?” All this time, Sean thought it’s what he wanted?

Unable to help himself, Sean presses a soft kiss to Hank’s lips. “I never wanted to hide us. I wanted to proudly walk into this party with you by my side. Not as my subordinate or my friend but as the love of my life.”

Sean eases Hank into his arms, holding him close, something they both need. They soak up the intimacy, a soothing balm for their battered hearts.

“I thought you weren’t ready to go public at the precinct; I didn’t want to push you. Simone was right, I should have asked you what you wanted, instead of assuming I knew.” Sean rests his forehead against Hank’s and stares into his eyes. “We need to communicate better.”

“I know.” They can’t keep senselessly hurting each other and themselves. “We have to work harder. No more assumptions. No more avoidance. If we have a problem, we have to meet it head on. Together.”

“Together.” Smiling, Sean brushes his fingertips over Hank’s full lips. “I love you, Pet.”

“I love you, too.” Hank pulls Sean down for a thorough kiss. “You don’t know how much I missed hearing that, how much I missed you.”

Sean trails kisses down Hank’s neck. “Shall I show you how much I missed you, Pet?”

Shuddering at the sensual purr in his voice, Hank croaks, “Dear God, yes.”

Sean grins. “My pleasure.” He leads Hank backward by the hips until his ass hits the edge of the vanity. Sean kisses him deeply as he inserts his thigh between Hank’s. Hank groans roughly when Sean presses his thigh tight against the growing bulge in his pants. The needy growl Hank makes as he thrusts against his thigh is music to his ears. “I’ve missed the sounds you make, Pet.” He takes Hank’s hand and cups it over his own hardness. Distracted by Hank teasing his cock through his pants, Sean almost forgets the plan. Reluctantly, he moves back. Out of Hank’s reach, he locks eyes as he drops to his knees. Sean barely notices the slight padding of the bathroom mat under his knees.
He would kneel on broken glass for the chance to taste Hank again.

The burning lust in Hank’s eyes spurs him on. Sean fumbles Hank’s pants open and shoves them and his boxers down to his knees. His mouth waters as his eyes devour the sight of Hank’s arousal. Sean lays his hands on Hank’s thighs, nudging them to spread as much as he can with his pants in the way. He leans forward and breathes in deep. His nose is flooded with the scent of Hank. Sean closes his eyes and savors it for a long moment.

“Please, Sean,” Hank begs, his hand resting on the back of Sean’s head.

Sean’s tongue darts out, lapping teasingly at his thighs. The tightening of Hank’s grip on his head signals his control is slipping and need is taking over. Sean stops avoiding the spot Hank really wants his mouth. He licks at the head and down the shaft slowly. This isn’t to be rushed. It doesn’t matter that they are in Nick and Monroe’s bathroom with a party going on downstairs. This moment is him and Hank. No one else in the world exists.

The salty taste of pre-cum overwhelms him and he needs more. Sean sucks lightly on the head, drawing the taste into his mouth.

“God, yes.” Hank thrusts shallowly into his mouth. “I can’t wait to cum down your throat and watch you swallow it all down.”

Sean looks up to find Hank watching him with hunger. With their eyes locked, he opens his mouth wide and sinks down onto Hank’s cock. The glint in his eyes makes Sean’s cock twitch in pants. Hank’s hands grip his head and guide him into a rhythm. Sean accepts it willingly, doing his best to please him.

“Your mouth, Sean,” Hank moans. “Need to fuck it. You ready for me?”

Sean quickly rips out his own pants and releases his aching cock. Then he nods carefully around his mouthful.

“Good.” Hank fucks his face in a slow pace and Sean’s hand on his own cock matches it. “I can’t wait to cum down your throat.” His pace speeds up. Sean steadies himself with one hand on Hank’s hip while the other jacks his cock to Hank’s thrusts.

Nothing exists outside of them. Nothing.

Sean floats, eyes closed, in a lust bliss cloud. Hank fucks his face harder as he gets close and Sean is happy to take it. His soul mate can use his mouth, his ass anytime he wants.

“Get ready, Love.” Hank slams forward several times before he cums with a cry.

Sean feels his own orgasm build until he explodes as he swallows Hank’s hot cum down his throat.

It takes a few minutes for them both to catch their breath. Hank looks down, combing his fingers through Sean’s short hair. Sean can’t help but lean into the touch.

“When we get home, we’re continuing this,” Hank promises darkly.

Sean nods. “Of course, Pet.”

“I’m serious, Sean. By the end of this weekend, we’re both better be fucked out, hoarse, and walking funny.”
Smirking, Sean says, “I think that can be arranged.”

“You ready for this? Once they know, there’s no going back, Pet.”

Hank smiles and takes Sean’s hand. “I know. I love you and I don’t want to hide that anymore.”

Kissing their clasped hands once, Sean starts walking downstairs with Hank. The happy chatter dies a quick death when they walk into the room. The people from the precinct gape at the sight of them holding hands. Clearing his throat, Sean states, “I’m sure you’re wondering what this means,” lifting his and Hank’s hand. “Hank and I are in love.”

He’s proud to stand next to Hank, declaring his love. He ignores the whispers. Sean doesn’t care what anyone else thinks, not with Hank in his life. Only one thing could make his life better.

“Marry me.”

The room falls as silent as the inside of a tomb.

Hank’s eyes practically pop out of his sockets. “Did you just—”

“Yes, I did.” Sean takes his hands. “Marry me.”

Hank looks around, shocked. The people around him are as stunned as he is but then he meets Nick’s eyes. In them, he sees happiness, not only the underlying happiness from being with Monroe but a happiness for Hank. “Yes.”

He pulls Sean into a passionate kiss, uncaring if everyone watches them. He just got engaged, he’s entitled. Hank ends the kiss reluctantly but doesn’t move away from Sean. He needs to feel Sean pressed against him. This was nothing like he imagined would happen but knowing Sean wants to marry him is everything. Marrying Sean feels right.

Wu’s partner, Franco, stares blankly at Hank and Sean before asking, “Is someone going to explain what just happened?”

“You see when two men love each other and want to spend their lives together...”

“Shut up, Rodriguez,” Franco snipes.

She laughs and shrugs. “Wu disappeared, someone has to tease you. Wu is going to be pissed he missed this.”

Everyone who knows Wu definitely agrees.

“Something you’ve been keeping a secret from us, Captain?” Rodriguez inquires dryly.

Looking around, Hank is surprised and happy his colleagues appear to be taking the news of their relationship well. In Rodriguez’s case, well enough to tease. Wu would have been having a sarcasm overload by now.

Sean pulls Hank close. “As you can likely deduce, Hank and I have been dating.”

“Where is Wu when you need him? Talk about the perfect time for a sarcastic eye-roll,” Tomlin, Rodriguez’s partner, says.
“Hey, Cap.”

Sean lifts a brow questioningly toward Rodriguez at the unusually informal address.

“Where’s the ring?” she asks, wiggling her fingers. The brief flash of a sheepish expression makes a wide grin spreads over her pixie face. “Oh, Cap, you did not just propose, in front of everyone I might add, without a ring.”

Hank, enjoying the teasing immensely, stares up at Sean. “Excellent question, Rodriguez. Well? Do I have a ring?” He wiggles his bare, ringless fingers at Sean. Having a ring doesn’t matter to him but he cannot pass up the opportunity to make Sean squirm a bit.

Sean mumbles something too softly to be distinguishable.

“What was that, Sean?” Hank prompts. “Couldn’t make that out.”

“Well…” Sean squirms uncomfortably. “Technically, I have a ring.”


“You cannot.”

Hank grins. “And why is that, Sean?”

Sean ducks his head. “I kinda, sorta, might have left it at home.”

Everyone winces, mostly in jest.

“Ouch!” Tomlin says.

Jameson looks around the room, questioningly. “Did anyone else expect our illustrious captain to be more of a romantic?”

Sean puffs up with indignation. “Hey!”

Everyone dismisses his huffing, liking this new side of their normally detached and thoroughly professional captain.

“What the hell happened? I used to command respect,” Sean complains quietly to Hank.

Hank pats him comfortingly. “It was the proposal, I think. You’re no longer the big, bad boss but someone in love.”

“You thought it was romantic, right?” Sean asks worriedly.

Hank lies through his teeth, “Of course, Sean.” Blurt out marry me isn’t what he’d term romantic but he doesn’t want to hurt Sean’s feelings. He’s been through the whole romantic proposal before, although he was the one that proposed. Romance didn’t help save his previous marriages and the lack of romance in the proposal isn’t going to weaken their love. He presses a soft kiss to Sean’s lips. “Do you really have a ring for me?”

“Yes. I’ve been waiting for the right time to ask you.”

“And you thought in the middle of my housewarming party was the right time?” Nick teases.

Sean crosses his arms defensively. “Clearly.”
“Are you pouting?” Rodriguez questions in disbelief.

“No,” Sean answers, clearly pouting.

Snickers fill the room.

Sean silences the laughing with a single gesture. “While Hank surely has enjoyed the playful ribbing at my expense, I must ask, does anyone have any questions or concerns about Hank and I being in a relationship?”

Everyone from the station sobers.

“I can’t speak for everyone,” Franco says, “but as long as on the job, your interactions are professional and fair, I don’t have an issue.”

The others add their agreement.

“I know this will likely spread through the station quickly.”

Rodriguez interrupts, “Ya think?”

Sean glares at her until she mimes locking her lips. “As I was saying, everyone will soon be aware of my relationship with Hank. If anyone voices concerns or questions, please send them to me. Or if they are not comfortable speaking with me, they are free to contact Chief Riordan about it.”

“Does he know about you and Hank?” Nick asks.

“He does. I spoke to him recently about us.”

Hank glances at Sean, surprised to hear he’s spoken to Chief Riordan about them.

“Hey, Nick, you got any champagne to toast Hank and Sean?”

Nick shakes his head. “No, Franco, I do not happen to have champagne lying around. However, we do have liquor of various kinds. That will have to do.”

All the missed opportunities for sarcastic retorts or eye-rolls put a spotlight on Wu’s absence. *Where the heck is he?*

Within minutes, drinks are poured and passed around. Nick lifts his, non-alcoholic of course, “To Hank and Sean, may you have many years of wedded bliss.”

“To Hank and Sean!” The room echoes with the sounds of glass clinking together.

“Do try to make this one your last, Hank,” Rodriguez teases.

Hank doesn’t take offense. “I intend to,” he says with a smug smirk. “I have captured the elusive panty-dropper, I ain’t about to let him get away.” Hank caresses Sean’s body, emphasizing his right to touch what no one else can. “Also, I’ll be taking my winning.”

“Winnings?” Sean asks.

“There’s a pot at the station, first person to snag you wins. That’d be me.”

They all groan. “Dammit, I was hoping he’d forgotten about that,” Franco complains.
“I’ll be expecting my winning ready for me by the time my next shift is over. I have a fiance to take out.”

Sean says, “I can’t believe there was a pot for sleeping with me!”

“Word of advice, Captain,” Jameson says, “don’t ask about the other ones. You don’t want to know.”

Sean looks at Hank, who nods in confirmation. “You really don’t.”

Franco suddenly perks up. “Can I tell Drew?”

Knowing the shit he puts up with Wu on a daily basis, everyone agrees.

Franco rubs his hands together in anticipation. “I can’t wait.”

“So, Nick.”

Suspicious of Rodriguez’s tone, he says carefully, “Yeah?”

“When are you and your guy getting hitched?”

“Oh...” Nick’s eyes dart to Monroe’s and away.

With everyone distracted by Rodriguez’s question and the awkwardness it created, Sean takes Hank’s elbow and leads him from the room. Finding a secluded spot, he stops.

Hank smiles at his fiance. *Fiance!* He’s still in shock; he had feared Sean wanted to break up and all the time, he had a ring stashed in his home.

“I know my proposal wasn’t the most romantic one in the world,” Sean stops Hank before he can protest. “You don’t need to lie to me, Pet.”

Hank closes his mouth and lets Sean talk.

“Nonetheless, I want you to know I love you with all my heart and soul. I want nothing more than to marry you, to say to the world you are mine and I am yours. To wear your ring on my finger and for you to wear mine on yours. I want you to know you are everything I have ever dreamed about and I’ll die loving you.”

The words make love swell in Hank’s chest. He chuckles in disbelief, resting his forehead against Sean’s. “It’s a good thing you didn’t say that in front of everything, I think Rodriguez would have swooned.”

Sean smiles.

Hank searches his face, trying to memorize every inch of it. “I love you, too. More than I thought possible, you know? I wasn’t expecting you, I admit I never saw you coming. But I can tell you, I have never been prouder to say someone is mine. I’ve done the whole marriage thing before, more than once.”

“Hank—”

“No, let me finish.”

Sean nods.
“I’ve thought I knew what it was to be in love before but what I feel for you is like nothing I’ve felt before. I’m glad we don’t have to hide our relationship anymore, I’m proud to be with you.”

“I’m so happy to hear that, Pet.”

Hank takes Sean’s hand in his, picturing matching rings circling their fingers. “I never thought I’d get married again.”

Sean gently brushes his thumb over Hank’s skin. “For the last time, Pet. You said yes, I can’t bear to let you go now.”

Hank smiles. “Good.”

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“So, Nick.”

Suspicious of Rodriguez’s tone, he says carefully, “Yeah?”

“When are you and your guy getting hitched?”

“Ah...” Nick’s eyes dart to Monroe’s and away.

Franco elbows Rodriguez before she can make it worse.

Monroe walks over to Nick, tucking him close to his side. “We’ll get married when the time is right, Rodriguez.” Besides, he and Nick are mated, which makes them married in the eyes of Blutbaden.

A sly look on her face, she asks, “Are you sure there’s nothing you’d like to ask Nick?”

“If you are waiting for me to propose like Sean did, you better get used to waiting. It will not happen.” The things he’ll say to Nick when he proposes aren’t for the ears of Kehrseite. He turns to Nick, hoping to find understanding in his eyes. Instead, he finds relief. His Nicky doesn’t want a public proposal any more than he does.

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Thirty minutes earlier:

With the main level bathroom occupied, Drew goes upstairs. Remembering where the bathroom was from the tour, he pushes open the correct door. Shocked to his core at what he sees, Drew stops dead. Mouth gaping open unattractively he cannot tear his eyes away from the sight in front of him: his captain on his knees in front of Hank, getting his face fucked while he jacks himself. Very enthusiastically, in fact. *What the fuck?* Apparently, the captain’s mouth feels quite good if the vulgar moans coming from Hank are any way to judge. If either man opened their eyes, they’d catch him frozen in the doorway. The frantic movements from them both helps Drew kick-start his body into action before he has to watch them both cum. He quietly backs out and shuts the door. He stares at the wood, blinking as he tries to process what he just saw. Taking a rather shaky breath, he starts down the hall. *What the hell am I going to do when I see them?* The images are burned into his brain and he knows the moment he sees either man, they are going to flash before his eyes. Turning the corner, Drew crashes into a hard body. He bounces back, stumbling. Strong hands reach out to steady him.

“Steady now.”
Drew feels anything but steady.

“Are you alright?”

He glances up, shock still making him feel shaky and nervous. His normal, confident sarcastic self is nowhere to be found. “What? Oh, yeah. I-I’m fine.” Drew racks his brain trying to remember the man’s name. Nothing comes to mind, all he knows is the man is married to Monroe’s brother. *A city. He’s named after a city.* Drew thinks hard. *Austin.* “I’m fine, Austin.”

“You’re Wu, right?”

“That’s me,” Drew says. He is too shaken to say it with his usual dryness. Realizing Austin still has his hands on his arms to keep him steady, Drew attempts to take a step back. Instead of releasing him, Austin steps forward. Drew instinctively steps back with Austin following until his back meets a wall. He swallows nervously, the look in Austin’s eyes is disconcerting. Before he can say anything, Austin leans forwards and breathes in deeply. *What the fuck?*

Austin leans back and their eyes meet. “Mate.”

“Uh,” Drew says with an awkward laugh. “I think you’ve had a little too much to drink. Let’s go find your husband before you do something—” He is cut off abruptly when Austin kisses him, a possessive, demanding kiss. Drew has a second to doubt before a wave of pure desire washes over him. Fire instantaneously spreads through his body and he has no chance at resisting. He doesn’t want to resist. Austin shoves his tongue in his mouth and Drew welcomes it. A kiss has never affected him like this before.

“Austin!” The sharp yell tears through the roaring in his ears and Drew opens eyes he didn’t realize he closed to find Austin’s husband behind them. Guilt and shock well up at the sight of Cameron staring at them. Austin pecks his slack lips once more before turning to address his husband.

“Cameron—”

“What is going on, Austin?” Cameron half asks half demands.

Austin reaches out and tugs Cameron forward. “Smell him.”

“What?”

“Do it,” Austin orders.

Hoping to escape while they are busy, Drew attempts to slide to the side. Austin’s head snaps around.

“Do not move.”

Drew freezes, a strange compulsion keeping him still. He can’t move when Austin guides Cameron toward him. Nerves flutter in his stomach as Cameron leans close and breathes in his scent. A ball of heat burns in his stomach as Cameron moans. *What the fuck is going on?* Drew seems to have no control over his body’s reactions. Austin whispers something in Cameron’s ear but it’s too quiet for him to hear. It becomes obvious when Cameron grabs his face, turning it toward him, and kisses him. It’s nothing like Austin’s. Austin took, Cameron’s kiss is a surrender, an invitation. Drew shoves his confusion and doubt aside and dives forward, taking control of the kiss. He flips them, pressing Cameron against the wall. The surrender in his body goes straight to Drew’s cock. A second later, he feels Austin’s body pressed against his back. Drew is overwhelmed being sandwiched between the two men. His mind is focused on two things: fucking and getting fucked. From the erections poking
at him from either side, the other men are thinking similar thoughts.

As if reading his mind, Austin ushers them both into the guest bedroom. “I want you both naked by the time I get back.”

“Yes, Alpha,” Cameron says obediently.

The lust haze lifts a bit at the response. *Alpha? What kind of kinky shit am I getting involved in?* The door shuts behind Austin. Drew glances over at Cameron, he’s flushed and the bulge in his pants makes it obvious why. “Um, Cameron. I don’t know what’s going on but I should g—” Cameron sucking on his neck wipes every thought from his mind.

“You were saying something?” Cameron asks innocently.

Drew shakes his head, denying easily, “I wasn’t saying anything.”

“That’s what I thought.” Cameron nibbles his way up Drew’s neck to his ear. “Alpha gave us an order. We shouldn’t disappoint him.” He starts unbuttoning Drew’s shirt. Spreading it open, Cameron eagerly lays his hands over Drew’s chest and groans. He moves his hands over his skin. “Oh, yes. I can’t wait to feel this against my skin.” Cameron’s eager fingers quickly divest him of his pants and underwear until Drew is naked in front of him. He licks his lips, staring at Drew’s cock. Cameron grabs him, stroking him slowly. “I need this inside me.”

“I thought I told you both to be naked,” Austin scolds. He eyes Drew up and down, his gaze lingering on Cameron’s hand on Drew’s cock. “Seems you got distracted, Sub.”

Cameron’s fist tightens briefly then releases. He hangs his head. “Yes, Alpha.”

Austin circles them, his fingers trailing over Drew’s bare skin. “Such a beautiful distraction.”

Drew shudders, feeling Austin’s long, slim fingers move slowly over one buttock then lingers over his crease and then moves across the other cheek.

“Strip, Sub.”

Cameron scrambles, nearly tearing off his clothes in his eagerness. Austin chuckles, slowly taking off his own clothing and setting them aside. “On the bed on your knees, Love.” Cameron moves into place.

Drew stares at him, the way he’s positioned is almost as if he is presenting his ass for him. He yelps at the surprising slap on his ass. He didn’t notice Austin moving behind him.

“Beautiful, isn’t he?”

“Y-Yes.” Drew has no fucking idea how he got here, naked and aroused with two equally naked and aroused married men.

“I want you to fuck him.”

Drew’s neck cranks to the side to meet Austin’s eyes. “What?”

Austin’s eyes are amused. “You heard me. Why else do you think we’re all naked?”

He wants to say something sarcastic but his mind is blank.

“What is your first name by the
Laughing at the absurdity of the situation, he answers, “Drew.”

“Drew,” Austin says as if tasting it on his tongue. “I like it.”

“So do my parents,” he says.

Austin smirks at his dry tone. “You’re going to make things very interesting. I look forward to it.”

Drew wonders what that’s supposed to mean. *We’re going to fuck and then whatever this craziness is, it’s going to be over...right?*

An eager whimper catches their attention and both look at Cameron. “He’s getting restless. He needs you, Drew.”

“Please,” Cameron begs.

As if the sweet neediness in his voice wasn’t enough, Cameron wiggles his butt enticingly. Drew climbs onto the bed behind him. His hand moves soothingly down his bare back and over his ass.

Cameron pushes against his hand and pleads, “Please. Need you.”

Drew brushes his thumb against Cameron’s hole, shocked to find it slick. He glances back at Austin questioningly. Austin shrugs and grins. Drew pushes a single finger inside with a groan. Cameron is hot, slick, and tight, his hole eager and welcoming in a way he’s never experienced. In no time, he’s stretched and ready. Drew moves into position behind him and slowly pushes in. His eyes flutter shut as Cameron’s muscles clench around him. It’s almost too good and Drew can barely remember to breathe.

“Move.”

*Yes!* Drew grabs Cameron’s hips and starts to move. He barely notices Austin climb on the bed behind him, too focused on the man in front of him. Cameron’s needy sounds are incredibly arousing and Drew could fuck him forever as long as he those sounds ring in his ears. A strong hand plants on his back, guiding him to lean over Cameron’s back. Drew gets comfortable, shifting his weight onto his hands and continues to move in more subtle thrusts. He probably should be more concerned with what Austin is doing but Cameron’s heat is too perfect to care. Austin stills him with hands on his hips and it takes everything within him to obey, instead of resisting. Drew presses tight inside of Cameron, sighing at how fucking perfect it feels to be buried deep inside the man. It’s almost as if Cameron should be his. Distracted by Cameron squeezing around him, Drew is startled with a slick finger presses into him. Groaning, he leans heavily on Cameron; he’s always been an equal opportunity type of guy. Drew loves getting fucked as much as he loves fucking; he won’t protest getting to do both at once. Desperate for more, he rocks back into the finger.

“So eager,” Austin says with a chuckle. He pushes Drew forward, holding him tight inside of Cameron, and adds another finger.

Impatient, Drew shoves back, starting a nice rhythm. Cameron moans, moving with it, showing he’s as eager as Drew is. Austin seems happy to permit it for a time.

“Enough.”

Drew straightens off Cameron’s back as Austin moves behind him. He grunts as his hole stretches around Austin. Even with the ache, it’s blissful to be between these two men. Having Austin inside
him feels just as right as it does to be inside of Cameron. What it is about these men, Drew has no idea but he isn’t about to fight it.

Austin gives him a minute to adjust before he starts moving. From the start, it’s clear he is the one in charge of the rhythm. They move together effortlessly as if they’ve been doing this for years.

“Close,” Cameron warns.

Austin fucks Drew harder, shoving him into Cameron. Cameron falls to his elbows, bracing himself under the assault. It takes little time before he cums with a cry, Drew’s grip on his hips the only thing holding his ass up. Drew lasts only a few more thrusts as Cameron flexes around him before he cums deep inside him. Austin pulls out, flopping on his back beside Cameron. He guides Drew on top of him. “Ride me.”

Still coming down from his orgasm, Drew is sluggish as he follows Austin’s demands. With Austin’s help, he sinks onto his cock. He braces himself on Austin’s chest and starts to move. Drew lets the sight of Austin and Cameron sharing kisses drive his hips on. Austin soon grabs his hips and slams up until he fills Drew with his cum.

Drew sags forward onto Austin, yelping at the strange pain he feels at the movement. Again, he tries to move off Austin but feels an odd painful tugging sensation. Austin’s hands go to his hips to keep him still. “Stop.” He carefully maneuvers them into a comfortable position.

“What is that?” Drew asks sleepily.

Snuggling against them, Cameron trails his fingers down Drew’s back to the place where the two men are connected. “It’s his knot.”

“Whatssat?” Completely drained, Drew slips into dreamland before he gets an answer.

Cameron and Austin don’t speak. Both focused on their new mate, petting him with soothing strokes across his bare skin. When Austin’s knot goes down, he turns to Cameron. “Help me with him, Love.” Together, they carefully roll Drew onto his back. Austin uses his undershirt to clean himself, then pulls on his pants and shirt. “Be right back.” He returns with a wet washcloth in hand. Austin cleans Cameron and then Drew. He strips again and climbs back into the bed. Cameron and Austin snuggle tightly against Drew. They both marvel at the beautiful man between them; their new mate.

“This is what Monroe has been talking about,” Cameron says, tracing Drew’s facial features lightly with his finger.

Austin answers simply, “Yes.” Blutbaden do not have two mates; triads do not exist in their world. For other Wesen, yes, but not Blutbaden. Mates means one Alpha and one Submissive. Drew is neither and both at the same time. He shouldn’t fit but he does. He is theirs. “He is ours, now.”

“Ours,” Cameron repeats. “The children are going to love him.”

“Yes, they will.” Leaning over Drew, Austin kisses Cameron. “Sleep now, Love.”

Cameron snuggles closer, enjoying the warmth of his mates and falls asleep.

Austin stays awake, watching over his mates. The road ahead will not be easy. Drew Wu will be thrust into a world he never knew existed. He has faith his newest mate’s mind will be able to endure the shock. Working out the details of incorporating Drew into their lives will be complicated but worth it. Austin looks down at Cameron’s peaceful, sleeping face. *First things first, we need to complete our bond. Drew will need to be marked.*
Austin smiles, a thought flashing in his mind. *Our family may be expanding rather rapidly. I wonder how long it will take for Cameron to go into heat?* The best way for a Sub to solidify a bond is by bearing a pup.

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

_Forty-five minutes earlier:_

Theresa retreats to outside, escaping the watchful eyes of Monroe’s brother-in-laws and Wu’s ever suspicious glaring. With luck, she’ll come back to a Wu-free room. The man has known from the moment Nick brought her along that they were lying about who she was. Wu never stops watching her, hoping for the evidence to prove his suspicions correct. *Practically crawling up my ass to get it. Shit, dude would follow me to the shitter and watch me piss if I had a dick like him.*

“Hello, Trubel.”

Theresa jerks at the greeting, ready for a fight. *Fuck!* She relaxes at the sight of Zuri. “You need to stop doing that.”

Zuri inclines her head. “I apologize.”

“How the fuck do you do that, anyway?”

Her only answer is a mysterious smile.

Theresa has excellent instincts, she had to in order to survive but she never senses Zuri. Ever. No one does. Not even Nick or Monroe.

“Not enjoying the party?”

Slouching against the house, she answers, “Not my thing.” She shrugs. “They are Nick and Monroe’s friends, not mine.”

“Some of them are,” Zuri states.

Theresa cannot deny that. Before Nick, she didn’t have any friends. Now, she has friends she can trust with her life. “I know.” Friends aren’t all she has either. Because of Nick and Monroe, she has a place to live, food to eat, and purpose. She knows who and what she is as well as who and what have been after her since she was a child. Theresa knows how to better protect herself from Wesen because of the training and education she has received. She owes Nick and Monroe everything, too much to repay in a lifetime. “Great friends.”

“They are special men,” she says, “in many ways.” Zuri smiles at Theresa’s surprise. “They are like no other in either world. As their children will be.”

Her mind hasn’t completely accepted Nick’s pregnancy. Seeing him in the mornings or after they come home from work still blanks out her brain before she can jolt it into accepting what she’s seeing. Give her a woge and she won’t blink but Nick’s growing belly freezes her on the spot. “I guess they will be.” Theresa hasn’t spent any time thinking about Nick and Monroe’s coming brood. It’s time she does. *Judging from how Nick’s stomach is growing, they’ll be here before I know it. Holy shit.* What a terrifying thought. *I don’t know anything about children and soon I’ll be living in the same house as three, THREE, infants.* Theresa rubs her forehead. Maybe she should start thinking about finding her own place. *With what money?*

“We all need to remain vigilant.”
Startled out of her thoughts by the somber statement, Theresa questions, “What? Is someone targeting Nick and Monroe?” She scans the area, searching for threats.

“No that I am aware of yet. We’ve been lucky, Nick’s pregnancy has received little attention. That luck will not continue forever.”

Sobering, Theresa vows silently to do anything necessary to ensure her friends and their coming babies remain safe. “No, it won’t.” One look at Zuri’s determined expression tells her Zuri is anticipating trouble and lots of it.

“The Guardians and I will keep them safe.”

The confidence in her voice should be reassuring and it is to a certain extent. A small ball of worry weighs heavy in her belly. *Is it possible to keep them safe from every threat?* Theresa fears it isn’t but she won’t admit that to Zuri. Instead, she fakes a smile. “Of course you will. We all will.” Theresa jabs a finger at the house. “I guess I better get back inside. Wu’s probably back from wherever he went, he’ll want to glare at me some more.”

Zuri snickers. “Yes, I imagine Sergeant Wu would.”

“He has it out for me.”

“Sergeant Wu has good instincts. He knows you are hiding something, although he doesn’t know what.”

“Maybe he does but the constant accusing glare gets old. Add in Monroe’s brother-in-laws and you can see why I needed to escape for a while.”

“They are Blutbaden. You are a Grimm. It’s natural for them to be cautious, especially when it concerns their mates’ safety.”

“I have as much right as they do to be cautious, am I watching them like a hawk? No.”

Zuri lifts a shoulder in a shrug. “Perhaps not but neither do you have a mate you feel biologically responsible to protect with your life.”

Theresa rubs her forehead wearily. Seeing how protective Monroe is over Nick, she gets it. They are following their instincts; letting her near their mates showed a level of trust she hasn’t earned yet. She doesn’t have to like it though. “Are you aware of how annoyingly rational you can be while proving your point.”

Zuri’s lip twitches. “I have been informed of that fact before.”

Curious, Theresa asks, “Do Eisbär Wächter have mates?” The Wesen she has studied all have mates of some form. Some are chosen for them through the senses like Blutbaden, while others choose their mates.

“Indeed, we do; we choose our own mate or mates. Although those of us who serve as Guardians very rarely choose a mate. We live to serve and protect our charges; intimate love is not often a priority or a possibility for us.”

Wondering at the carefully emotionless tone, Theresa asks, “Is that how you feel? Personally, I mean?” Although Zuri does not break eye contact or flinch at the question, Theresa senses it has hit a nerve.
“My heart is for my charges.”

“There is only room for them, then?”

“Are you propositioning me, Theresa?”

Smirking, she explains, “If I was, you’d know it.” Zuri is beautiful but Theresa doesn’t see her in a sexual manner. *Which is too bad,* she eyes her up, *I bet she’d be very...intense.*

Zuri quirks a brow at the contradiction between Theresa’s words and her appreciative eyes.

“Don’t get me wrong, you are hot. But I don’t feel that way about you and you don’t feel that way about me.”

“Don’t I?”

Theresa gives her a dead-eyed look. “I was a teenage girl living on the streets. I learned quickly how to spot when people, male or female, wanted to get into my pants; many of them weren’t concerned about having my consent.” The look they share is telling. Zuri knows what she’s talking about from some personal experience in her past. Theresa survived the streets without anyone succeeding, although a couple of times were frighteningly close, she wonders if Zuri was as lucky. Hesitant to pry, Theresa tries to figure out how to ask without Zuri taking offense.

Zuri sees something in her face and closes down. Theresa senses the change more than she sees it. The air around them turns cold, the feeling of comfortable camaraderie is gone. The subject is clearly not one Zuri is willing to discuss. Zuri is far more guarded than Theresa has ever been and that is saying a lot. *What happened to her?* She may never find out, Zuri is like an impenetrable vault about her personal life and past. Zuri trusts professionally but not personally. Theresa wonders if the woman trusts anyone with her secrets; it’s a question to be answered another day. They’re survivors, life has tried to beat them down. Earning Zuri’s trust will take time and patience, just as it does to earn hers.

“I better get back to the party.”

Zuri bows respectfully. “Enjoy yourself, Trubel. Try not to live up to your name,” she says with a wink.

“I’ll do my best,” she says dryly.

Thoughts focused on Zuri, Theresa enters the house and turns the corner, only to slam into someone. The person bounces back and tumbles onto the floor with an oomph. “Shit! Are you alright?”

Theresa scrambles over to help but she freezes as the woman looks up. Every thought disappears from her mind at the sight of warm brown eyes.

The woman smiles sheepishly. “I’m fine, just a little embarrassed is all.”

Theresa swallows harshly, trying to force down the lump in her throat. “No, it’s my fault. I wasn’t looking where I was going.” She helps her to her feet. The woman is more than beautiful, she exudes a warm sweetness. Theresa thrusts out her hand. “I’m Trub—Theresa.”

The woman doesn’t comment on her stumbling over her name. Instead, she smiles warmly. “Nice to meet you, Theresa. I’m Rosalee.”

Recognition sparks. “From the spice shop. Nick got his...medication from you.” Theresa watches Rosalee’s eyes sharpen at the proclamation.
“You know about his...condition?” Rosalee questions delicately.

“I do.” Theresa guides Rosalee outside, where they should have more privacy. Rosalee allows herself to be led with cautious compliance. “I’m living with Nick and Monroe. Nick’s training me.”

Startled at realizing who Theresa is, Rosalee woges and backs away. “Grimm.”

Stomach twisting at the shock and fear in her eyes even as Rosalee snarls in warning at her, Theresa slowly puts her hands up. “I won’t hurt you, I promise. You know Nick would never allow me here unless he trusted me, neither would Monroe or the Guardians. None of them would risk the pups’ safety.”

With the loosening tension in Rosalee’s body, Theresa knows she has gotten through to the Fuchsbau.

“Instinct,” Rosalee explains without apology and woges back.

Theresa barely stifles the disappointed sigh as the adorable fox-like face disappears. Despite being snarling at the whole time Rosalee had been woged, she can’t help but notice how cute the pointed tips of her ears peeking out of her hair were. Or her adorable little brown nose surrounded by all the white fur. *Strange. I’ve never thought a Wesen woged face was cute before.* She realizes she’s been staring blankly at Rosalee for an uncomfortable amount of time. The blush sprinkling over Rosalee’s caramel skin sends a rush of pleasure through her veins. “Would you like to have dinner with me?”

“What?”

Suppressing a wicked smirk at Rosalee’s shock, Theresa repeats, “Dinner.”

Rosalee blinks.

Her lips form a smirk. “As in a date, Rosalee. With me.”

“Oh, um,” Rosalee giggles uncomfortably, a pretty blush spreading over her cheeks.

*So. Fucking. Adorable.*

“Okay.”

Her smirk turns into a grin. “Wonderful.”

Rosalee nibbles on her lip, her nervousness causing a touch of fang to bleed through. “I could make dinner,” she shrugs, attempting nonchalance, “if you’d like.”

Getting to know Rosalee without anyone else around? *Yes, please!* she thinks. “I would be honored, sweet Rosalee.” The blush darkens at the term of endearment. Wanting to see more, Theresa goes with her instinct and takes her hand, bowing over to kiss it. Sweetness and chivalry aren’t usually her thing but to see how Rosalee reacts to it? *Worth it!*

Rosalee takes out her phone, checking her schedule. “Would next Friday be okay?”

Theresa doesn’t bother to check. Nothing is more important than a date with Rosalee. “Absolutely.”

As they are trading numbers, Nick pops in. “Oh, hey. Have either of you seen Wu?”

“I went outside to get away from his constant glaring, so it’s been awhile since I’ve seen him,”
Theresa admits.

“Sergeant Wu doesn’t like you?”

Theresa shrugs carelessly. “He doesn’t know the real reason I’m shadowing Nick and doesn’t believe the reason we told him. Wu watches me, waiting for anything that will give him an edge.”

“Oh, I see how that would cause problems between the pair of you,” Rosalee says tactfully. She turns to Nick. “I thought I saw him going upstairs as I left the room. Perhaps he’s still up there?”

Theresa and Nick trade a worried look. If Wu had gone snooping in her room and found the Grimm books, there will be trouble.

“Please excuse us, Rosalee,” Nick says politely and rushes off.

Calling out as she follows Nick, Theresa says, “I can’t wait for Friday!” She gets a brief glimpse of pink on Rosalee’s cheeks before she loses sight of her.

Carefully weaving through his guests, Nick rushes up the stairs. “You wanna tell me what that was with Rosalee?” Nick whispers.

“We’re going on a date.”

Stunned, Nick stops in his tracks for a moment. Then remembering the shit storm they’ll have to deal with if Wu finds Grimm books in Trubel’s room, he shakes off his shock and gets moving. “You are aware she’s Wesen.”

Trubel sends him a patronizing look. “Of course. And she’s fucking adorable. Have you see her woge?”

Nick doesn’t know what the hell is happening anymore. “You think she’s adorable woged?”

“Yes.” Theresa smiles, remembering the soft-looking fur covering Rosalee’s face.

“That’s new…” Nick doesn’t know what else to say.

“Do you disapprove or something, Nick? Because she’s Wesen and I’m a Grimm? Isn’t that a little hypocritical?”

Nick stops Trubel. “That’s not it; I was just surprised. Rosalee is wonderful and I hope you can make each other happy.” At Trubel’s nod of acknowledgment, they turn their focus back to their mission. They barge into her room, expecting to find Wu with a book in hand and a stunned look on his face. Instead, the room is empty and appears untouched.

Trubel heads toward her bedside table and checks the books. She looks around the room critically for signs. “Nothing’s been touched in here. He hasn’t been in here.” If he had found her room, she doubts he’d have been careful enough to be able to leave it looking untouched. Not with how much he wants to confirm his suspicions. If he’d seen the books, there would be evidence. Seeing the Wesen drawings would have an effect on any Human, even a seasoned cop. “He wasn’t here.” She hides the books under her pillows, no sense in tempting fate.

“No, he wasn’t.” Maybe Wu didn’t go snooping after all? “Where did he go, then?”

“You’d know better than me. Still want to look for him? I mean, if there’s no risk that he’ll stumble
on something Wesen-related...” Trubel trails off with a shrug. She’s been his target since day one, if
he hasn’t searched her room, she figures no harm can be done. “He’ll show up sooner or later,
right?” She isn’t too concerned with Wu’s mysterious disappearance. How much trouble can he get
into?

“It isn’t like him to disappear at a party.” Nick can’t help but be nervous. Since he became a Grimm,
he’s learned to be suspicious of unexpected behavior. “I’m going to look for him, just in case.” In
case of what, he doesn’t know.

Trubel rolls her eyes. “Fine.”

“You don’t have to help, you know.”

“You have a feeling something is up, don’t you?”

“Maybe.”

“I trust your instincts. Let’s get this over with.”

Door by door, they systematically search. Reaching the guest room, Nick opens the door expecting it
to be empty. It’s not. His eyes nearly bug out of their sockets. What. The. Hell. He stands frozen,
shocked at the sight in front of him. Nick feels Trubel moving to his side.

“Nick?” Glimpsing something in the corner of her eye, she turns toward the open door. “OH MY
GOD!”

Austin is awakened by the exclamation, his eyes feral red as he stares at the two Grimms.

“Uh,” Nick stutters dumbly. Finding Monroe’s brother and brother-in-law in bed with Wu, all bare-
chested and presumably naked under the covers, is something he never expected in a billion years.

“Leave.”

Nick nods numbly, shutting the door. He avoids Trubel’s eyes as she does the same to him.

Drawing out the word, Trubel says, “Okay.”

“Yeah.”

Trubel rubs her eyes. “Care to explain what that was to me?”

“I literally have no idea. I know what it looked like.”

“It looked like they fucked each other.”

Nick clears his throat, wracking his brain for another explanation. Any explanation but he draws a
blank. “Yeah.”

“I thought Blutbaden only fuck their mates.”

“I was under that same impression,” Nick admits, leading Trubel away from the door. He cannot
fathom Roe sharing him with anyone, under any circumstances.

Needing to separate from what he saw and the resulting confusion, Nick states, “We’ll figure it out
later. After the party.”
Trubel shrugs, “Whatever you say, Nick. I’m not sure I even want to know.”

“Yeah, me neither.” Nick mumbles. Unfortunately, he’s afraid he is going to have to find out anyway. *What is Roe going to say?*

“Not so worried about me and Rosalee anymore, are you?” Trubel says wryly as they walk down the stairs.

“Honestly, finding you and Rosalee together would have been far less shocking. At least neither of you are already mated.” Nick shakes his head. “I really didn’t need to deal with this today.”

Trubel elbows him playfully. “Hey, it could be worse. You could have had to deal with a brawl, Wesen and Humans and us.”

“Thank you so very much, Trubel.”

She rolls her eyes. “Such sarcasm.”

Seeing his guests, Nick fakes a smile. “Leave it alone. We do not need to make this mess bigger by dragging it out in front of the Kehrseite.”

“You got it, Nick.” Trubel makes a beeline for Rosalee. With his extraordinary hearing, he can hear their conversation.

“Did you find Sergeant Wu?”

Trubel glances in his direction before answering, “We found him, alright.”

“He’s okay?”

“Looked more than okay.”

Nick tunes them out, remembering how relaxed and careful Wu had looked sleeping between the two Blutbaden.

Suddenly, he feels Roe at his side. His mate kisses him on the temple and wraps an arm around him casually. “Everything okay, Love?”

Glancing upstairs, Nick admits cryptically, “Something eventful occurred, however, it’s best left for after our guests leave.”

Roe scans him critically. “Everyone is...unharmed?”

“Yes, no worries on that front.”

“Later, then.”

Nick is grateful to push the Wu situation away and re-focus on his guests.

Waving as the last guest leaves, Nick sags against Roe. “You are not going to believe what Trubel and I saw. Hell, I still don’t believe it.”

Monroe’s brow crinkles in confusion. “What did you see?”
An image of the three men in bed flashes in his mind. “I found Wu, naked, asleep between Austin and Cameron.”

Monroe chokes on the air, coughing harshly. “What?” he croaks.

Nick looks at him with sympathy. “Yeah, my thought exactly. I thought Blutbaden could only sleep with their mates, once they found them.”

“Mated Blutbaden do not sleep with anyone but their mate, it just doesn’t happen.”

“How do you explain it then because I’d love another explanation.”

Monroe opens his mouth to answer, then stops and slumps with confused weariness. “I can’t.” He leads Nick into the living room to sit. Needing the comfort, he pulls his pregnant mate onto his lap.

Stroking Wynn arm lightly, Evan asks, “Is there a problem, Monroe?’’

He glances over at his brother-in-law, pondering how to bring up what Nick and Trubel saw.

From Evan’s lap, Wynn questions, “Does it have to do with Cameron and Austin’s disappearance? We haven’t seen them in quite a long time; they haven’t left as their vehicle is still here.” Concern flashes on her face. “We thought they simply sneaked off for some alone time, which is why we didn’t go looking for them. Has something happened to them?”

Before his sister can work herself up further, Monroe reassures her, “They are physically fine.”

“But not emotionally?”

Monroe looks over to Nick, who shrugs. “They looked fine to me.”

“We are fine,” Austin announces from the stairs.

Everyone turns to watch as the men descend; Cameron is in front, the other two are behind him. Austin has a possessive hand on Wu’s lower back, for whose benefit is unclear. While Wu is walking under his own power, there is reluctance in his step. He’s clearly confused and maybe even a bit petulant at being paraded in front of them.

Drew doesn’t need to look to know every eye has turned toward them. Panic trickles down his spine.

“What the fuck am I doing?” Drew mentally shakes his head. “Doesn’t matter. All I need to do is walk down these stairs and leave.” Ignore everyone and flee. Once outside, he can pretend all of it was a dream. Simple.

All thoughts of fleeing and forgetting are obliterated, as is the panic skittering under his skin, the moment Austin presses a hand to his lower back. *What is going on? How can the touch of a guy I just met—and slept with—make it feel like everything will turn out?* Nothing makes sense. Not what he’s done, not how he reacts to Austin or to Cameron for that matter. He should run away screaming, not passively accepting the inexplicable need to stay with Austin and Cameron, which only furthers his annoyance.

Drew cannot explain his own behavior from the moment Austin kissed him. As to Austin and Cameron’s behavior, he can only speculate they enjoy inviting a third into their bed occasionally, *or maybe frequently, I don’t know them well enough to judge.* Something deep down scoffs at the thought that he’s simply one in a string of men that have graced Austin and Cameron’s bed. As if he
should know he is more than a random lover to them. *Which doesn’t make any sense! None of it does.* Drew lets out a barely audible sigh; he’s never been more confused, neither have his instincts spoken as clearly or strongly to him before. If he could ignore his instincts telling him to stay, to remain with Austin and Cameron, he’d be gone in a second. But he can’t. Austin’s hand on his back only serves to reaffirm his instincts, making contentment spread through him. Drew hates having to face a room full of people feeling as confused as he is. Irritation flares but contentment from Austin’s touch quickly drowns it out. At least Nick is the only one who knows him. The others are Austin and Cameron’s problem.

Before he knows it, he is sandwiched between the two men. Drew crosses his arms defensively and does his best to avoid Nick’s eyes. Austin and Cameron’s heat soaks through his clothing and he has to fight against the urge to relax. The contentment he felt before increases tenfold, almost like something inside him has been waiting for them and a piece of him is unfurling like a flower to the sunlight. *This is insane! I need to leave.* His instincts scream at him not to. *Get up and leave!* But he can’t, his body remains unresponsive to his demand. Cursing mentally, he tries, again and again, to get his body to respond but it won’t. Why, he doesn’t know. All he knows is he can’t leave.

Drew should be panicking about his sudden lack of body control but his body is utterly comfortable. His mind is panicking more about not panicking. With a lack of subtly, Cameron guides his arms out of their crossed position and brings Drew’s hand to rest inappropriately high on his thigh. He knows he should move his hand, provided his hand obeyed him, but the solid feeling of Cameron’s thigh under his fingertips gives him a strange possessive satisfaction. Everyone must still be looking at them in silence but Drew is distracted. The memory of pushing inside Cameron plays in his mind and without thought, his fingers grip his thigh tightly. Drew closes his eyes as the images flash, fighting to keep his arousal from being noticed. The way Cameron presses harder against his side and opens his legs slightly makes it clear he’s failed. Austin, too, presses closer, his arm stretches over the back of the couch behind Drew and Cameron. He glances over and Austin glances down at his hand on Cameron’s thigh, then shoots him a sultry smile blatantly promising they’ll be fucking again and soon. He doesn’t dare meet anyone else’s eyes, fearing they had sensed all the sexual tension between them.

“Great party, Nick. Sorry about Sean stealing the spotlight with the propos—” Hank stops abruptly, sensing the strained atmosphere in the room. “Uh, we can head out if you want.”

Drew feels Hank’s curious eyes analyzing his position on the couch, his absolutely inappropriate hand on Cameron’s thigh, Austin’s shamelessly possessive arm resting on his and Cameron’s shoulders, and the physical closeness between the three of them. Normally, a sarcastic quip would roll off his tongue at a time like this but Drew’s mind is blank. Confusion and embarrassingly enough, lust, have taken over. Drew would give almost anything for an answer to why he’s feeling like he is. Why he uncharacteristically jumped into bed with a married couple. Why he feels drawn to the two men with an intensity he’s never come close to experiencing before. Why if they were alone, he’d let Austin rip his clothes off while he did the same to Cameron’s and gladly fuck.

He finally looks up from the floor and tries not to picture Hank fucking Renard’s mouth. *What the fuck is going on?* From the easy and possessive way Renard has his arm around Hank, they share more than a one-time blowjob in the bathroom. It’s more than that, much more from how comfortable they both look at being intimately close. *What is happening?! Captain Renard and Hank are dating now?* Drew pinches the bridge of his nose. He doesn’t know how to process...anything.

Austin waves off the offer. “Stay. Your presence would be appreciated.”

Drew turns sharply to Austin, surprised by his answer. Frustratingly, he doesn’t acknowledge
Drew’s look. *Just what I need, another colleague and my boss to witness my private business being put out in the open. What we are even doing here? We f*cked. So what. It was consensual, extremely consensual* He smirks in memory. *And probably the best sex of my life. How is that anyone’s business?*

“Okay,” Hank says with confusion, dragging out the word. He takes a seat and waits for an explanation. Sean stares critically at the three men on the couch. Although suspicion is clear on his face, he says nothing as he sits next to Hank.

Out of the corner of his eye, Drew watches Nick’s friend, Zuri, slink into the room and hovers protectively behind Nick and Monroe as if she’s expecting an attack. He narrows his eyes at her suspiciously. There’s something off with her. Zuri never relaxes, *ex-military, maybe?* He doesn’t know the reason for her hyper-vigilance, which makes him all the more suspicious of her. Nick trusts her, though. *Nick also trusts Theresa Rubel and I seem to be the only one who realizes what a mistake that is. What is going on with him? He used to have good judgment.*

“Want to explain what’s going on, Austin?” Evan asks with a hint of a bite.

Drew turns to glare at the man; family or not, who Cameron and Austin f*ck is none of their business. He seems to be the only one that feels that way though and the tension in the room is palpable.

Austin moves to curl his fingers around Drew’s neck.

The possessive vibe he feels from the hand gripping the back of his neck sends a shiver down his spine. He holds onto Cameron’s thigh tight, knowing both men felt the slight tremor in his body. *Why do they make me so hot?* Distracted by the lust swimming in his veins, he barely hears Austin say, “Drew is our mate.”

The term makes his mouth go dry and his heart freeze for a second before it pounds furiously. The word mate echoes in his mind like a chant even as every pair of shocked eyes train on him. Drew squirms under the attention but stills with Austin’s warning squeeze.

“Follow your instincts, Wu.”

Drew looks up to meet Nick’s eyes and finds knowing sympathy in them. As if he knows what he’s experiencing. Staring in Nick’s understanding gray eyes, Drew rides the rush of emotions warring within.

“It’s going to be okay.”

Torn between relief and panic, Drew turns to the one person he knows and trusts who seems to know what’s happening. “Nick, What the hell is going on?” Cameron lays his hand atop Drew’s and squeezes it comfortably.

Nick’s eyes move to Cameron and then Austin. “You’re both certain?”

Drew feels their eyes on him before they answer together firmly, “Yes.”

Again, the word mate chants repetitively in his mind.

An intimate look passes between Nick and Monroe before he refocuses on Drew. “I know you are confused.”

Drew sends him a ‘no shit’ look.
“Look, I don’t know the right way to explain,” Nick says, dragging his hand through his hair and making it stick up in odd directions.

Weary and confused, all he wants is an explanation. “Just tell me.” Drew waits impatiently for Nick to find the words to explain.

“Okay, listen. This is going to sound insane, just know that every person in this room is aware of what I’m going to tell you. They know it’s true, they believe it. Hell, we all live it. That includes Hank and Sean.”

Nick’s vague warning and reassurance only makes him more confused. “Get on with it, Burkhardt,” Drew barks. He just wants to know what is going on.

“I don’t know how to say this any other way. An entire world exists that most people are completely unaware of. People like you.”

Drew glares at Nick in irritated disgust.

“I’m telling the truth, I told you it’d sound crazy. I wish I could say it won’t get crazier but it will.”

He suddenly is starting to wonder if he’s better off not knowing. Running away from the trouble isn’t normally his M.O., there’s a reason he’s a police sergeant, but warnings are blaring in his head. What Nick will say is going to change everything; Drew can feel it in his bones. And he’s afraid, a feeling which makes him distinctly uncomfortable. *Am I ready to face whatever Nick’s going to say? Willing to leave ignorant bliss behind to gain a new awareness?* Unsure, he suggests, “Maybe this isn’t such a good idea...” Admitting it out loud sends a wave of shame through him; he hates he is allowing his fear to gain the upper hand.

“Drew.”

Closing his eyes at the soft but firm tone, Drew feels compelled to open them a second later to meet Austin’s gaze. He does not understand the effect Austin has on him.

“Secrets have no place in our relationship.”

*Relationship? What relationship?* Drew squeaks, “Relationship?” They slept together one time. Yeah, okay, Drew doesn’t doubt it’ll be happening again. Cameron and Austin have made that exceedingly clear and Drew has little confidence he’ll be able to resist either man. *Since when does having sex suddenly qualify as a relationship? Aren’t we fuck buddies at best?* He is completely thrown by Austin saying they are in a relationship.

“Drew, look at me.” Compelled, he obeys. Austin’s gaze is full of strength and confidence with a hint of compassion. “You are our mate,” Austin states simply as if it says all Drew needs to know.

“I don’t know what that means.” The weight they put upon the word mate is completely foreign to him. It doesn’t mean to him what it seems to mean to them. It’s as if he’s speaking English and they are speaking French.

“This other world is filled with a species collectively called Wesen,” Nick explains. “And they contain numerous subspecies.”

Drew snorts and rolls his eyes. *Sure. Whatever you say.*

Nick soldiers on, ignoring Drew’s disbelief. “One of these Wesen subspecies is called Blutbaden. Like all Wesen, they have two forms. One is the one Humans see, their Human form. It’s the one
Wesen use most often and the only one Kehrseite, people like you who don’t know about the existence of Wesen, see.”

*This is stupid.* Drew looks around the room, expecting to see the same expression on everyone else’s faces. Except none of them do. Not a single person is acting like what Nick is saying is absurd. No one. Drew feels a nervous fluttering in his stomach, one he doesn’t want to examine.

“They change into their second form by woging. This form is more...” Nick pauses before settling on a word, “animalistic.”

It’s too much. “Come on! People that shift into animals? What is this? A fantasy movie? This is ridiculous!” Drew looks around, trying to find someone sane in the room who agrees with him. But mostly he sees compassion or pity. *I’m surrounded by crazy people.*

“Wu, I know it sounds crazy. Hell, I thought it was crazy too when I found out but crazy or not, it’s true. I’ve seen Wesen woge,” Hank says.

*They’re all fucking nuts.*

“He needs to see it like I did. Words are all well and good but it was seeing Sean change that helped me believe what he was telling me.”

*See what?* Drew notices the looks being traded throughout the room. He hates not knowing what everyone else clearly knows.

“But who? It was different with you, you and Sean had time to develop your relationship. It at least prepared you a little,” Nick tells Hank, then glances over at Drew. “Wu doesn’t have that to fall back on. He just met them, there isn’t that level of trust or love yet.”

“I am right here. Don’t talk about me as if I’m not,” Drew growls. Everyone looks at him, except Cameron and Austin, but they continue the conversation without attempting to include him. Not that he has any idea what the fuck they’re talking about.

“But who? The choices here aren’t...great,” Nick says delicately.

“Rosalee,” Monroe suggests. “She’s the least predatory looking.”

Nick looks over at Zuri, who has remained mostly invisible. “Could you find her?”

Zuri inclines her head and goes off.

“Am I going to get some fucking answers or what? If you were trying to get me more confused and pissed off, you’ve succeeded.” Drew rarely loses his temper but he’s reached the end of his rope. Since it’s obvious he can’t leave, the least the others could do is provide an explanation he can comprehend. No more of the vague shit he’s been given.

Nick nods. “I know this isn’t easy and I haven’t explained it well but sometimes seeing is believing. I just hope your mind can handle it.”

The worry evident on his face and in his voice is not helping Drew keep his own worries under control. “This is getting a little too intense. I think I’m going to bow out.” Drew surges to his feet, slipping from Austin and Cameron’s grasps. At last, his body is cooperating. He turns to the two men. “Look, I had fun. It was great but whatever all this,” Drew waves his hands around to indicate the room and conversation, “is, I want nothing to do with it.”
“Don’t leave,” Cameron pleads.

The need in his voice sends a pang through his heart, it hurts despite how ridiculous that is. His heart is screaming at him to stay but his mind is louder. He can’t stay here and listen to any more of this crazy talk. Drew is no way near ready to believe any of the crap Nick is saying. “I’m sorry but I have to.” Cameron’s face crumbles and Drew almost breaks at the sight. Austin’s mouth turns down at the declaration but doesn’t attempt to stop him. Instead, he gathers his broken husband close and attempts to comfort him. Seeing them together, Drew is almost brought to his knees by the yearning to join them. *No! That’s fucking crazy. What I’m feeling isn’t real. It can’t be. It’s too much, too fast to be real.* He turns his back on the two men and walks away. His heart feels like it’s being ripped from his chest but Drew grits his teeth and moves faster.

Once out of sight, he starts sprinting. He climbs on his bike, pulls on his helmet, and revs it up, his tires squeal as he roars off. Driving too fast, Drew flees. From the house. From Cameron and Austin. From his colleagues. But most of all, from the heart he left behind.

No matter how fast he drives, all he can think about is Austin and Cameron. Drew rubs at the ache in his chest, with every mile he puts between them, it seems to grow in intensity. *No. It’s all in my mind. Snap out of it!*

By some miracle, he makes it to his apartment without killing himself or anyone else. Drew jogs up the stairs, not bothering with the elevator. Completely focused on getting into his apartment, he does not register his rather attractive new neighbor trying to greet him. Drew walks right past him as if he was invisible and hurries into his apartment. He heads straight for his liquor and takes out the bottle of Ginebra San Miguel gin his cousin sent him from the Philippines. Opening it, Drew takes a huge swig. His lungs burn and he coughs as the liquor hits him. “Holy fuck! That is awful! Note to self, never drink any liquor George sends again.”

He considers grabbing something—anything—else but choking down the swill might distract him from the ache in his chest just long enough for him to get drunk enough to become numb.

Several gulps later, Drew is feeling deliciously detached. The ache is still there but he’s too drunk to care. He staggers to the couch and drops onto it face down. Swimming through the liquor, he grins into the fabric. If he’s lucky, things will go back to normal tomorrow. He’ll be able to forget about his one-night stand and pretend all the weird shit he can’t explain never happened. Drew’s last thought before he blacks out is, *The best fucking sex of my life. Had to be with two crazy married fuckers.*

Chapter End Notes

If you think of a better title for the chapter, feel free to share. I cannot waste any more time trying to think of a good one.

This chapter is the perfect example of how I plan plot points for future chapters only to throw them out the window. This was not how I intended to reveal Wu and his mates but it’s the way it needed to happen I guess. Hope you enjoyed!

FYI, updates for my stories will likely be even slower. I’m working now and I am only able to write on weekends, providing I don’t have any migraines. So if it’s been a while since I updated, it doesn’t mean I’m not writing. I’m writing as much I can and your patience is greatly appreciated.
“Alpha,” Cameron sobs. Broken and grieving, he’s held tightly in Austin’s lap. “Please, Alpha. I need him.”

Austin clutches his mate tighter, the desperate pleas tearing at his heart. From the corner of his eye, he sees Nick bury his face in Monroe’s chest as if unable to watch Cameron’s heart breaking before his eyes. But nothing can block out the soul-crushing sounds. Austin’s heart is torn in two. Each bleeding half with one of his mates. His wolf rages Fix it!

Nick loses his hold on his emotions and his quiet cries join Cameron’s. Monroe holds him close, murmuring words of comfort.

His wolf whines at the sight of his broken sobbing mess of a Sub in his arms. Mere minutes ago, they were whole. They found the mate they hadn’t known they were missing. As fast as he appeared, Drew vanished, leaving behind a gaping hole nothing but Drew can heal. Cameron, his beautiful, loving Sub, needs their mate beside them. Austin doesn’t want to admit he needs Drew too. His first priority has to be Cameron.

“Please, Alpha. Bring him back,” Cameron pleads.

The plea tears at his battered heart. “I’ll get him back.” He can promise no less. As Cameron’s Alpha, it’s his job to care for him. Cameron needs Drew and if it takes him a lifetime, he will get Cameron what he needs.

“You’re not…”

Austin turns to Hank.

Hesitancy radiating from the man. “You’re not going to go after him, are you?” Austin glares at Hank, who flinches at the hard stare. “Wu hurt you but forcing him to talk about this before he is ready will end in disaster. Wu is a stubborn man and from the way he left, he is in no shape to listen, much less believe anything you say. It doesn’t matter to him how important mates are to Blutbaden. He doesn’t understand and frankly, at this point doesn’t care.”

Monroe adds before Austin can respond, “It isn’t what you want to hear but Hank is right. Wu isn’t ready. Hank is the only Human here, he understands how Wu is feeling more than any of us can. We’re Wesen, Austin, Blutbaden. We love our mates to a depth Humans cannot comprehend unless they are receptive to the bond.”

It’s the last thing Austin wants to hear or accept, allowing Drew to leave without going after him.

Cameron lets out a wounded animal sound, realizing Drew isn’t coming back. The sound makes everyone’s hair to stand on end. All Austin can do is cradle him against his body. Only his need to stay strong for his Sub keeps him from breaking apart himself. Austin stands with his broken mate in his arms. “I am going to take Cameron upstairs.”

“Would you like us to change the sheets first?” Monroe asks gently.

The memory of Drew between them makes his muscles tremble. “No. Our mate’s scent is on those
sheets.” He offers no further explanation. As a fellow Blutbad, Monroe will understand. Drew’s scent will be a temporary fix for their broken hearts.

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

Ignoring the eyes following his entrance, Drew heads for his desk. The longer he can avoid being cornered by Nick, Hank, or Captain, the better.

“You look like shit.”

Drew glares at Franco but his partner is unfazed.

“Where’d ya disappear to at Nick’s party? You missed out on Captain Renard’s big announcement.”

“I left,” Drew lies.

Franco leans close, lowering his voice. “No, you didn’t. Your bike was still parked at Nick’s when I left. What’s going on, Wu?”

If he was going to open up to anyone, it’d be his partner. But Drew is in full-on denial mode. *What happened was just a fluke.* Drew rubs his chest, he barely slept because of the insistent ache in his chest. “I don’t want to talk about it.” He doesn’t want to think about it. *Deny, deny, deny.*

Franco backs off. “Okay, dude. You know I’m here when you’re ready.”

“I know.” He can count on Franco to wait for him. Glancing at the three pairs of eyes on him, Drew knows they won’t. “What’d I miss?”

“Captain proposed to Hank.”

*More than just fucking then.* Drew is a little surprised they are being open about their relationship though. Not about to explain how he knows about them, he fakes shock. “He what? They’re dating? Since when?”

Franco sits on the edge of his desk and looks in Hank’s direction. “Apparently, they’ve been a thing for a while. Get this, though. Mr. Suave proposed without the ring. Just blurted it out.”

“Romantic.”

“No, shit, right? Rodriguez hasn’t stopped laughing about it. Captain’s never living it down, not with her. She demanded to see the ring the instant the pair got in this morning. If Cap had been lying about having a ring at home...” Franco winces.

Drew hums in response. Feeling his partner’s assessing eyes on him, he mentally kicks himself. Too tired to drudge up the energy for one of his usual sarcastic quips, he ignores Franco and checks out his desk.

“Sergeant Wu.”

Drew freezes. *Damn.* Slow with dread, he turns toward the voice. “Yeah, Captain?”

“My office.”

Renard goes back into his office, leaving the door open.

“What is that about?”
Shrugging, Drew lies, “Don’t know.” Tamping down the instinct to flee, he enters Renard’s office and shuts the door. The look in Renard’s eyes reveals his intentions and Drew digs his fingernails into his thighs.

“How are you feeling?”

The concerned tone sets his teeth on edge. Determined not to give an inch, he replies, “Fine, sir.”

Renard sighs at Drew’s closed off answer. “I’m here if you wish to discuss what happened. If you have questions or need someone to talk to.”

His whole being tightens. He wants to forget what happened. The amazing sex and the fucked up shit that happened afterward. All of it.

“Nick or Hank are available as well. They may be able to help; they’ve been in your shoes.”

Rage bubbles under his skin. “I don’t need anything. It’s over and forgotten.” The ache in his chest intensifies, forcing his attention. He rubs over his heart to ease the pain. Drew doesn’t need to look at Renard to sense the pitying look. The ache infuriates him, forcing him to remember when all he wants is to forget. *I. Just. Want. To. Forget!*

“It won’t go away, Drew,” Renards warns in a sympathetic tone. “It will grow stronger over time until you reunite with your mates.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Ignoring it won’t work. It’s the bond urging you to go to your mates. Ask Hank, if you don’t believe me. Like you, he didn’t know what it was or why it was happening. It only disappeared when we got back together and repaired our bond. You aren’t the only one suffering in this. Cameron and Austin feel what you do but more intensely. I am not trying to guilt you into going back, it has to be your choice, but you should understand you are not alone in your suffering.”

Hearing about Austin and Cameron suffering makes his heart twinge before he hardens his resolve. With defiance, Drew growls, “Stop. I don’t want to hear this bullshit. You’re all fucking crazy.”

Sean stares back, sympathy in his eyes. “It’d be easier if we were. And safer. We aren’t though and the longer you deny the bond between your mates, the more dangerous it becomes. Blutbaden bonds are the strongest of all Wesen. Mates die when they are separated for too long. Drew, the three of you could all die. Austin and Cameron will die without you. We can’t be sure about your fate. It’s a lot to take in and I wish I could give you more time to work through it but time is not on our side. You cannot deny the bond forever.”

“There is no bond. Try and guilt me all you want, Captain, but I’m not joining your delusional club.” Not willing to hear more, Drew bites out, “If that’s all?”

Renard assesses him carefully, then nods.

Drew leaves without another word, afraid of what will come out of his mouth if he lets go of his restraint. The last thing he needs is to be fired. Back at his desk, Franco waits expectantly.

“What was that about?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

Franco looks between him and Renard’s office with interest.
“Wu! Franco! You’ve got a case.”

*Thank god.*

NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR

“Burkhardt.”

“Nicholas.”

Nick freezes in place. The voice is one he instantly recognizes. “Vivian?”

“The time is drawing near. It will soon begin. Prepare. Gather your allies.”

*Not now.* Cameron is a complete mess; Austin and their children are the only things keeping him from succumbing to grief. Wu lurks around the station like a shadow, avoiding them like the plague. None of them have managed to get the man to acknowledge what happened. Any mention of it has Wu either leaving or changing the subject without subtly. Not to mention, Nick feels like a beached whale and is sick to death of fighting against his pregnancy hormones. Bursting out in tears at the station is something he’d be hard pressed to explain.

He hates feeling helpless. Cameron welcomed him into the family with open arms. He and Austin and their children are family. Nick loved his aunt but she wasn’t the most maternal; the last time he felt part of a real family was before his parents died. He has a family again. Nick doesn’t want to lose them.

Irritable from the helplessness of the Cameron, Austin, and Wu situation and the pregnancy hormones, Nick snaps, “I can’t deal with your seer bullshit right now. You want to help? Give us information we can understand and help!” Cameron and Austin’s lives are on the line. Possibly Wu’s too. Hope for a positive outcome is dwindling. Wu is doing all he can to avoid dealing with what happened; Nick knows more than most avoidance can have deadly consequences. Wu has no idea what he is risking.

“Monroe’s family must know the truth and make their choice. Loyalty must be chosen.”

“What truth?”

“What changes have come to our world.”

“No shit.” Change hasn’t been without its share of difficulties. Nick loves Roe with his whole heart and Hank seems to feel the same about Sean but neither has had an easy road. *Do Austin and Cameron wish deep down they never found out about Wu?* Their lives are in the balance. If Wu doesn’t go back to them, they’ll likely die from the grief. Nick isn’t worried about the family’s reaction to him mating with Roe. He can handle rejection and hate. Although the family probably deserves to know and prepare for the worst, Cameron is unbelievably fragile. They could break him.

“What happens when they decide they don’t want to have a Grimm in the family? Or worse, if their poor reaction pushes Cameron over the edge into a despair he can’t recover from?”

“Love is its own reward, Nicholas. Have faith.”

Nick snorts. “Easy for you to say. You didn’t witness Roe’s brother fall apart before your eyes.” Roe has tried to keep his hope up but worry and fear are weighing on him.

“I have seen it in my dreams.”
The quiet sorrow reveals she speaks the truth. Nick has had his own dreams of Cameron and Austin’s heartbreak. Not even Roe’s comforting heat can chase away the cold the dream leaves behind. “Can’t you help them?” Bleakness is fighting against hope.

“I will do what I am able.”

Muttering under his breath, “Let’s hope it’s enough.” How Roe and his family will cope if it isn’t, Nick can’t bear to imagine.

“Hope is a power unto itself.”

*It better be, it’s all I have.* Weary, Nick’s patience is nonexistent. “Is that all you have for me?"

“All I am able to give. Rest, Nicholas. Rest and hope.”

“Yeah, whatever.” Rude? Maybe but as a pregnant man, he is too tired to deal with her shit any longer. Nick rubs his temples.

“Would you like to talk about it?”

Having gotten used to Zuri appearing out of nowhere, he doesn’t jump. None of them know how she does it but Nick doesn’t mind. It gives them an advantage against any enemies trying to hurt him or the pups. “More vague seer shit. We have to tell the rest of Roe’s family about me and Wu.”

Zuri’s expression doesn’t flicker. “Are you worried about how they will react?”

“Yeah. I’m afraid they will push Cameron over the edge. Roe has avoided telling the rest of his family for a reason. His parents are traditional; they probably won’t be keen on the world they know is changing.” Nick shrugs. “Maybe we aren’t giving them enough credit and they will surprise us.” Roe knows his family more than he does. He’s avoided telling them for a reason. “Guess we’ll know for sure soon enough.”

“How do you want to do this, Austin?”

Standing next Monroe in the doorway of his bedroom, Austin’s eyes are glued to his sleeping mate and their triplets cuddling on the big bed. “My focus lays with Cameron and our pups.”

Monroe bobs his head in agreement; the last thing Austin needs is to add the weight of Monroe’s traditional parents’ judgment. The stark dark circles under his eyes are painful to look at. The stress of the separation is weighing heavily on Cameron. *Is he going to survive this?* He can smell the scent coming off Cameron. His brother will be in heat soon; with Drew in the mix, Monroe isn’t certain if Austin will be enough to satisfy it. Drew’s status is undefinable; he isn’t exactly an alpha nor a true submissive. More like... a bit of both. Flexible. *The first beta in a Blutbaden mating?*

Patting Austin on the shoulder, he goes back to the living room to find Nick. Monroe needs the reassurance of his mate’s touch while he tells his family. With Nick’s hand in his, he calls his parents.

“How do you want to do this, Austin?”

“Hello?”

“Hi, Mom.”

“Monroe, it’s good to hear from you. It’s been a while.”

A bit of guilt churns in his belly. The happiest time of his life and his parents have no idea. “Yeah, it
has.” Their reaction to him becoming wieder has stayed with him. They came around but Monroe hasn’t forgotten how it felt to be cast away for defying his parents. “Is Dad around? I have something I wanted to tell you both.”

“You’re not sick, are you?”

“Nothing like that, Mom.”

His mom’s relief is audible. “I’ll go get him.”

Nick squeezes his hand in support.

“We’re both here. What did you want to tell us?”

Inhaling a deep breath, Monroe says, “I found my mate.”

His mom squeals. “I’m so happy for you!”

The excitement in his mom’s voice is bittersweet. Will she feel the same when she finds out what Nick is?

“Congratulations, Son. We were beginning to think you weren’t going to find your mate,” his dad says gruffly, “what with your wieder lifestyle.”

“Bart,” his mom scolds.

“You were wondering the same as I was, Alice.”

“At least I’m polite enough not to say it.”

Not wanting his parents to start bickering, Monroe interrupts, “His name is Nick.”

“What a nice name. Do we know his family?”

“Yes,” Monroe blurts out without thought. *Shit.*

The other side of the line is silent as his parents try to figure out a family they know with a son named Nick. “The Carvers?”

Having already dug himself into the whole, he might as well go with it. “His last name is Burkhardt but it’s his mother’s family you would know.” Lost in his dread, Monroe doesn’t notice going silent until his dad speaks.

“Well, who are they?”

“The Kesslers.”

Monroe waits for the moment they figure it out.

“I don’t know of a Blutbaden family with the name Kessler,” Alice says.

How quickly will her confusion turn into hate? “They aren’t Blutbaden.”

“Not Blutbad—” His mom goes dead silent. “Kessler. Marie Kessler? The Grimm that killed your great-grandmother?”

Vibrating with fury, Bart demands, “What kind of sick joke is this?”
Monroe empties his lungs. “It’s not a joke, Dad. My mate is a Grimm; Marie Kessler was his aunt.”

“Blutbaden do not mate outsiders.” Disgust and fury drip from his father’s lips.

“I did.” Monroe fights to keep his cool. A hint of anger and it’ll dissolve into an alpha pissing match. “The world is changing, both ours and theirs. Nick is my mate. He went into heat, for me. He bears my mark; Nick is mine. My pups are growing in his belly and they’ll be here before I know it.”

“I won’t listen to these lies,” Bart growls.

“Bart!”

A slamming door echoes through the phone. The rejection stabs at his heart. It hurts but Monroe expected it. “Mom?” He can’t guess how she’ll react. More flexible than his father but still a traditionalist at her core.

“You are sure?” Her voice gives nothing away.

“About what? Nick being my mate? Going into heat? Carrying my pups?”

“All of it.”

Recognizing their mates is deeply ingrained in their biology. Things may be changing but he doubts the importance of mates to his kind will. Nick being a Grimm hasn’t changed how his wolf feels. Monroe feels as strong about his mate as his siblings do. “I’m sure. I would die for him and for our pups. Nothing and no one are more important to me than them.” Monroe grips the phone as he waits for the stretching silence to end.

“Must you always take the hard road?”

Hysteria bubbles out at the exasperated tone.

Alice sighs. “I won’t make the same mistake I made when you told us about becoming wieder. I can’t promise to love him, though.”

Thinking of Nick, Monroe smiles. “You will. My Nicky is irresistible.” His mom will love Nick. His dad is another story. Monroe’s smile falls away. His dad might never change his mind. “It’s good the pups will have a grandmother to spoil them.” Melancholy leaks into his voice. Bart is gruff but he loves his grandchildren. Monroe had wanted him to love the pups like that.

“Nick’s parents? They’re...gone?”

“Yes. All of them.”

“Why don’t I come up this weekend and meet your mate?”

“We’d like that.”

“If your father knows what’s good for him, he’ll be coming too.”

If anyone can get through to his dad, it’s his mom. “Thank you.” Monroe has little hope of his dad changing his mind though. His stubbornness is legendary; it’s where his sister got it from.

Glad for his mom’s willingness to try, Monroe wishes he didn’t have to add more for her to deal with. “I wish that was all but there’s more.”
The silence is weighty. Then she sighs deeply. “Lay it on me.”

“It’s Cameron and Austin.”

“What about them?”

The worry in her voice hurts to hear but she deserves to know. “They have a third, a Human. Their mate knew nothing of our world and is deeply in denial of their bond.”

“No. Please, no.”

Her stark grief echoes his. “I’m sorry, Mom.” They both know what could happen.

“How are they doing?”

“Cameron holds hope that Drew, that’s their mate, will come back. Austin is much less optimistic. Cameron’s heat is coming; time will tell.”

“Please, keep me in the loop. I will talk to your father. If things worsen, we will come immediately.”

“I will.” Austin and Cameron don’t need the stress of Alice and Bart. With his mom working on his dad, perhaps his parents will help Cameron and Austin through this instead of making things worse.

Nick drags his tired body into the house. Roe is sprawled on the couch, dark circles of exhaustion under his eyes. They all seem to be fast approaching zombie states or maybe a skeleton. The invitation of Roe’s open arms is welcome and Nick settles into them. The comfortable quietness is soothing.

“Bad case?”

“Yeah.”

“Wesen related?”

“For once, no.” Humans are as violent as Wesen, without the excuse of animalistic instincts. Nick shudders at the thought of the horror one being can do to another. “Just a human killing another human.” Nervous, Nick picks at Roe’s shirt. “How’d your calls go?” Roe reads him like a book.

“Mostly, as expected. Dad wouldn’t listen once I told him who you are but our pups will have a grandmother at least. Mom will be there for them and us.” Monroe strokes the distended belly with tenderness. “I told her about Cameron and Austin. Didn’t question it.”

“Good. Cameron and Austin need her.” They may not have much time left.

“She’s coming this weekend. Said she’d bring Dad along.” Roe shrugs. “If anyone can convince him, it’s her.”

“I hope she can, provided your dad won’t...you know.”

“Make things worse?”

“Yeah.” Roe’s dad is stubborn and traditional. It’d be better if he didn’t come if he can’t be supportive to Cameron and Austin. Nick isn’t concerned about himself; he can take Bart’s hatred.
“If he does, he won’t be staying long.”

“Agreed.” Nick wonders about the rest of Roe’s family. “Your sisters?”

“Amanda told me I’m no longer her brother and wants nothing to do with me.”

Nick wraps his arms around him, hoping his touch eases the hurt a bit. “I’m sorry, Roe.”

“I am too. Amanda and I have had a tumultuous relationship our whole lives. If she can’t accept you and our pups, be happy for me, then we don’t need her in our lives.”

Guilt twists in his gut. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry, Nicky. It was her choice, you’ve done nothing wrong. Just like Cameron and Austin haven’t.”

Anger shines brightly in Roe’s red eyes. “She didn’t.”

Roe growls. His wolf fighting to get out. “She did.”

Cameron is a gentle, loving soul. He sees the good in everyone and everything. For Amanda to throw his love away as if it’s nothing is beyond his comprehension, especially when he needs her support the most. “And Madeline?”

“She has her reservations but she loves me and she loves Cameron and Austin. Madeline is willing to try.”

The red in Roe’s eyes bleed away as his wolf settles down. “Good.” He hopes Madeline will come around.

“I’m not worried about Madeline. Once she meets you, she’ll love you.”

Nick’s mind is on Wu, though. He wonders if Austin and Cameron will live long enough for Wu to accept their bond.

By some miracle, Drew has avoided all attempts by the three crazies, aka Renard, Burkhardt, and Griffin, to corner him for another talk. Problem is Franco’s concern for him has grown exponentially. Franco usually lets him work through things on his own unless he asks for help but Drew can see his partner is approaching his limit. The last week has been rougher than he’d hoped. He and Franco have barely spent a moment in the station. Drew wishes he could blame the caseload for how shitty he looks and feels but his ability to deny is waning. He stopped looking in the mirror by the third day, unable to look at the dark circles and gauntness of his face without wincing. Ignoring the ache in his chest has become impossible; enduring is his only option.

It’s gotten to the point he’s been hallucinating. In the darkness of night, he spotted two sets of red eyes staring at him from the bushes. The demonic red eyes should have incited fear but instead, they eased the ache in his chest and sent a wave of calm over him. When Drew went to investigate, there wasn’t a trace of anyone or anything in the bushes. The insanity of it had him questioning his own mind. After the first time, the eyes appear night after night across the street from his window, staring up at him. Something within him calls to those eyes.

Drew hurries up the stairs to his apartment. Anticipation tingles under his skin as it has since the first night. He won’t admit it, even to himself, but he looks forward to the brief moment of pleasure and
calm when he locks eyes with the two sets of red eyes. Locking the door behind him, Drew heads straight to the window and looks down.

Darkness.

Worry lays heavy in his gut. “They have to come,” he unknowingly mutters to himself. Looking too closely into who they are is to be avoided at all costs. Minutes pass and no one appears. No eyes looking up at his window. No feeling of comfort, of belonging, of completion.

His chest tightens, the ache spreading from his heart outward. Drew drags air into his lungs as panic skitters through him.

With a flash of clarity, Drew knows what he needs to do. *I need to find them.* He yanks the door open and rushes out. A solid force sends him bouncing back. “What the?” Drew’s mind goes blank; a sweet, intoxicating scent wafts into his nostrils.

“Hello, Drew.”

The greeting barely registers, his mind focuses on one thing. One man. Cameron, smelling of need and sex. *Breed him,* a voice in his mind urges. His cock presses against his zipper, eager and ready within seconds. Drew licks his lips at Cameron’s lust-blown eyes. Austin’s hold appears to be the only thing keeping Cameron in place.

“May we come in?”

Eyes locked on Cameron, dirty images flash through his mind. Drew wants him naked and under him. No, he *needs* him.

“Drew?”

Mechanically stepping back, Drew feels the heat in the room crank up. His skin blazes with heat. The sound of the door shutting and the lock clicking into place is distant.

“Ready for him, Love?”

Cameron whimpers. “Need him, Alpha.”

“I know, Sweetheart. I know. Drew.”

The authoritative tone offers a momentary clearing of the lust fogging his brain. He meets Austin’s gaze. Arousal burns behind the iron-clad control. “Y-Yeah?” *How do they do this to me?* *Underneath his need for Cameron, a need for Austin simmers.*

“Cameron needs you. Will you give him what he needs?”

“All right.” The blatant need on Cameron’s face calls to him. Whatever Cameron needs from him, he’ll give. Cameron is his to take care of. *Why have I been fighting this?*

“I know it’s hard to think right now but I need you to focus, just for a moment. You with me?”

Austin’s restraining hand on his shoulder helps. “Y-Yes.” He doesn’t dare look at Cameron or breathe deeply.

“Cameron is in heat, Drew. The bond is trying to force us together.”

“Heat?”
“Yes, heat. Blutbaden submissives go into heat and mates will have sex for days. It cements the bond between mates. Cameron needs you. His body and mind need you. I can’t satisfy him alone; we need you.”

“I need him, too.” His body has never craved another person like this before. Drew needs to be inside Cameron or he’ll die. The need isn’t for Cameron alone, a subtle heat curls in his belly for Austin. Not burning and desperate like with Cameron but steady and solid.

“This is the important part. Are you listening?”

He isn’t. Cameron is tearing off his clothes and every inch of skin exposed is chipping away Drew’s restraint. Austin steps in front, blocking his view. Needing to see the beautiful buffet waiting for his hands, his mouth, his cock, he tries to step around Austin. But his face is held between Austin’s strong, insistent hands.

“I know it’s hard but I need you to pay attention for a moment longer.”

Drew stares into his eyes and forces himself to focus. “I’m listening.”

“The heat is to make babies. When it’s over, Cameron will be pregnant. With your child. Do you understand?”

*Child?* An unfamiliar longing tugs at his heart. “I understand.” Emotionally, he understands. Logically is another matter. But his brain has little influence at the moment. Drew needs to be inside Cameron, he’ll deal with the fall out later.

“The child will twine our lives together. Forever bonded. Do you understand?”

*Never alone.* Drew’s lips curve. “Yes.”

Austin moves aside. Drew rips open his uniform shirt and tosses it aside. His eyes lock on Cameron, who is wiggling in anticipation on the couch. The loud thud of his heavy duty belt thuds dropping to the floor barely registers.

“Don’t worry, I’ll take care of your gun.”

Drew waves at him absentmindedly. He couldn’t care less what happens to his gun.

“Please, Drew! I need you!”

Cameron beneath him and Austin’s hands on them both, Drew knows nothing will ever be the same.

*NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR*

Drew stares at the back of his eyelids. What he’d done is a suffocating weight on his chest. Cowardice isn’t in his blood but opening his eyes to face Cameron and Austin terrifies him. It’s too much. The memories of the past few days too vivid, the feelings pulsing inside him too strong. The warmth of the two men cuddling close to him on his full bed too perfect. Drew can’t deal. *What I wouldn’t give to feel the freedom of that lust clouding my mind again.* The clarity of the truth punishes him. After promising himself he wouldn’t, he slept with Cameron and Austin again. They’d fucked like animals. For days.

“No, like Blutbaden mates in heat,” Austin’s voice says in Drew’s mind. Cameron hadn’t been happy unless he was balls deep in him. Drew hadn’t been happier when he was sandwiched between the two men, which happened more times than he could count.
Worse than the memories is the intangible thread he senses linking them together. As Austin warned him, they are bonded. *Fuck. What have I done?*

Drew remembers how Austin explained to him what was going on and what would happen. Understanding and dealing with the consequences are two different things. The need to fuck Cameron driving him made it easy to accept Austin’s explanation. What he’d said hadn’t mattered. Without the need fueling him, Drew realizes what he consented to. He has to fight the urge to curl into a ball.

*Time for a trip to visit the cousins.* Cowardly? Hell yes but what is his alternative? Embracing the insanity? The Philippines seems like an excellent place to hide. From Austin and Cameron and all that comes with them.

“Are you feeling better, Love?”

*They’re awake.*

Beside him, Cameron hums, sounding relaxed and satisfied.

Drew has to strain to hear the words Austin whispers to Cameron. “ Didn’t I tell you I’d take care of everything?”

“You did. Thank you, Alpha.”

The bed shifts next to him, Cameron must be moving in some manner. Drew doesn’t dare open his eyes to see what he’s doing.

“I wonder if it’ll make a difference, Drew being the father? Will it be triplets like all Blutbaden firstborns?”

It takes every ounce of his control to keep from reacting. *Fuck, fuck, FUCK! Austin was bullshitting about that. He had to be. Right? Oh, fuckity fuck. What if he wasn’t?* Wrapping his mind around the possibility feels like trying to keep his head above water with cement blocks on his feet. *Is that why Cameron wouldn’t let Austin fuck him? He wanted to be sure I’d be the father?*

“I don’t know, Cameron. What we knew doesn’t apply to us. The rulebook isn’t any use to us anymore unless we set it on fire for warmth. Finding Drew changed everything. We’re in uncharted waters.”

At the happiness in his voice, warmth floods his chest. Then, the warmth is washed away with dread.

“I’m just happy he’s marked and together we’ll be having a pup or three.”

*Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god.* How could he have forgotten the bites? Hidden, Drew clutches the sheets. The way he’d begged for them to bite him reverberates in his head. The bite marks on either side of his neck tingles. Their claim of each tooth in his skin burns with pleasure-pain.

“I hope the baby has Drew’s eyes. Dark and deep and warm.”

The happiness in Cameron’s voice sends fear down Drew’s spine. Either Cameron is completely insane or he actually is pregnant. Drew feels like he’s drowning at the possibility of the latter and he doesn’t know what to do. *What if he’s not crazy? Is my child growing inside of him?* His Adam’s apple bobs. Children aren’t something he’s thought seriously about yet.
“He does have beautiful eyes, just like you do. Different but beautiful all the same.”

“Such a flatterer,” Cameron jokes.

Austin chuckles. “I need my mates to know how much I adore them, nothing wrong with that.”

*How can they be so nonchalant? As if this is normal?* His mind feels like it could explode trying to comprehend everything that has happened.

“How can they be so nonchalant? As if this is normal?*

“Speaking of mates, do you think we should wake him?”

The following silence has Drew panicking. He isn’t ready to face them. *What the hell would I say? Do?*

“No, our beloved passed out hard when we claimed him. We should let him rest. Come, let’s shower.”

“Okay, we can make breakfast if Drew still isn’t up. The smell of coffee always wakes you up,” Cameron teases.

Austin lowers his voice. “I know other ways I like to wake up.”

Cameron giggles. “I don’t think any of us are up for that after my heat.”

The two get out of the bed and move toward the bathroom, their easy bantering growing softer the further they get. At the sound of the door shutting, Drew’s eyes pop open and dart around. The room is empty, the faint sounds from the bathroom the only indication anyone else is around. Drew waits until the water turns on and he hears them squeeze into his tiny shower together.

He jumps out of bed and dresses like a crazed man. Guilt tugs at him but not enough to stop him from fleeing. Instead, it forces him to leave a note. With his hand shaking, he explains it’d been fun but he’s not looking for a serious relationship. The lie twists in his stomach; it’s going to hurt them. *That’s what I want,* Drew tries to convince himself, *then, they’ll leave me alone. That’s what I want.* His heart gives a painful twinge at the lie. Something deep inside him flares, grabbing his attention. Drew doesn’t understand what it is but it hums and through it he can feel Cameron and Austin. Their happiness twists the knife in his heart. But he doesn’t have the courage to open himself up to them and all they bring with them. *I can’t. I’d rather face a drugged out nut, pointing a loaded gun at my face.*

Drew grabs his keys and sneaks out. The living connection roars, trying to pull him back. Fighting with all he has, Drew forces his feet forward.

Straddling his bike, the ache in his chest flares up into a stabbing pain. Since Cameron and Austin arrived, it’d disappeared. The fierceness of the ache and the bond screaming at him take his breath away. The only thing keeping him from spilling to the ground is his bike. He drags air into his lungs until he gains strength back in his trembling limbs. “I need to get out of here.” His bike rumbles to life.

“Drew!”

“Fuck.”

Austin comes flying down the stairs dripping wet with only a tight pair of briefs on. “Stop!”

Drew shoves his helmet on and flips down the visor. Revving the engine, his tires squeal as he peels
out. The weight of Austin’s eyes follows him. Worse, the image of a grief-stricken Cameron haunts him. Trembling lips and pain-filled eyes. Pain he caused.

Miles away, Drew pulls off and parks. The hidden bite marks on either side of his neck throb. Though he can’t explain it, he can feel gut-wrenching grief coming from Cameron and Austin at his desertion. Stumbling off his bike, he rushes to the grass and his stomach heaves until he has nothing left. Shaky, Drew wipes his mouth. Collapsing on the curb beside his bike, he buries his face in his hands.

Things are falling apart around him. Leaving Cameron and Austin behind should have been easy. They are two men he had sex with, set the sheets on fire kind of sex but only sex nonetheless. It should be meaningless. “Why the hell do I feel anything for them? I barely know them,” Drew mutters to himself. “Plus, they’re completely insane.”

“What are they?”

Drew’s hand instinctively goes to his gun. Beside him is an older woman with her empty hands up in a placating manner. She seems like a minimal threat and Drew relaxes a bit. “Did you say something?”

She shrugs. “I asked if they are.”

“What are they?”

“Insane.”

“Of course they are, they—” Drew halts. “Nevermind, I need to get to work.”

The woman nods her head. “Of course, Sergeant Wu.”

“How did you—”

She points to his name tag.

“Oh.” Drew narrows his eyes, the easy explanation doesn’t reassure him. Something about her has his detective instincts screaming. She knows who he is. Yet, he knows they’ve never met before. *How does she know who I am?*

She smiles reassuringly as if she knows he’s suspicious of her. “I’m Vivian. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Likewise,” Drew lies.

“Are you sure you have to get to work? You look like you need to talk to someone. I’m a great listener.”

If he wasn’t suspicious before, he is now. “Thank you but no.” Drew isn’t about to spill all the craziness to some random woman.

The woman purses her lips as if disappointed but not surprised by his answer.

*What the heck is up with this lady?* Who spills their secrets to a random stranger unless the stranger is a trained professional? Drew has a healthy suspicion, of everyone. He doesn’t blab his business to strangers.

“If you change your mind, I’m available.” The woman starts walking away. “Nick knows how to get a hold of me.”
*Wait, what?* Dumbfounded, Drew shouts, “Nick?”

Vivian grins, then disappears behind a building.

“What the hell is going on? I used to have a nice, normal life. Boring, sure. Lonely, yeah. But at least things made sense.” Drew looks around. “And now, I’m sitting on the ground talking to myself in public like a crazy person.”

Back on his feet, he tries to pull himself together. *Oh, FUCK!* He missed work, with no call. About to call the station, Drew stops. *Wait. Why didn’t anyone check on me?* The threat of suicide is too great for an unexplained absence to be overlooked. *I might have been out of it but I’d remember if someone came over to check on me.*

Drew calls Renard, a suspicion burning in his gut.

“Renard.”

“Captain, it’s Wu. I apologize for not calling in earlier, I—”

“Your absence was approved. Take as many days as are necessary.”

Drew shakes his head, trying to clear his mind. “It was?”

Renard drops his professionalism. “Austin called, Drew.”

“What?”

“He told me Cameron went into heat,” Renard says as if that should explain everything. “Austin didn’t tell you he called me?”

“No.” He probably would have if Drew had given him a chance instead of running like a coward. *No! I’m not a coward. I’m sane. It’s not my fault everyone around me lost their minds.*

“I’m sure he meant to. I’m assuming the call means Cameron’s heat is over or at least winding down?”

“Uh.”

“I know this is all new to you but it will get easier. If you need to talk, all of us are available. Just ask.”

“Thanks, Captain. If it’s alright, I will take a couple extra days.”

“Of course. The extra time will help strengthen your bond with Austin and Cameron. Make it easier when you have to spend days apart.”

“Yeah,” he lies through his teeth. That is the last thing he plans on doing. He is staying as far away from the two men as possible. His idea to escape to the Philippines is becoming more and more necessary. The station isn’t an escape. Running from Austin and Cameron only to be surrounded by Nick, Hank, and Sean is like escaping the frying pan only to jump into a fire. Drew can’t forget what happened when it’s staring him in the face the whole time. The ache twinges as if to remind him. Worse, he feels the two men through the inexplicable bond. It calls to him, coaxing him to return to them.

Hanging up, Drew decides he needs to get away. He straddles his bike and starts to drive with no destination in mind. All he needs is distance from the men messing with his mind.
Mile after mile, he gets further and further away. The chaos inside him quiets the longer he is on the open road. Escape is what he needs.

“How is he doing?”

Austin can’t look away from his mate curled up with their pups. “Better than me.” Cameron’s grief is tempered with hope. The life he and Drew created keeps his faith alive. Austin can’t say the same.

He can feel Monroe’s keen eyes on him, no doubt seeing all he hides from his pack. The overwhelming grief, sorrow, and exhaustion. Austin is barely holding himself together. If not for Cameron and their pups, he would have collapsed into a pathetic heap long ago.

“Come.” The gentle pressure of Monroe’s large hand on his shoulder leads him from the room. Austin doesn’t have the will in him to fight him when he nudges him onto the couch.

Solid, strong arms wrap around him. Austin almost breaks, reminded of how he felt when his father cradled him as a young pup. “Let go, Austin. You don’t have to be strong with me.”

At the end of his rope, he can only offer a weak struggle before breaking. All he’s held in to be strong bursts out. Grief and pain pour out of him with the fury of a hurricane. “He’s gone; he isn’t coming back.” He feels lost. For years, he and Cameron have been complete, happy. A life filled with love. Meeting Drew changed everything. Only then did he realize there had been something—no, someone missing. Deep in his soul, he knew Drew was theirs and it left no room for doubts. *But Drew doesn’t feel it. Not like we do. He can’t.* Despair seeps into his heart. “It’s my job to protect our pack. How do I protect them from this?”

“Don’t give up hope. He’ll come back.”

Sitting up, he moves away from Monroe’s comforting arms. He isn’t a child; he won’t bury his head in Monroe’s arms like a pup. “No, he won’t. Not willingly. We marked him and still, he left the first chance he had. Maybe as a human, he can’t feel our bond.” Drew might not feel them but Austin can feel his stubborn resolve through the bond. Drew isn’t coming back to them. They’d have to drag him back like a hostage.

“That isn’t true. Hank’s human and he was brought to his knees during his separation from Sean. If Hank can feel the bond, Drew can too. Blutbaden bonds are among the strongest in our world. He might be fighting it but Austin can feel the bond, he isn’t unaffected.”

Austin feels hopeless. “Even if he isn’t, it won’t matter.” He wishes he had Cameron’s faith but he doesn’t. Watching Drew flee from him, a look of desperation on his face, demolished his optimism. “Cameron and I are going to die without him. Our pups left orphans. The most I can hope for is Drew survives.” Austin is resigned to his death. Maybe he should be mad at Drew but his love for his mate remains strong. He mourns for his pups, Cameron, and the pup that will never be.

“Austin…”

The sorrow in Monroe’s voice should affect him but trying to remain strong for his mate and pups has exhausted his resolve. He has nothing left.

“Papa?”

His heart stutters in his chest at the sound of his little princess’s voice. “Fiona.” She’s a mini Cameron. Loved by all with such a gentle, kind soul. Their deaths will crush her pure little heart.
“What’s wrong, Papa? Do you miss Dad?”

Austin’s heart gives a painful squeeze. Since the moment they told the pups about Drew, Fiona has been calling him dad and asking when she could meet him. Love shines out of her with impossible ease.

She crawls up into his lap and wraps her tiny arms around him. “Don’t worry. Dad will come back.”

Her innocent optimism almost gives him hope but not even Fiona can accomplish that. “Of course he will,” Austin lies, a stiff forced smile on his lips.

“You don’t believe in him.”

Austin opens his mouth to reply but the atypical sober expression on her little face stops him.

“It’s okay, Papa. Daddy and I believe enough for you.”

“Thank you, Princess.” Her sweet lips kiss his cheek.

Fiona beams, pure happiness in her smile. “Welcome!” She jumps off his lap. “I’m gonna tell the baby a story!” Only Fiona rivals Cameron’s excitement about the coming pup. She talks to the pup constantly.

Watching his princess disappear, despair overwhelms him. His pups are going to lose all three—no, four—of them and he can’t stop it. *Why, Fates? Why bring Drew into our lives only to take him away? Take us away from our pups? How can you be so cruel?* Austin feels helpless. “I’ll never see Fiona find her mate.” Austin turns to Monroe. “Make sure my princess finds her knight.”

“You’ll be there to make sure yourself.”

Not believing for a second he will, Austin orders, “Promise me.”

Monroe sighs. “I promise.”

A weight lifts off him. Fiona needs protection, like Cameron. The pure need to be protected from those who would take advantage of their giving, innocent hearts. Austin worries less about Delilah, his little queen, and Aaron, his little king. They will grow up to be strong Doms. “Watch out for Delilah and Aaron, too. Teach them how to be good Doms.”

“They will be, with you as an example.”

*No, they won’t.* But between Cam’s family and his own, their pups will grow up loved with positive role models.

Monroe eyes him unhappily but Austin can’t bring himself to care. He drags himself to his feet and heads to the bedroom. Death is coming for them; Austin intends to spend every moment he has left with his pack.

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

Leaving Austin and Cameron’s, Monroe dials Nick.

“Burkhardt.”

His mate’s distracted voice almost brings a smile to his lips but Austin’s hopelessness has seeped into his bones. “Please say you’ve found him.” It was painful seeing his strong, brother-in-law give up.
“No.” Monroe can picture Nick running a frustrated hand through his hair. “Wherever Wu is hiding, he’s not making it easy for us to find him. He’s a cop, Roe. He knows how to cover his tracks. We’ve checked his family and friends. No one has seen or heard from him.”

“Keep looking.” How broken Austin looked flashes in his mind. “You need to find him. Austin…” Monroe shudders. “He has given up hope; I don’t know how long he can hold on. Trying to keep strong for Cameron and the pups has drained him. Austin has little left.”

“We won’t stop looking.”

“I’m scared for them, Nicky.” He doesn’t want to lose them but if they don’t find Wu soon, they will. Wu is a mystery to him. How he thinks. What kind of man he is. The human mind is fragile. Face to face with the truth, it often breaks or dives into denial. Neither option will save the people Monroe loves.

“We will do everything we can to find him.”

“I know.” Nick loves them too. *I hope it will be enough.* Otherwise, Cameron and Austin won’t be the only to lose their lives. An innocent, new life is on the line. Cameron and Austin love their triplets with all they have but their plan has been for at least five. It’s not happened, although no doctor could explain why. Fate was waiting for Drew Wu. The child they’ve waited eight years for is growing inside Cameron but will he or she live to take their first breath?

“How are you feeling? Taking care of yourself and the pups?”

Nick doesn’t comment on the subject change, probably realizing Monroe needs a break from the bleakness of Austin and Cameron’s future. “Tired. My back is fucking killing me.”

Monroe smiles. “I’ll draw a nice bath for you when you get home.”

“I can’t wait.” Nick sighs. “I better get back to work. I’ll call if I find anything.”

“Thanks, Nicky. Love you.”

“Love you too.”

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

Hours away from Portland, Drew’s eyes strain to stay open. If he doesn’t find somewhere fast, he’s going to fall asleep on his bike. Drew spent the day on his bike with only a stop for gas and quick meal. The food had gone down like a bitter pill, the ache in his chest made his stomach sour. The gods must be taking pity on him because out of nowhere appears a small grouping of cabins. The flashing open sign is a godsend to his tired body and soul. Stumbling into the small office, the front desk is the only thing keeping him on his feet. “I need a room. Anything with a bed. I thought I’d be sleeping out in the woods tonight.” He’d prepared to camp out in the woods for an uncomfortable night’s sleep.

“Sanctuary Cabins is here for the lost, the searching, and the needy.”

The odd reply parts the fog in his brain. *What kind of answer is that?* Tired eyes look up and a jolt of electricity shoots through him. His hand jumps to his holster.

“Nice to see you again, Sergeant Wu.”

*What. The. Fuck?* The familiar feeling of his gun’s grip under his fingertips settles his anxiety.
“Still running, my dear?”

He has no words. The odds of the woman he met today happening to work at the cabins he finds after driving aimlessly all day is beyond comprehension. “Are you stalking me?” Weird shit keeps happening to him.

“I’m where you need me to be.”

“I don’t know you, lady.”

“No, but I know you.”

He wouldn’t enjoy shooting the woman but he’ll do it if he has to. A stalker is the last thing he needs. At his wit’s end, Drew turns away without a word. The woods is better than sleeping near a crazy woman.

“Is sanity worth the pain?”

The soft question should send him running but it strikes a chord in him. Since Cameron and Austin walked into his life, normal went out the window. What they said. What they did. What they make him feel. Life as a cop in Portland means he’s used to craziness but he is separated from it. The Cameron-Austin situation is personal and Drew can’t wrap his mind around it. Is accepting the insanity worth the risk? Tremors of fear shake him to his core. He’d run rather than find out. Believing means he can’t go back to the way things were. Saying yes to Austin and Cameron is like jumping off a cliff without a parachute.

“Is it?”

Drew stares at the door. A few steps and he’ll escape. Something compels him to answer. “I don’t know.” The pain he’s felt since the moment he left Austin and Cameron behind hasn’t wavered. Trying to convince himself he’s imagining it is a constant failure. The pain flares at the lie as if taunting him. The pain isn’t imaginary; the further he travels and longer he is apart from the men, the worse it becomes. It isn’t going away. Drew is linked to them, whether he wants to admit or not. The bites, the bond, and the ache won’t let him forget it.

“Didn’t they make you happy?”

The sad thing is, they did. The connection he felt—and still feels—is unlike any he’s felt before. With them, Drew felt complete. *But I ran.* His head drops with shame. *Like a coward, I ran from them. From a chance at happiness.* Fear is something he conquers, not is conquered by. Except with Austin and Cameron.

“Here, cabin five is open and ready for you. Sleep, Drew. Your body needs rest.”

Drew blindly takes the offered keys and mumbles a thank you. She might be a crazy stalker but she’s right about him needing sleep. Having his gun beside the bed will be all the protection he needs.

Startled out of his dream with the taste of Cameron’s sweetness lingering on his tongue and an empty ache in his ass, Drew reaches for his gun. Using the moonlight shining in through the windows, he searches the small cabin. Holding his breath, nothing moves. Whatever woke him isn’t in the cabin. The floor is cold beneath his bare feet but Drew is too focused on the possible threat to care. Not bothering with pants or a shirt, he shoves his sockless feet into his boots. Gun resting against his leg, Drew cautiously steps outside. Few deep shadows are able to resist the moon’s bright beams. The
dew-filled grass swishes under his feet. Senses high, Drew methodically searches around his cabin.

Nothing.

No unusual sounds. No suspicious movements.

Trudging inside, Drew’s thoughts stray to his interrupted dream. A picture of what his future could be if he accepted Austin and Cameron. His soul cries out for the men and the happiness they could bring him. The dream viciously batters at the cracks in his stubborn wall of resolve. He doesn’t have the depth of will to strengthen it. Kicking off his boots, he lays his gun down beside the bed and drops onto the mattress. *Bring on the dreams.*

Drew falls into dreamland the second he closes his eyes. He’s back in Nick’s house, bumping into Austin for the first time. The first touch of Austin’s lips against his. Then Cameron’s. A rush of sensation flows through him. Lust. Need. Love. Completion.

A cloud of darkness envelops the blissful memories. The room transforms into a gloomy one, a palpable feeling of empty sorrow heavy in the air. Empty beer bottles litter the floor and it reeks of body odor, spilled alcohol, and sadness. Tossing and turning, begging pleas fall from his sleeping lips. He wants to escape from the depressing nightmare. An older version of himself appears; heavy lines crease his face, shouting to the world he’s had a hard life. He looks old and unhappy. Sad Drew walks to the fridge, grabs a six-pack, and chugs the first bottle in three swallows. He doesn’t recognize himself; he looks like a drunken bum. Unless he’s gone deep undercover in some sort of homeless gang, Drew fears he’s not a cop anymore. Like a vision of some terrible future Drew never wants to see. It’s clear the loneliness is tearing his drunken self apart. He tries to shut his eyes but the image doesn’t flicker and he’s forced to stare at the broken, hopeless man he’s become.

Drew watches his other self, swimming in alcohol, stumble over to a closet and start digging through piles. Other Drew sprawls gracelessly on the floor, clutching a small lockbox in his hand. Worn and old-looking, the lock no longer working. Drew eases it open with more care than he appeared capable of in his state. A single picture is lifted from the box with reverence. The faded photograph is a candid shot of Cameron and Austin with their arms around each other. Tears wet his lined face. The contrast between the happiness on the men’s faces and the deep sorrow in Drew’s is painful to see. This Drew is sad and alone, pathetic and wishing for the two men he carelessly rejected. With the picture clutched in his fingers, he digs through the closet looking for something else. The expression on his face fills Drew with dread. He’s seen it before on the faces of people with nothing more to live for. “No! Don’t!” Drew screams at the other Drew but he doesn’t stop.

Gun in hand, he stares down at the crumpled picture.

*Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!*

Unable to stop the dream or to close his eyes, Drew can do nothing but watch helplessly in horror as the gun is stuck in his mouth.

BANG!

Drew jerks awake. Hands shaking, he tries to erase the gruesome, depressing sight from his nightmare. Drew grabs the bottle of water next to the bed and tries to wash away the imagined copper taste of blood.

In the back of every law enforcement officer’s mind, whether they’ll admit it or not, is the fear the job will eventually drive them to suicide. The horror they see day in and day out is often incomprehensible. It can break anyone. Drew’s shocked to his core to see himself broken, not by the
job, but by the absence of two near strangers.

His eyes flutter shut, picturing how he’d caressed the picture in the dream. Yearning.

*No.* *Drew rejects it. *It’s just a dream. I won’t become some pathetic drunken loser driven to suicide because I can’t live without them.* *Head in his hands, he tries to forget the dreams. Despair versus bliss. Loneliness versus completion. Nightmare versus fantasy.*

Jumping to his feet, Drew growls in frustration. “Why can’t you leave me alone?!” he screams at the ceiling. The anger drains from his body. “I just want to go back to the way things were.” Feeling sorry for himself, Drew falls back into bed, prepared to curl up in a pathetic ball and pretend the outside world doesn’t exist.

“What the hell?” At the sound of a scream, Drew grabs his gun. The familiar weight of his pistol in his hand settles his thundering heart. Another terrified scream. Drew tears open the cabin door and plunges into the night. Someone, somewhere is scared to death.

“Oof!” A weight crashes into him, sending his gun flying. Terrified eyes meet his.

“Run! It’s coming!” The man scrambles to his feet and leaves Drew behind.

The sound of Something big crashing through the woods toward him sends fear skittering down his spine. *My gun!* Frantic, Drew searches for his lost gun.

Too late. Frozen, Drew stares at the pursuer that emerged from the darkness. Like something out of a movie or a nightmare. The monster snarls at him, madness in its eyes. Unable to look away, his hands seek out his weapon. *There!* Drew curls his fingers around the grip. He might survive this encounter after all. Gun pointed at the advancing monster, Drew orders, “Don’t move. Police.” On his feet, he tries to convince the monster to stay away. “I’ll shoot.”

The monster shows no signs of comprehending his warnings. It lunges and Drew fires a shot. The monster roars in pain when the shot hits true but it doesn’t go down. Drew fires again. And again. The monster falls atop him, limp.

Shoving it off him, Drew watches it for movement. He nudges it with his foot but it doesn’t react. Heart racing, he stares at the dead monster. Drew looks up and around, wondering where the man this monster was chasing went. Distracted, he doesn’t notice the monster lunging toward him until it is too late.

Drew screams at the pain of sharp teeth sinking into his leg. He tears the beast off him and empties his clip into it. The monster shifts into a human. “What the fuck?” Everything said to him about Wesen rushes forward. “Shit. SHIT. SHIT!” They were telling the truth. How else can he explain what he saw?

Light-headed, Drew slams to the ground. Vision blurring, he wishes he could go back.

“Drew. Drew!”

The feminine voice sounds miles away.

“Focus! Stay with me!”

Drew tries. “Ca’ron. ‘stin.” His last thoughts are of them and then it all goes black.
“‘Lo?’ Monroe slurs, mostly asleep.

“Uncle Monroe?”

The fear in Delilah’s young voice jolts him awake. A quick check shows it’s past four in the morning. “Honey, what’s wrong?” He senses Nick awake beside him, he puts the call on speaker.

“Daddy and Papa woke up yelling for Dad. Then they went limp. They won’t wake up.” The sounds of Fiona and Aaron crying in the background breaks Monroe’s heart. “Sh, Fiona. Aaron. Papa and Daddy will wake up and everything will be fine.” The wailing from the two children quiets to little whimpers.

Delilah shouldn’t have to be strong for her siblings. “Do you know if they are breathing, sweetie?”

“I checked. They are. Just sleeping and won’t wake up.”

“Good. That’s good.” They have time; not much but some. “Can you, Fiona, and Aaron watch over your parents?”

“We won’t leave them.”

“Good. I’ll stay on the line while I get dressed. I’m coming over, okay?”

Delilah asks, “You’ll help Papa and Daddy wake up?”

“I’ll do everything in my power, honey.” Monroe hopes they can find Wu in time. He and Nick have a conversation with their eyes. “I’m in the car now, Delilah. I’m coming, okay?”

“Okay.”

Monroe tries to keep her mind off her worry, talking about anything and everything on the drive over.

Aaron and Fiona meet him at the door, jumping into his arms for comfort. He carries them into the bedroom. Delilah is watching over her parents, both of them still. Monroe doesn’t know how she had the strength at eight to keep herself and her siblings from panicking. Austin and Cameron are still as corpses; it’s eerie. He checks their pulses, each has a slow, steady heartbeat and are warm to the touch.

“It’s about their mate, isn’t it?” Delilah’s lip trembles imperceptibly. “Are they going to be okay?”

Monroe can’t lie; he has no idea whether Austin or his brother will ever wake up. “I hope so. Nicky is going to find Drew.” *Hopefully, before it’s too late.*

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

“Griffin.”

“Hank, wake up. We need to find Drew, now!”

The urgency in Nick’s voice jolts his brain awake. “What’s happened?” Beside him, Sean wakes up. Putting Nick on speaker to allow Sean to hear, Hank scrambles to find some clothes.

“Roe’s niece called, frantic. Austin and Cameron are unconscious; they won’t wake up. If we don’t find Drew and fast, I’m afraid we will lose them all.”
Hank meets Sean’s eyes, three men and an unborn child might die this morning and three children might lose their parents.

“I’ll spread the word through my contacts,” Sean promises. Phone in hand, he is about to start dialing when it rings. Hank and Sean both stare at it. Phone calls at four a.m. are rarely good. “Renard.”

“Sean.”

“Who is this?”

“Your aunt, Vivian.”

The men are stunned into silence.

Sean gathers himself first. “Why are you calling me?”

“Drew is with me; he unconscious and hurt. He needs his mates as much as they need him.”

“Where are you?”

“Sanctuary Cabins.”

“I know where that is.” It was an out of the way, Wesen-friendly place a friend of his has stayed at several times.

“Hurry, Sean. They have little time.”

“Understood.” A seer’s warning is nothing to mess with. “Nick, go to their house and help Monroe. Hank and I will get Wu.”

“Be quick.”

“Pedal to the metal with lights. We’ll make it.” Sean drops into the driver’s seat, flicks on the lights, and squeals out. Thankfully, it’s early and traffic is light.

The sirens the only sound in the car. Mile after mile, minute after minute.

“Are we going to make it?” Hank asks, finally voicing the fear they both have.

“We have to.” Failure isn’t an option.

Hank stays silent but not for long. “What happens when he wakes up?” He has to assume they will get Wu back with his mates in time. “Wu ran for a reason. What’s happened might not change anything in his mind.”

Sean glances over, patting Hank’s thigh. “We have to have faith things will work out. Obstacles aren’t insurmountable; we have to hope Wu’s eyes and heart will open.”

Hank’s been in Wu’s shoes and it isn’t an easy place to be. Accepting the existence of Wesen means taking a great leap of faith with the hope it won’t end in a fiery ball of flames.

**NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M*HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR* NB*M* HG*SR**

“You hear me? Hold on a little longer, he’s coming.” The stillness of Cameron and Austin is concerning. Monroe prays Sean and Hank arrive in time. His brother and Austin have been losing color as if the life is draining from them. Worse is the solemn look on Delilah’s young face. She
refused to leave her parents’ side. Stubborn baby alpha. Between him and Delilah, they’d convinced Aaron and Fiona to stay with Nick in another room.

The waiting is excruciating. Monroe doesn’t want Delilah to watch her parents’ lives fade away before her eyes but it’s out of his hands. Drew will either make it in time or he won’t.

“Daddy, Papa, don’t leave. Aaron and Fiona need you.”

*Just rip my heart out, why don’t you?* Delilah thinks nothing of herself, always thinking of protecting her siblings.

“The new pup needs you.”

Monroe suppresses a shudder. A life barely begun. Cameron has wanted more children since the triplets were babies. He can hear Cameron say, *I want a whole pack of pups,* in his head. Cameron loves his triplets but his heart has much more love to give. His brother had been ecstatic about the pregnancy after waiting eight long years. Ever the optimist, he’d been sure Drew would come back. Austin had been right though; Drew didn’t come back on his own. *Please, let him make it.* The rest they can figure out later.

Like sand falling in an hourglass, the minutes tick by. Monroe can nearly see the life fading from the men.

“I’m scared.”

As an alpha and Delilah’s uncle, Monroe fights to stay strong for her but he’s losing hope. *They are taking too long.* He hugs her close, pressing her face into his shoulder. “I am, too.”

“Daddy was so sure but Papa was right, wasn’t he?” she mumbles. “Dad isn’t coming. Not in time.”

Monroe wants to deny it but with each second, Cameron and Austin are closer to death. Wishing differently won’t stop it. Mates need each other to live; it’s part of being Blutbaden. *Why them?* Delilah’s little body shaking in his arms breaks through his thoughts. Her strength gone, she weeps for her parents, her siblings, and herself. Monroe holds her close, all he can offer is senseless sounds of comfort and to hide her face from watching her parents breathe their last breath.

With sorrow-filled eyes, Monroe watches helplessly as the movement of their chests slows further. *They’re dying.* He squeezes his eyes shut, his lungs tight with grief.

“We’re here!”

Monroe’s eyes pop open. Hank barges into the bedroom with a limp Drew over his shoulder. With more speed than care, he dumps him on the bed.

Nothing happens. No movement. No breath.

*No. It can’t be too late.*

The three still forms draw every eye.

“Please,” Monroe begs.

Nothing.

Delilah cries, “No!” Then leaps onto the bed with her still parents. She grabs Austin’s hand and put it in Cameron’s, then does the same with her daddy’s other hand, laying it on Drew’s. She stands back
on the foot of the bed and watches.

Austin moves first, curling his hand around Cameron’s. Cameron follows. Drew’s fingers twitch in Cameron’s grip.

A deep growl rumbles out of Austin. His eyes, fiercely red, pop open. “Mates.” He pulls Cameron and Drew closer to him, a possessive glint in his Wesen eyes; Cameron ends up sprawled half on Austin and half on Drew. Neither Cameron nor Drew wake, although they cling to each other in their sleep.

Monroe quietly lifts Delilah onto his hip. “Come, let’s leave them to recover.” When forcibly separated, the alpha is dangerously possessive. Austin didn’t attack them but if they stayed, he might. Delilah would be safe but the rest of them, even Monroe, could be seen as a threat. He closes the door with a soft click and leans back against the door. *That was too close.*

Delilah wiggles down and sprints to her siblings. “They’re okay.”

Aaron bursts into tears, snuggling closer to Nick for comfort. He may like to pretend he’s a big, bad alpha but he is always the first one needing a hug. Aaron’s a cuddler.

Fiona jumps off the couch with a happy scream and starts doing her silly celebration dance.

“Shh! Quiet, sissy! Papa, Daddy, and Dad need to sleep.”

The scream is silenced but the soft noise from her dancing feet on the carpet doesn’t slow.

Chapter End Notes

If anyone is interested, I am in need of someone willing to read through my chapters before they are posted looking for plot holes, areas needing expansion, continuity errors, etc. The friend I had doing it is far too busy to do it any longer. If you would be a good fit, please let me know either through a comment, e-mailing me at katmoreid@gmail.com, or contacting me through facebook (Kat Moreid).
Drew wakes feeling warm and complete. In place of the burning, gaping hole in his chest is his connection to his mates. It’s unlike anything he has felt in his life, and more than Drew could have dreamed. *Is this real?* He looks down as hands press against his chest. Somehow during the night, they must have stripped each other. Drew can feel miles of bare skin pressed against him under the covers.

The warm body next to him jerks up. “The pups! They’re alone!”

Austin stretches over Drew to comfort his panicking mate. “Monroe is with them.”

Cameron lets out a sob of relief. “They must have been terrified. Our poor babies, I need to see them.”

“Sh, it’s okay, baby. I’ll go get them.”

Watching from between them, Drew isn’t sure what to do.

Austin kisses Cameron, then Drew and gets out of bed. He tugs on boxers and is out the door.

Drew feels awkward as hell left alone with a worried parent. What is he supposed to do? “I’m sure they’re fine?” He cringes at how stupid he sounds.

Cameron sniffs but doesn’t respond to Drew’s pathetic attempt.

“Daddy!”

Cameron lights up, lunging out of bed to embrace his three children. He smothers them with kisses all over their little faces.

Hoping to remain unnoticed, Drew doesn’t move a muscle.

Austin stands at the door, smiling, before joining the family hug.

Two of the kids are crying, saying something about how they thought Austin and Cameron were dead. The other one, a girl, looks like she’s trying to stay strong for the other two.

Drew feels like an outsider watching Austin and Cameron comfort their children and each other. If they weren’t blocking the exit to the bedroom, he would have snuck out. Then the little girl turns to look at him and he freezes. Suddenly, he has all eyes on him. Time seems to stand still and Drew wishes he could disappear from the awkward moment.

“Dad! You’re okay!”

*Dad?* Like an idiot, Drew looks around as if the girl could be referring to someone else.

The smaller girl, the one that had been crying, jumps onto the bed and launches herself at him like she’s a hug attacker. Her little arms wrap arm him and she hugs him like he’s not a total stranger.

“Um...hi?” Drew is still reeling from the dad comment.

“Fiona, why don’t you introduce yourself first, hon?” Cameron suggests with a little laugh.
Fiona giggles, sitting back on Drew’s chest. “Oops! Hi Dad! I’m Fiona!” She hugs him again. “I’m so glad you’re okay and Daddy is okay and Papa is okay and everyone is okay!” Fiona shows her joy by bounces a bit on his chest.

“Fiona, gentle,” Austin chastises.

She stills, her cute little face looking apologetic. “Sorry Dad.”

Drew stares at the little girl on his chest and tries to keep the panic from his face. She sees him as a father figure and whoa, talk about jumping into the deep end. He manages an acknowledging nod at the apology.

Fiona moves to sit on his shoulder to play with his hair for some reason.

Cameron nudges the boy and he steps toward the bed. “Hi Dad. I’m Aaron.”

Dad again. I have to be a parent now? I don’t know how to be a parent! “Hi Aaron.” He’s a cute kid, appears to be a little shy. Maybe Drew can build a relationship with Aaron without too much awkwardness. It seems Fiona will be easy enough, it’s as if they’re already friends. I better talk to Austin and Cameron about how she is with strangers. She needs to be careful.

The last of the children, a girl, steps up. “Hi Dad, I’m Delilah. We were all worried; we weren’t sure you were going to get here in time.”

There was a little accusation hidden there; Delilah holds him responsible, smart girl. “Hello Delilah.” Drew doesn’t know what to say to her and decides honesty is best. “I didn’t think I was either. I am grateful I did though.” The outcome could have been much different for them all if he hadn’t. Drew doesn’t feel ready to be a dad but it doesn’t mean he isn’t going to try. If he has to work harder to have a relationship with Delilah, Drew is more than willing.

Cameron brushes Aaron’s hair back from his forehead. “Have you pups had breakfast?”

“Uncle Monroe is making pancakes for us,” Delilah says.

“They are probably ready by now,” Austin adds. “Why don’t you pups go and see? We are going to shower and dress and we’ll be out in a bit. We’ll need to have a nice family talk with all of us.”

The kids nod. While Aaron and Delilah head to the door, Fiona makes no effort to move. “I like your hair.”

“Fiona, breakfast time.”

“But Daddy—”

Cameron shakes his head. “No. It’s time for breakfast. You can spend more time with Dad later.”

Fiona pouts a little but does as she’s told. “Bye Dad.”

Drew is surprised by the stirring of warmth he feels from the kiss she gives him on the cheek. Stunned, he touches the spot where she kiss his cheek.

“Drew?”

“Huh?”

“Are you doing okay? You look like you’re a million miles away,” Austin asks.
He had been, lost in his thoughts. “Is this real? All of this?” Drew can’t explain what he means, between the bond and the kids and everything.

“It’s real,” Austin declares.

Cameron’s beautiful, blue eyes stare at him. He moves back onto the bed. “Don’t you feel us in here?” He asks tapping Drew’s chest.

Drew looks between the two gorgeous men that fate somehow chose for him. “I don’t deserve this. I don’t deserve either of you. I definitely don’t deserve those kids. All I’ve done is cause you pain.” It’s agony to think of what he put them through. Drew’s heart aches to imagine how scared the kids must have been and he caused it. He feels like he’s drowning in guilt, seeing their terrified faces. Because of me. “How can you look at me? I terrified your kids, traumatized them because I was too damned stubborn.”

Cameron drapes his body over Drew. “The pups, our pups, will get through this, just as we all will, together.” He presses a soft kiss over his heart. “We can feel the pain you feel. It hurts me to feel how much you are hurting.”

“You’ll learn Cameron is the most compassionate man you will ever know. He never lost faith in you. I confess I cannot say the same.”

The guilt and shame Austin feels bleeds into the bond, soothed by warm forgiveness from Cameron.

“Feel that? That’s our Cameron. Even when we don't deserve it, he forgives. I can't condemn you for lacking faith, Drew. We expected too much, too fast, and you weren't ready. That's my fault. I'm the alpha, it's my job to take care of our family and I failed to give you what you needed. In my failure, our pups were hurt. They almost lost us and I should have never let it get that far. I gave up instead of fighting. Alphas aren’t supposed to give up. I'm sorry.”

“You’re sorry? You are sorry?!” Drew questions in shock. “How can you think this is your fault? I'm the one who rejected you two and ran away like a coward! I let this happened!”

“I should have done more to help you understand what was happening. You were overwhelmed and alone. Of course you would run. I thought more about Cameron than I did you; that wasn’t fair. You are as much my mate as he is.”

Drew is baffled by how earnestly Austin is arguing with him. He is at fault, not Austin. How can he not see that?

“We’re together now and safe, does how we got here matter?” Cameron asks. “Claiming blame and suffering guilt is not how we move on as a pack.”

“No, it’s not. Thank you for reminding me of that, love,” Austin says.

How in the world did I get here? Hours ago, he was in pain and alone. Now despite the pain he has caused, he has a family. He has mates and children who call him dad. “Are you one hundred percent sure this is real?”

His mates smile fondly at him. “Yeah, we’re sure.”

Is he ready? “This is a lot to take in.”

“Hey, take a breath,” Austin orders.
The overwhelming weight eases. Drew feels Austin’s confident support through the bond and Cameron’s warm love. No, he isn’t ready but he doesn’t want to go back to his lonely existence.

“We’re here,” Cameron promises.

With them, he can adapt. He finally understands why Nick and Hank could accept the existence of Wesen. The bond with their mates and the support they get from them makes it possible. Otherwise, it would probably be too much to handle. “Okay.”

“It was a long night, let’s take a shower.”

Guilt flashes through Drew, remembering how he’d used them showering to escape.

“This time you get to join us,” Cameron says with an eager grin.

Guilt forgotten, Drew's body goes hot with the way the two men are looking at him. He tries to jump out of bed but crumples under the pain in his leg.

“Drew!”

Oh, shit. He'd forgotten about the bite.

“Let me see.”

He moves his hands to expose the wound. Austin kneels down in front of him.

“This is a nasty bite,” Austin growls.

“You were bitten!” Cameron yells, panicked. He scrambles over to Drew and runs his hands over his body checking for other injuries. “Are you hurt anywhere else?”

Before Drew can respond, Austin interrupts, “I will hunt down who or whatever attacked you.”

“Me too,” Cameron agrees.

Their eyes glow red and fangs peek out from their mouths, a glimpse of the animals hiding within them. Instead of feeling afraid, Drew feels weirdly protected.

“Cameron, you can stop. I’m not hurt anywhere else.” Drew’s words don’t have any effect; Cameron is too focused on inspecting his body for wounds.

Despite their anger and suppressed violence, their touch is light. Still, Drew winces when Austin touches his bite wound.

Austin takes a deep breath and holds it for several beats before releasing it slowly. The calming breathing makes the red bleed away and his eyes return to normal. “We’re going to have to get this cleaned up. It's going to hurt. Afterwhich, you are going to tell us what happened to you and who we need to kill.”

Austin looks like he feels worse about it than Drew does. “Going to kiss it and make it better?”

“I can blow you. You'll forget all about the pain.”

“Uh.” The offer shouldn’t be as enticing as it is considering Cameron still has red eyes and fangs.

Austin carefully lifts him into his arms. “What the hell? I can walk.” Probably.
“You were attacked when I wasn’t there to protect you, an attack which I still know nothing about. If you think I’m letting you walk when I can carry you, you are mistaken, mate,” Austin explains haughtily.

“I second that, Alpha,” Cameron says, following closely behind them. “Blutbaden alphas don’t always pamper but this time, it’s a necessity. You were attacked, Drew. You will be pampered.”

Drew has little experience with pampering and both his mates seem determined. “I’m not good at sitting back and letting someone take care of me.” It has been a long time since he’s been carried in a man’s arms.

“You'll get used to,” Austin answers confidently. He sets Drew down carefully and takes the offered first aid kit from Cameron. “Our relationship dynamic may be new in the Blutbaden world but I'm still an alpha and Cameron is still a submissive. Our instincts may evolve but we are what we are. My first instinct will always be to care for my mates and our family. That includes you.”

Taking that in, Drew watches Austin take out the supplies.

“While Austin tends to your wound, why don’t you tell me what happened?”

Until this moment, Drew hadn’t realized Cameron’s potential for violence. The look in his red eyes is predatory. Not the sexy kind either.

“Cameron, calm down. We’ll hear the details after but first, you need to regain control.”

Cameron growls but one sharp look from Austin stops him. He walks over to the window.

“Give him a moment; he gets upset when anyone in the pack is hurt.”

Someone else he’s hurt.

Cameron turns away from the window, eyes and teeth back to normal. “Stop feeling guilty, Drew.”

“Can you feel everything I feel through the bond?” The confusion, guilt, joy, love, sorrow, and all the emotions he can’t decipher.

Cameron smiles gently. “With some training, you’ll be able to control what emotions go through the bond. The stronger the emotions, the more likely it is that we will feel them through the bond. Don’t worry, we’ll help you.”

Help. Drew looks away.

Austin stops working on his wound. “Stop whatever foolish thoughts are running through your head right now.”

Eyes shut tight, he can’t bear to look at either of the men. “You’d be better off with a mate you didn’t have teach everything to.” Drew knows nothing about their world. Feeling stupid makes him defensive.

“Open your eyes and look at me, Drew.”

The forcefulness in Austin’s voice has him obeying.

“Your pity party is over. No more feeling sorry for yourself. You are our mate because you are meant to be. We want no one else and will have no one else. It will be our pleasure to teach you everything you need to know about our world and our lives. We love you. Okay?”
Drew swallows, blinking back unexpected tears. “Okay.”

“Good.”

Cameron kisses Drew lightly. “The fates blessed us greatly.”

“You truly believe it was fate, that I’m fated to be here with the two of you?” Drew is not a fanciful person. Believing in fate or anything he can’t see with his own eyes has never been his strong suit. His grandmother can attest to that. Drew wonders how many of his grandmother’s unbelievable stories might have had a kernel of truth. Judging from what he is learning, almost anything is possible.

Cameron draws him back from his thoughts when he answers, “Yes, we do.”

The thought of that being true blows him away. He’s where he is meant to be, with who he is meant to be with. Drew thought this kind of shit only existed in fairy tales.

Finished with the bandage, Austin sits back on his haunches. “All done. Now, how about you tell us how this happened?”

Was the attack last night? Mere hours ago? It feels like a lifetime ago. Drew feels as if he’s a different person than he was before he realized the truth. Maybe I was.

“Yeah, I—”

The sharp sound of a cell phone ringing from the bedroom cuts Drew off. The three men still at the continued ringing and exchange looks. Their bubble is broken and the outside world has intruded. It had to happen but if only they could have had more time.

“Someone should get that,” Drew says. It’s not his, since his is probably still at the cabin in the middle of nowhere. Neither Cameron nor Austin move a muscle and finally the ringing stops. “Or not.”

“It’s unimportant.”

The ringing begins again. “I have a feeling they are going to keep calling until someone answers.”

Austin rises from his knees and walks toward the phone.

Trying to lighter the serious mood, Drew tilts his head, giving Austin’s retreating ass an appreciative look. “Do you think he’ll let me take ‘im?”

“Uh…” Cameron’s expression turns thoughtful. “Before you? I would have said no but adding you into the mix might change things. Maybe?”

“I’ll take those odds.”

“He does have a nice butt.”

“Yeah, he does,” Drew agrees. “What about you? You ever want a piece of it?”

“Nah. Goes against my instincts.”

“To top?”

Cameron shrugs.

“You do want to top?”
Cameron ducks his head and mumbles softly, “Maybe you. Not Austin.”

“No, it can’t be. ‘Vivian?’”

“Renard’s aunt? She was the one stalking me? Can this get any weirder?"

“I must warn you, Drew was bitten by a lycanthrope.”

A heavy weight settles in the bottom of his stomach. Cameron moves closer as if seeking comfort or offering it or more likely a bit of both. Austin is trying to appear unaffected by the statement but Drew senses the worry hiding behind his stoic eyes. “That’s bad, isn’t it? I knew it was too good to be true. What the hell did I get bitten by? ‘They’re poisonous or something aren’t they? Am I going to die?’

Austin crouches in front of Drew. “Lycanthropia is caused by a virus, one that anyone can get, including humans. All it takes is a scratch or a bite from a lycanthrope.”

If his mates hadn’t been holding him, Drew would have jumped up. “Are you fucking kidding me? I’m going to turn in to that!” He remembers the feral look in its eyes; there was nothing human left in that thing. “I won’t. I’ll kill myself first!” Drew struggles against his mates’ hold. “You didn’t see what it was! Please, I don’t want to become a monster.”

“Sh, love. We’ll figure this out,” Austin promises.

Cradled between his mates, Drew voices his greatest fear, “I don’t want to hurt either of you.”

“We will find a way to help you.”

“A cure?”

Austin shakes his head. “There’s no cure but that doesn’t mean we can’t find a way for you to live with lycanthropia.” He grabs the forgotten phone, realizing Vivian is still on the line. “Vivian?”

“Yes, I’m still here. There is one more thing I need to say. Drew’s lycanthropia will make or break your triad bond.”

Cameron’s hand goes to his stomach. “Our bond will not be broken.”

“But maybe it’d be better…” Drew tries to protest.

Cameron repeats more forcefully, “Our bond will not be broken. We are bound, the three of us. The life we created grows within me, Drew. Can you not feel it?” He takes Drew’s hand and rests it on his stomach.

He feels something, an inexplicable connection. How could he have forgotten? They’d warned him about the pregnancy. How am I supposed to be a father now? Drew scrambles away from Cameron, in his panic not registering the pain in his leg. “What if I hurt the baby? What if I hurt the kids?” The
baby and the kids are defenseless unless Cameron or Austin protects them. If he was scared of the monster he is going to become before, he’s terrified now. “Stay away from me!” I need to go. Where’s my gun? I need to protect them from what I’ll become.

“Drew, calm down. It’s going to be okay.”

Panicked, he holds his hands up to fend off Austin’s approach. “No! It’s not! I’m turning into some sort of fucking monster and Cameron is pregnant! With my baby! And the kids are here! Don’t you understand?!” Drew sobs. His perfect world is already falling apart. Austin’s arms wrap around him and the thread snaps, the fight going out of him. “You have to kill me.”

“Oh, baby. Don’t think like that.”

Unresisting in his misery, Drew allows Austin to hold secure in his arms as Cameron changes the sheets. He can feel the alpha’s strength bolstering him through the bond, restoring his empty reserves.

“Why don’t you take a nap with Cameron and I’ll talk to Monroe and Nick. We will find something that can help you, Drew.”

Drew tries to get off the bed but Austin holds him down. “You are going to leave me alone with Cameron!? What if I turn into that thing!?”

“You won’t until the full moon. Last night was the last night of the full moon. We have time until the next one.”

The panic skittering through his body calms. “We do?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay.” Without the fear of turning into a monster any second, Drew reaches out to Cameron. Something in him loosens at touching his mate. They must feel it too as their faces lose a tightness he hadn’t noticed before. Drew wishes he could make some sarcastic joke and laugh off his panicked reaction but he is too emotionally raw.

Cameron tugs him close. “Cuddle with me. I love to cuddle when I’m pregnant.”

Drew drapes over Cameron’s back, arm around his stomach.

Cameron threads his fingers through his over his stomach. “I wonder how many we are going to have?”

How many? “What do you mean?”

“Blutbaden firstborns are always triplets and technically, this pregnancy is our first.”

“…”

“Drew?”

“…”

“Drew? Are you okay?”

An elbow to the stomach jolts him out of his shock. “Uh, my heart just stopped for a second there.” Three babies? At once.
Cameron turns around to look at Drew face to face. “Do you not want children?”

“It’s not that. I never thought I’d have a family. It’s happening faster than I expected and I’m trying to catch up.” He’s trying to catch up with everything that’s happened. Wesen, the mating, lycanthropia, male pregnancy, fatherhood. He had been reeling from the three kids calling him dad and now he might be adding three infants to the mix? Six kids? Drew can’t wrap his mind around it. He can’t think of that now. It’s too much. His head will explode.

“Lean on us, Drew. You don’t have to be strong with us. If there is anywhere you can be vulnerable, it’s with us.”

“You’re beautiful, you know.”

Cameron rolls his eyes. “Don’t change the subject or no sexy times for you later and I will be very upset with you.” He offers a sultry smile. “I have a feeling I will need both my mates to satisfy me tonight. You wouldn’t want to disappoint me, would you?”

Bribed with sex, smart man. “You are evil.”

“No, just horny,” Cameron says with a wink.

“Fine, you win.”

“I always do.”

Drew doesn’t doubt it. Figuring he might as well start expanding his knowledge. “Tell me about male pregnancy. How does it work?”

Austin finds the pups in the playroom with Nick and Monroe.

“Papa!”

Three eager bodies crash into him and Austin falls to his knees to wrap his arms around his pups. Last night, they almost became orphans. “I love you, pups.” It feels wonderful to have them in his arms, warm and safe. They shouldn’t have had to seen what they did. Austin wishes he could go back and change the past but he can’t. He, Cameron, and Drew will have to watch the pups and make sure they are coping with what they experienced. Hearing they tell him they love him too soothes a bit of his guilt.

Austin kisses each of them. “Delilah, I need to talk to Uncle Monroe and Nick about something. Can you watch over you siblings? We’ll be down the hall in my office if you need anything.”

His serious little alpha catches on easily. “Yes, Papa.” Delilah then herds her siblings back to what they were doing.

Austin turns his attention to Monroe and Nick. “Thank you for everything,” he says, addressing them for the first time.

“You know we’d do anything for you and the pups, and you’d do the same for us.” Monroe lays a hand on Nick’s expanding waistline.

He nods. Nick’s due date is fast approaching and they’ll have triplets of their own. The three of them walk to Austin’s office. With the door shut, Austin doesn’t waste time. “I’m going to cut straight to
the point. Drew was attacked and bitten last night by a lycanthrope.”

“What’s a lycanthrope?”

Monroe explains, “It’s like a Blutbad on steroids with no mental awareness of who or what they are or were.”

“We’re hunting a lycanthrope then?”

Austin shakes his head. “It’s dead. The problem is the bite.” The confusion in Nick’s eyes makes it clear he doesn’t understand what a bite means for Drew. “Lycanthropia can be transmitted to humans through a scratch or a bite.”

“Shit.”

“I need the two of you to try your contacts, see if anyone has anything he can try to help him at least retain his mind and help him with his control over the lycanthropia. Drew needs this for his peace of mind.” To underscore how serious the situation is, Austin adds, “When Drew found out he is now a lycanthrope, he wanted us to kill him. He doesn’t want to hurt anyone, us especially. We must find something, anything, that will help him and there is very little time. We have only until the next full moon.”

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