

## Chosen 261

### 261 Chapter Two Hundred Sixty One

Lina finally got to her friend. Without noticing it, the rain had begun to pour down on her on the way to the flower shop. Having told her chauffeur to ditch her once she was near the shop, she now dreadfully regretted her words which flashed through her mind quite vividly... 'You can go now. I don't need you...'

"Oh, come on, it was shining brightly just a moment ago," the girl cursed while she made her way to the flower shop not far from where she had chosen to be dropped off. Staring up at the sky, streaks of blue lightning dashed across the sky, followed by the rumbling of thunder. 'It's just ordinary thunder and lightning. Stop overthinking it, Lina. Get a grip of yourself,' she told herself, rushing for shade.

"Sometimes I wonder what goes on in that head of yours," a mocking voice came beside her.

"You know, you didn't have to come after me, Crysta," the girl replied. She had completely run out of the energy to fight the delta, but the girl seemed determined to mend what had been broken a long time ago.

"I know that Lina, but I want to. It's nothing more than that," Crysta responded. Sighing, the girl continued their light jog and soon made it to the flower shop. The rain had started drizzling and the warmth of the sun had been drained from Sirius in a matter of minutes. I almost felt humid... as though the weather had been that way for days.

"You took a long time to get here, Lina," Honour's irritated voice welcomed them at the door, letting them in as soon as they'd arrived.

"Hey Honour," Lina called back. The two friends embraced each other as soon as they crossed into the flower shop. Honour held on tighter to her friend than she normally did and Lina offered herself as comfort to the girl, "How are you holding up?"

"Well, I'm doing fine as much as emotionally possible," Honour replied, anxiety leaking through her words. The girl couldn't hide the nerves that wracked her mind. The same nerves had kept her from going straight home.

"Well, for someone who's about to ask why they looked like a lightbulb in a field of glowing flowers, you're doing more than okay," Crysta pitched in cheerfully.

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"You're the worst, Crysta. For a moment, I thought I'd finally been able to get a grip. Now I'm back to square one," the girl covered her face and shivered at the thought of the confrontation they were about to make.

Lina reached for her friend and pulled her into another hug before sticking her tongue out at the delta she'd come with, "If I were in your shoes, I'd choose to be excited."

This got Honour's attention, "What's that supposed to mean?" the girl asked her.

"Well, you were glowing in the woods from what I've heard the two of you say, but what I was more curious about was the plants you were controlling. Is that something you've always been able to do? Is it

why you guys run a flower shop? You have no idea how curious I am. Not to mention the fact that you saved us back at the reserve. The more answers you get, the better equipped you'll be at handling the next step. I'm not saying there has to be a next step, just that... well..."

"I understand what you mean Crysta," Honour cut her off. The girl's face held a sad smile, "I guess the strong will always look for ways to protect those they care about the best they can. I haven't been able to protect anyone at all in my life. That day was the first time..." she paused, "Crysta, you might find this ability of mine to be a blessing, but deep inside me, I don't think of it as such. The closer I get to know the answer behind it, the more I feel like it will bring me more harm."

Crysta was confused at the girl's words and further brought to ask the question on her mind, "Why would something that helped you save so many people bring you harm? From the way I see it, it would be harmful in the wrong arms. But it's you who has this power..."

"And would I be the best person to have a power like this? I have seen Lina try so hard to protect the wolves of Sirius. She has been called useless her entire life and yet she did everything she could to protect those she held most dear," Honour said to her.

"What about you? Don't you want to protect those you hold close to you?" Crysta asked her.

"I..." rrrinnng... the phone went at the desk of the flower shop, "Who would be calling in this rain?" Honour complained, rushing to the counter of the flower shop to pick up the phone. "Umm, hello..."

"So that's where you are. The school called us and said you'd returned from the trip. Honour what are you doing at the shop at this hour? You know we weren't going to work today. You only needed to come straight home..."

"I'm coming home, Mum. I just needed to get some fresh air... and to make sure you didn't do anything wrong to the flowers," the girl quickly covered her tone.

"You've never been good at lying and you shouldn't learn to lie either. Did something happen at the reserve, honey? You know you can tell me anything," her mother's voice came from the other side of the phone.

"Yes, mum. Something..." she paused, and with a sigh, "wonderful happened at the reserve." Her voice said anything but 'wonderful'.

"Oh, what was it? You don't sound that happy that something happened. Did a boy ask you out?" the woman asked with a gasp, "Oh, dear, what's his name? When do I get to meet him?"

"Mother, I am a werewolf. I have to wait till I'm eighteen to start thinking about such occurrences. Would you stop letting your imagination run wild like that, mum? That's not even close to what happened," Honour yelled into the phone. By the time she went quiet, so had her mum. Tears stung her eyes from getting her mum's antics out of the way.

"Well then, don't keep me waiting like this. What happened?" the woman asked in a much more composed voice.

"I found a field of moon lotuses, mum," the girl said to her, "They are just as beautiful as you've always said they'd be. They shone a bright blue under the moonlight and they were breathtaking to look at."

Lina was with me along with Katie and one of Cole's beta alphas. I don't think there is a flower in the store that comes close to the marvel we witnessed. Well, since it was the middle of the night, they were glowing and in full bloom..."

"Come home, Honour. We need to talk," the woman cut her off, her voice had lost its former cheer and only screamed melancholy.

"What is it, mother?"

"It has something to do with our family. Honestly, your grandmother has been pushing me to tell you this sooner, but I kept pushing it further hoping you could enjoy a normal childhood a little longer. Just come home, Honour." The woman on the other side of the phone was clearly saddened by her daughter's news. The phone was silent in the next second, leaving Honour holding on to it even though it had gone entirely silent.

"What does she have to tell me?" the girl whispered more to herself. She'd never thought her family could hold any secrets. They were only a normal family living in the capital. There was no secret for them to hold. No connection to the royals. Nothing of what was happening to her made sense in the slightest.

Lina got out her phone and dialled the number of the car she'd only sent away moments ago, "Yeah, I know what I said. Just get here asap, okay." After hearing, 'Yes, your highness' from the other side of the phone, the girl ended the call with a groan. "Ugh, he's not going to let go of this..."

"Well that was your fault, to begin with," Crysta responded.

"Ugh, it wasn't I that decided the weather forecast was wrong today. Come on, it was supposed to be clear sunny skies," the girl screamed, holding her phone for the delta to say. Clear as day, her phone still said it was meant to be sunny at that moment.

Upon seeing the image of the sun on the girl's phone, Honour averted her eyes, a bad feeling creeping into her stomach, "This just keeps getting better and better."

"Huh, do you mean the rain could be your doing?" Lina asked her.

"I'm not sure, but it has the same feeling of unnatural," she responded before taking a seat at the counter. Lina noticed her friend's depressed state and the weather... It was the perfect weather for the girl's state.

"Who knows... your mood could be the one causing this weather just as much as your control over plants. Who knows anything anymore?" Crysta voiced her thoughts while they waited for the car.

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The chauffeur arrived and followed the princess' orders with minimal resistance to get her riled up. They now sat in the car, waiting for Honour to get the guts to leave the car. Her home was only a few steps away from them. They only needed to exit the car and make their way to the building.

Lina put her hand over her friend's hand, "Hey, whatever it is out there, we'll be together. You don't have to go through it on your own."

Honour felt her friend's warmth. She truly wanted to help her and Honour appreciated her help even though she only felt all the more alone in this situation. Steeling her nerves, "Let's just get this over with."

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Honour's mother welcomed her guests and seated them around a table before serving them some herbal tea. The smell of cinnamon wafted through the air and calmed their nerves. From the stairs, an old woman descended the stairs, the sudden entrance startling Honour from her seat, "Grandma, you don't have to push yourself so hard, you know that..."

"Yes, I do, but you took so long to come that I thought you'd rushed off to your room," the old woman complained before hugging the girl before her, "We've missed you, Selene."

Honour froze at the name the old woman used with her, her hands shivering at the mention of the name she'd been nicknamed a long time ago. Tears stung her eyes and she felt as though everything was piecing together before her eyes. Her parents hadn't kept anything from her... She'd only chosen to look away from the fairy tales they'd told her as she'd grown up. "All those stories..."

"Well, Honour, it's about time you knew the full story and the origin of that fairy tale," her mother, holding a cup of tea and looking down, barely able to meet her daughter's eyes. She'd been running from this the most in their family...

## 262 Chapter Two Hundred Sixty Two

It was only after everyone was seated that Honour's grandmother started the story that had been passed down in their family for so long they didn't bother to keep records of how long it was. An estimation was all they could keep track of, "It was about two centuries ago when the story of our family began. The goddess of the hunt was in the need of an object of vengeance against the humans. As a goddess, there was much she could do to bring the humans to an end and I'm not so sure what rules kept her from using ordinary means, but she came up with a completely devious plan at the time.

It was the cultivation of all the cruelty she could muster at the time. She'd been wronged by the Man god Prometheus and she had to do something to him that would leave him torn beyond repair. There aren't many things one can find in the world that can do that to a god, but she found something. The Man god valued one thing above all others in his eternal life and that was the creation he'd made and even gave fire against Zeus' better judgement and was punished for it.

She chose to turn the humans against each other and bring them to kill each other until nothing was left of them. Back then, humanity was starting to prosper. Humans had proven to be intelligent indeed and there weren't many things she could come up with that were effective at the time. If she was to wipe out the whole of humanity, she was going to use a power that would stay present until all humans were gone. A powerful curse...

What better curse than that of the moon?

One visit to the moon palace was all the goddess needed to have control of its power. It was said she struck a deal with the goddess Selene. In truth, it was when our family began. A lone child was sent down on earth and handed to a human family to raise. Since the werewolves were cursed using the

moon's power, the child was no human either. She was but a weak average werewolf child that was fated to give birth to the one who would later take her place back in the heavens."

Honour's heart beat even louder at the words that came from her very own grandmother. It wasn't every day that someone said you were descended from a bloodline of a fallen goddess, "Grandmother... I don't understand."

"The deal that was struck was to last a good two hundred and fifty years. In that time, the goddess planned to accomplish total human annihilation," the old woman continued.

"It can't be true. The goddess has been trying to save humanity and stop the rogues..."

"Honour..." Honour's mother made a move to silence her but was stopped by the old woman.

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"I know you have a lot of questions, a young one and you have the right to ask anything on your mind. It's true our family is weak and has no connection to the royals, but that was the point of it all. The goddess Selene was to be kept as far from the power of the moon so that the goddess of the hunt could utilize its power with no interruption. We are the weakest werewolves in the world, but also the werewolves with the power of bringing the goddess down from her throne," the woman explained, "For she never belonged there in the first place."

"Why would the moon goddess turn against her original mission if she was meant to wipe out all humanity?" Honour asked the old woman.

"Well, that is quite simple really. As the years passed by, the goddess of the moon grew to love her creations. Prometheus didn't blame her for falling in love with them either and he was the one that agreed to help her in her mission to bring peace to the two races that now ruled the earth. A faction of the wolves chose to veer off the new path that the goddess laid down for them. They didn't agree with her newfound love for the creatures that were the reason for their creation in the first place and so the rogues came to be," Honour's grandmother explained.

"So what are you trying to tell me, grandmother?" Honour asked when she found that no other question could be asked other than why she had been told this entire tale.

"On your eighteenth birthday, the two hundred and fifty centuries will come to an end and you will be summoned to your place at the moon palace and you will take the goddess of the hunt's place as the moon goddess," the woman announced as tears broke from the wells in her eyes.

"What..." Honour placed the cup on the table as the news finally registered in her mind. Placing her cup on the table, she turned to her mother. The woman stood at the threshold and tried to dodge her daughter's eyes, "Mum..." She was stopped by the pooling tears in her mother's eyes. None of them had the nerve to make up a story as silly as the one they were telling her at the moment. So it had to be true...

"What about everything I've come to know since I was a child? How a wolf finds their mate when they turn eighteen... one that lives to protect them and only find comfort in their wellbeing..."

"You will have a mate," Lina pitched in, "You will have one Honour."

“What makes you so sure of that?” the girl asked her friend.

“Because I’ve met the current moon goddess’ mate. I also heard that he was there on the day Katie was born. He helped them fight the rogues while the moon goddess had Katie stolen from her crib,” the girl said before her.

“When...”

“We were in Brigadia when it happened. The day the moon goddess came down from the sky,” Lina said to her, “so believe me when I tell you that you will have that life. Besides, you won’t be alone in all this.”

“Lina... I need some time to think,” Honour managed, rushing out of the room, without sparing the room another glance.

“She had to be told much earlier than this,” the old woman shook her head in disapproval.

“I was trying to keep her from harbouring a burden that was still miles away from her. She didn’t need to know about all this now,” her mother argued.

“Enough, the two of you... Honour doesn’t need any of that right now,” Lina snapped at the bickering females, “Whether it was late or early, what would you have done in her shoes? What would you have thought if someone just told you one day that you were fated to become a goddess?”

“You have something wrong, dear. The girl is already a goddess. Her power is just suppressed by her loose connection to the moon. When the goddess of the hunt officially leaves the moon palace, it will call for her and her power won’t be held back much longer,” Honour’s grandmother explained, “It’s impossible for any of us to put ourselves in her shoes for they aren’t the shoes of a human being. The gods and goddesses are quite different from us.”

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The rogue rushed through the woods at the pace the weaklings that had rescued him could manage. After all, there was no reason to his escape without them. They held the key to his success in his mission. His mind searched for all possible explanations for what they could have come up with, but he couldn’t think of any.

He’d had a spy to tell him of the moon goddess’ plan to bring about his end by taking some of the lethal power she’d bestowed upon the royals and he’d done everything he could to bring that to an end. Now that he thought of it, he’d been cautious at the time when he tried to kill the children. Looking at his generals, he remembered their absence at the time.

The rogues weren’t as strong at that time as they were now. ‘If I’d had my generals at that time, those children wouldn’t have grown up to be a pain,’ “Your majesty, what did we just witness?” General Amanda asked

“Well, that would be the power of the gods trying to snuff out what they would consider a weed in this world,” the man replied cryptically. He’d felt the power coming off the girl during his fight and even known just how much exaggerated her power seemed to be.

“Why didn’t we kill her while we had the chance? If she gets any stronger, we might not be able to put an end to her,” the woman argued.

"I know what you mean, Amanda, but what we just witnessed was more than just strength and years of training. That was a girl desperate to keep me from escaping. Which is why I want to know what our new friend has to say to us?" the rogue king commanded, facing the yellow-eyed wolf that ran with them.

"Oh, you mean me... I'm honoured, my king..."

"Skip the flattery and get to the point," the rogue king spat at him.

"No need to be rude about it. In any case, the moon goddess is going to have a replacement two years from now. There is a girl somewhere in the Sirius empire. I don't know who she is just yet, but I know she will be the mate to the future king of Sirius and she will be the next moon goddess," the man announced. The king's first reaction was to shun this information as it sounded even more blasphemous than anything he could have ever thought of.

Right as he was about to strike the man, Victor backed away and continued speaking, "Just think about it, your majesty. The possibility of there being such a person means you can have the power of the royals returned in an instant. I can prove my words... just give me the chance to do it," Victor was now backed up against a tree waiting for the man's final decision with his eyes closed.

"How..."

"Well, we'll have to pay a visit to the Golden Moon pack... and retrieve a Seeker," Victor said with a smirk on his face... 'I'll get my vengeance, Drake Sirius. Just you watch me...'

#### Chapter 263 Life Over Mission

Cole held onto his mate as tightly as he could without causing her any pain. After all the times she'd gone weak just by being wrapped in his arms and the confidence he'd had in her reacting that way. He hoped they would all vanish and just this once, it would happen again. Katie struggled with the war in her mind. It was the second time she was coming face to face with the rogue king. The only difference was that this time, she had the power to put him down, or at least, that's what she thought and felt coursing through her body.

Without caring for the rogues behind him, Cole let them flee, his mind trying to find entry into that of his mate. Katie had blocked everything out in her state of despair. The rogue king had taken the opportunity to run. "Cole, let me go. I have to finish him off before he gets away."

"You made a promise to me, Katie. I don't intend to let you break it," the man responded, holding the girl even as she resisted.

"No, you don't get it, Cole. If we let him go..."

"If I let you continue drawing on that kind of power, you'll be gone. That's a risk I cannot take," the royal cut her off. Katie wasn't sure what Cole was trying to tell her.

"Cole, you're not making any sense. I have to..."

"Don't you ever feel it, Katie? Don't you ever notice when your body has reached its limit? You're not a machine, damn it. You can't be fixed the way they can. Once you break this body, you don't get another

one. You're made of flesh, not metal and no one said you were made to put down the rogue king at the cost of your life," Cole tried.

"I'm a werewolf, Cole. I'll heal. Let me go now before he gets away," the girl tried yelling while she felt the rogue king reach the ends of her scope. She struggled against his hold over her, but her energy diminished below what she needed to break free. He was the one thing she couldn't hurt even if she wanted to.

"No, Katie... You've not been listening to me this entire time. So, listen. Your body is on fire at the moment. If you can't feel it, then believe that I can feel it for you. You've been drawing on power that's more than your body can handle. Can't you tell?" the royal whispered into her ear. Katie stopped squirming inside his embrace for the first moment. She could feel it, the power leaking out of her and flowing through every vessel in her body. She had unleashed all the gifts she had at once.

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'Katie, once you turn off your gifts, you'll go into a state of pain while I focus on healing the both of us,' Ashley said to the girl, making sure Cole could hear her words.

"So, you knew what was happening and you still let her go through with it?" Cole bit back the venom in his voice, but it was undeniable.

"Forgive me, Cole, but Katie and I aren't so different. She's not wrong. The rogue king is going to tear this world in half if he gets away," the wolf replied right before a scream tore through the forest. The aura around Katie had completely vanished and the drawbacks of her exertion were starting to kick in.

A fire roared through every cell in the girl's body as her muscles relaxed from the stress they'd been under. It was like she'd been stretching all of them without noticing and the pain was only registering now that the adrenaline was gone. Everything hurt. Cole's heart rushed into panic as he searched for ways to help his mate.

Activating his power to heal, he started taking the pain away from her as she writhed in his arms, "Hey, Lycaon, place her on her back. I know something that might help." Someone interrupted him. Looking to his side, he saw the man that had been hit by the rogue king in an attempt to help Katie overwhelm him. Doing as the man had asked, he placed Katie on her back, ignoring the black veins that had already spread across his own body more rapidly than he'd ever seen them do so.

The man shook his head to clear his thoughts and expertly hit pressure points about the girl's neck with his thumbs, using a calculated amount of force. It happened so fast that Cole almost missed it himself. The screams and writhing died down and the girl went unconscious. Cole watched for her even breathing and sighed in relief, "I don't know what I would have done if she had continued fighting the rogue king."

"She has more power from the gods than any of us. It explains how she was able to overwhelm the rogue king like that. Has she always been that powerful?" the man asked him.

"I'm afraid not... That was her giving it everything she had at the cost of her own life if it came to it... All for the sake of others... What's wrong with you, Katie? When will you realise that your death would mean pain for those you care about the most?" Cole said more to himself, carrying the girl into his arms.



His healing power still activated, he continued to take away his mate's injuries which were all internal and riddled throughout her entire body.

The man before her reached for Katie's adoptive mother and carried her into his arms. He looked at her lovingly... It was an expression Cole knew all too well. "Does she mean something to you?" he asked him.

"Oh... yeah, she's my... sister-in-law," the man replied with a cough, stunning Cole.

"Wait, that would make you..."

"Thorrin Chase, one of the Mighty Warriors just like her," the man introduced himself, "It's an honour to meet the king of Lycaon as well." He said with a bow. Cole looked away, forcefully reminding that his father was no longer in the land of the living.

'I was going to say Micah Chase, but I guess that's even cooler,' the alpha thought to himself before replying. "It's a pleasure to meet you," the royal replied before turning to go to the capital. He stopped when he noticed the last person they'd come with just stood there watching a vacant spot in the direction the rogues had taken, "Hey, Drake, what is it? Did you see something?"

The royal was quiet for a while, searching his mind for an answer, "Yeah, I thought I saw someone I knew." The face of the amber-eyed wolf was sealed in his mind and his wolf growled at the memory. He could feel something wrong with the wolf's presence at the scene, but couldn't tell what it was doing there or where he'd seen it before.

"Oh, who was it?" Cole asked.

"Well, I can't remember his name. Although I do remember him annoying me and I got him demoted," Drake said, turning to walk away, "No, it couldn't have been him. Maybe I was just seeing things. Don't worry about it."

Cole didn't reply, hoping the conversation on 'might or might not have been' would end right there. There was so much happening that he wanted nothing more to be added to it. The rogue king had escaped right before his eyes and once more, his mate had faced him. This time, however, she wasn't poisoned and Cole was sure she was healing. It was a relief to know she was going to be fine rather than hear the doctor give you news of her potential death.

'If I hadn't jumped in, were you really going to fight him till the divine energy ripped you apart, Katie?' the man asked internally, 'Who am I kidding? Of course, you were going to do it.' The memory of the time she'd trained with Silver and ended up unconscious proved more than he needed to know. Katie didn't know when she'd gone too far with something physically impossible for her and this one quality scared the royal.

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Darkness was all that filled her surroundings. She was sure there was nothing around her. Only darkness and nothing else. It was peaceful for a time, but then questions began to ripple across the darkness, echoing in her mind. 'Why she had done what she had done? What she had intended to do afterwards? Why she didn't think before acting drastically?' To some degree, these questions didn't make sense to the wolf.

She didn't believe in having limitations. She only knew something had to be accomplished. She had to kill the rogue king. It was what she'd resolved to accomplish her whole life. After all the suffering that the rogues had brought upon the world, there was no better way for her to bring an end to the suffering. Her thoughts battled the questions around her. She wanted to impose her reasoning upon wherever they came from.

"Your reasoning is so basic and primal. For someone who didn't have their wolf for the first part of their lives, you definitely ended up more like a werewolf than anyone I've ever met," the clear voice snapped light into the girl's eyes. She hadn't thought anyone was around her, let alone that the darkness could be vanquished.

Once the light had dimmed out, she took in her surroundings. White walls that went as high as she could see. She couldn't believe what she was seeing. There wasn't much in the large room but pillars of white and far at the front, a throne of white. Seated on the throne was a figure she could recognize quite well... The moon goddess, Celeste. Her radiance and beauty, not to mention the way her wolf fawned over her, were all impossible traits to forget.

"I guess we meet again, moon goddess," the girl smiled, even though it didn't reach her eyes.

"I would not have wanted to meet you when your body was being put back together cell by cell. Honestly, what were you even thinking about exerting yourself like that? Not to mention you almost kicked Ashely out of your body," the woman sighed heavily.

#### Chapter 264 A Lone Queen

"I did what I thought was best. If Cole hadn't..."

"If Cole hadn't stopped you, you would have died. And the rogue king knew his place as well. If he'd done something to get you from Cole's grip, he would have risked getting killed as well," the moon goddess confessed, "The two of you would have perished. He clearly knew the right answer to his problem."

"So you're always watching us, huh?" Katie's mind, agitated, was all over the place.

"Of course, I'm always watching. I am your goddess after all," Celeste responded calmly looking upon the girl like she was a child that didn't realize all she did for her. The goddess's face then took on a much sadder frown, "Although, I won't be your goddess for much longer. I hoped the rogue king would give up all this while he was still in custody, but alas, that has not happened."

"I didn't quite understand the first thing you said. What do you mean you won't be our goddess?" Katie asked her, worry seeping into her voice. The previous defensive tone she'd used was gone completely.

"You almost sound like you're worried about me..." the woman smirked at the girl.

"Clearly it was a mistake and one I shall not be repeating," Katie huffed and turned from the goddess. The goddess chuckled at her antics, "But... what am I doing here?"

"Well, if I'm being honest, I wanted to talk to you. To tell you what's happening in the heavens," the goddess replied quietly.

“What’s that got to do with a mortal such as me? The gods can do whatever they like,” Katie replied indifferently.

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“Yes, that is true. However, among those things is taking me away from the position of the goddess of the moon. While I might be the one that brought the curse of werewolves to mankind, I didn’t use my power. The goddess that’s meant to seat at this throne will soon return and I shall step down and resume the normal duties that I’ve always meant to be doing,” Celeste announced.

Katie turned back to look at the benevolent being seated on her throne. She couldn’t form words. She didn’t know what to think at first. “When?”

“On the next goddess’ eighteenth birthday,” the goddess replied.

“So the goddess is... human?” Katie asked her.

“Well, she stems from the family of the weakest werewolves in the world,” the woman responded.

“Oh, I see... So she’s a werewolf, but just a... Wait, Honour?” Katie couldn’t believe what she was hearing. The goddess nodded to confirm the girl’s suspicions. Katie’s mind froze at the information she’d been handed, “How do I end the rogue king once and for all? He’s already killed so many and now he’s out there. He won’t be easy to track now that he’s more cautious of me... I had that one chance...”

“The rogue king will be much easier to find now than you might imagine,” the goddess replied, “But I think you won’t get the time to participate in the investigations this time.”

“I didn’t participate in the investigations the last time as well,” Katie argued.

“Well, you did play a major role in the king’s movements. He might have mistimed his attack when you hid your marking, but it was all based on your actions,” the goddess said to her, “But this time, you won’t play any role in his movements.”

“You’re not making sense,” Katie asked her.

“Well... You’ll understand it later when you’re awake... For now, just take care. Get lots of sleep and wake up to your mate. He’s waiting for you, you know. I’ll have lots more to tell you the next time we meet,” the goddess waved her hand while the girl thought of a complaint to make. However, she was sent back into her body before she could make up her mind. ‘Is it just me or is the goddess hiding something from me?’ the girl thought to herself, trying to figure out what had triggered the thought. Before she knew it, she’d lost the ability to form coherent thoughts altogether and drifted into unending darkness.

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Katie’s eyes fluttered open and she awoke to the sound of a beeping machine. The scent that had been driving her wolf crazy for the better part of the last months wafted into her nose. Trying to move her body sent pain through every muscle that she thought she had and some she found new to her. She bit down on her lip at the sharp pain that shot through her body from the mere effort.

“Hey, slow down... You’ve only just woken up, Katie,” his voice reached her ears calming her senses and thwarting the pain, yet still filling her with regret and fear at the same time. Tears began to stream down her face while she thought through the goddess’s words to her.

“Cole, I’m sorry...”

“You have nothing to apologize for... No, you were reckless,” the man corrected himself, “You were very reckless and you nearly got yourself killed.”

“That’s why I’m...” Cole placed two fingers on the girl’s lips to keep her quiet.

“No, Katie... An apology is meaningless if you’re going to do it the next time like your life doesn’t matter,” Cole replied, falling back into his seat beside her. Katie, against the pain in her neck, turned to face him. He’d done his best to wash his face and keep his composure, but she could tell from just one look at him. Great pain was eating at him.

“Then... thank you,” the girl replied after a moment of silence.

Startled by the sudden change, the man looked her in the eye, “For what...”

“For saving my life...” Cole stood and reached out for the girl, pulling the girl into a hug and taking away her pain while he did. It was the second time she was in a position where he had to take care of her and she hated it. The mate bond they shared allowed both their emotions to be heard by the other... And Katie could tell how much worry she’d caused him. How to apologise, however, was quite beyond her at the moment and so, she could only weep in his arms...

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Thorrin returned with Tom’s wife and got her to the infirmary. The palace was in a state of disarray. Tales of a coffee brown wolf and a hunter apprehending the escaping prisoners filled the mouths of those that had witnessed what had happened. The hunters that had been knocked out woke up only moments after everything had happened. The prisoners that managed to escape were long gone by then and Tom, along with the capable werewolves that were present worked at getting the recaptured prisoners back into their cells in the dungeons.

Not a word was heard from Cole Lycaon while his mate was recuperating during that time. The Perfect Warrior had the other hunters take care of bringing the capital back to a state of calm. They swept through every part of the city in pursuit of the criminals. Word was sent to all citizens to stay in their homes and activate their rogue protection systems while the situation was taken care of.

A few more criminals were apprehended during their widespread search and once it was clear that they’d searched everywhere, a roll call was made and seven escaped prisoners were taken note of. Wanted posters were immediately printed and citizens were advised to keep a look out and measures were taken to keep them safe. The work only reminded Thorrin that he hadn’t had an ounce of sleep, but soon enough it was all done. He sat in the conference room with barely an ounce of energy left within him.

“Thorrin, you need to get some rest,” Evelyn said to him.

“Yes, I know that... The girl... Did she wake?” he asked her.

“Yes, she did. Cole Lycaon took care of her and set her to sleep before anyone could be allowed to see her,” Evelyn replied.

“Okay then... I’ll pay my visit to her tomorrow then,” the man replied before collapsing on the table...

“A bed would have been a better option, dummy,” Evelyn grumbled before turning to her brother who was only just arriving, “Get him a blanket, Micah.”

“Of course, because you’re my boss,” Micah replied with a smug look on his face.

“No, he’s the boss of both of us. Besides, I have somewhere to be right now and you have... Oh, wait, nothing to do at the moment besides going to sleep,” the woman whisper-shouted.

“Oh, and what makes you think my sleep is really not that important? I wouldn’t want to burn out like that man over there. I’m quite sure he would have got the rogue king if he hadn’t spent his time awake and run out of divine energy,” Micah was now leaning against the wall yawning heavily.

“You’re just trying to be obnoxious right now, aren’t you? The only sleep you’ve had was given to you by a sleeping draught. You hadn’t slept either. Why am I having this conversation with you? Your brother is cold over there. You know he would have done the same thing for you if he was in your...”

“Alright alright... You’re giving me a headache... I’ll go get the stupid blanket. Gosh, Thorrin, have you been giving her yelling lessons again?” the man complained, walking out of the conference hall. Evelyn took one more look at her brother and listened for his even breathing.

“I hope you don’t blame yourself for losing him. You did all you could. No doubt you’ll get him next time,” with that, she left the conference room and started her walk to the king’s chambers. Within the room, the woman she’d come to see was seated sipping a cup of tea while she watched the orange sky turn darker. The sun had already set and the last rays of light were only starting to disappear.

“You came... I thought you would decline my request,” the woman sounded surprised.

“I wouldn’t. Although I’m not sure if I’ll be of any help to you,” the woman responded with a slight bow.

“I haven’t left this room since it happened. I don’t even know how to conduct myself outside this room now. How will they look at me? What do I say to them? How do I keep myself from breaking down in front of them? It’s all too much for me,” the queen replied.

“You won’t have to do any of that. Your subjects know what you’re going through. All werewolves know what it is like to lose a mate,” Evelyn tried despite her being human.

“Yeah, I guess you’re right,” the queen responded, wiping a stray tear from her face. Stepping around the three caskets, the hunter came up to the queen. Her eyes bore a darker shade beneath them and her make-up was all wrong.

“But you can’t go out looking like this,” she said to her, gesturing to her entire figure. The gown was a mess as well, bearing blood stains from god-knows-where...

“What!” the queen exclaimed, taking a look at her dress before coming to the inevitable conclusion that the hunter was telling the truth. Blood stains and creases riddled the once glamorous dress she wore indicating her conduct in the past hours, “Oh, I see what you mean. I don’t even know if he’s holding up

just fine. He hasn't even had the chance to see his father and yet... I was able to sense his distress through the mind link."

#### Chapter 265 Eutopia

The queen discussed everything she had on her mind with the hunter, bringing the two of them closer as they spoke. She allowed the hunter to call her by her first name and let her skip all the formalities. As someone who was watching the woman hurt, Evelyn allowed herself to be the shoulder she needed.

Once the queen was done freshening up and had donned a fresh lilac gown, the queen finally stepped out of her chambers with Evelyn in tow. Their destination was the emergency room where the future alpha and luna were currently occupying.

Evelyn watched as the queen froze with her knuckles held up to the door before knocking. The moment of tension as she rethought her decision was so excruciating that Evelyn ended up knocking at the door herself, "Come in..." a tired male voice called out from the other side.

The queen pushed open the door and graced the room with her presence. Cole had his head in his hands, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. He'd fallen asleep in a chair next to the sleeping girl. "Hello, Cole," the queen greeted her.

"Queen Margaret..." the man froze at the sound of the queen's voice, "I hadn't expected you to come here. Not this late anyway."

"I also thought you were in Sirius making sure to keep your mate safe and introducing her to the life of a werewolf and soon-to-be Luna before rushing her into the role of being queen of the Lycaon empire, but here we both are," the queen rushed her words.

"Well, we can never know what will happen in the future. Whether it's in the distant future or just a few hours away. One moment she's alright and the next..." he gestured to the sleeping body of the girl, "Well, you can see where I was going with that."

"What happened to her?" the queen finally gave in to her curiosities.

"She overexerted herself when she was trying to stop the rogue king from fleeing Lycaon. I don't even know how she was able to tell that the man was going to escape in the first place. If she had known the entire time that we were on that plane, she could have made a call to the hunters that were already here."

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"We cannot always know what our senses are trying to tell us. If I'm guessing correctly, she might have merely felt that something ominously wrong was going to happen in Lycaon and came as fast as she could without knowing what it was in the first place.

The more complex the problem, the harder it is for us to discern what it is. Sometimes, it's something we are trying to avoid that could cause a problem in the future that we can't even foresee. We aren't perfect," Evelyn explained, noting her moment to clear some of the prince's confusion. Watching the man as he talked only proved to her that he was worrying himself sick over the girl's reckless actions.

Cole sighed upon hearing her explanation and looked at the girl in the bed. Reaching out with his hand, he tucked a stray hair behind her ear, "That would be the most logical way to put it. The inevitable way to make it seem as though she'd never intended to put herself in that state."

"I'm not sure I know anyone who'd want to be in a hospital bed at any one point in their lives. Have a little more faith in her," Queen Margaret spoke up.

"You came here to ask me about my father's funeral?" Cole asked her.

"Yes, that I did. Now that you're here, it can happen the right way. With you as his heir and successor to the Lycaon throne. It's nice to see that you found your mate as well and even got marked," the queen congratulated him.

"What was he thinking sending me away in the first place? If I had been there, he would have survived. I wouldn't have let them get to him," Cole argued, "So many hunters and he still died."

"Cole, don't question the decisions they took. There was a lot that happened. You weren't here to watch it all," Queen Margaret argued, "In any case, that's not the way he would have wanted you to embrace his sacrifice."

"What sacrifice..." a knock at the door snatched the man's attention as an ageing doctor entered. The man was known for his healing capabilities and so, Cole was ready to hear what the man had to say.

"You're right on time, doctor. The prince needs to hear what was happening to the king in his final moments. What the king meant to have him know before he passed," the Queen asked of him.

Bowing to the queen and prince in greeting, the man began his narration of what was happening to the king, "As you know, your majesty, I was always the first to run tests on the king before deciding on how to treat him. When you came into the picture two years ago with your healing abilities, we were overjoyed. Sure that the king was going to survive the illness that ailed him.

But that wasn't the case. With time, he was deteriorating even faster and he needed you to heal him a lot more frequently in a month. If he didn't stop relying on you, it was only a matter of time before he died. I later found out that his cells were starting to get weaker since they were no longer required to fight off his illness. That's when he came up with the decision that his heir had to meet his mate.

He says it came to him through a dream from the goddess herself. I didn't believe him at the time, but I was also the only person he told along with the queen that Cole's mate was indeed located in Brigadia. When he sent you off, he gave you two orders.

One was to finish your education in the safest school on earth while the other was to make sure you only returned home after you'd found your mate and showed her what it was to be one with one another. What he didn't tell you was that he knew where your mate was and that you would be meeting her in that exact same school. For fear of the information reaching the enemy, he told no one of this, not even you."

"Why wouldn't he tell me?" Cole rested his chin on his hands, trying to take in the information he was receiving. A whole part of his father's plan that he'd never even suspected, 'I guess it was too much of a coincidence.'

The doctor was shocked by the man's question that he posed one of his own, "You believe the part about him speaking to the moon goddess?"

"I've spoken to the moon goddess myself, so I wouldn't call the man crazy," Cole shrugged it off, "Now, if you would answer my question please."

"Yes, your majesty. He chose not to tell you so that you wouldn't tell your beta alphas. With how information had leaked eighteen years ago amidst those exchanges, he wouldn't have wanted to jeopardize any chance you had at finding her. Furthermore, he wanted you to experience what it was like to have a mate and guide her towards accepting what she was and not forcing her into it," the man tried to explain.

"In other words, he wanted Katie to be marked of her own free will? I knew that much from how he insisted I not force her into anything over the phone, but I never thought how much he'd thought into it," Cole replied.

"Yes, the marking only takes place once and if it's not done right... well, that leaves a scar. If she let you mark her, then I can assume she marked you as well. Forceful marking never goes both ways," the doctor explained.

"Yes, she did..."

"That's good to hear," Margaret sighed, "The two of you will make a lovely royal couple."

Cole turned red at the woman's words and turned his attention to the girl in the bed, "I'm pleased to hear that. Is there anything else I need to know?"

"There is one more thing. The king knew of the possibility of being attacked in his weakened state just in case the rogue king would want to take the power of the Lycaon family for himself, but he miscalculated how quickly the rogue king would move.

He didn't think they would move that quickly which is why he was pleased when he felt the bond form between the two of you the day you marked each other," the man explained, sending the room into a deep silence. Cole merely rubbed his temples, trying to fathom how much his father had read into the situation.

"For what it's worth Cole, I'm sorry," Evelyn spoke, stunning the room and sending into a deep silence. Cole had never known the words to mean so much and yet they freed him of all his frustrations. Of course, the hunters wouldn't have intentionally let his father be killed by rogues. They had done everything they could to keep the king safe and it hadn't been enough.

"Two mighty warriors and a whole collection of hunters and they couldn't do a thing against the rogue king. They might have downed a large number of his forces, but..."

"There was a traitor amongst us that helped the rogue king escape," Evelyn interjected, "Don't you wonder why you were only backed up by one hunter?"

Now that Cole thought about it, he had an odd memory of the rogue king talking about a sleeping draught. The whole situation was a mess, "This is the second time the rogue king has been involved in a rogue attack and once more, my mate has ended up in a similar situation.



We've clashed with him twice..." he paused, allowing his mind to go through all that he knew, "And I can't call either one of those times a win for us... No, I can't. We've most definitely been losing."

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Sandra sat in the waiting room outside of Katie's emergency room, going through a newspaper she wasn't even interested in. It was the nearest thing she could find to distract her. The details within it were of no concern to her and she wished she had a novel or a book instead, but there was nothing she could do about it. Her mind tried to run away from the painful reality that plagued her.

The newspaper would have been effective if it had involved something interesting... Instead, it only allowed her eyes to glaze over while the flashes of the battle in the woods roared through her mind. She'd been there the entire time. There had never been a time in her life when she'd felt more useless to help Katie than when she stood in that forest watching her fight with so much skill and power that it froze her right to the core.

She didn't want to think about how useless she'd been. How much more she could have done if she had simply gone with Mr Tom instead, "You know, worrying yourself sick like that will only get you in worse shape. Honestly, what difference is there between you and Katie anyway?" Jason's voice tore her from her thoughts.

The alpha had returned from an errand. Thinking back, now she remembered what it had been like... for the three of them to watch the fight happen. The rogues on the other side hadn't dared to cross either while the two titans battled.

Only Cole felt the need to stop what was happening. After all, he was the only one that could peer into the girl's mind. "He must have felt the pain she did..." she said, looking up from the newspaper. Jason held out a book for her to take. In his other hand, he had a bag filled with yoghurt packs.

"Well, it doesn't work that way really. If the wolves had a conversation during that time, maybe that could have been how he came to know..." the man explained, taking a seat beside the girl, "You know, you will be able to help her out soon enough."

"I've been hearing that for some time and I'm starting to feel like it will never happen. She's proceeded to even higher levels. When we talked earlier, I thought she was joking about wanting to become a Mighty Warrior but now I'm not so sure," Sandra chuckled.

"You know, Sandra... only one person gets to kill the rogue king. If Katie manages to pull it off, what does that make you?" Jason asked.

"The person that helped her get there. I could hold off the beta alphas and provide all the support she needs."

"Then what does that make Cole and the other hunters with the same goals and dreams?" he asked, holding a metallic can of soda out to her.

The girl took the can from him, "Thanks. What's your point?" the girl groaned.

“My point is that you’re too focused on trying to emulate your mentor. Things like that will only get you disappointed. She’s trying to achieve her dream while you’re trying to achieve her dream as well. What do you want?” Jason asked her.

“Well, honestly...” Sandra thought back, “I just want to live in the world Katie is trying to create. To truly live a life in it. A world of peace, where we don’t have to worry about rogues trying to kill us. Eutopia.”

#### Chapter 266 Rogue Meets Seeker

Seated in the living room of a lovely cottage watching television was a rather peculiar young lass graced with beautiful amber eyes that ever so often blinked grey. With the weekend only starting, she had quite the number of shows to catch up on, with a few recommendations from friends at the restaurant she worked in. There was no better time to be lazy than now after she had saved up so many episodes of her favourite shows over the week.

“Hey, Madeline, would you turn it down a little?” her grandmother called from inside her bedroom. The girl complied with her grandmother’s wishes and reduced the volume of the television. Popping another chip into her mouth, she smiled at the scene unfolding before her.

Romantic comedies weren’t many to choose from, but with each one she watched, she found herself swooning over the characters and dreaming of herself as one with the shows. Lucky for her, she wasn’t picky about whichever of them she picked out and her friends gave her so many recommendations that she could never go wrong in finding the right series to follow.

“It’s nice to know how to relax you know. It’s good for you,” a deep male voice suddenly pierced the peace of the lovely cottage. Sensing the cold heartless nature contained within the voice that had just spoken, the girl turned in her seat as fast as she could losing her blanket just as quickly. The man before her was muscular but not as much as the other standing beside him. The red-eyed large man seemed to suck the life out of her by simply gazing at her.

“What are you people doing in my house?” the girl asked in a tone that started off strong but ended up shaky while she took a step back. The one who scared her most, however, was the less muscular man who only now decided to show her his eyes.

The bright blue hue that emanated from them and the fact that she had no idea who he was in the royal family could only mean one thing. She was standing in the same room as the man who wanted to bring humanity to the ground and all the wolves that complied with peace along with it.

When the man was about to speak, his voice got caught in his throat while his face lit up in excitement at something he’d just seen, “They really do flash silver every once in a while.” The rogue king mused.

“It’s like I was telling you. This home of freaks is just the tip of the iceberg. The royal family has a number of things they are hiding and these happen to be some of them,” a new voice, although much more familiar to the girl rang out from behind the rogue king. A hooded figure stepped out from behind her and took off his hood to reveal his face.

Madeline went weak in the knees and fell to the ground. The man beneath her hood had been someone she’d come to know and respect, “Victor, why?”

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“Oh, why not? I get to have my revenge on the pesky royal. It’s a win-win situation,” the man smirked, showing no compassion in his yellow eyes.

“The lot of you have some nerve entering the Seeker’s home unannounced,” a feminine voice came from across the room. On the other side of the room was an older woman with grey eyes. Hers didn’t shift back and forth. They were permanently set in grey.

“You could have made an appointment, you know,” the woman greeted, walking up to her granddaughter and helping the girl up. Her grandmother’s touch was calm and seemed to chase some of the fear from her.

“You’re one confident granny, Beatrice,” Victor spoke up.

“And you’re one spineless traitor. Utterly shameless too. What do you hope to gain from helping him?” the woman asked, getting her granddaughter up, “Madeline, dear, would you go and make these intruding ruffians some tea?”

Madeline, against her immense anxiety, rushed to the kitchen to carry out her tasks. The rogue king watched the woman with curiosity in his eyes. Her composure was like steel under his gaze and she carried herself as though she’d been visited by ordinary people who’d come to see her for her gift.

This angered Victor even though he felt he should hold his tongue and avoid lashing out at the woman. Beatrice took a seat and gestured for them to take seats as well, turning off the television in the process and stealing away the blanket that had been dropped by her daughter, “Don’t just stand there gawking. Take a seat and let me know what brought you here.”

“No, we’re better off standing,” the king replied, “Besides, you don’t want us getting your carpet wet and dirty. It’s been pouring for a few days now. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“Yes, the rain does feel strange these past few days. It’s almost as though it pours with the intent of never stopping and we all feel that it’s still going. Now, I asked you to take a seat knowing what state you come in. Don’t make me repeat myself,” the friendly tone she’d been using vanished at the end.

Like clockwork, the rogues were seated as if they didn’t want to be sent to their rooms as punishment, or worse, “That’s much better now, isn’t it? I’m happy you were considerate enough to take off your shoes as well.”

“You know, Thane. I like this woman. She reminds me a lot about Amanda,” the king chuckled, thinking of his female general.

“Oh? And what is this, Amanda like?” Beatrice asked the rogue king, sitting back in her chair as well, regarding him with the same air as one would a new friendly acquaintance.

“Well, she’s stubborn like you and one hell of a spitfire. Although, I wouldn’t put much confidence into your words if I were you. I tend to break away from that spell once things go too far,” the king rumbled.

“Well, the only reason the ‘spell’ is working is that it’s the only way you’ll be able to get what you want. And I hope you understand what I mean by that in its entirety,” the woman replied, raising her fingers to put quotes around the word ‘spell’.

Just then, Madeline came in, tremors racking her body as they always had when holding a tray of delicate ceramic cups. Realising her mistake, the older woman got up and helped the girl set down the cups before letting her serve their guests. Victor groaned, "I was sure I would get to see her spill that tea. Why did you intervene?"

"While her training might have helped her improve over time, she has always been far too shy when serving you, Victor. You wouldn't want her to spill hot boiling tea on you, would you?" Beatrice replied in a sweet tone. Madeline looked sad when they spoke of Victor.

"Is this why you left her?" the woman asked him. This time the rogue king was interested.

"It was never my intention to be her bodyguard in the first place. Lionel must have had a good laugh when he sent me to take care of her," the man spat. His words were like daggers to the girl and she fled the room before she could hear more rushing up the stairs to her room.

"There goes our room service," Thane sighed, helping himself to the flask so he could serve himself the tea that had been brought to them.

#### Chapter 267 Breaking the 'Spell'

"I'm curious to know what happened between the two of them," the king asked, rubbing his hands together with a goofy expression on his face.

Beatrice couldn't believe she was seeing the man act this way and chuckled a bit, "Well, he was assigned to protect the girl. It was his only job and for a time, that's all he did. As time went on, their relationship became more... well... complicated," the woman said with a sad smile, "He wasn't making fun of her anymore and instead, he was... helping her. I've never seen her improve so fast since she started pursuing her dream of..."

"That's enough. Might we proceed to what we came here for, your majesty?" Victor snapped, having had enough of the conversation.

The old woman's eyes seemed to light up as she had hit a nerve. Deciding against her next statement, she spoke up, "Well, I do hope you find what has led you down this path and that you won't regret it when you find it."

The rogue king looked at the amber-eyed man a little longer before changing the subject, "Fine... On to our purpose of coming here. We came here because of something a little bird told us once. Depending on the way you answer, we may or may not think of torturing you into telling us what we need to know."

"Well, what might that be?" the woman asked.

"We came here to know the identity of the moon goddess. And we don't mean Celeste. We mean the one that's coming after her," the rogue king explained as briefly as he could.

"What good would that... Oh, you seek to reverse the goddess's power that was unleashed by her chosen pair. Were you not satisfied with the time you had to..."

“Don’t dodge the question. It’s quite simple. Who is the next moon goddess?” the rogue king responded, running out of patience for the woman’s conversation, “I don’t know what you’re playing at, but you might want to give it up. Calling the pack warriors here will only get them killed. Stop stalling.”

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“I sense mates of others... not goddesses,” the woman replied sternly, raising her voice to emphasise a point, “and here I thought the rogue king had come to his senses and wanted to know whether he was blessed with a mate or not?”

“Oh, I see what you did there, but I won’t fall for it,” the rogue king narrowed his eyes at the crafty woman, “You will tell me what I need to know. Where is the next moon goddess?”

The conversation had taken a turn for the worst. Had the king asked to be directed to his mate, the woman would not have had any trouble doing so. However, this was different. She was supposed to deliver to him something that was out of her capabilities, “The power to sense the goddess does not come in my job description.”

The rogue king leaned back into the sofa he was seated in, taking in a deep breath, “I was told of a wolf you sensed not long ago. One that was far too special to be anything but the future moon goddess... The next words that come out of your mouth had better be the truth or else you will be in for a world of pain. As I said, a little bird told me what you know. You merely have to tell me where to find her.”

The woman chuckled at the man’s words, thinking over her words before speaking. Placing her cup on the table, she took the time to think about what he’d said. The rogue king was in all ways the ruthless person he was said to be and would no doubt do what he said he would if her answer wasn’t satisfactory. “Do you plan to waste my time now?” the king asked her.

“I did sense someone special a while ago, but I never did confirm that she was indeed the moon goddess just that she was special. Not to mention how obnoxious it sounds for the moon goddess to be a werewolf among us,” the woman replied.

“That’s the wrong answer,” the man sighed, “Thane...”

“Yes, your majesty,” the beta alpha adhered, getting up to apprehend the woman.

“No, not her... I know the look in that woman’s eyes. She won’t break so easily. But there is a way we can skip right over to the part where she tells me where I can find the moon goddess,” the king said with a smirk. A look of fear similar to the one that was on Beatrice’s face, flashed within Victor’s eyes before he composed himself.

“You mean the girl that went upstairs in tears a moment ago?” the question was rhetorical and the king didn’t dare to answer it. Victor was the first up the stairs along with Thane. The king was left alone, seated with the woman who could only look up in fear.

“You seem awfully calm for someone who’s about to watch their granddaughter be tortured for something she didn’t even do,” the man smirked bringing the cup of tea that Thane had just prepared for himself up to his nose. He sniffed it for any kind of drug before taking a sip, “Oh my, this is good. What did she put in this?”

Ignoring the question, "My granddaughter has nothing to do with any of this. You must understand that my power doesn't look for goddesses. I look for mates. The souls of werewolves are connected strongest to their mates. That's what I can find, but there is nothing more to it than that," the woman responded, pinching the bridge of her nose in frustration.

"I didn't come here looking for excuses. After all, there is something you know about the moon goddess that you're not telling me. You know who she is... How else would I have known that it was you who divined that someone who'd come to you recently was fated to be with..." the man asked her.

"Your majesty..." Thane's voice came from the top of the stairs. From the emotions that the rogue king felt through their mind link, tension built within him as he wished the man had good news for him, "The girl is gone."

#### Chapter 268 Rain and Gloom

Katie stared into the mirror before her, passively taking in her appearance. Her mind worked at keeping her in the present. Her body had healed a lot with Cole's help and thankfully without getting him into his weakened state. By forcing him to stop using his ability when it got too much for him, she was able to keep him from falling ill.

She felt sore in so many places and barely had the energy to walk. Heavy rain pelted the glass panes of the windows in a rhythmic tone that gave the girl peace of silence. The occasional waves of heat swept through her as her body adjusted to the cold temperature.

The door to her room opened admitting a majestic-looking woman dressed in a black beautiful gown. The queen walked up to the girl who'd barely spared her a glance and stood behind her. In the mirror, she looked like a porcelain doll, having applied just the right amount of makeup to bring her face to perfection. Beneath all the looks, she was a mess waiting to be fixed, "It's time, Katie." The queen spoke, placing her hands on the girl's shoulders.

Katie's eyes blinked twice as she came to reality. She was in Cole's room... His room in the palace in Lycaon. While the two of them had spent a while in Katie's room, moving into his room had been a whole different experience. Everything in the room was covered in the alpha's scent that the girl, along with her wolf, Ashley could barely find the ability to focus while enveloped in it, "Yeah... I'll be there in a minute," her reply sounded distant.

The queen looked into the mirror, watching the girl's bright blue eyes, "Well, that's what you said a solid ten minutes ago to the maid I sent to get you," the woman replied.

Katie thought back and got the faint memory of someone talking to her earlier. She hadn't even thought about her reply at the moment. She could barely focus on what was in front of her. Ever since that day... it hadn't been the same for her. She'd not been able to move on her own unless someone pushed her in the right direction. 'Oh yeah, someone did come for me...'

The will to move her body was nearly at zero. She spent all the time she could resting. When she was visited, she paid attention to only those she cared about and even then, they could tell she was pushing herself. As a result of this, the burial of the king had happened without her and a memorial was set for a later date when the Luna would be able to attend.

Thinking back on Cole's words to hold the ceremony in her presence, her mind began to clear a little bit, "Would you walk with me?" the girl asked, speaking in a tone so low the queen wouldn't have heard if it wasn't for her werewolf hearing.

Smiling at the beautiful girl in the mirror, the queen replied, "Of course, dear... Just come with me." She took her hand and led her out of the prince's chambers. It had been like this for the past few days. To be more specific, it had been a week.

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Cole, who had seemed more broken than her at first, had started picking up the slack, while she only fell into a more reserved state confining herself to their room, partly because she didn't have the strength to move about, however, she wasn't sure it would have been any different if she had been strong enough.

Katie walked through the halls with the queen avoiding eye contact with anyone as much as possible. The marble floors seemed more interesting than anything else and she gazed at the mesmerizing patterns that swirled within them until they reached the main doors where she stopped for a moment. The queen pushed open the doors open, letting in a cold breeze from the exterior of the palace that sent shivers through the girl's body, "It's been like this since that day, hasn't it?" Katie asked the queen... "...the rain?"

The queen sighed, looking into the clouds in the sky that were always present, "Yes, Katie. It has been like this for a little over a week. We haven't seen the sun since the day the king escaped. It's not just here in Lycaon though... It's been happening in Sirius too."

"Is it why my sister cannot make it to the ceremony?" Katie asked.

"Your sister and father won't be able to attend for that reason indeed. I would have asked that they drive all the way here, but that would be risking their lives and the journey is not the shortest. The rogue king is still out there and we've heard the reports about how powerful he is. You certainly..." the woman stopped when the princess's eyes flashed a bright blue.

She was falling deeper into her daze than she'd intended, "Katie..."

The girl held her hand up to stop the apology that was coming her way, "No, it's fine. Let's... just get to the ceremony." The queen silently cursed for having made a mistake. Katie fell into a daze every time she was reminded of the reason that had brought her to Lycaon in the first place.

The queen beckoned for the servants to bring them umbrellas to shield them from the rain while they went to the car. The queen and princess boarded the car that had been waiting for them and were both driven away...

The burial grounds were filled with hunters and civilians from all over Lycaon and the surrounding areas. Many of them had come to attend the memorial for the king while others had come to pay visits to those they had lost in the battle a week before. As it had turned out, more hunters had been lost during the fighting than they had initially thought which made the week of mourning that much depressing. Most of the ones that were in the castle had survived with minor injuries, but the ones that had been at the front lines barely had anyone standing.

The werewolves had lost many of their own as well... and most of them had been buried in this same cemetery out of respect for their service to the empire. The black car carrying the two Lunas was opened to release the two ladies. The two royals walked elegantly into the cemetery, holding hands and making their way through the crowds to the gathering a little into the scattered woody part of the cemetery. While most of it was covered by short grass, there was a part that had trees that provided shade to the graves below

The part of the cemetery had been reserved for royalty and beta alphas of the past. Katie's eyes, which had barely done much in the past days, scanned through the scores of people as they parted ways for her to pass. She was looking for her friends... People she knew, but most of all, she was looking for the only other person that reminded her she was alive.

The one person whose presence was the equivalent of a pinch to check if someone wasn't dreaming. His scent was harder to pick up in the rain, but as they got closer to what she thought was their destination, she finally picked up the man's sweet scent as well as the depressing mood he tried to cover up.

Three tombstones stood at the centre of the gathering the people had made. Katie could make out the names of the deceased king, Trevor Lycaon. Cole's eyes shot open when he picked up on the faint scent of his mate and darted in her direction as she approached him.

On both sides of the king's tombstone were his beta alphas, Duncan and Cross. Katie hadn't known how risky the life of a beta alpha was until the moment they told her of their passing. The two of them had offered to fight on the front lines to keep their rogues at bay and had even made it through the worst of it, but with the king's last breath came their passing as well since their lives were directly linked to his.

The hand of the widow at her side got tighter the closer they got to the tombstones. Looking at the three tombstones, Katie was only now realizing that the woman had not lost only her husband, but three close friends as well, 'Makes me wonder if I've been a brat this past week,' the girl thought to herself, almost forgetting the weakness that wouldn't leave her body.

In front of Duncan's tombstone stood a woman with a girl in front of her. The girl had her face covered with her palms, but the sobs were still clear to the werewolves that were near. Even in the rhythmic sound of the rain against leaves and black umbrellas, they could be heard.

Katie looked around at the solemn looks on the people's faces, expressions she'd worked so hard to get rid of. Her dream had never felt so far from her like it did now. It felt almost unattainable... and her ironclad will to keep pushing forward faltered.

"I'm glad you could make it," Cole's whispered into her ears, snapping her back to reality. Cole stood in front of her, his scent invading her personal space, but warming her at the same time. She felt his loss more than anyone in the vicinity. The mate bond they shared ensured it. She couldn't smile as brightly unless he was able to as well...

"I had to," she replied, pulling the man into a hug, "I said I would." Evelyn was by the queen's side without anyone noticing. The queen, however, seemed to have expected it and hugged her friend before turning back to face the tombstones before them.

'Where does one even start?' a question echoed in Katie's mind as she stared at the tombstones of the very people that had held the empire before Cole's time as king.



'Well, there is the part that the public gets to hear,' Cole said to her through the mind link.

'And the other part?' the girl asked her, looking him in the eyes.

'Well, the other part is the one I'll tell you when we get back home,' Cole responded, before turning to the gathering. As the next king, there was no one of higher ranking at the ceremony other than him, "Now that my Luna and the queen have arrived, there is no reason for us to wait any longer. The ceremony shall now begin," he announced calmly.

As soon as he'd said that, someone came from the crowd. Katie's senses tried to pick up something from him, but in her state, she could only tell that she should have known him. Yet another thing she'd painfully started getting used to since that day. The toll her body took to interpret messages that were coming from her senses. Her senses were much more muffled than they used to and even when she did interpret them, her solution was barely close to a favourable answer. She had completely shut them off as they took more effort than her morale allowed.

"My name is Thorrin Chase. I asked the future king to allow me to speak first. Hopefully to ease up the tension, but also so I would get the chance to say everything I knew of King Trevor Lycaon. You all know me more as the Perfect Warrior, but on this day, I am Thorrin. A man that has come to bid heroes farewell. Today... We... We celebrate the life of Trevor Lycaon and his beta alphas, Duncan and Cross."

#### Chapter 269 Memorial

Katie paid attention to the speech given by the man meant to be her uncle Thorrin, her eyes numerous times taking note of how built his body was. It only stood to reason that he was indeed the famous Perfect Warrior.

Thorrin spoke of times before the prince of Lycaon had been born. He made jokes about different encounters he'd had with the king, some embarrassing while others touching. Ultimately, Katie was able to paint the deceased king's image as that of an honourable man worthy of all the respect given to him by the two empires. The king did his best to cater for every part of his empire, no matter how far it was from him.

At some point, Thorrin pointed out that the capital seemed like the furthest thing from the king's mind when he was dealing with matters concerning the empire. Thorrin's speech was long, but it covered most of what they wanted to hear on the occasion.

The man made sure to keep his exaggerations to a minimum as well as his laughter, or at least, that's what Cole's emotions told Katie. Every time something sounded exaggerated, his grip on her hand would tighten and she would take it as a hint that it wasn't how her mate remembered his father or sometimes as a sign that the memory was one he didn't want to revisit. Nonetheless, he held his tongue.

Shuddering for what felt like the hundredth time, the girl pulled her coat around her tighter, the words fading away from her mind as her attention wavered and she tried to get warmer, "You've been less chatty for the past week," Cole's voice leaked into her mind.

"I'm sorry about that, Cole," she replied earnestly. Even as they stood before the headstones, she had nothing to say except another apology.

“It isn’t bothering me or anything. I just want to know what’s on your mind. Would you perhaps let me in?” Cole’s voice came again.

The girl sighed, leaning into the man at her side, “You’ve been patient with me. Thank you. I could let you in, but I don’t think you’d find anything in there really. It’s like time stopped for me the moment he got away. Like I had been thrown back many years in progress,” the girl replied, looking to the man speaking beyond the headstones.

Thorrin was concluding his speech when she finally tuned back into her surroundings. “While we call this a ceremony to celebrate the life of the king, we do not forget the implications of holding it. After all, we could have held this ceremony while he was alive. His legacy stands before us, the remnants of proof of the promise made by the moon goddess.

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The hunters shall not let the king’s death be in vain. We shall keep on working our very hardest to bring an end to the terror the rogue king still brings to our hearts and the hearts of our loved ones. This is a promise I declare on behalf of the rest of the hunters,” the man declared with a bow to the future king. It didn’t take long for Katie to realise he was saying this to Cole more than the rest of the werewolves present.

Taking his cue, Cole took a step forward to replace Thorrin. When Katie resisted his sudden motion, the man turned to his mate, “Hey... Is something wrong?” he asked her.

Katie turned red, “It’s like you’re forgetting I have trouble addressing large crowds,” the girl complained through the mind link, punctuating her thoughts with a questioning look.

“Well, you didn’t seem to have trouble at the Founder’s Festival,” Cole reminded her.

“I did... I don’t even know what that would have turned out to be if you hadn’t helped me. For goddess’ sake, you didn’t even know if we were mates back then,” the girl said to him.

Cole nearly laughed out loud at the sudden change in the colour of his mate’s face. It was the first time he’d seen a drastic change in her composure that whole week that it was refreshing. “So now you have your answer,” he winked, “Very well, I’ll spare you this time, but you’ll have to be with me on the rest,” he said to her, letting go of her hand.

“Wait, the rest? What’s that supposed to mean? Oh right, we are mates. This, obviously is not the only speech you’ll ever have to make,” Katie groaned, realisation turning her even redder.

“You won’t have to say anything this time. Just stand at my side. I think much more clearly with you around me,” the alpha confessed, bringing warmth to the girl’s heart, ‘You could have tried that line before the burial, I probably would have done my best to attend,’ this she shielded from the royal. Doubt filled her mind on whether it would have changed a thing.

Hesitantly, the girl took the man’s hand once more and the two of them walked to the other side of the headstones where Cole would then get the chance to address the gathering. Whispers could be heard throughout the gathering crowd.

Katie's ears chose this moment, out of the entire week, to awaken, 'Is that supposed to be his mate?' 'I heard she just chose to impersonate the girl who died eighteen years ago,' another would go. 'I don't care who she is, the two of them look like they were made for each other. Just check her out. And what's with that monstrous aura? Her innocent facade doesn't fool me one bit,' the most prominent voice made its way to Katie's ears.

When Cole cleared his voice, everyone went dead silent, "Thank you, Thorrin. I'd expect nothing more from the one of the four. I also had no idea you had that many stories of my father... Took far more time than I thought it would," the crowd chuckled at Cole's nervous joke as he checked his watch.

Having cleared the tension, he began speaking, "I always find introductions complicated when they are not made for me... considering everyone makes their research before meeting me. I'm the one who ends up having to pay attention to others' names in the process...

I will make one nonetheless. Cole Lycaon, son of Trevor Lycaon and future king of the Lycaon empire. I would say a lot about my father that put a smile on my face. Alas, Thorrin took those that were before and after my short lifetime.

In any case, I am glad he had that much of an impression on someone who wasn't even a part of our pack. I think I speak for the entire pack when I say that my father was a benevolent leader who valued every pack under his care.

What the pack doesn't know, however, was everything that he did for me as his son. While he might have cared for the pack far more than you all demanded of him, he never failed to make time for his family.

After the death of my mother, he was torn and in depression. None of us knows what that pain is like except what we've heard from werewolves that have recovered from it.

My father was king at the time. With one child and a shattered bond. With all that much to shoulder, it would have ripped anyone into pieces, but here I am standing before you all. I don't doubt the moon goddess granted him a second chance mate because of his strength as well. He certainly deserved one. She made him smile again and had a more fulfilling life towards the end of his time," the queen's eyes got teary at Cole's words.

"Calling him a strong man would be an understatement. For the empire of Lycaon to remain intact after everything he went through. It's quite a feat. One that I'm not sure even I would have withstood.

Sir Thorrin, I'll hold you to that promise you've made today. As the future king of Lycaon, I ask that the rogue king see his final day while I am still king," Cole said to the man.

Thorrin recognized the fire within the young king's eyes and understood how big a commitment it was for him to accept as well. The girl beside him seemed to burn with a passion when he spoke so confidently about bringing the rogue king down, "Yes, your majesty. To this, I pledge. After all, I also became the most powerful hunter to accomplish this very task before the end of my time."

The queen spoke after Cole and praised her husband as a lover and a king. Her words were as sweet as they were kind. The crowd lingered at her every word as though she had read them from a holy

manuscript. She didn't take that much time speaking and let the mates of the beta alphas take their turns. The memorial hadn't been held for one person after all.

Katie listened to what they all had to say about the deceased. The happy memories were good for the gloomy mood.

As she giggled at a joke made by alpha Cross's mate, she noticed the rain let up for the first time in a week, "I haven't seen you smile in so long," Cole pulled her closer and nuzzled into the crook of her neck.

The girl turned red once more and looked around in panic, "Werewolves don't mind this kind of thing, besides, my mark is right... here."

Nerves ran through the girl's entire body the moment Cole licked the wolf-shaped mark on the girl's neck, "Cole, I don't care what other werewolves think about this. Stop right now..." the girl cried through the mind link.

The man chuckled and pulled away from her neck, replacing the woollen scarf she'd donned, "Thanks, I could barely think."

"Oh, so you like it when I do that," Cole asked her with a hint of mischief in his voice. The girl giggled at his silly thoughts. "I've been worried about you, Katie. Are you okay?"

Katie thought back to the week. To the countless times that Sandra and Drake had tried to cheer her up. Combined with Jason, she was surprised by her reluctance to their charms.

The queen tried dressing up and taking her on walks which she denied or simply tea on the balcony, but it hadn't worked either.

Ashley had done her part as well, popping into her mind every now and then with a completely new idea. In the end, nothing had worked to cheer her up.

Her adoptive mother, Marie was the one who'd realised it not long before this day that she had not yet regained her strength and that she was partly sulking because of that.

The girl took a deep breath, "One step at a time, Cole. I'm going to get better."

"I'm glad to hear that," Cole replied.

"Yeah..." she paused, breathing in the rain clear air, "The rain is starting to let up. Maybe we could watch a sunrise or a sunset one of these days."

Cole looked up as well, with a look of worry on his face. It was only for a moment before the man smiled as well, "Yeah... one of these days. One of these days, we'll wake up to the rising sun."

Chapter 270 Fireflies... and Tea

The memorial ended later rather than sooner and the royal family was driven back to the palace where Katie was ecstatic to drop onto the bed, having gone through the numerous greetings and short conversations that were demanded of her.

Cole took off his coat with a chuckle at the girl's attitude, "It was so long. Did we have to stand for all that time? My legs were killing me," she groaned.

"Are your muscles still hurting?" Cole asked her.

"No, not as much as before... but I'm not as strong as I normally am," the girl replied, rolling onto her back so she might see her mate, "You were definitely happier today."

"Oh? I wasn't so sure you noticed," Cole replied sarcastically, walking into the bathroom.

"Well, of course, I noticed. I might not be able to detect emotions clearly through our bond, but I can tell when your smile is ten times brighter than before," she replied with a chuckle.

"I have been meaning to ask you about that. You mentioned it earlier," Cole's voice took on a hint of urgency.

"Oh, well, the art of noticing someone's smile as genuine is..." the girl started only to be cut off.

"No, not that," Cole chuckled. He remained silent and waited in silence as the girl figured out what he was saying. She'd known what he meant from the start.

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"I guess there is no dodging the one," she sighed, turning her attention to the ceiling before explaining, "It's like I am always exhausted. I can't access anything concerning my powers. I'm not worried about it. I think I just need to take it easy for a while."

"Of course, you wouldn't be worried. You don't know if there is anything around you going wrong. You can't tell at all. So of course you wouldn't be worried." Cole's voice came from the bathroom.

"Well, it can't be helped. Besides, since the rest of the Chase family is not showing any trouble, I don't see a reason to worry," Katie replied.

"Yeah, I guess so... Hey, would you get over here?" Cole called out to her.

"Yeah yeah, I'm coming. You know..." Katie paused at the threshold, crossing her hands over her chest with a proud look, "You cannot live without me."

"As long as you get to sleep beside me and wake up beside me, I'll be fine.," Cole replied.

"Oh, I am so right..." she continued before getting whisked into the bathroom.

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Cole found a note on the bed when he got out of the shower. His mate decided to stay behind and soak for a bit in the warm water. 'Alpha Cole and Luna Katie are hereby invited to have tea with the queen in the gardens at 8:00 pm.'

"Umm, honey, we have been invited by the queen," Cole called out to his mate in the bathroom.

"What? Why? Doesn't she realise I have to brush my teeth for two hours, brush my hair, try out different clothes and, and..." the girl started rambling on about the different things that didn't mean as much as the queen's invitation.

“Yeah, get it out of your system,” Cole mumbled, hearing the girl go on and on barreling through her mind in search of an excuse. “You know complaining won’t get you out of it. Why do you bother?” Cole replied when she’d finished.

“It’s part of the process I guess,” the girl sighed. A comfortable silence came over the two of them.

“Have you tried accessing your gifts?” Cole asked the question that had been burning in his mind.

“No, not yet, but then again, I don’t think I would be able to access them when I’m still this weak. I’m going to give it some time,” she responded. At that moment, Cole hadn’t thought to look at his mate as a sense of sadness took over her.

Shaking off the thoughts and depression, she changed the subject “Hey Cole, you said something about telling me your side of the story concerning your father.”

“Oh yeah...” he paused as the memories came pouring back into his mind, “I did, didn’t I?”

“You don’t have to tell me, Cole,” she quickly intervened, hearing the sadness in his voice.

“No, that’s not it, Katie. I’ll tell you. Let’s just get done with tea with my mother first,” Cole replied.

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The queen was seated on a chair watching the different couples that lived within the palace mill through the gardens. The time she had chosen was preferably peaceful and one that many mates chose to enjoy the lovely gardens.

The timing was right and the lights that lit up the beautiful gardens made it an even more beautiful place for them to take walks and spend time together. It was also the time when most of them didn’t have more work to do.

“Katie, fireflies have no fire-related power within them nor are they creatures related to the Apollo. I’m trying to tell you that they were merely named because they look like flying sparks of flame. There isn’t much to it,” Cole’s voice interrupted the peaceful silence. The queen was suddenly curious to know what had gotten the man so riled up.

“Yes, Cole I have heard you saying something of the sort, but then how do you explain the way their bodies glow in the dark? Do you really believe there is a natural process in a biological organism that can allow them to emit light in the dark? Except for the power of the gods that make the eyes of werewolves glow, I cannot think of any other explanation,” Katie argued.

“You’re being impossible right now, Katie. Fireflies are fireflies. You don’t have to over-think it. Have you been talking to Celeste again? She might be the one putting all these ideas into your head,” Cole was starting to get suspicious.

“No, not really. Well, I talked to her a few days ago, but she didn’t say anything about fireflies,” Katie argued.

“Aha, so you have been talking to the goddess. What have the two of you been discussing behind my back?” Cole was even more suspicious and was successfully changing the topic. If his mate would not

see things his way, perhaps she would lose track of the conversation and forget the point she was trying to make in the first place.

“There is no world where I and that goddess would be on the same page,” Katie chuckled right before they reached the gazebo the queen was seated in. Katie stopped laughing when the queen stood suddenly. The girl took a low bow to acknowledge her.

“Uh... Katie... No... You don’t have to...”

“It’s a pleasure to see you doing well, queen mother,” the woman facepalmed and groaned.

“And here I thought you didn’t have this side to you,” the queen groaned.