

Loving a monster

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Loving a monster

by [Wolffe4648](#)

Summary

She's unnatural, she's a freak but does she care, no. Shade has a secret that binds her to prince Velkan Valerious and his sister Anna. She is a hunter that works with the great Van Helsing but she likes to call herself 'His lap dog'. Shade must help Van Helsing slay Count Dracula before the Valerious's die but as their journey continues, Shade learns a bit more about her past. Can she contain what she is? Can she finally love or will her past destroy the last human part of her?

Notes

This story is also on my wattpad and Quotev account, hope you enjoy xx

One || Beginning Of The End

It was a clear night filled with light from the gleaming stars that shone through a window of a small cottage, on the outskirts of the Transylvania countryside. A small girl was huddled in her bed, shivering with fever. Her unnatural blue hair clung to her sweaty heart-shaped face, her sparkling blue eyes were dull and filled with pain. Her parents were downstairs, trying desperately to lock, bolt and chain the windows and doors, the sounds of whimpering and crying mixed together caused them to look at each other with a look of fear. The parents yelped in fear and surprise as something heavy landed with a thud on the roof, shaking the small cottage. The sound of claws scraping against wood causes them to cringe and cover their ears with their hands. Tears flowed down the mother's cheeks as she looked around frantically before grabbing the father by his shirt.

"Please don't let him take my baby," The mother begged.

The father held the mother tightly and let her sob into his shoulder, the whimpering and crying had turned into screams causing the mother to cry harder. The small girl had started to thrash around in her bed, she desperately clawed at her chest as waves of pain washed over her. Her screams were becoming louder with every second until they became growls and roars.

A loud knocking came from the door but the parents wouldn't answer it, the knock came again but this time it was a harsh knock. The father grabbed his gun and the mother ran to her child's room where she pulled the young child to her chest and rocked back and forth. Downstairs, the father was standing by the door that had started to be rammed into by an unknown person, the father readied his gun as one of the bolts flew from the door.

"Go to hell," The father mumbled before the door was broken down and a pale man, with long straight black hair walked in. He wore all black and his cloak was lined with red silk, his eyes were blue/green. He smiled an evil smile as he circled the father, three women wearing silk loose clothes walked in followed by a blue-ish werewolf.

"You thought that you could keep her from me Vladimir," The pale man sneered.

"No I didn't but I tried, you will not take my daughter Dracula," The father, Vladimir growled.

Count Dracula slammed his fist on the table now separating him and Vladimir, his three brides squealed in fright and hid behind the werewolf.

"She has the power to bring my children to life, you think I would let that that opportunity slip through my fingers. You are wrong Vladimir, both you and your child belong.....to me," Dracula shouted but drifted of into a whisper.

"We will never belong to you, you monster," Vladimir shouted bravely.

The Count shook his head as he walked over to his brides, he whispered something into the werewolf's ear, causing the werewolf to growl and lunge at Vladimir. The mother heard a gunshot and held back a sob, the sound of bones crunching drifted into the small bedroom, the girl shook violently against her mother side.

"Mama," The girl cried softly in a small delicate voice. The mother turned to her child and stroked her blue hair.

"Shh, mama's her baby," The mother whispered.

"It hurt's so much," The girl said, her voice became deep and more demon like.

The mother sobbed loudly causing the vampires and werewolf to look towards the stairs, the Count smirked evilly as he turned towards the werewolf next to him.

"Bring me the child and kill the mother," Dracula ordered.

The werewolf growled and bounded up the stair, he crashed into walls as his claws slipped on the wood, his eyes burned with excitement as he barged into the small room. He caught sight of the mother and child that was huddled together on the bed, he growled and the mother scream, the werewolf lept forward and grabbed the mother by her ankle causing her to cry in pain. He dragged her from the bed and cut of her screams by snapping her neck with his powerful jaws.

"Mama!!" The girl shouted.

The werewolf looked up at the girl and snarled, he was about to grab her but the girl launched herself at the werewolf and sunk her newly developed fangs into his shoulder. The werewolf howled in pain and tried to grab the child that moved away from his clawed hands, the girl bit and scratched at the flesh she could reach, her eyes burned bright blue and her hair shone in the darkness. The girl jumped off the werewolf as he ran into a wall, she landed in a crouching position with the tip of her fingers touching the floor, she growled at the werewolf and leapt out of her bedroom window. As soon as she landed on her feet, she bolted for the forest with her hair blowing through the wind. The werewolf bolted after the girl, his claws

digging into the earth as he propelled himself forward, the girl looked behind her and saw the werewolf gaining on her so she stopped. She faced the werewolf with a growl, the moonlight illuminated her pale skin. She lifted her hands and pointed them at the werewolf, a beam of fire erupted from her hands and shot the werewolf backwards into a tree where it was knocked unconscious. The girl dropped to the floor and pulled her knees to her chest, she let her tears fall as she remembered her mothers pained face, he fathers bones breaking and the pain that had coursed through her heart.

"Mama.....Papa.....gone," The girl cried softly.

The girl had ran for days on end, her tiny legs carried her through the rocky plains of Europe and all the way to Rome. The girl was weak from hunger and dehydration, she was extremely skinny and pale. Her eyes were dull and her hair was covered in dirt. She walked through the streets of Rome, cold and alone. She searched desperately for somewhere to rest but no where looked safe to her that was until she saw a large building in front of her. The church of Rome was what the sign said, the girl saw a man walking up the stairs and ran over to him, he looked old and kind but he still had a hard face that showed no emotion. The girl tugged on the man's robe causing to look at the girl and when he did, he nearly had a heart attack.

"Oh my," He breathed as he picked the girl up.

He rushed into the church and set the girl down on one of the benches before running off to get some food and water, the girl sat quietly and looked around the church until the man came back with a plate filled with a mountain of food and a glass of apple juice. He handed the plate to the girl and watched as she ate slowly and quietly, he had thought she would have scoffed down the food due to the state she was in.

"My child what is your name," The man asked, the girl swallowed her mouthful of food.

"My name is Shade, Sir, what is your name?" The girl replied in a soft voice.

"My name is Cardinal Jinette," The Cardinal replied. "Where are your parents?"

"My Mama and Papa where killed, I ran away from our home in Transylvania."

The Cardinal Jinette gasped as he realised how far this girl had travelled, she should have died due to starvation and dehydration, halfway through her journey her but somehow she had manged to survive. But how?

Two || Shade The Great Hunter

Two people were looking at a wanted poster of a man and a girl. The first person had long blue hair and bright ice blue eyes. She wore a leather jacket that stopped above her belly button, a white tank top that also stopped above her belly button, leather trousers and a pair of knee high leather boots. She had weapons strapped to her back, waist and legs. The other person was a man with black shoulder length hair and brown eyes. The man wore a black wide brimmed hat, a black t-shirt, black trousers, black boots and a black cloak. He had weapons hidden beneath his cloak along with the weapons strapped to his waist.

"They always make me look like a troll," The girl said as she ripped the poster down.

"You always look like that Shade," The man said as he re-adjusted his hat.

"Shut up Van Helsing," Shade growled.

A scream suddenly ripped through the silence of the night causing Shade and Van Helsing to look towards the bell tower, Shade sighed.

"Another monster in Paris.....great," Shade muttered sarcastically. "See you there."

Shade speed towards the source of the scream while Van Helsing got on his horse and chased after her.

The two hunters stopped in front of the bell tower where a young girl lay dead among the wet cobbles, her beautiful white gown was stained with blood. Shade got on one knee and put her fist to the floor in a bow while Van Helsing removed his hat and put it to his heart.

"Let your soul forever dance among the clouds of our Lords kingdom above," Shade prayed before a murderous laugh entered her ears, she looked up just in time to see a monster called Dr.Jekyll climbing up the bell tower. Shade growls and turns to Van Helsing with a angered look.

"Let's go get that bastard."

Van Helsing nodded his head and followed Shade to the bell tower. The two hunters made their way up the stairs of the bell tower, the floor boards creaking under their feet, they reach a large wooden door and push it open. Shade and Van Helsing walk silently to the middle of the bell room, the bell gleams in the moonlight that shines through a window on the far side

of the room. The crescent moon reflected off of Shade's skin, creating small silver swirls to glisten across her pale skin.

"Shade find our target," Van Helsing ordered.

Shade sniffed the air, catching the scent of death and chemicals. Dr. Jekyll suddenly appeared in front of Shade causing her to jump backwards with a growl, Dr. Jekyll was hanging from the wooden beams that held up the roof of the bell tower.

"Hello beautiful," Dr. Jekyll laughed.

"Rot in hell you diabolical freak of nature," Shade spat as Van Helsing walked to her side.

"We missed you in London," Van Helsing said to Dr. Jekyll. Dr. Jekyll laughed and jumped in front of Shade and Van Helsing, he had a cigar hanging from the side of his mouth.

"No, you bloody did not. You got me good," Dr. Jekyll replied as he flexed his arm, revealing a hole made by Van Helsing's gun and a set of bite marks made by Shade. Shade smirked and her eyes flashed dark blue.

"Your lucky I didn't aim for your throat," Shade growled, Van Helsing stepped towards Dr. Jekyll.

"Dr. Jekyll, you are wanted by the knights of the holy order..." Van Helsing began.

"It's Mr. Hyde now," Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde said.

"...For the murder of 12 men, 6 women, 4...." Van Helsing continued but he was cut off by Mr. Hyde.

"Children, three goats and a rather nasty massacre of poultry," Mr. Hyde laughed. "So you must be the great Van Helsing and Nightshade."

"The one and only," Van Helsing said.

"Just Shade and your a deranged psychopath," Shade replied with a glare.

Mr. Hyde puts his cigar out with his tongue and then eats it, he blows the excess smoke into Shade and Van Helsing's faces.

"We all have our little problems," Mr. Hyde sneered.

"Our superiors would like us to take you back alive so that they may extricate with your better half," Van Helsing announced, Mr. Hyde grabbed Van Helsing's hat and putting on his head.

"I bet they bloody would," Mr. Hyde spat, Shade turned to face Mr. Hyde with a small growl.

"Personally we'd like to kill you and call it a day," Shade started.

"But let's make it your decision shall we?" Van Helsing asked.

"Let's do," Mr. Hyde said before he smashed Van Helsing into the wall on the far side of the room.

Shade leapt onto Mr. Hyde's shoulder and bit him, Mr. Hyde growled in pain before grabbing Shade and throwing her into the back wall. Shade landed on a piece of loose wood, she screamed in pain as it pierced her side. Shade took deep breathes before yanking the wood from her side, the wound immediately started to heal. Shade's finger nails elongated as she ran at Mr. Hyde, Mr. Hyde dodged Shade and ran into the shadows while Van Helsing shot at him. Mr. Hyde's laughter sounded through the darkness.

"Here I come...ready or not!" Mr. Hyde reappeared and charged at Shade and Van Helsing who were standing in front of the bell, a double sided katana appeared in Shade's right hand just before she cut off Mr. Hyde's left arm while Van Helsing cut his stomach. Mr. Hyde shrieked in pain before he ran into the bell.

"The bells!" Mr. Hyde screamed as he covered his ears.

Shade smirked but quickly frowned when Mr. Hyde ripped the bell from the pillar and slammed it over Shade and Van Helsing. Van Helsing grabbed a small blade saw and cut a circle into the floor before climbing to the top of the bell while Shade jumped through the hole in the floor. Mr. Hyde picked up the bell and a look of confusion spread across his face, Van Helsing grabbed his hat before dropping onto Mr. Hyde's head and cutting the back of

his neck. Mr. Hyde dropped the bell just as Shade came bursting through the floorboards with an inhuman snarl, Van Helsing landed on the floor as Mr. Hyde stumbled around in pain.

"I bet that's upsetting," Van Helsing stated as he caught sight of the arm that Shade had cut off earlier. Mr. Hyde growled and picked up Shade and Van Helsing, he threw the two hunters through the roof. Van Helsing landed on top of Shade who grunted in pain, Mr. Hyde jumped through the hole made by the hunters.

"Ahhh! Paris!" Mr. Hyde said as he picked up the hunters again and held them over the edge of the bell tower roof. "I think you'll find the view over here rather spectacular. It's been a pleasure knowing you, Au revoir!" Mr. Hyde said before throwing the hunters off the roof, Shade elongated her claws and stabbed them into the stone wall of the bell tower while Van Helsing used a grapple gun. The metal tip of the rope pierced Mr. Hyde's chest as Van Helsing landed safely on the ground.

"Oh no, no, no, no," Mr. Hyde said frantically as he looked down at Van Helsing.

Van Helsing pulled roughly on the rope causing Mr. Hyde to lurch forward but Mr. Hyde put his foot out to stop him from falling off the roof, Mr. Hyde smirked and grabbed the rope.

"My turn," Mr. Hyde exclaimed as he ran across the roof causing Van Helsing to shoot into the air and pass Shade who was using her claws to climb up the bell tower. Mr. Hyde tripped over the edge of the balcony that was on the opposite side of where he threw Shade and Van Helsing, the rope in his chest caused him to crash through a window and swing through the hall of the church. Shade reached the top of the tower at the same time as Van Helsing, they both watched as Mr. Hyde crashed through Rose Window that was over 600 years old. As Mr. Hyde fell towards the ground, he turned back into Dr. Jekyll and let out a scream that was cut off as his body roughly slammed against the ground below.

"May he rest in peace," Shade and Van Helsing said as they did a religious cross sign across their chest. A large crowd had gathered around Dr. Jekyll's body, one of the villagers, an old man, looked up to the top of the bell tower and caught sight of Shade and Van Helsing.

"Van Helsing, Nightshade, you murderers!" The villager shouted.

Shade's eyes turned electric blue as she lifted her hands to her mouth, she made a cup like structure with her hands and let out a mournful howl that was more inhuman than any monster on Earth. The howl stretched all over Europe and caught the ears of three people, Velkan Valerious, Anna Valerious and Count Dracula.

Three || Mission Transylvania

It took about a year of killing monsters and travelling across the rocky terrains of Europe for Shade and Van Helsing to reach Rome. Shade sighed in relief as she spotted the Roman Cathedral, the sun reflected off of the marble church which created a beacon of light in the middle of the darkness that plagued the world. The two hunters came to a stop as they reached the church, Shade groaned as her bones popped and creaked in protest while Van Helsing got off of his horse and laughed at her.

"I told you to get a horse but no, you wanted to run," Van Helsing chuckled.

"Well I love to run and horses hate me," Shade growled. "Plus, I'm glad to be home."

"I'm not," Van Helsing grumbled.

Shade and Van Helsing walked side by side as they entered the church, they looked around before going over to a confession box that sat in the far right corner of the church. Van Helsing entered the box while Shade sat on the floor by the door, Shade sat crossed legs and made a bow and arrow appear in her hands. She polished the golden coloured wood and sharpened the silver arrow heads, a disapproving grunt caused Shade to look up and meet the strict glare of Cardinal Jinette. Shade smiled sheepishly and made the bow and arrows disappear just as Cardinal Jinette walked pass her and into the confession box with Van Helsing.

"Bless us, Father, for we have...." Shade heard Van Helsing start say but was cut off by Cardinal Jinette.

"Sinned. Yes, I know. You two are very good at that. You Shattered the Rose Window."

"Not to split hairs, Sir, But Mr.Hyde did the Shattering," Shade said through the door, she laughed as Cardinal Jinette kicked the door to tell her to be quiet.

"13th century. Over 600 years old, I wish you a week in hell for that," Cardinal Jinette said.

"It would be a nice reprieve," Shade and Van Helsing murmured.

"Don't get me wrong. Your results are unquestionable...but your methods attract far too much attention."Wanted" posters? We are not pleased."

"Do you think I like being the most wanted people in Europe?" Van Helsing asked. "Why don't you and the Order do something about it?"

"Because we do not exist," The Cardinal argued.

"Well, then neither do we," Shade growled which earned her another kick to the door.

"When we found Shade in the street and you crawling up the steps of this church, half-dead...it was clear to all of us that you had both been sent to do God's work."

"Why can't he do it himself?" Van Helsing said angrily.

"Don't blaspheme," The Cardinal scolded. "You already lost your memory as a penance for past sins Van Helsing. If you wish to recover it...I suggest you continue to heed the call. Without us, the world would be in darkness. Governments and empires come and go...but we have kept mankind safe since time immemorial. We are the last defense against evil. An evil that the rest of mankind has no idea even exists. To you and Shade, these monsters are just evil beings to be vanquished."

Shade was pulled through the door of the confession box by Van Helsing before following the Cardinal through a hidden door and down a flight of stairs that lead to the underground headquarters of the Order. Shade turned towards the Cardinal with a sad expression.

"We're the ones standing there when they die...and become the men they once were," Shade replied sadly, talking about the monsters that the Cardinal mentioned.

"For you, my daughter, this is all a test of faith," The Cardinal said to Shade who looked down at the floor. "And now, we need you to go to the East. To the far side of Romania. An accursed land...terrorized by all sorts of nightmarish creatures. Lorded over by a certain Count Dracula."

"Dracula?" Van Helsing and Shade questioned in confusion.

"Yes," The Cardinal replied casually as they walked past men who were building and creating new creations and weapons. "You've never faced one like this before. Our story begins 450 years ago..." The Cardinal took the two hunters to a large projector where an image of a man

appeared, he had a long hair and beard and he look older then Cardinal Jinette which is really old.

"When a Transylvanian knight named Valerious the Elder...promised God that his family would never rest nor enter heaven...until they vanquished Dracula from their land.They have not succeeded...and they are running out of family.His descendant Boris Valerious, King of the Gypsies.He disappeared almost 12 months ago. His only son, Prince Velkan, and his daughter, Princess Anna. If the two of them are killed before Dracula is vanquished...nine generations of their family...will never enter the gates of St. Peter. For more than four centuries...this family has defended our left flank.They gave their lives. We cannot let them slip into purgatory," The Cardinal announced.

"So....you're sending me into hell?" Shade asked.

"In a manner," The Cardinal replied as he walked over to a table, the two hunters following him. He handed a small scroll with a small torn piece of paper to Van Helsing, Shade looked at it carefully as she tried to read the writing."Valerious the Elder left this here 400 years ago.

We don't know its purpose...but he would not have left it lightly. The Latin inscription translates as:" The Cardinal was cut off by Shade.

"In the name of God, open this door"

"There is an insignia," Van Helsing said.

"Yes, it matches your ring," The Cardinal replied."I think that in Transylvania you may find the answers you both seek." The Cardinal walked off, leaving the two hunters to look around for their friend. Shade caught sight of the familiar blond hair of her friend and grabbed Van Helsing's hand without thinking, she dragged him towards the figure dressed in a brown robe that was looking at some men that were building a new weapon.

"Carl!" Shade exclaimed happily as she and Van Helsing came to a stop in front of the figure.

"Ah there you are. Did you bring Mr. Hyde back, or did you kill him?" Carl questioned as he began to walk towards his work bench.

"Um..." Shade hummed.

"You killed him, didn't you? That's why they get so annoyed. When they ask you to bring

someone back, they don't mean as a corpse," Carl ranted as he stopped and turned towards the two hunters who gave him a look of annoyance. Carl turned away quickly and started towards his work bench again.

"All right, you're in a mood. Come on. I have some things that'll put the bit back in your mouth," Carl announced as they walked pass a black smith. "Any idiot can make a sword." The black smith glared at Carl who gulped and bowed. "Sorry, Father."

"Come along, Carl. Here, take this:" Shade said as she and Van Helsing started to grab weapons and put them in a bag that they gave to Carl.

"Rings of garlic, holy water...silver stake, crucifix," Shade listed as she went, she had to duck as a giant arrow from a catapult flew pass her head.

"Sorry," The men at the catapult shouted.

"Why can't I have one of those?" Van Helsing asked as he pointed to the catapult with his free hand since Shade was still holding his other hand and she didn't realize it.

"Because it nearly killed me," Shade replied as she continued to collect supplies.

"You've never gone after vampires before now, have you?" Carl asked Van Helsing since he know Shade had killed plenty of vampires.

"Vampires, gargoyles, warlocks, they're all the same. Best when cooked well," Van Helsing said with a smile as he watched Shade observe the equipment.

"No, they're not all the same," Carl argued. "A vampire is nothing like a warlock. My granny could kill a warlock."

"Carl, you've never even been out of the abbey. How do you know about vampires?" Shade asked in confusion.

"I read and listen to your stories of vampires," Carl answered as he and the two hunters came to a small contraption with a bottle filled with a clear liquid.

"Here's something new. Glycerine 48," Carl said as he put a drop of the liquid o is finger

before flicking it onto the floor, creating an explosion that caused a few people to scramble away shouting angrily.

"Sorry!" Carl and Shade yelled.

"What in Allah's name is wrong with you?" A man shouted at Carl.

"The air around here is thick with envy," Carl said jokingly as he walked to a crossbow.

"This is my latest invention. It's gas-propelled. Capable of catapulting arrows in rapid succession...at tremendous velocity. Just pull the trigger and hold on. I've heard the stories from Transylvania. Trust me, you'll need this. A work of certifiable genius."

"If you don't say so yourself," Van Helsing mumbled.

"No, I did say so myself," Carl said. "I'm a veritable cornucopia of talent."

Shade saw a contraption that held a glass ball filled with a glowing green liquid and picked it up.

"Did you invent this?" Shade asked Carl.

"I've been working on that for 12 years. It's compressed magma from Mt. Vesuvius...with pure alkaline from the Gobi Desert. It's one of a kind," Carl replied as he tried to snatch it out of Shade's hand.

"What's it for?" Van Helsing asked.

"I don't know, but I'm sure it'll come in handy," Carl replied.

"Twelve years, and you don't know what it does?" Shade said in disappointment.

"I didn't say that. I said I didn't know what it's for. What it does is to create a light source...equal to the intensity of the sun," Carl snapped.

"This will come in handy how?" Van Helsing questioned in boredom.

"I don't know. You can blind your enemies. Charbroil a herd of charging wildebeest. Use your imagination," Carl said.

"No, We're gonna use yours. That's why you're coming with us," Van Helsing said back as he put the glass bal into the bag and headed towards the exit.

"Holy hell be damned I am!" Carl exclaimed as he followed Shade and Van Helsing, Shade gasped and whirled around to look at Carl.

"You cursed. Not very well, but you're a monk," Shade accused.

"You shouldn't curse at all," Van Helsing added with a nod.

"Actually, I'm still just a friar. I can curse all I want..." Carl argued. "Damn it!"

"The Cardinal has ordered you to keep us alive. For as long as possible.," Shade stated.

"But I'm not a field man," Carl countered.

Shade and Van Helsing ignored Carl as they started to walk up the flight of stairs that lead to the outside of the church.

"But Shade, Van Helsing," Carl shouted. "I don't want to go to Transylvania," He cried, as he followed after the hunters.

"Shade?" Van Helsing said causing Shade to look at him.

"Yeah," Shade replied, Van Helsing laughed.

"You can let go of my hand now."

Shade looked confused for a second before realising the heaviness of her hand, she looked down and saw that her and Van Helsing's hands were intertwined so she quickly pulled her hand away and looked down blushing.

"Uh...Sorry," Shade mumbled quickly before walking away, leaving Van Helsing to look at her retreating form in sadness.

Four || Invisible Nightmares

Shade opened her eyes with a gasp, looking around fearfully, noticing that she was In a forest.

"Van Helsing!" She called, her voice echoing off of the trees as it bounced around the empty, never ending woods.

She shakily walked through the woods, using the light of the cloud covers sun to find her way to a small clearing. A man was tied to a post, he seemed to be looking forward like he was looking at someone or something. Shade lifted her foot to walk towards the man and help him but something stopped her.

"Dracula unleashed you for a reason." The man seemed to growl and Shade began to wonder if he was talking to her.

Shade yelped and jumped back as a blue-ish werewolf leapt out of the undergrowth and toward the man. The man freed his hands before climbing to the top of the post where he proceeded to jump up and grab a hook that hung from a rope. Shade watched as men ran from the trees, pulling a lever that made the rope holding the man lift into the air causing the werewolf to jump up to try and grab him. Suddenly a girl appears which makes the wolf jump down, ground beneath the werewolf collapsed and it fell into a cage that the people must have put for the werewolf.

"Pull me up!" The man on the top shouted as the cage started to lift.

"It's stuck!" A man shouted back.

A gasp left Shade as the cage slammed into the man on the rope and he dropped his gun.

Shade ran forward and over to the gun, leaning down to grab it but it just went through her hand.

"What the hell." Shade whispered to herself as she examined her hand.

"No, Anna, it will kill you." Shade heard a man say and looked towards the voice, seeing a man hold the girl she had seen before which she now knew was Anna. That meant the man on the rope was Velkan.

"That's my brother out there." Anna exclaimed and ran towards the cage.

"Cut the rope! Cut it now!" Velkan shouted but the men were still having trouble with the lever. Shade tried to pick up the gun again but it still went through her hand.

"Velkan!" Anna yelled as she stopped to look around for Velkan's gun.

"My gun! Find my gun!" Velkan ordered but the other men seemed to be more busy since the werewolf had started to slam itself into the cage walls, making it rock and creak.

"Find Velkan's gun. It had to be silver bullets." Anna said, going ignored by the man.

"Hurry!" A shout said, it sounded like Velkan but Shade's vision was beckoning blurry and her hearing was fuzzy. She dropped to her knees and watched as Anna spotted the gun. Anna ran over and picked it up but it was too late, the werewolf had managed to break out of the cage. Shade gasped as the werewolf spotted Anna.

"Anna, look out!" Shade shouted along with Velkan.

Shade stood in front of Anna, lifting her hand as a light flooded to her palm. Her veins felt on fire as her eyes turned black and the tight grew until it became a ball of flames. The werewolf jumped towards Anna but Shade let the ball go and it sent the werewolf fly backwards. Everyone stopped and looked around and Shade finally realised that they couldn't see her.

"Run!" Velkan screamed at Anna as the werewolf came bounding through the trees with a snarl. Anna turned and ran through the trees, towards a cliff that Shade could smell had a river at the bottom.

"No, no, no, they aren't allowed to die." Shade muttered to herself and ran after the werewolf and Anna. Shade moved the branches out of the way as she ran as fast as she could, using the skills she had learnt over the years to get in front of the werewolf. Shade stood in front of Anna who was trapped at the very edge of the cliff. The yellow eyes of the werewolf met with Shade's even though it couldn't see her and Shade was sent in an agonising swirl of colours as she went back to the day her parents died and those eyes were what accompanied the fangs that tore her parents to shreds.

A loud thud reached her ears, making her turn around and see that Velkan had appeared and pushed Anna out of the way but sadly it was too late. Velkan fired the gun at the werewolf who leapt at him but its body collided with Velkan's and Shade's making all three fall over the edge of the cliff and into the water below. A scream threatened to escape Shade's mouth but when she opened her mouth, water filled her lungs. The river was pulling her down, drowning her as the need for air became greater. Darkness clouded her vision, her body becoming cold and limp as the river pulled her to its depths.

Shade woke with a scream, desperately reaching for something to hold onto so she didn't go back to the river.

"Shh, shh, it's ok." A voice whispered in her ear as someone pulled her into a hug. Shade buried her head in the person's chest, crying as she clung to them, knowing by scent that it was Van Helsing.

"Your safe Shade, no ones going to hurt you while I'm here." Van Helsing whispered which made the young girl relax slightly. Van Helsing had always come to her when she had nightmares, he could hear her screaming from down the fall and he'd run to her side in an instant. A soft whimper let Shade as she went over the dream again, feeling Van Helsing tighten his arms around her and pulled her closer to him. He lay down with Shade in his arms, stroking her hair as he waited for her to fall back to sleep.

"Velkan." A voice whispered to Shade.

"God....help us." It whispered again and Shade knew that it was Anna, mourning her brothers death. But those words were the last one she heard before the comforting darkness of sleep overtook her.

Five || Little Village

It took two months for Shade, Van Helsing and Carl to get to Transylvania, every second filled with a whining Carl or a slight protest from Shade. It had been agreed, before they left, that Shade would not transform unless it was absolutely necessary. Transylvania was like a safari for supernatural creatures such as Vampires and Werewolves, the original legends had seemed to start from the very core of this wasteland. So Shade, as much as she hated it, had been forced to ride a horse to their destination as soon as they had gotten off the ship they had travelled on. This was when Van Helsing caught the girl in a lie, horses did like her, unlike she said, she just didn't know how to ride them very well.

"Is it too late to turn back?" Shade asked as the horses trotted up a small slope that lead to a town just at the peak of it.

"Sadly, yes." Was Carl's reply who was huddled under a large cloak, while glaring at Shade who was in her usual outfit, unaffected by the cold weather.

The young werewolf could feel the look from her religious partner, taking off her jacket and tying the sleeves around her slender waist. There were some advantages to what she was, especially when it came to the weather, although she hated spring and summer for its hot climaxes. Yet she couldn't help not laugh at the groan of annoyance that came from the young friar who probably wished to condemn her to hell by this point in their journey.

"Let's just skin her and make a fur coat," Carl spoke to Van Helsing. "There'll be enough fur to make two!"

Those words seemed to have put a stop to the laughing of the lycanthrope but it sure as hell set Van Helsing off. The male hunter roared with laughter, actually imagining Shade as a fur coat, jet black fur and hanging over his shoulders. It seemed as if the female could read his thoughts because she began to try and kick him off of his horse with a few small growls of frustration until they finally settled back into a comfortable silence.

It didn't take long to reach the small town, villagers passing by to continue with their daily routine while the three strangers rode into the very centre. People slowly began to take notice of the company who stuck out like sore thumbs with their attire, which looked a lot more luxurious then the rags that the villagers clad themselves in. It was unnerving, to be watched by the villagers, something Shade made sure to comment on as the trio dismounted from their horses and grabbing their stuff.

"Is it always like this?" Carl whispered to Van Helsing who was looking at the villagers that had begun to surround them with all sorts of weapons that ranged from pitch forks to torches.

"Pretty much"

"Damn, I wasn't supposed to be pitch forked until my hair started to turn grey," Shade commented, earning her a glare from her companions, now was not the time to joke about her condition, even if it was funny.

"You, turn around," A feminine voice spoke up from behind the three, making them turn around. "Let me see your faces."

"Why?" Van Helsing and Shade spoke up at the same time, one reply more hostile than the other.

"We don't trust strangers, strangers don't last very long here."

"I wonder why?" The werewolf growled under her breath as she watched a man with long white hair and black leather clothing measure the Van Helsing height.

"5'7 by 2'3," That made Shade want to punch the white haired man in the face.

"You will now be disarmed," The woman announced, waving her hand at the people.

"You can try," Van Helsing spoke clearly so that all of the villagers could hear him, surprisingly calm in this situation.

Now the only reason Shade had stayed so calm was because the woman in front of her was the woman she had been sent here to help and the same woman she had seen in her dream. Anna the last of the Valerious family and a fine reason to cause the young werewolf to strain with her self-control, Anna had done nothing but check out Van Helsing since she appeared.

A scent carried itself upon the wind, causing Shade to tense up, eyes turning black as she stood frozen to the spot. Her eyes held no focus, everything seeming to slip away from around her, as if the only thing keeping her grounded was the fear that settled in the pit of her stomach. Something was coming, the sound of wings slicing through the currents of air making her wince at how they echoed in her ears. The conversation between Anna and Van

Helsing had all but been drowned out, the heavy weight of a hand on the young female's shoulder, pulling her out of the state she had fallen in to. She leaned into it, knowing from scent that it was Van Helsing.

Then she was being pushed to the side by the very man, barely avoiding the vampire that flew pass her with a shriek of frustration. Villagers were running to get inside, screams filling the air along with the sounds of beating wings and the firing of Van Helsing's crossbow.

Shade got to her feet, running to a nearby bell tower and climbing up into the darkness of it. She settled in a crouching position, using this advantage point to take aim and fire her own crossbow at the flying bloodsuckers. Yet her skin tingled with a familiar sensation, making her squirm in discomfort and miss a few of her marks. Every part of her was screaming to change, to fight the vampires as a beast with similar strength, even if it meant breaking the one rule she had been given.

"This counts as a necessary situation," She muttered under her breath, watching a mother grab her child before running to the shelter of a nearby home.

The lycanthrope threw down her weapon before taking a deep breath and leaning over the edge of the position she had taken. She fell, the wind whipping past her face and tugging at the clothes that clung to her, it felt like claws of ice being roughly dragged down her body as her transformation took over her, the adrenaline fuelling the wolf with enough strength to escape its fleshy prison. It had long since stopped hurting, now only a numbness as her body changed its shape. Then she landed, large muscles rippling under the fur that had sprouted from her body, her breathing hard as she looked up with eyes of night, baring her fangs in a challenging snarl at the three vampires.

Six || Inexperienced Werewolf

The sight of the Werewolf added to the panic that had scattered throughout the village, Van Helsing casting the canine creature a quick glance of disapproval before going about with trying to kill the three Vampire brides that had swooped in from the grey sky. Shade watched Van Helsing disappear around the corner with his crossbow before tackling Carl out of the way of one of the Vampires. The two landed with a thud, the Werewolf taking most of the impact so that the friar would not be harmed.

"Oh...god..bl...bless you Shade.." Carl stammered as the two stood, Shade shaking dirt and twigs from her smooth coat before replying with a short huff of air.

Wasting little time, the wolf scanned her surroundings, eyes zooming in on the Vampire that was making a beeline towards an unsuspecting Van Helsing who had his back towards the nightmarish creature. A savage snarl ripped from the wolfs maul, her taunt muscles propelling her forward as she raced to meet the other creature halfway. Running up the statue close by, the werewolf waited until she reached the top before using her back legs to launch herself into the air, tackling the Vampire through a wall of one of the homes. The two creatures landed in a heap on the floor, a family screaming at the sight, running to a more safer room just at the Werewolf used its spear like teeth to tear into the wings of the creature beneath her, resulting in the Vampire clawing the Werewolf across the face.

Whimpering, Shade was forced to let go, momentarily blinded by the injury, allowing time for the Vampire to escape the clutches of the Werewolf. Blood dripped from the wound, becoming matted in the fur of the muzzle of the she-wolf as she used her one good eye to help her out of the building. The sight she was greeted with was the sight of Anna straddling Van Helsing due to both being dropped by one of the Vampires which made Shade's heart clench painfully in her chest. Turning away, the wolf focused on the job at hand, even though she was slightly at a disadvantage with her damaged eye.

"Shade! Watch out!" Carl shouted towards the Werewolf.

Shade turned to look towards the young male which was her first mistake, a force slamming into her side and throwing the Werewolf through another wall, this time with a piece of unhinged and damaged wood piercing her leg as she landed. She gave a howl of pain, feeling the pain shoot through her viens. the one problem with her Werewolf form was that she always felt weak. Mustering up all the strength she could, Shade lifted herself off the piece of wood, limping out of the home with a growl of pain and annoyance. It clearly had been a while since she properly fought in her werewolf form.

The sun had come up now so the wolf was able to take a small break as some of the villagers began to slowly come out of their homes to see if the coast was clear. They still side stepped around the Werewolf as it made its way to the centre of the village, Carl helping her by cleaning Shade's eye with some holy water. It did allow her to be able to open the eye but it still needed proper cleaning later on. Even if the sun was up, Shade could still feel the presence of the Vampires, her fur bristling as she looked around growling. Taking note of

Shade's behaviour and a noise coming from the well, Van Helsing moved to look down the well to see if the Vampires had used the darkness to hide in.

Just as the sun began to set, Shade launched towards the well, colliding with a Vampire just as it burst from the depths of the well. focusing on speed rather than strength, the she-wolf was ready this time, dodging attacks from the wings and claws of the Vampire, only ducking in close to be able to land a single hit before leaping out of the way again. A scream stole the focus of the Werewolf, a small child left stranded in the swarm of people as another of the Vampires closed in. A swirl of energy swirled in Shade's chest until it became a dull ache in her lungs until she released it with a roar, a wave of sound knocking her current enemy away. Now free, Shade ignored the pain of her leg, sliding through the mud to take the child into her arms. Once she had a hold of the child, she jumped out of the way of the second Vampire, landing close to the church just as Van Helsing shot the third Vampire with holy water covered arrows.

Nothing was more satisfying than watching a vampire crumble away to ash while screaming and Shade was more than happy to watch but she did cover the eyes of the child she had so that the little girl would not be able to witness such a sight.

"Marishka!" The unholy scream of the two other Vampires as they flew away had the Werewolf cringing as the sound echoed through her sensitive ears.

But the fight wasn't over yet, it seems that the death of Marishka had angered the villagers who now surrounded the Shade, Carl and Van Helsing as they moved back to the centre of the village. The Werewolf was far too tired to listen to the angry cries of the villagers, snarling only once when one went to poke her with a rake.

"Mommy!" The young girl cried from the arms of the Werewolf that was still holding her protectively.

Shade let out a soft noise, moving through the many villagers that separated as she made her way to the mother of the child, handing the young girl back to the cowering woman. That didn't stop the wolf from affectionately nuzzling the young girl before heading back to Van Helsing and Carl, only now changing back.

"They are going to let us stay, Anna has offered us beds to sleep in." Carl whispered to Shade as she approached.

"Oh yay, a place they can smother me in my sleep." She replied sarcastically to her friend, glaring at Anna.

Van Helsing soon joined the two as they went to collect the horse, pulling Shade aside to look her over. His eyes held an emotion she could not quite place but the one emotion she could see was anger.

"What were you thinking? You could have been killed!"

"I thought that maybe I could...." Shade began to try and explain herself but was cut off by Van Helsing.

"Thought what? That we....I wouldn't care if...." He took a deep breath, making the female smile.

Shade took a step forward, wrapping her arms around him, ignoring the pain of her wounds.

"I know that I don't have much experience with fighting as a wolf but I promise that I will be fine Van Helsing.....you forget that I have something worth fighting for."

With a sigh, Van Helsing finally let his arms embrace the young werewolf, allowing himself to be comforted by her.

Seven || Run Free

Shade already hated the inside walls of the place in which she had been brought to, that overwhelming pressure of jealousy welling inside her chest once more at how close Anna was being with Van Helsing. The mere sight made her think about why she had never told Van Helsing about her feelings, why she always buried them when she realised how close they were becoming. It hurt her, she knew she could never have the normal life she had been wishing for, of a family, without hunting the dark forces of the earth.

Sighing softly, Shade took her leave from the group, wandering until she found a quiet room to rest in for the night, the flickering of the candles in the dark room making her feel at ease for a simple moment. Piece by piece, she threw her armour and weapons down, stepping towards the large windows to stare at the moon, blinking in and out of existence from behind the clouds. The white orb reflected in the swirling blue depths of her eyes, a soft whisper tickling at the back of her ear.

"Run."

Every time she heard the word, it made her heart ache once more, not knowing what the whisper wanted her to do. Run away with Van Helsing? Run away from her pain and never look back? or just give into the primal urge that was always clawing at her chest, trying to break free of the human flesh it had been imprisoned in.

"Run..." She whispered to herself, closing her eyes.

She imagined the wind in her hair, pulling at her as she raced against it, the burning of her limbs as she let the world fall away from her, all but a blur as she passed it by. The soil beneath her feet, moulding to her feet as she pressed down into it, pushing herself faster. Hearing the sounds of woodland creatures calling out around her. Eventually a weightlessness took over her, fatigue nibbling at her body until she fell upon the hard floor, breathing softly beneath the gaze of the moon that peered through her window.

At some point in the night, something fell and thudded loudly upon the floor, lulling the werewolf at of her slumber. Somehow she had managed to go from the floor to the comfort of the bed that wrapped around her, trying to drag her back to sleep. Yawning, she strained her ears to see if she had been imagining things, knowing Carl probably left a window open. Hearing nothing at first, she laid back down to sleep but her nose refused to let her stop investigating, the scent of another werewolf lingering in the air. That was when she noticed her wide opened door, wet footprints leading from the outside to her bed before back tracking.

Leaping up, she grabbed her bow and ran out of the room, making sure to keep her footsteps light, eyes glowing a bright crystal blue as she scanned the darkness around her. Eventually she came to a corner in which upon turning, was met with a sight that had her own insides churning with the need to vomit. There, clawing at the wall and his skin was Valken, Anna's brother, or what remained of him, the werewolf inside him was clawing free with a vengeance as the moon resurfaced.

Shade heard a gunshot, the noise ringing in her ears, as she continued to stare. Dust crumbled from the bullet hole that was left next to the male Werewolf's head, causing it to roar and leap out of the large glass window beside it. Van Helsing ran to the glass door below it to look at the now running werewolf, grabbing his weapons before checking up on Anna. There it was, that burning feeling in the heart of the female werewolf that looked on ahead, fingers relaxing around the bow in her hand, letting it drop to the floor with a dull thud.

Brushing pass the pair before her, she walked to the balcony that Van Helsing had just been standing on, crawling up onto the stone structure with shaky hands. The harsh rain licked her skin as the wind tried to tackle her backward, the dark sky growling with the threat of thunder.

"Shade what are you doing?" Carl called to her, voice overwhelmed by the wheather that drowned her ears.

A hand encircled her wrist, making her look back at the person holding her. Staring into Van Helsing's eyes normally made her feel safe, happy and warm but now she just felt to empty to feel anything as she stared into those eyes, knowing she had to distance herself.

"Shade...let's go." He spoke softly, waiting for her.

She placed her hand gently over his, giving it a small squeezed.

"I'll see you out there." She replied before brushing off his hand.

Taking a step back, she allowed herself to fall off the balcony, falling against the forces of nature that fought against her descent. She took a deep breath, allowing herself to transform, the process tickling at her skin as she took on canine features. Once she fully transformed, she used her claws to dig into the cliff side, slowing herself down enough to be able to safely land on the soggy ground.

The wolf growled beneath her breath, straining forward with determination to find the other werewolf, knowing she would have to stop him before he killed someone. Even if she was sent to protect him, once the moon sank, he would forever be a servant to his own mind. Claws dug into the earth as she ran, fur matted and soaked through by the rain, puffs of smoke escaping her panting maul, eyes slitted and cold. The wolf was on the hunt, powered by the many memories and emotions that began to well up inside her. Like the hope that she didn't see Van Helsing out tonight, hoping she may be able to leave before he notices her lack of presence, she didn't want to get hurt by the reminder of her condition anymore and she didn't want to get him killed because of it. She had to know...needed to know...if there was a cure out there to rid her of this curse.

Eight || Come Back To Me

Shade felt like she had searched the whole village, unable to find any sign of the werewolf through the fog that had crept up on her from nowhere, it wasn't thick yet it still provided the other creature with cover from the hunter. The rain had stopped for what seemed like hours ago, the snow slippery in parts of the alleys and small paths between the houses.

There, a slight scratch of wood to herself, causing the she-wolf to jump backwards as the other werewolf leapt from the roof of one of the homes. Growling, Shade ran towards him, tackling into his side to knock him off balance before she sank her teeth into his back leg. Using the grip she had, the hunter tugged at the flesh in her mouth, using her strength to throw the other werewolf through the wall of barn to her side. Another growl slipped from her maul as she leapt after him, noticing the back door of the barn swing shut, knowing the other werewolf had made a quick getaway to avoid a prolonged confrontation with Shade.

Feeling frustration building within her, the wolf kicked at a nearby create to let out her emotions before giving chase to the other werewolf, now using the shadows to help her disappear from the sight of all creatures. With her black fur, it was easy for her to hunt without detection if she wanted but with Valken having brown fur in his werewolf form, it was harder to do so. Keeping her footstep soft, the hunter was soon making her way into the graveyard, sniffing at the solid ground below, taking note of every scent that happened to linger around it. A new, familiar scent joined the mix, making the she-wolf's chest tingle with the warmth of a fluttering heart, the scent of the man she had known for many years now. Blue eyes found his cloaked form amongst the mist, watching him carefully, so she could see if he was hurt in anyway. Just as she was about to step out of the shadows, the grave digger who had given her goosebumps appeared, speaking with Van Helsing while also measuring the hunter out of habit of his job.

"Nice night, this is a bit tight for me." The slimy weasel chuckled. "But for you it's a perfect fit. What a coincidence."

A small growl left the she-wolf, alerting both men to her presence.

"I see the wolfman hasn't killed you yet."

"Don't worry, he's getting to it." Van Helsing replied, looking around. "You don't seem bothered."

"I'm no threat to him" The grave digger spoke casually, digging a little bit of a grave he had been working on. "I'm just the one who cleans up after him...if you get my meaning."

"Little late to be digging graves, isn't it?" As soon as he asked the question, a noise from behind him made Van Helsing turn around to inspect the darkness

"Never too late to dig graves." The grave diggers voice became tighter as he gripped his shovel.

Shade growled at the sight, ready to lunge at any minute to intercept the grave daggers oncoming attack.

"You never know when you'll need a fresh one." The grave digger turn to hit Van Helsing with the shovel but the hunter turned just in time to catch the weapon in his gloved hands.

"Oh, sorry. It's just my nature." Was the petty attempt of an apology that came from the grave digger before his eyes grew wide.

His look alerted Van Helsing of the danger behind him, only managing to leap out of the way at the last second. Shade looked on, wincing at the slight crunch she heard from the body of the grave digger before he rolled lifeless into one of his own graves.

Van Helsing shot at Valken just as Anna appeared in an attempt to stop him from hurting her brother. In his own anger, Van Helsing grabbed Anna by her throat and pinned her to a wall, Shade quickly leaping in with a growl to intervene. As much as she hated Anna, the two hunters were still here to protect her from Dracula.

"No, let her go Van Helsing." Shade mumbled softly, now taking on her human form. "She was only trying to protect her brother."

Van Helsing sighed and let go of Anna, turning to Shade. His eyes scrunched together as he stepped closer to his blue haired companion, taking her face between her hands and wiping blood from a cut on her face.

"What happened?"

"Oh, Valken must have scratched me when he jumped out at me earlier, strange of him to not actually try and kill me." Shade smiled weakly and pulled away from Van Helsing, not wanting to seem so weak at the moment in time.

"You knew he was my brother?" Anna's voice piped up, laced with the poison of her anger.

"Yes." The two hunters replied.

"And yet you still tried to kill him!"

"He will kill people Anna." Van Helsing tried to reason with her.

"He can't help it, its not his fault!"

"But he will do it anyway!" Shade snapped at the other female, the growl of her wolf slightly coming through to try and get Anna to calm down and shut up.

"What about you then, you have control." Anna pointed out to the female hunter, glaring her down.

"Yet no one knows why, not even me Anna. What I am, comes from my past, it is beyond me and I have been constantly searching for answered on why." Shade sighed and shook her head, her head feeling like it was about to burst.

"I hear Dracula has a cure, if there is any chance we can save my brother....and cure Shade then we have to go after him."

Shade and Van Helsing shared a look with each other before Van Helsing took her hand and led her to the side, not wanting Anna to overhear their conversation.

"Shade, Valken can lead us to Dracula." He started, speaking softly as his thumb ran over her knuckles. "But if he does have a cure....would you..like to cure yourself?"

"There is no need to ask, I would cure myself without hesitation if I was alone. But I have you and Carl to look after so keep the cure to yourself." Shade spoke strongly, as much as she did want that cure, she had to protect Van Helsing and she couldn't do that without her werewolf side and the random abilities that appeared in her times of great need.

"Then lets go, I want you to track in your wolf form, once we find them then we will split up." Van Helsing told her.

Shade turned to leave but was quickly stopped by Van Helsing, once again grabbing her wrist, this time pulling her close and resting his forehead on hers.

"For the love of god, be safe and....come back to me."

The words made her heart leap into her throat, she didn't know what to say so she just nuzzled her head against his then pulled away, walking a few paces away to be able to transform.

Once they had suited up, Shade led Van Helsing, Anna and their horses to a large castle, a warm glow coming from one of the large windows of the nearest tower. Shade decided to go on ahead, using her nose to lead her into a secret passage way that ran into the heart of the castle. The wolf shimmered her way through, growing weak the further she went in, knowing that she would not be able to stay in this form for much longer now that she had forced herself to transform more than once in such a short period of time. Her claws pulled her out into the open, where she shook many cobwebs from her fur.

She looked around, noticing that she was in what seemed to be a study of some sort. As she was about to make her way out of the room, a sliver of paper caught her eye, lingering on the edge of the icy cold fireplace. Slowly, she made her way over, picking the paper up and dusting away some of the soot that lingered on it. Her eyes grew wide, the feeling that had drew her near it, grew in her chest like a tidal wave. There on the paper, was a small painting of a family, a mother, a father and there between them, was a blue haired girl with the brightest smile in the world. Shade whined and pulled her hand to her chest, cradling the picture, she may not remember her past too well but she could not mistake the younger version of herself. Careful as to not tear the paper with her claws, the werewolf folded it into a thin rectangle and slipped it beneath the latch of the thick armoured bracelet she wore.

Taking a deep breath to calm herself, the wolf soon found herself making her way out of the room, the sound of thunder meeting her ears. Yet the screams that accompanied the thunder had her shivering with slight fear and disgust. She raced through the halls, using the sounds to help her find her way to what appeared to be a huge lab with small creatures wandering

around. A flash of lightening drew the werewolf's attention towards an opening in the ceiling where she could see Valken strapped to a machine.

Now that she had something to do, the werewolf focused on the machines, ramming into them while also using her claws and fangs to bite and claw into the many wires around her, trying to destroy whatever was happening her. While she was doing so, she could here gunshots from somewhere else in the castle, making her chest swell with pride, knowing that Van Helsing was doing something to try and kill Dracula. Something bit into her leg, making the she-wolf howl in pain before whirling around on the creature and biting off it head with powerful jaws. Seeing that more of the small creatures closing in on her, the werewolf stood on her back legs and let out a challenging roar, the walls seeming to quake around them. As each one leapt at her, she either bit them or threw them away by swinging out one of her clawed hands. During her preoccupied state, the wolf saw Anna climbing the machine in an attempt to help her brother.

Shade was tiring quickly and as soon as she heard the furious roar from Dracula, she knew it was time to leave. She leapt up the machine to pull Anna away just as Valken was about to transform again, throwing the woman onto her back and racing to meet Van Helsing at the side of the castle that overlooked the river. The gap was wide and the two hunters knew that, which is why Van Helsing shot a line of wire into the trees opposite them so that they may cross before they were caught in the overload of the many machines behind them. Van Helsing pulled Anna close to him as he readied himself to zip down the wire before turning to the werewolf beside him.

"Shade, come on, hurry up and turn back. We need to get out of her." .

The werewolf began to change back just as a nearby explosion hit the castle from a bolt of lightening that hit a tower, a stray piece of metal flying towards them and embedding itself into the body of the half transformed hunter. Shade looked down at the metal that had pushed through to her front, shaky hands reaching up in shock, blood running down her front.

"No! Shade!" Van Helsing shouted, moving to grab her.

"Van...Helsing..." she gazed up at him, just as she stumbled backwards, foot slipping on the wet stone and sending her over the edge. The wind roared as she fell towards the river below, feeling numbed by the pain of her wound. She felt herself hit the river, the icy water swallowing her into its depths, her eyes fluttering closed. Everything turned to black as the river carried her away, the last thing to cross her mind was the hope that both Van Helsing and Anna made it out alive.

Nine || I promised

The darkness had faded into a beautiful colourful landscape, rolling green hills that spread out into many fields that seemed to be filled to the brim with many different crops. The sky was bright and blue, no storm clouds, no birds, just a empty blue nothingness. A small river divided the land, lapping at the bank with lazy touches, a body blocking the water from continuing its nature process.

Taking in a sharp breath, Shade shocked herself into consciousness, the sudden intake of breath forcing her into a coughing fit as she slowly began to pull herself from the place she had been thrown out on. The first thing she did was clutch her lower stomach, looking down in confusion at the sight of nothing but her own flesh, the explosion still raw in her mind yet no wound was present. Looking up, Shade scanned her surroundings, using her hand to shield her eyes from the glaring beams of the sun that was beating down on her. She didn't quite know where she was but she could clearly tell that she was no longer in Transylvania.

Slowly, she edged herself away from the river, taking in the painful picture of this brightly created scenery, catching sight of two figures in the background. Continuing forward, Shade strained her eyes to make out the two people but sadly they had their backs to her.

"Excuse me! Hello? Where am I?" She called as she came even closer to them, coughing once again as she breathed deeply.

The two figures turned around, making the young hunter stop in her tracks, eyes wide open with slight fear and shock. She studied them for the moment, reaching for the image beneath her bracelet, fingers sweeping against nothing, she must have lost it in the river. There, before her were the two people in the photo with her youngerself, the man and woman, her parents.

"H...how? You're dead..." She stuttered, unable to even think of the words that could explain what was going on.

"It's nice to see you too." The man chuckled softly before his face fell into a small frown. "Although, I did not expect to see you so soon into your life."

"What your father means to say is.....we have been waiting for you Shade, my dear little girl." It was the woman who spoke this time, stepping towards the girl so that she could press her hand to Shade's cheek.

"Father? What?" The hunter was far to confused to even try and pull away, looking between the man and woman. "Are you saying....I'm dead?"

The man and woman shared a look, both frowning as they took a step away from her, now looking out towards the other side of the river. Slowly turning around, Shade followed their gazes, her blue eyes met the pitch black eyes of a creature that stood across from them. The closer Shade looked, the more she began to remember those dark eyes, the eyes of the wolf that was stuck on the other side of the river.

"It can't be..that's me..." Shade gasped softly, staring deeper into the eyes of the wolf that had been separated from her body.

And as she reached a hand up to push the hair from her face, she noticed that her once blue hair had now faded to a dark brown. Her eyebrows furrowed in confusion, as she stared at the strands of her hair, tears beginning to well in her eyes at the realisation that she was dead.

"I can't be dead, I just can't!" She exclaimed suddenly, turning to face the two people standing behind her. "I....I promised Van Helsing that I would come back.....that I would help kill Dracula."

As she began to cry, her father stepped forward and wrapped his arms around his little girl, letting her weep into his shoulder. He felt his heart clench tightly as he listened to her soft sobs, stroking her hair in an attempt to calm her down.

"I am so sorry Shade, this was my fault." He whispered softly to her. "I was a werewolf once...I worked for Dracula but when I met your mother, it was as if the wolf couldn't hurt her, even if both me and the wolf tried. I stole some of the cure to turn myself human but your mother was pregnant before I even became human again. She was the only woman to love and bare the child of a werewolf. Once you were born, once we saw you had special abilities, we tried to hide you but Dracula found us."

Shade pulled away to look up at her fathers face, tears still streaming down her face, as much as she wanted to be angry at him for doing this to her, she just couldn't find it in herself to blame him. Even as she looked over at her mother, all she felt was the overwhelming feeling of relief. She may have found them in death but she understood why they had did what they did, she would have done the same if she and Van Helsing...she had to stop herself from thinking about it, even more tears running down her face.

"You can control light energy, like the moon, your roar is the voice of those that Dracula killed." Her mother piped up as Shade looked back over at the wolf that was trying to cross the river, too afraid to touch the water.

"You were born to kill him." Her father added, following the gaze of his daughter. "That is why you are going back."

That seemed to only make Shade cry even more, her father taking her arm and leading her towards the river, turning her to face him so that he could give her one last hug, her mother joining in only moments later.

"We wish we could have more time with you sweetie, but it just isn't your time to die yet." He mother spoke softly before letting go.

"Just touch the wolf and you may leave, we will still be waiting for you." Her father sighed and pulled away, joining his wife at the edge of the riverbed.

Shade smiled softly, taking small steps into the river, turning away from them. Every step towards the wolf part of herself took more effort than the last, like a force was trying to keep her away from it. Reaching out her hand, she pushed closer, feeling the pull even stronger

now as her fingers brushed the fur of the creature in front of her. The world exploded into a bright light, blinding the hunter with the overwhelming flash, everything crumbling away from her.

Bolting up, the hunter groaned at the pain in her stomach, she was on a riverbed this time, covered in mud and blood. Shade looked around at the icy darkness around her, relieved to see the sight of the Transylvanian wilderness. Forcing herself to her knees, she gritted her teeth to push the pain away, crawling towards the edge of the river. Her blue hair was back, yet it seemed to glow beneath the moon that still hung in the black canvas of night. Taking a deep breath, the hunter allowed her fingers to run over the metal that stuck out of her flesh, wrapping her hands tightly around it before mustering up all of her strength to rip it out. It took a few tugs but as soon as the metal slid from her body, the scream of pain she had been trying to hide, suddenly ripped from her vocal box.

"Okay, that was stupid." She spoke to no one in particular as she began to scoop up water, cleaning the wound as best she could.

After a few moment, the hunter was finally about to gather her wits, knowing she didn't have enough time to sit around and ponder the possible infection to her wound. Forcing herself to her feet, using a tree to do so without falling, the young girl finally took in her surroundings. The castle she had come from was not to far from where she was, maybe twenty or so miles north, if she started now then maybe she would be able to catch Van Helsing scent before it disappeared.

Although she knew it was going to hurt, Shade mentally prepared herself for her transformation, almost screaming in pain as her bones cracked and popped beneath her flesh. She could feel the slow drag of them as they moved, feeling the elongation of her face as it morphed into a muzzle and the unmistakable itch of her ears as they lengthened and dragged themselves to the top of her head. Her long claws dug into the earth as her hands began to morph, feet crunching and bending into a new position to make this new body even more comfortable for the wolf that was worming itself out of its cage. Soon, the transformation was complete and the wolf flexed its claws as it threw its head back and howled, the noise echoing among the many trees that surrounded it.

Dropping down onto all fours, the werewolf growled and began forward with a small trot before building enough speed to become a run, dodging the trees as she began her journey back towards the castle, only one thing on her mind.

Her promise.

Ten || Still Need You

Shade had ran for what felt like a lifetime, losing Van Helsing's scent as soon as she managed to cross the river, something that had required her utmost courage due to her last encounter with the river. Yet losing the scent did not stagger her in her attempt to find her fellow hunter, somehow only stirring an emotion deep within her that tugged at the instincts of the wolf inside her. It hurt her though, the separation between her and Van Helsing, this was the first since they had met that she had been separated from him, without knowing how to get back to him and it scared her more than she realised, showing her just how attached she had grown to the man that had plagued her heart and mind for so long. Even as she wondered, paws bleeding from the lack of rest, she began to realise that she would have to tell Van Helsing, because she would regret it if she died again without getting it off her chest.

Eventually, the search became an endless wander of the wilderness, mind fogged with many thoughts and body numbed by the forces of nature that worked against the wolf. Slowly, the path led to a outstretched cliff that hung over the forest of Romanian, a slab of rock for the werewolf to fall upon with a small whine, seemingly losing herself to her own belief of failure. Her eyes would shift between the blue of herself and the abyss of the black eyes of her wolf, unable to decide who this body belonged to. For the first time, in a long time, Shade was afraid, feeling it clench around her heart like the slave collar of an animal in a cage. Allowing her eyes to move towards the stars, the werewolf's eyes were slowly filled with the gaze of the moon as it rose over the horizon, filling her with the warmth of the moon's embracing light. Letting out a small huff of a laugh, the wolf heaved herself to her paws with much effort, growling at the pain that accompanied the movement. She didn't know what spurred her forward but as her mind began to clear, she noticed that she now stood at the very edge of the cliff, muzzle tilted upwards in an attempt to feel the rays of light stroke at the fur of head. Something seemed to grow inside her, blooming like a flower in the hands of the sun, a feeling that swept through her like nothing she had ever felt before. It escaped her in the form of a howl, far softer than she anticipated, seeming more like a song than the howl of a wolf without purpose. Yet she didn't stop, didn't allow the sound to be drowned out by the wind as she sung her heart out to the moon, letting the world crumble away from her own reality, a single memory creeping into the foresight of her mind.

The memory was of her and Van Helsing, the day he had found out about her curse, the day she had wanted to run away and also a memory that she had no idea she had. They were hunting a warlock, walking side by side as they searched the darkness of the castle before them, Shade leading her companion through the cobwebs and shadows. For years they had been together now, their methods of hunting now legendary among those that supported them in their fight to kill the dark forces of the world. Over those years, they had become close, without realising it, they had made a connection with each other that no one would ever be able to understand. Coming to a large room, the hunters came to a stop, silently sharing a look before separating to search the room for their target, listening carefully to their surroundings. They had been searching for only a few minutes when Shade saw a shadow creeping towards Van Helsing, she knew she would not be able to get to him in time but another part of her refused to allow the creature to harm the man. Changing into her wolf form, the werewolf surged forward and tackled the creeping warlock, drawing the attention of

the other hunter as she wrestled the creature, wrapping her powerful jaws around the warlocks neck as she bit down into its neck, tearing its head from his shoulders with a low growl. The wolf stood there for a moment, gathering her mind before slowly turning towards the eyes that bore into her back, she was met with the pointed end of a loaded arrow, Van Helsing glaring at her. She whined softly, bowing her head as she slowly turned back to the blue haired girl that had spent so much time next to Van Helsing. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she cried, telling him how sorry she was. telling him that it was okay if he killed her for being a monster, that she would not blame him for doing what was right. Yet the arrow never came, instead, he had kneeled in front of her, placing his crossbow upon the stoned floor before cupping her face in his large hands. He had forced her to look into his eyes, a small smile gracing his lips as he gazed into her teary eyes, assuring her that she was not a monster and how a monster would not have saved his life the way she had. He had accepted her, held her until the tears stopped, whispering in her ear every now and then to tell her that she wasn't a monster.

Coming back to the present, the wolf slowly came to a silent standstill, allowing the memory to stay fresh within her mind, making her heart swell with happiness. She was filled with a new determination to find Van Helsing, even if she wore herself out. Nothing was going to stop her from finding him, four days without him was enough for her, it already felt like she had lost him, slightly wandering if it was how he felt when he had watched her plunge into the icy water of that river. Shaking her head with a small growl, the wolf turned her back from the edge of the cliff, leaping back into the forest as she ran in the direction her instincts pulled her towards, eyes swirling and merging with the black and blue of both human and wolf.

The sun had risen twice by the time Shade had managed to come to a small town, changing into her human form so that she would be able to walk through the slightly busy streets, stealing a jacket from one of the stools so that the attached hood would hide her face from anyone that might recognise her. As she walked through the streets, the sound of powerful wings beating the wind made her look up, catching the sight of a one of the vampire brides as she flew away from the village, saved from the sun by the dark clouds that covered it. That was when she heard it, the squeaky, unmistakable voice of her favourite little friar. Smiling softly, the woman made her way towards it, rounding the corner of a wall that led to a path that went under a bridge that connected the village to the city beside it. There stood Carl, huddled with Van Helsing and a man she had never seen before, they were talking in low voices, not having noticed the girl that now watched them in both relief and amusement. Relief soon turned into slight worry when Van Helsing pulled out his dart pipe, looking towards the large man that stood beside him and Carl.

"You know, not everything is solved by your damn blow darts." Shade spoke up, drawing the attention of the three men, slowly lowering her hood.

"Shade?" Van Helsing stared at her, frozen in spot.

"I promised I would come back to you." She spoke softly, tears beginning to form in her eyes. "But you have no idea....how much it hurt not to see you when I opened my eyes."

Even as Van Helsing stared at her now, she could have sworn that his own eye had begun to fill with tears as he listened to her, his own heart clenching tightly in his chest. Without missing a beat, he stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Shade, letting her bury her head in his neck as she silently cried.

"I know exactly how it feels." He whispered in her ear, his voice slightly strained.

His words only seemed to make Shade cry even more as she now clung to him, she had tried to be the sarcastic wolf, make a joke about her own death but seeing Van Helsing had completely broke the wall she had tried to rebuild after all this time. But as the pain came back to her, the pain of being seperated from him, she knew she needed to tell him how she felt, even if he didn't return her feelings, she just needed him to know.

"I...I..I felt so lost..." Shade cried into Van Helsing's shoulder, having to pull away slightly to look up at his face, tears freely falling down her cheeks. "I know, deep down that...n..no matter what I still need you and...I..I need to tell you..."

She didn't manage to get anymore words out before she was silenced by the warm lips of the man holding her, she was slightly shocked but soon her body melted into him, her lips slightly pushing back against his as she kissed him back. She poured her feelings into the kiss, her hands balling into fist as she clung at his jacket, not wanting to let him go. But eventually they had to pull away to breath, their lungs crying out from the lack of air. Van Helsing rested his forehead against hers, not caring that he was showing emotion because for her, he knew he could show weakness and she would still see him as the strongest person in the world. Almost losing each other had brought up a lot of emotions that the two had tried to bury, both far too stubborn to admit to them until now.

"I know." Van Helsing finally spoke, pulling away slightly to look at Shade, afraid she may disappear if he closed his eyes. "I need you too."

{Author Note}: Really hope this doesn't suck.

Also want to hear your thoughts on this story because it means a lot to me that you are taking time to read this also want to see how you guys want this to end <3

Eleven || I Didn't Do It For You

Shade had been introduced to the creature that accompanied Carl and Van Helsing, almost acting like a temporary fulfilment to the space that had been punched into their small group by the kidnapping of the princess. The news of current events left the young werewolf feeling rather disappointed, she had made quite a promise to the cause that she fought for and now she felt as if she had failed the reason why they had come to this desolate land in the first place. But nothing could quite compare to the pain that clawed at her heart when she saw the bloodied bite of a werewolf on Van Helsing's shoulder. Hot rage flashed in her eyes, a primal feeling gripping her body in an iron grip as she made to walk away, stopping only when Van Helsing wrapped his large hand around her upper arm, keeping her from going anywhere that he was not able to see her.

"Shade, the werewolf responsible is dead." He told her, a shadow of guilt swirling in the abyss of his iris.

"Now you will become that in which you have hunted so passionately." The creature of their group spoke up with a slightly angry edge to his voice.

Carl had taken a moment to whisper to Shade, revealing the creature as the experiment of the late Doctor Frankenstein who was supposed to have been killed along with this creature because of his crimes in grave robbery.

Sighing softly, Shade slipped her hand into Van Helsing's pocket, small fingers wrapping around the cool metal of the dart pipe. She pulled it from his pocket, loading a dart into the barrel of it, her eyes looking into that of Frankenstein's creature with unsettling sadness and regret.

"I'm sorry, this is the only way to defeat Dracula and get back the asset in which we were charged to protect."

"May others be as passionate in their hunting of you both." Was his reply were the dart was shot into the side of his neck, causing him to lose consciousness and fall to the ground.

The weight of Van Helsing's hand settled on Shade's shoulder, squeezing it gently in an attempt to comfort her for her actions. He understood what she was doing, after he had told her about the conversation with the vampire bride Allera, he knew that Shade would want to go to the ball to save Anna.

"Let's do this."

Shade turned, leaving Carl and Van Helsing to carry Frankenstein's monster as they made their way to the location of the ball, picking up their masquerade costumes along the way. In their travels, they managed to find an old graveyard that they were able to use to hide Frankenstein's monster in an old crypt.

"Well, they won't find him in here." Shade chuckled slightly as she walked out of the bushes towards the two disguised men that were dragging a large wooden beam that they planned to lean against the door to the crypt to ensure it was unable to be opened by the being inside.

"I am sure this is some sort of sin." Carl piped up, his voice shaking slightly as he spoke.

"God will forgive us." Van Helsing countered as he continued to lift the beam.

"We need to save Anna." Shade added as she watched the two struggle with mild amusement.

"You don't think the hat's a bit much?" Carl questioned, turning to Shade for her opinion, completely forgetting about the task that he was suppose to be helping with, which he was reminded of when Van Helsing called for his aid.

"How many commandments can we break in one day?" Carl continued, causing his female companion to giggle, he shook his head at her before turning his attention to Van Helsing. "Anyway, according to the book, you won't turn into a werewolf until the rising of your first full moon."

"That is two nights from now." Shade mumbled out, not really wanting to hear this side of the conversation but that didn't stop Carl from saying more, all three of them walking away from the now barricaded crypt.

"You'll still be able to fight Dracula's hold over you until the last stroke of Midnight."

Sensing the discomfort from Shade as she leaned into him, Van Helsing looked over at Carl, attempting to finish the conversation.

"Then I have noting to worry about." He replied, wrapping his arm around Shade's waist.

"My God, you should be terrified." Carl exclaimed.

Shade growled at Carl, her eyes flashing dangerously, feeling a pang of hurt as his words caused a wave of offence to wash over her. Carl gave her a apologetic look, mumbling a soft sorry under his breathe.

"We still have forty eight hours to find a solution." The Friar quickly added, trying to cover for himself before changing the subject. "You sure he can't get out of there?"

"Not without some help from the dead." Van Helsing answered, moving his arm so that his hand could hold Shades as they walked, moving further and further away from the graveyard and even closer to the castle upon the hill.

It didn't take them long to make it to the castle, yet it did take quite a bit of time to sneak pass the masses of vampires that swarmed the place. The overpowering smell of their swarming made Shade feel sick, the scent burning her nose to the point that almost made in impossible to continue forward. She had to lean against the wall for a moment, her vision refusing to focus as the world seemed to swim around her until she was anchored by the feeling of Van Helsing wrapping his arms around her.

"Shade.....are you sure you can do this?" He whispered to her, his breath tickling the side of her cheek.

"I have to." She replied, slowly peeling herself away from him, steadying herself on her own two feet.

Van Helsing nodded, letting her go on ahead as he and Carl made their way towards the balcony that over looked the ballroom, leaving Shade to complete her own task in trying to find anything that could give them an idea of where Dracula's lair is.

She stuck to the shadows as she wandered, passing many open doorways, surrounded by the eerie cold that flowed around her like the river that swallowed her not so long ago. Shivering, the young werewolf came to a picture, it was of a woman and her faithful hound as it rested by her side with her hand upon its head. Shade looked at it with great interest, spying a series of elegantly curved letters at the bottom, a message written in Latin for those that could read it.

"A companion with loyalty like no other, it will seek its master through the storms of hell until they are once again complete, for it must trust its heart to seek that which it cannot see." Shade whispered to herself, reading the words of the artist.

Before she could do anything else, the sudden voice of Anna was screaming at her to run. Looking around in confusion, the eyes of the young werewolf landed on the figures of Van Helsing and Anna running at her, followed by the swarm of vampires that had gathered her. She wasted no time as she ran her two companions, leaving no time for debate or thoughts, taking Anna's hand and leading the two of them down a series of hallways. As they burst through a set of large double doors, Carl suddenly appeared in front of them, holding a device in his hand.

"Now I know what it's for." Carl exclaimed happily, holding up the device with a gleeful expression that soon turned into one of confusion.

"Through that window!" The others shouted, grabbing Carl and dragging him towards the large stained glass window as they threw themselves at it. It shattered around them, millions of coloured shard glistening around them as they fell towards the dark water below. The device that Carl dropped when he was grabbed, exploded behind them, triggered by the presence of the vampires that pursued them. The bright light burned away at the flesh of the vampires, leaving only ashes and bones behind as an aftermath of the accidental actions of the Friar. The darkness was illuminated for a moment, allowing each of the escapist to push themselves to the surface, all gasping for air. Another splash of water drew their attention of the boat that now floated upon the water, guided by Dracula's servants towards a bigger ship outside of the area of water they accompanied.

"Say goodbye to your friends." Igor spoke loud enough for them to hear, waving as they took away Frankenstein's monster.

"No!" Shade shouted, starting to swim after them.

The others followed after her, trying to get to the small boat but the gate on the wall lowered before them, stopping them from going any further. Shade hadn't even been aware that Dracula had found Frankenstein's monster, another failure in her cause.

"I will find you! I'll get you back and set you free! I swear to God!" Van Helsing shouted as he gripped the bars of the gate, trying to break it with his bare hands as he tugged at the metal.

Shade gripped the gate so that she wouldn't have to use her legs to keep herself above water, placing one hand on Van Helsing's shoulder in an attempt to calm him down.

"Van Helsing...." Shade began.

"I must save him." He cut her off, still trying to bend the bars of the gate.

"No, you can't." Carl told him with a shaky voice, wiping the water from his face.

"Why not?"

"I cabled Rome earlier to apprise them of our situation...." Carl began to answer.

"What did they say?" Van Helsing cut him off, his voice filled with anger still.

"Even if you kill Dracula..." Carl continued. "Rome orders you to kill Frankenstein as well."

"But he isn't evil!" Shade exclaimed, feeling slightly angry herself, even she could not imagine herself killing Frankenstein.

"But they say he isn't human either." Carl told her, noticing the pained look that crossed through the young woman's eyes.

"Do they know him? Have they spoken to him? Who are they to judge?" Van Helsing pulled away from Shade's hand as he advanced on Carl, shaking with anger now.

"They want you to destroy him so that he can never be used to harm humanity."

"What of me? Did you tell them what I'm to become? Did they tell you how to kill me?" Van Helsing growled and grabbed Carl by his throat, pinning him to the gate. "The correct angle of the stake as it enters my heart? The exact amount of silver in each bullet?"

"Stop!" Anna suddenly shouted, swimming forward to try and push Van Helsing away from Carl.

"No! I left you out!" Carl tried to speak around his quaking voice, scared of Van Helsing's anger.

Van Helsing suddenly let go of Carl, roaring as he threw himself backwards against the gate, body arching. Shade gasped and rushed to him, taking his face in her hands as she tried to calm him down, sensing the wolf inside him.

"Van Helsing, its okay..." She shushed him, feeling the others staring at them, she could see the gold in his eyes, so far from the eyes she was use to. "Focus on my voice, let everything else fall away."

Slowly, Van Helsing began to calm down, realisation slowly starting to creep onto his face as he looked at the faces of his other companions. He reached a hand up to rest upon one of Shade's, closing his eyes and taking a deep breath to calm himself.

"I'm sorry." He apologised. "Its starting."

Van Helsing pulled away from Shade, beginning to swim to the stairs that led back into the now empty castle, the others following after him. Out of instinct, Shade tried to shake herself dry of the water that clung to her, earning a small chuckle from Carl. The two men left to walk ahead, leaving the two women to follow after them.

"Shade..." Anna spoke up cautiously, falling into step with the werewolf.

Shade answered with a small hum, showing that she was listening to the princess.

"I wanted to thank you for coming to save me I...." Anna continued, suddenly being cut off by the other woman as they paused for a small second.

"I didn't do it for you." Shade told her before jogging ahead to catch up with the men, falling into step with Van Helsing and taking his hand.

Twelve || Inner Turmoil

Searching was no strange concept to Shade, whether she was searching for answers or the creature she had been sent to hunt, now the search was for Dracula's castle and she could barely stay focused on the task at hand. A million thoughts were running through her head while fear gripped at her heart, she could sense the wolf becoming stronger in Van Helsing's body, threatening to take away the man that she had fallen in love with. She should have been happy, overjoyed in fact at the possibility of them being together perfectly like she had always imagined, but she didn't want this, she didn't want him to suffer the same curse that had plagued her throughout her entire life.

Even now as she sat there, watching Carl, Anna and Van Helsing work to find Dracula's lair, she just couldn't bring herself to read the maps in front of her. Every word upon the pages, every line of perfectly cursive letters swam into a sea of inky nothingness before her eyes, eyes that would drift until they landed on Van Helsing, causing her heart to hammer painfully against her chest. It was the monster that lay beneath his skin that scared her, they were running out of time and if they didn't find Dracula soon, she may just lose Van Helsing forever.

With a sigh and a heavy heart, the woman shook her head, allowing herself to finally listen in on what the others were saying. She had drowned them out at first, too lost in her own thoughts to even care what they had to say until a wave of utter determination hit her like a battering ram. She made her way over to the others, taking Van Helsing's hand as Carl decided to give them a lesson on Dracula, a lesson Shade has sadly heard far too much.

"Dracula can't bring his children to life until the sun sets. The sun sets in two hours "

Now there was the voice of Carl, a voice that Shade was becoming rather annoyed with so far.

"We've been looking for him for more than 400 years!"

And the voice of Anna, a woman much despised by the werewolf that stood close by.

"Yes, well, I wasn't around for those 400 years, now, was I?" Carl mumbled to himself.

"Oh for the love of God. Count Dracula was the son of Valerious the Elder. The son of Anna's ancestor." Shade jumped in out of impatient annoyance, earning a death glare from her friar friend.

"Everybody knows that. What else?" Anna spoke in return.

"All right. Well, according to this rubbing...it all started when Dracula was murdered." Carl had quickly jumped in to avoid being interrupted by the female werewolf, wanting the one to share the information he had found.

"Do you know who murdered him?" Van Helsing asked, his hand slightly squeezing Shade's, he could feel how tense she was and he understood because he felt just as tense.

"No, there's just some vague reference to the Left Hand of God. And in 1462, when Dracula died...- he made a covenant with the Devil." Carl started as he began to flip through some books, even showing them a picture of Dracula making the said deal with the deal. "And was given a new life."

"But the only way he could sustain that life was by drinking blood" Van Helsing interrupted.

Shade tutted him, lightly punching him in the arm, she could see Carl's excitement growing over this find so even she had elected to stay quite for a moment.

"Let him tell his story." She growled softly.

"Sorry."

When Carl waited for a brief moment to make sure that he could continue with what he had been saying beforehand, without interruptions.

"And your ancestor, having sired this evil creature...went to Rome to seek forgiveness. That's when the bargain was made. He was to kill Dracula...in return for eternal salvation of his entire family...right down the line all the way to you. But he couldn't do it. As evil as Dracula was..." Carl spoke to Anna this time, allowing the two werewolves to just listen in on the conversation and process the information being given to them.

"My ancestor couldn't kill his own son...." Anna mumbled, her own mind racing as she herself began to mull over what she was being told.

"So he banished him to an icy fortress...sending him through a door from which there was no return. And then the Devil gave him wings."

"Yes. All right, so where is this door?" Van Helsing eventually huffed, looking at Carl.

"I don't know." Carl answered after a brief pause. "But when your ancestor couldn't kill his son, he left clues. So that future generations might do it for him. That must be what my father was looking for in here. Clues to the door's location."

Shade suddenly felt a pull on her hand as Van Helsing began to move toward another part of the room, leading her along with him to the large map on the wall. For a moment, she was confused, her eyes roaming over it with little interest until she saw the words of Latin that were inscribed onto the boarder of the painting.

"The door....Of course!" Shade chuckled a little, having figured out what Van Helsing was getting at.

"You said your father spent hours...staring at this painting, trying to find the lair. I think you were right. Quite literally. I think this is the door. He just didn't know how to open it." Van Helsing ushered Anna and Carl over with his words, a smile on his face as he looked over the painting, as sure as night that he had found the conclusion to their problem.

Shade was confused at first until she caught sight of the torn edge of the painting at the left bottom corner, eyes lighting up in realisation. The only problem was that she could not read a lot of Latin so she lightly nudged Carl in the ribs and pointed at the inscription.

"Look. A Latin inscription. Maybe it works like the painting in the tower." Carl voiced, catching on to what Shade was trying to say.

"If this were a door, my father would have opened it long ago."

Shade glared at Anna, wondering why the woman had to try and dampen the mood with her negativity.

"I can't finish the inscription. There's a piece missing." Carl looked over to Van Helsing, pointing at the torn edge.

"Your father didn't have this." Van Helsing informed Anna as he pulled out the scroll that they had been given before coming to Romania.

"Where did you get that?"

Something in Shade's mind clicked as she thought back to what happened back then, the simple words that had been spoken when reading the text of the torn paper with the insignia from Van Helsing's ring.

"Carl, finish it." Van Helsing ordered.

"In the name of God, open this door." It was Shade's voice that spoke up instead of the friar's, her eyes wide and shocked as she stared at the painting. Before her eyes, it began to fade away, revealing a mirror beneath it.

"A mirror? Dracula has no reflection in the mirror." Anna broke the silence that came with the feeling of victory that had settle over the hunters and the friar. "But why?"

"Really? Is negativity the only thing you are capable of?" Shade huffed out, earning herself a light nudge in the ribs by Van Helsing and a glare from the princess.

"Maybe, to Dracula it's not a mirror at all." There was Carl, trying his hardest to break the tension that was slowly growing between the members of their small group.

After a moment, Van Helsing stepped forward, facing the mirror and examining it. Slowly, his hand came up, reaching towards his own reflection with an unsteady hand. The others watched, barely breathing as Van Helsing touched the mirror with his fingertips, the mirror shifting around his hand as it disappeared through the mirror.

"It's cold," Van Helsing, pulling his hand away from the strange mirror, snow glistening along his skin, allowing everyone to breathe easier. "And it's snowing."

Shade sighed, lightly shaking her head before stepping forward and grabbing a lit torch before turning to Van Helsing and kissing his cheek.

"See you on the other side."

Van Helsing barely managed to reply before Shade stepped through the mirror, disappearing from sight. The female werewolf gasped as the cold wind hit her, stumbling out of the mirror and into the darkness of a snowy valley. She looked around for a moment before the sound of the mirror cracking turned her attention back to the mirror, Van Helsing slowly coming into sight, followed by Anna and then Carl.

"Castle Dracula." Anna gasped when she caught sight of the large, daunting castle in front of them, the sky darker than the abyss of hell.

Upon seeing the castle, Carl had instantly tried to run back through the mirror, realising rather painfully that this was a one way trip.

"Damn it Carl, I will not carry your ass." Shade laughed, helping the man back to his feet and dragging him back towards Van Helsing and Anna.

"Do we have a plan? Doesn't have to be Wellington's at Waterloo...but some sort of plan would be nice." Carl stuttered out, completely terrified by the valley.

"We're going to stop Dracula." Shade replied, winking at Carl as she fell into step with Van Helsing.

"And kill anything in our way." The male hunter added, taking ahold of Shade's hand and squeezing it gently, remembering what happened what happened the last time they faced Dracula with a werewolf involved.

"Well, you let me know how that goes." Carl whimpered, making a move to run away again as they grew closer to the castle.

Van Helsing let go of Shade to grab Carl and Anna by the back of their shirts, roaring as he focused on the developing wolf inside him to leap up the walls of the castle and into the large open window above the door. Shade watched from the snow, feeling a sense of nausea rush over her at the sight of what Van Helsing was becoming. Looking down at her hands, the young werewolf sighed, her heart heavy as she followed Van Helsing's lead, launching herself up the walls and through the window.

"Well, as grateful as I am to be out of the cold..." Carl began to speak, cut off by the pained roar that slipped from Van Helsing as he hunched over "that doesn't seem like a good thing."

"It isn't." Shade mumbled softly as she placed one hand on Van Helsing's shoulder, using the other to cup his chin and turn his face so that their eyes would meet. She searched his eyes, looking beyond the pain to see the wolf inside him, her own reacting in response.

"We'd better get moving." Van Helsing panted, his voice barely above a whisper as he leaned into Shade's touch.

Shade surged forward, pressing her lips to his in a deep, passionate kiss, knowing that this might be the last time she would ever be able to see him like this, alive. They shared their

kiss for a few moments, the sound of footsteps from the other side of the hall drawing their attention away from each other and back onto the mission at hand.

Anna and Carl were stood awkwardly to the side, looking up when they too heard the footsteps echoing off the walls. A man appeared before them, carrying equipment of many kinds, dropping it in shock when he saw the group before him. Shade and Van Helsing parted, just as Shade growled, eyes flashing dangerously before she pounced.

Thirteen || The Cure

Anna and Carl were stood awkwardly to the side, looking up when they too heard the footsteps echoing off the walls. A man appeared before them, carrying equipment of many kinds, dropping it in shock when he saw the group before him. Shade and Van Helsing parted, just as Shade growled, eyes flashing dangerously before she pounced.

The air shimmered as a low growl filled the fire-lit hall, Shade surging forward to grab the small, greasy man that had appeared before the small group of misfits. The young huntress had meant to grip him by the collar of his tattered jacket, yet the wolf inside her had decided on a different approach, making her cringe at the sudden sound. No introductions needed to be made, whether by scent or sight, she could tell this was Igor, a cowardly squib that never had a shred of honour or loyalty.

"How did you find....It's impossible!" He screamed at them, his voice laced with pain as the werewolf's claw pierced him.

Shade narrowed her eyes, wiggling her fingers to further maul the flesh surrounding her claws.

"Please don't kill me!" He begged her, trying his best not to struggle against her, fearing the possibility of further injury.

"Why not?" Van Helsing asked as he came up beside her, a flash of silver drawing the mans eyes to the silver blade in the male hunters gloved hand.

"Well, I..." Igor blinked repeatedly for a moment, looking between the hunters, Carl and Anna as he was surrounded by each of them, the fear evident in his eyes once he saw the darkness creep into Shade's eyes.

All heads turned as a chain jingled to their left, Van Helsing, Anna and Carl going over to investigate while Shade kept Igor from running away while the others were preoccupied. Her attention deter for a single moment to watch them, seeing the scene unfolding in the reflections of their eyes. There, frozen in a block of ice was the very creature, very being that they had come to rescue from the evil grasp of the lord of the undead. The block of ice had chains around it, the chains attached to a large cross that balanced the block of ice, chains pulling Frankenstein's monster up the high tower by a hidden mechanism, chain rattling with every movement. From where she stood, Shade could see Van Helsing take hold of the bars that separated them from Frankenstein's monster, using his new found strength to try and bend the bars enough to get through them, but it was to know avail.

Suddenly, the castle shook with a mighty screech, Shade stumbling back with a cry and covering her ears. Blood matted in her hair, her eyes stinging from how tightly she had squeezed them shut. She felt as if her head was about to explode from the high pitched noise that invaded her ears.

Carl had moved to help her but the savage noise that escaped her in reply to the screech had scared him into taking a large step back.

"My master has awakened." Igor laughed, making a move to leave, only to have a silver disc blade pin him back to the wall.

"There is a cure." Frankenstein's monster revealed to them, his words pulling Shade from her small painful experience.

"What?" Van Helsing replied, confused on what their friend was talking about.

"Dracula. He has a cure to remove the curse of the werewolf!" Was the reply as Frankenstein's monster was pulled higher and away from them. "Go, find the cure! Save yourself!"

As he disappeared, Anna pulled Van Helsing away from the bars as Shade shakingly got to her legs and stumbled over to them.

"Come on. You heard him. Let's find it." Anna said, guiding them to Igor, only for Van Helsing to pull his hand from her grasp.

"Wait. Why does Dracula have a cure?" He aimed his question at them all, the new found information was echoing inside his mind.

"I don't care!" Anna snapped, clearly too focused on the task at hand, maybe driven by her revenge and pride more than actually planning an attack.

"I do." Shade interrupted, leaning close to Van Helsing, her ears still ringing from the screech that had pierced her mind.

"Why does he need one? Why?" Van Helsing asked, gently passing Shade to Carl so she would be able to properly gain her focus without falling over and hurting herself as he stormed over to Igor, gripping him by his collar.

Igor looked away, seemingly uninterested in revealing anything to them.

"Because....." Carl piped up, a look of realisation dawning on his face. "The only thing that can kill him is a werewolf."

"The painting you told us about, that's what it meant." Shade carried on for him, steadily standing on her own, taking a deep breath to calm herself.

"Dracula's been using werewolves to do his bidding for centuries." Anna argued, almost sure that this cure was something to deter them from their path, unsure on whether to believe it at all.

"Yes, but if one ever had the will to turn on him, he'd need a cure...to remove the curse and make him human before it bit him."

Carl was right and Shade was a prime example of a werewolf who used their own will to follow a path that she had forged for herself. But she had not been the only one, she thought back to her father, to the place she had gone to after she fell into the river. It didn't help that both her reality and dream world had given her a fear of water but she had also been forced to remember, forced to face the truth of her destiny.

"Carl is right...."She spoke softly, eyes down cast as all eyes turned to her. "Dracula cannot stand having his werewolf pets turn against him. He has to kill them or , cure them before they kill him, like he did to my father....."

"Your father?" Anna sounded shocked, or maybe sceptical, Shade couldn't tell.

Was this where she lost their trust? or their respect? Maybe it was finally time to tell them.

"My father was a werewolf that worked for Dracula many years ago. When I fell into the river....after we went to rescue Valken, I saw my parents. Meaning....I died. When I was there, my parents revealed that Dracula had a cure and that my father stole some of it so he could be with my mother. But she was pregnant with me, before he even took it. Dracula killed my father and my mother, because both I and Frankenstein's monster can bring his children to life. He needed me, knew that if I learned about my powers, I would be able to stop him, or he would be able to use me to make his brood stronger than they will be.""

"What powers?" Carl asked, staring at Shade with wide eyes.

Shade paused for a moment, looking over at Van Helsing as tears filled her eyes, the blue hues of her iris's becoming brighter.

"They told me, that I could control the light of the moon, use it to my will. That my roar was strong because all of the people who Dracula has killed, roar with me." Shade answered, her body shaking, from fear or trying to stop herself from crying, she didn't know.

For a moment, all was silent, seconds ticking by. Now one knew what to say or do, the air tense and heavy. Van Helsing was the one who broke the tension, pulling his blade from the wall to release Igor.

"You're going to take them...and lead them to the antidote." He ordered, his face set in a scowl.

"No, I'm not." Igor countered, only to nearly leap from his own skin when Van Helsing threw him against a small, broken staircase with a growl "Yes, I am."

"Here's the plan. When the bell begins to toll midnight..." Carl began, coming up behind Van Helsing and placing a hand on his shoulder. "you'll be able to kill Dracula. We just need to find the cure...and get it into you before the final stroke."

"Are you insane? What kind of plan is that?" Anna scoffed angrily, smacking Carl's back.

"If they even suspect you of misleading them..." Said to Igor, pulling out some pliers and clipping them before turning his attention to the three behind them. "...clip off one of his

fingers."

"I'll clip off something." Anna mumbled, taking the pliers from Van Helsing.

"The tower over there... that's where it is." Igor pointed to their right, both his hands and voice shaking in fear.

"And what about the other tower?" Van Helsing asked, only for Igor to go quiet on him.

"Give me that!" He said to Anna, ready to take the pliers, a scare tactic to get Igor to talk, a tactic that worked.

"That is where...we reassembled the laboratory. Would I lie to you?"

"Not if you wanted to live." Van Helsing replied angrily, lifting Igor so they were face to face before shoving him over to the others.

"Now, if I'm not cured by the twelfth stroke of midnight..." He turned to them, pulling out a silver stake, his focus set on Carl now.

Shade perked up from where she stood, having decided to step back after her revelation, to afraid of them turning their backs on her.

"I don't think I could." Carl began, taking the stake from Van Helsing, only for the male hunter to cut him off.

"You must."

Carl nodded frantically and quite shakily, brushing pass Van Helsing to grab Igor, dragging him towards the tower that held the cure.

"Come on."

Both Anna and Shade gave Van Helsing one last glance before making a move to follow Carl, yet Van Helsing grabbed Shade's hand before she go to far. Both knew that there was a lot still unsaid between them and this....this may be the very last time they see each other.

"Van Helsing..." Shade was the first to break the silence, her voice shaking, her face turned away, unable to look him in the eye.

"No, listen to me." He took a step towards her, warm, rough fingers sliding under her chin and guiding her face round to look at him.

His eyes were filled with sadness as he stared down at her, but hidden deep in their depths, she could see a flicker of hope, a sparkle of love and despite all, she knew everything was going to be okay. It just had to.

"When you get to the tower....I want you to take the cure."

"What?" She was in disbelief, had she heard him correctly.

"I might die tonight and if I do.....I want you to have a normal life, to enjoy all that mushy stuff we always joked about."

Did she want that? Did she want to be normal? She had thought about it in the past, wondered what it would be like for them to live a normal life together. To go to the market to buy food for their home, for their family. But would she be able to? after all, what she was, who she was, was the only life she had ever known.

"Gabriel..." It was the first time she had used his real name since their first encounter with Dracula and it shocked him. "If I leave this castle without you....I wouldn't be able to live. I hate what I am, I wish things were different. But if I had to choose.....I would rather spend the rest of my life as a monster than let you suffer the pain I have endured all of my life."

"Shade..." He made to stop her, wanting to say more but she wasn't done.

"For crying out loud! I love you! I wouldn't care if you turned into a goblin, I will never stop loving you!"

It was the first time either of them had said, both shocked for a moment, letting it settle in. And Van Helsing just smile, his eyes softening before he surged forward, pressing his lips passionately against hers. Shade kissed back with equal force, both clinging to the other, not wanting to let go. But when the time came, when the need for air burned at their lungs, they parted, foreheads resting against each other.

"Promise me.....promise you'll come back to me....like I came back for you." Shade whispered softly, breathing in his scent for what felt like the last time.

"I promise."

Those were the last words she heard before they parted ways, his embrace replaced with the harsh cold of the empty castle. She had stayed to watch him leave, only running to catch up with the others once he had vanished from her sight.

Fourteen || Biting Cold

Every step echoed off the stone cold walls of the damp castle, like a constant heartbeat as the three heroes followed after Igor. Anna was pushing Igor forward, pincers still in hand while Carl followed, mumbling under his breath. Shade had fallen behind so that she could watch their backs from an surprise attack. She had begun to feel the itching of the full moon, the werewolf in her dancing under her skin in a desperate attempt to find a relief, to break through the control she had built over all these years. It made her mind wander to Van Helsing, he must have found Dracula by now, must be feeling the effects of the moons pull against his humanity. Was he in pain? Was he even alive?

She shook her head, not wanting to even think about losing the man she had ever loved, it was hard enough letting him go on his own. Suddenly, she bumped into Carl's back, snapping back into the present, only to see that the small group had come to a stop outside of a open room. The gate was lifted, the room dimly lit by candles that had nearly burnt down to the last of their wicks. Nestled in the centre room was a clear glass ball atop a pedestal, filled with what looked like water and a single syringe, holding the cure Igor has told them about. Igor is the first to try and step into the room, yet a hand shoots out to grip his arm and pull him back towards the group, causing him to stumble and look at Anna.

"I'll go first."

Igor gives the woman a nasty look, one that is returned by the Romanian princess Anna before she enters the tower, on alert as her eyes dart around the room, heading for the syringe. Despite the windows being barred shut, there is no other entrance, which means she wouldn't be able to make an easy escape if she was suddenly ambushed. Shade was next to enter, acting as a guard for Anna, despite her dislike for the other woman. The blue haired female sniffed the air, sensing nothing but them. She clicked her tongue at Anna to get her attention, offering the other a reassuring nod that it was safe for her to go for the orb.

Carl watched them both with great interest, sadly allowing Igor to sneak behind him, using his heel to kick the Friar into the room. The gleeful cackling of the grotesque man and the surprised yelp of their friend caused the two woman to spin around, watching as Carl stumbled into the room and fell to the hard stone floor.

"Stay as long as you like." He wheezes, pulling a lever on the wall that they seem to have missed, a metal grate crashing down to trap them in the closed off space. "Bye-bye!"

They all watched him skip away from their now prison, Shade moving to help Carl back to his feet, allowing him to dust himself off. For a moment, they stare at the door, each wondering on how they could have let their guards down around someone who would clearly betray them. With a shake of her head, Shade turned towards the syringe, followed by Carl and Anna as they stepped up to it, examining it closely.

"Well now what? Do we just grab it?" Shade voiced, looking between her companions.

"Go ahead, grab it." Anna urged Carl, probably hoping that a holy man wouldn't get hurt by any possibly curses that the sphere had.

"!You go ahead and grab it. Ifthere's one thing I've learned,it's never be the first one tostick your hand into a viscousmaterial." Carl retorted, earning a knowing laugh from Shade.

Suddenly, the hairs on the back of Shade's neck stood on end, coldness rolling over her as a shiver snaked down the length of her spine.

"Smart boy." A sickly sweet voice piping up behind them.

Carl practically jumps out of his skin, bumping into Shade as he tried to scramble away from the vampire, while the hunter turned sharply, letting out a low growl. Anna grabs Carl andjerks him further away from Aleera, pushing him behind the huge jar as some form of extra protection.

"Did I scare you?" Aleera giggled, dropping down from where she had been hiding.

"No." Shade and Carl replied in unison, one voice steady and calm, the other failing to hide their fear.

"Then maybe I need to try a littleharder."

Shade growled again when the vampire stepped closer, mentally beating herself up on not being able to sense her before, she should have smelled Aleera as soon as she entered, yet she hadn't. Something was covering her presence and blocking the werewolf's senses. She readied herself for an attack, rooting her feet and squaring her chest, moving in front of Carl so she could protect him from the blood hungry immortal.

Anna suddenly lashes out at Aleera with her sword, The movement surprising the Friar and the werewolf, making them step backwards. The pedestal wobbled as Shades heel knocked against it, the glass sphere rolling off its seat and crashing to the floor below. Liquid sprayed from the broken object, some splattering on Aleera's face. The sound of the vampires screams sliced through the vastness of the tower, echoing around them as the liquid ate away at her face, the vampire clawing at her face to try and get it off of her, the attempts futile

"See! What did I tell you!?" Carl freaks, watching the scene unfold.

" Grab it! Grab it! Grab it! " Anna ignores him and gestures to the syringe rolling across the floor.

Using the hem of his frock, Carl scoops up the syringe, itburns at the material and causes it to smoke, making him jump and yelp, yet he managesto hold onto it and it eventually stops trying to eat through his clothing. Shade looks around, spotting a piece of glass that still held some of the liquid, thinking quickly, she grabs it and runs to the door, splashing it over the gate. She watches as it bubbled, the melted metal slowly dripping away and opening a path for them to escape. She smiled, a noise of triumph escaping her for a moment before a forced knocked her backwards, flinging her against one of the rooms pillars. The air was knocked from her lungs, falling to the floor with a pained groan and shaking away her the daze of

being hit. Looking up, the hunters eyes followed clawed feet to the face of the owner of them, her heart clenching in fear as she stared into the eye of the one creature she thought she never see again, the very creature that haunted her dreams and every waking hour. The werewolf with the blue fur, the one that had killed her parents, the one that was suppose to be dead at the bottom of a river. Somehow, she managed to snap herself out of her shock to roll away as it lunged at her, barely catching her shoulder with its claws.

"C'mon!" Carl shouted as he raced to the hole in the door, the syringe in his frock.

"No Carl, you have to go! We can handle this, you have to be the one to save Van Helsing." Shade shouted, dodging another lunge from the other werewolf.

Carl looked between Shade and Anna, not wanting to leave them here to die, not wanting to leave them behind, they were in this together.

"Carl, please....he needs you."

The sound of Shades voice made him falter, it was sad, like she knew something bad was going to happen. So the Friar nodded, trusting her, giving his friend one last smile before racing off down the hall to the laboratory. Anna made suite to follow, her handle barely on the grate to help her through when a hand grabs her and spins her around.

"You can't go until I say you can go." Aleera hissed at the princess, her face beginning to heal from the burns.

"Carl!" Anna screamed, ripping away from the vampires grip to try and run after him.

"I'll say you can go when you're dead" An angry Aleera grabbed Anna and threw her across the room, making her skid across the stone floor, Anna's sword sliding away into one of the corners.

Meanwhile, Shade was on the offensive, dodging every attack that was thrown her way, unable to get any attacks of her own in. He was feral and ferocious, not letting up, not giving her a chance to breath, each swing just as wild and quick as the last. She was struggling as much as Anna was, Aleera treating the princess like a rag doll and refusing to let her get to her discarded weapon.

After a wide swipe, Shade saw her opening, throwing herself into the others body, using her full weight to knock him off balance and stun him. The two dropped to the floor, Shade quickly scrambling away to put some room between her and the blue wolf. As it got back to its feet, the two shared a look, yellow eyes boring into her own bright blue ones, his were wild angry, hers scared and worried. She was faced now with a huge decision, to let her fear stop her from saving the man she loved or to stop being that little girl who ran from the monsters that hunted her.

When she thought that it would pounce at her before she could do anything, the large window burst inwards upon the impact of Frankenstein crashing through it, colliding with Aleera and saving Anna. Time seemed to slow as Shade and the wolf turned to look, the female noticing the clouds slowly reveal the moon to her eyes, its light dancing across the stone of the room,

glistening on the shards on the ground while stray shards flew pass her. The inching under her skin grew as her eyes narrowed, a growl slipping past bared teeth, she let it consume her, light beginning to emit from her fingertips. It travelled along her veins, streams of moonlight lighting up like ink on her skin, fuelling the power growing inside her. From the darkness of her wolfs original eye colour, to the blinding light of pure white, the she wolfs head snapped forward to glare at her opponent. Usually, her transformation hurt or made her ache, now it felt like water washing over her and she was no longer afraid. The wind picked up, sweeping and swirling around her as the light fully took a hold of her, changing her body from human to wolf, painless and quick. Everything good she had felt came rushing forward, love, happiness, kindness, it overtook the darkness that was once inside her, turning it into something more, something strong, something that Carl and Van Helsing has seen in her, long before she even saw it herself. The light suddenly burst outwards, knocking the other werewolf back wards, the blinding aura slowly began to fade away, the black she wolf standing tall and proud, white markings now adorning her fur.

The blue wolf snarled and ran at her, aiming bite her throat, only for her to dodge at the last second, dipping low to sidestep the attack. She growled, using that moment to pounce at him, using the momentum of both attacks to fling them both out of the open window, leaving Anna and Frankenstein to deal with Aleera. The two werewolves hit and bounced off a few jagged areas of the castle as they descended down on a broken bridge that connected two of the towers, coming to a stop with a splash. A storm has brewed, thunder clashing over head and illuminating the sky for a slit second, rain heavily beating down upon them. They were soaked in moments, growling and circling each other once they had managed to compose themselves once again. It was just them, one slip away from plummeting to their deaths, and only one would be walking away. Claws dug into stone as they pushed forward, both colliding with brutal force, claws digging into flesh and teeth gnashing as each tried to find a way to go for the others throat. Neither would allow the other to have the upper hand, finding a way to steer clear of most attacks. Shade roared when the other managed to clamp his jaws onto the junction of her back, eyes flashing as the markings on her back drew brighter. The blue wolf howled in pain, smoke billowing from his mouth as the flesh burned away from his muzzle, head trashing back and forth to try and stop it.

Shade used the opportunity to think, think about what her parents had told her about her powers. She had no idea how to use them, but her instincts had proven worthy so far, all she had to do was listen. She closed her eyes, allowing the world to fall silent, looking inside herself for something to give her a chance at victory, so she could go and make sure Van Helsing was okay. An memory surfaced, her singing drunkenly with Van Helsing around a campfire while Carl shook his head in disapproval. It faded into another, the day she finally found her voice as a wolf, her first howl.

"When you roar, you roar with those that Dracula killed." Her fathers voice echoed in her head.

Her voice, her voice was the key.

The blue wolf has gathered himself once again, angrily charging at the she wolf, trying to use her stillness as an opportunity. Yet she felt him through her paws, felt the vibrations through

the surface below her feet. He was almost within reach when her eyes snapped open, her expression growing serious as she took a deep breath and roared as loud as she could.

Thunder plastered the sky, the electricity dancing among the droplets of rain, sparking around the female werewolf. It danced along her body, kissing the moonlight that stuck to her pelt before it erupted. Light lashed forward, the electricity seeping into the skin of the blue wolf while the light pushed him away. His body convulsed, unable to handle the current that had invaded his body. As he stumbled, as he lost control of his body, he slipped on the wet stone of the broken bridge, unable to find purchase as he fell into the darkness below.

Shade gasped, her roar dying out and the markings fading from her body. Whatever she had done, had exhausted her, making her collapse. The rain continued to beat down on her, the female breathing heavily, slowly taking on her human form again. She wanted to sleep, she was so exhausted, eyes fluttering as she tried to stay awake, she had to get to him. She had to get to Van Helsing.

Fifteen || Final Farewell

-The clock chimes once-

The night rumbled with the growling voice of thunder, its fingers of electricity combing through the clouds, enticing tears from within them that beat down on the stone of the castle below. Each tear fell silently upon a form, a figure slowly dragging themselves along a broken stone bridge. She stumbled and fell, slipping on the clouds tears as her strength slowly began to fade from her, her whole being seeming to flicker in and out of existence. The wind tugged at her clothes, whispering messages in her ear, telling her that the moon was calling her home and that it was time to go. But she knew her task was not yet complete, she was not ready to leave this plane of existence behind just yet, not without seeing the man she loved for the last time. Shade pulled collapsed once again, letting out a small sob of pain, droplets falling upon her face, mixing with the tears that were beginning to run down her cheeks. She stared at her hand, her vision starting to go hazy.

-Twice-

Panting heavily, Carl struggled up the steps of the castle, hearing the noises of Van Helsing's battle with Dracula. He tripped on a step and fell forwards, catching himself while ensuring he didn't drop the syringe that held the cure. His eyes and head were downcast, fear gripping at his heart. He didn't know whether he was ready to face the man he had come to see as his greatest friend, especially if the cure didn't work. But Carl steeled himself and continued forward, climbing the rest of the stair until he came to another bridge, one that led to the laboratory. He stepped out onto the bridge, only to jump backwards as it crumbled and broke apart, leaving him stranded save for a small ledge that he would be able to cross with patience and carefulness. Looking around, he saw the broken window of the tower he had come from, using his voice in hopes his friends could hear him.

-Three-

Anna, thrown towards the open window heard a call for help over the rumble of the storm and looked down, seeing Carl stranded on the bridge. She looked at Aleera who lunged at her, only to be grabbed by Frankenstein's monster and thrown to the other side of the room, giving Anna a chance to escape. She stared at him for a moment, remember the first time they had met and how deeply wrong she had been about him.

"Thank you." Anna spoke up, watching his face light up with the recognition that he was seen as more than what he was.

While he fought Aleera, Anna used the wire he had used to swing herself down to the other side of the bridge, calling to Carl to throw the cure to her so she could get it to Van Helsing. Carl, focused, counting to three before tossing the syringe, his heart stopping as he watched it sail through the air, a part of him fearing Anna would miss. Yet as she swung through the air, she reached her hand out as far as possible, wrapping her fingers around the syringe and calming the Friars heart.

-Four-

Frankenstein lost his grip on Aleera, the vampire mistress flying out of the window after Anna, the princess had made up onto a ledge along the castle wall. The vampire shrieked with glee as she landed next to Anna, making the princess move backwards on the precarious perch as Aleera closes in.

-Five-

"Your blood shall make me even more beautiful. What do you think of that?" Aleera cackles as she moves in for the kill, baring her fangs.

-Six-

Suddenly, a silver stake impales her through the chest, causing Aleera to shriek in agony while looking at the silver object producing from her chest. Anna looks over at the bridge, to where Carl has crawled down between the girders, then looks back at Aleera, who is staring at her in horror as her body starts to slowly crumble and rot.

-Seven-

"I think if you're going to kill somebody, kill them, don't stand around talking about it." Anna hisses angrily at the rotting vampire.

Aleera bursts into rot, the silver stake is erupting from her body and flying into a beam right next to Carl's head.

-Eight-

Van Helsing is struggling with control, time drawing closer to his demise as he battles with Dracula. The moon shows herself once again to his gaze, turning him back into the black sleek beast that he had become. The werewolf snarled and lunged at Dracula as the vampire took on his own beast form, long claws digging and tearing into the thin flesh of the vampire's wings. He roared, using his grip to pull himself up onto the vampire's back, using his weight to keep Dracula from flying away. The two fell from the air, crashing into equipment in the lab and colliding with the stone floors of the castle. Fire had erupted around them, Dracula's minions running around, screaming as the fire leapt onto them, eating away at their flesh as they run in an attempt to get away from it. The clock chimed again, the moon falling from view, allowing Van Helsing to turn back into a man for a moment, the hunter staggering away from the fire as Dracula slowly emerged from the flames.

-Nine-

Anna climbed her way up to an open window, pulling herself through and onto more stone steps. She could hear the fighting more easily now, knowing she was close to her destination. As she got to her feet, she noticed a trail of blood leading up the steps. Slowly and quietly, she crept upwards, ready for whatever might be waiting for her once she had reached the top. But the sight that greeted her brought tears to her eyes and ripped a gasp from her lips. Shade laid in a pool of her own blood, the red liquid darker than usual and seeping from many

orifices on the female hunters body. Anna ran to her, taking the other into her arms, placing the cure securely by her side. The colour of Shades skin had faded into a pale complexion, making Anna think the worse, her heart sinking.

"Anna...."

Her name was a pained murmur on the tongue of the woman in her arms, more blood seeping from Shade's mouth and eyes as she struggled to open her eyes. Dim blue orbs looking up at the princess holding her.

-Ten-

"Do you have the cure?"

"Yes i have the cure Shade, we can get it to Van Helsing together." Anna replied, tears beginning to stream down her face.

Shade managed to give Anna a small smile, mustering as much strength as she could to try and stand. Anna helped the werewolf to her feet, picking up the cure before securing a arm around Shade's waist to keep her upright. Together, the two limped down the long hall leading to the laboratory, their steps heavy and filled with determination.

"What ever I had....I used it all Anna....I don't know if I'll make it." Shade wheezed, finding it harder to breathe.

"You have to, we need you."

-Eleven-

Carl had managed to find his way across the bridge, hurrying along the path to the laboratory to try and catch up with his friends. He crashed into two double doors, pushing them open and letting them clang heavily against the stone of the castle. What greeted him made him falter in his steps, eyes widening in shock and awe. Before him, stood a transparent figure, like a ghost. It was shaped like a wolf, staring at him with glowing eyes, as if it was staring into his soul. It tilted its head to the right, drawing his attention to a chest that was in a small crevice of the castle walls. It was adorned with the symbol of many wolves made of gold, calling to the Friar. When he looked back to the apparition, he was met with nothing, just him in the room with the chest. Slowly, he made his way over to it, shivering hands reaching out to trace over its lock. It clicked and opened suddenly under his touch, the lid springing open to reveal its content to his eyes. Nestled inside was something wrapped in red silk, something that was continuing to call to him. He reached inside, picking up the object and slowly peeling the silk away, finding a small bottle of blue liquid, accompanied by a note.

-Twelve-

Anna and Shade burst into the laboratory, seeing the shape of a werewolf through the flames that had spread through the room. It slowly stood, straightening its back, which was facing them. With the last chime of the clock, they knew there was no time to waste, it was now or never. Shade took the syringe from Anna, leaving the princess in shock as the female hunter

limped forward. Van Helsing turned towards her, able to hear her footfalls, able to smell the blood coming from her body. For a faint second, his eyes twinkled with recognition as Shade came closer, a fleeting pang of happiness filling him. It was quick to leave, the iris of his eyes becoming pinpricks as the wolf took over his mind, swallowing any humanity that may have remained in him. He lunged at her with a snarl, tackling her and throwing her onto a red couch that lay near the window, his teeth sinking into her throat and stealing the life from her body. Behind him, Anna let out a scream of pain and horror, just as Carl came running into the room. Anna collapsed to her knees before him, her line of sight drawing his attention to what was before them. The werewolf's back was to them, but what lay beneath the beast made Carl freeze for a moment, his best friend, lay motionless, her blue hair fanned out underneath her and blood adorning her pale skin. Devastated, angered and scared, Carl thumbles for the silver stake in his robes and holds it tightly in his hands, taking a deep breath before running at the werewolf, ready to plunge it through Van Helsing's heart.

"God forgive me." He prays, swinging the stake at the werewolf.

At the last second, Van Helsing spins around, catching Carl's wrist in a clawed grip before the friars' act can be completed. Carl trembles as he stares at the werewolf, both locked in each other's gazes until Van Helsing tilts his muzzle downwards, looking at the syringe sticking out of his chest. Carl looks down at the syringe, noticing it was empty and stumbles away from Van Helsing, letting out a whimpering sob. He watches as Van Helsing rips out the syringe and throws it away, watching as his other friend turns to look at the body of the girl they had come to care for. The friar felt a hand on his shoulder, turning his head to look at Anna as another sob fell from his trembling lips.

"S....she's dead."

Van Helsing pads over to the couch, his large eyes glossy with sadness as he looked down at the woman he loved. Her once bright eyes were empty, her skin pale, her hair slowly fading from blue to a dark brown, the life finally leaving her. The moon shone brightly through the window, framing the beast and his love as he scooped her into his arms, holding her as he threw back his head, letting out a low, mourning howl. The fur fell away from his body, his features falling back on themselves until he was himself again. He cries out in pain as he sobbed, falling to his knees, pulling Shade closer and resting his forehead on hers. His body trembled with his sobs, his heart shattering inside him, he had killed her. He hadn't been strong enough to fight the monster inside of him, murdering the woman he had planned to spend the rest of his life with, to shower with love and raise children with.

"I'm so sorry, please....come back to me." He begged, holding her tighter.

Carl and Anna watched, saddened by the scene in front of them, Van Helsing had lost more than them tonight. They had lost a friend, a comrade but he had lost his heart, his entire being. The room suddenly filled with a blinding light, drawing their attention to the figure appearing before them, once again, the wolf appeared before them. They stared at it, transfixed for a moment before Van Helsing sniffled and called out to it.

"Can you save her?"

The wolf regarded him with a brief glance before it moved forward with grace, coming to stop next to Carl. It stared him in the eye before lowering its head, snout pointing towards one of his pockets. The friar recalled the bottle of blue liquid he had found when the wolf had visited him before. He pulled it from his pocket, turning it over in his hand before looking back to the spirit. It nodded its head at him before walking into the light of the moon and fading into nothingness.

"Can that bring her back?" Anna asked, looking over at Carl's shoulder to look at the bottle.

"Yes, but it comes with a price." Carl replied, voice lowering to an almost whisper.

"I'll do whatever it takes to bring her back Carl, just tell me what to do." Van Helsing's voice was almost pleading as he looked at his friend, filled with a newfound hope.

"The note I found with the bottle explained that we would have to give Shade some of the bottle's content." Carl began, looking between Anna and Van Helsing. "But someone else would have to drink the rest....and give their life force to bring her back."

They all let the information sink in, let Carl's words linger in the air for a moment. To bring her back, one would have to take her place, the price was a life for a life. Van Helsing opened his mouth to volunteer, but was beaten to the offer.

"I'll do it." Anna announced.

"But....but you can't, we were sent here to ensure you lived." Carl spluttered.

"And you did, you broke my family curse and opened the gates for my ancestors. Now I can be with them." Anna reassured him.

She took the bottle from him, making her way over to Van Helsing and Shade. She and the female hunter may have never seen eye to eye but Anna had come to respect Shade for her courage, will and determination to protect those that couldn't protect themselves. The princess dropped to her knees, leaning forward to press a caring kiss to the cold cheek of her companion.

"Thank you, Shade."

Carl and Van Helsing watched as Anna took the cork out of the bottle, bringing it to her lips. She tilted her head back, draining half the blue liquid into her mouth before swallowing. There was no turning back now, the decision had been made without the input of men in the room, Anna was ready to be with her family and ensure the world was in the safe hands of the hunters who had freed her bloodline. Van Helsing took the bottle from Anna as she laid on the stone floor, pouring the rest of the liquid into Shade's mouth. He laid her down next to Anna, the princess taking the other female's hand into hers. A warmth had spread through her, filling her with a feeling she had never felt before. The warmth travelled along her arm, down into her fingertips and into the cold body next to her. She let out a sigh, closing her eyes, a sense of peace settling over her.

The two men watched with baited breath, unable to see any changes, slightly scared that they had been too late in saving Shade. Carl moved closer, noticing the colour fading from Anna and crawling into Shade's face. As Anna slowly began to leave them, Shade began to come back from the darkness that had taken her. The wounds on Shade's body began to slowly heal, skin stitching together as if no damage had ever been done. They watched as Anna took her last breath, her chest rising once more before slowly falling to a standstill. Van Helsing leaned over Shade, running his fingers through her dark hair, searching for a sign of life, any sign that showed she was back with him. After a moment, her eyes slowly fluttered open, staring up at him.

Bonus Content

Three figures stood upon a cliff, standing beside a pyre, the body of their friend laying upon it. Carl read a verse from the bible while Shade stood next to Van Helsing, his arm securely wrapped around her waist. The two hunters stared down at Anna, she looked so at peace, dressed in a beautiful gown and flowers braided into her hair. Shade moved away from Van Helsing to come to Anna's side, leaning down to press a kiss to her forehead, a final farewell, a final act of kindness towards the woman she had come to call friend.

"Thank you."

She stepped away, turning to look at Van Helsing as he came to her side. He took her hand, holding a burning torch in his other. They shared a sad smile before he brought the torch down to the base of the pyre, setting it ablaze. As the flames engulfed Anna, the two hunters retreated to the cliff side to look over the sea, a beautiful place to lay their friend to rest, Anna had always wanted to visit the sea.

Upon the horizon, a dark figure paddled further into the sun set on a makeshift raft. For a moment, they stopped to look back at the cliff, watching the flames dance for a moment before taking their hat off in respect. Frankenstein sighed softly, putting his hat back on, catching a glimpse of a figure on the cliff waving at him. He smiled to himself, waving back before going back to paddling, setting out to sea to find his own path.

The hunters watch him fade away, smoke suddenly curling around them and dancing upwards into the sky. They watched it rise, both smiling as it took on the form of Anna, among the clouds. Many faces appeared to greet her, smiling and hugging her, welcoming her, finally their family was together again. Shade waved up at the sky, saying one last goodbye to Anna before she faded into the heavens with her family. Van Helsing lightly tugged her hand, drawing her attention away. He smiled softly at her, bringing her hand to his lips to press a small kiss on her knuckles, then the ring that she wore on her ring finger. They shared a loving embrace, basking in the presence of one another, never wanting to let go. But they had places to be, monsters to hunt, people to protect and a life to lead. Carl called them over to their horses, the hunters slowly making their way over, sparing one last glance at the burning pyre.

Van Helsing helped Shade up onto his horse before climbing up behind her. Now that she was no longer a werewolf, she could no longer run alongside them, no longer hear or smell as

well as she had before. For the first time in forever, she finally felt normal and she could finally start a life with the man she loved without worrying about the curse that once plagued her. They had both been curse, but together, with the help of friends, they had managed to find a cure to what ailed them.

And together, with their favourite Friar, they rode into the sunset. For now, their ending was happy, one chapter closing to give way to another. Together, they would face what ever was thrown their way.

The End

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