

Chosen by Fate 31

Chapter 31 - Trinity-Exploring

Trinity

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It's been a few days since I was marked. Every day when I showered, or when I changed clothes, or wore something that showed my shoulders I could see the mark growing steadily larger and darker. The tattoo-like image was forming. After about a week it would be an intricate design, the pack crest surrounded by a pattern that would be unique to Reece.

I had seen other mate marks. My aunt and Nikki had both shown me theirs, so had Juniper. Theirs were about the size of a half dollar. The crest, consisting of a wolf leaping displayed over a full moon.

Aunt Eve had thin lines swirling around the crest that almost looked like infinity symbols. Nikki's lines were more geometric and appeared in diamond patterns. Juniper didn't have thin lines, she had what looked like vines of ivy weaving around the crest.

As much as I hated Reece right now. As pissed off at him as I was and wanted to make his life a living hell. I was still interested in seeing what my mark would look like. The crest was almost fully formed now, so over the next few days I should start seeing Reece's personal touch.

Aside from when I was in my room, I didn't like the mark to be seen. Everyone knew I was the Luna, they knew I had been marked by Reece, but I didn't need them seeing it. The mark felt personal to me, intimate somehow. Like something that I should keep to myself because I was not a true mate. I guess, in a way, I was embarrassed by it.

It was for that reason I had taken to wearing a light jacket or cover of some sort everywhere I went. I was slowly changing my sense of fashion. Adding little things here and there, eventually, I would probably be a completely different person. The thought actually made me sad.

I was still going to my classes. Juniper and the guys were doing their best to support me through my transition into being the new Luna. Vincent was still with me regularly as I went to school. As I didn't need to be guarded all the time anymore, the guards didn't need to switch shifts like before. Because of this, I hadn't seen Leslie much lately, thankfully. Hopefully, he would be back to his old self the next time I did see him.

Outside of school, I was allowed to do whatever I wanted. As long as it didn't embarrass Reece or the pack. And I had to take a guard with me. For this purpose, I had been introduced to two more pack warriors, David and Jeremy. I would need to call one of my guards before I could go anywhere.

David was a nice guy. He was similar to Vincent, but he wasn't as quick to do gentlemanly acts. I actually preferred that. I was used to it with Vincent, but I would be too embarrassed if everyone started treating me like that. But David was always quick with a smile and kind words. And he got along with everyone. And unlike Vincent, he was a little closer to my age, so my friends would be more comfortable around him.

I hadn't spent much time around Jeremy. He seemed alright, and I'm sure he was plenty capable. But he seemed standoffish to me. I had only met him twice, at the introduction and he guarded me once when I had an errand to run in the city. I was going to call Vincent to see if he was free, but Jeremy was already at the house, so he took me.

Both times I had met Jeremy he acted like he wanted to be anywhere but where I was. I think he might have been among those who were displeased with me becoming the Luna. There wasn't much I could do about it now. But I didn't want him guarding me much either.

Today, I was bored. I didn't have anywhere to go. No one to spend time with. And no assignments to complete. So, I was wandering the house. Since no one had taken it upon themselves to show me around, I still didn't know where anything was.

I could find my way down to the kitchen and dining area. I could find the library no problem. I could get to Reece's office. And I could find my way out. But ask me about anything else along the way, and I wouldn't know what to tell you. I could probably find Reece's bedroom based on his scent, but I wasn't interested in finding his bedroom so that didn't matter to me at all.

I had started on the first floor of the house. So far, I had investigated the massive dining area in more detail. I found a grand ballroom, and actual ballroom like I had just walked into Victorian era London. The rest of the rooms on the first floor weren't so grand as those.

There were several large and small storage rooms. I found a parlor for entertaining, a study, and a games room. There was a solarium off the back of the house next to the garden and a greenhouse that I never knew about. Aside from these, the only other rooms on the first floor were the laundry room, which was massive, and utilities rooms.

I did find stairs that led to a basement. A quick search showed me that it was actually a massive wine cellar next to a walk-in freezer. This house truly did have some over the top stuff.

Almost everything from the second floor up was nothing but bedrooms, conference rooms, and offices. There were linen closets, and some rooms that were just used for storing old furniture. But there wasn't much else when you went up from the main floor. I did come across a few different living rooms and sitting rooms.

It looks like things had been redone in the house a while ago. It seemed like the house used to be more inviting and welcoming. More open to visitors, but that it was closed off now. I wish I knew what had happened to make it this way.

I was almost done exploring the fourth floor. The same floor where my room was, and from the scent Reece's was as well. But I was in the north wing and he seemed to be in the south wing. I had never noticed before, but there was the faintest trace of another person's scent down this way.

I followed my nose, curious. It was an odd scent. It was weak, but it didn't smell like an old scent. So, the person must still be there. But I hadn't noticed anyone come into the house at all. And the smell was distinctly female.

I could tell that Reece's room was getting closer. His scent was so overpowering. That is probably why I never noticed it before. His scent overpowered whoever it was that was here. Whoever she was, it must

be whoever Reece was in love with. Why he had been so upset that he had found a mate. It meant that he couldn't be with the woman he wanted to be with.

I was standing next to the room that I was certain was Reece's, the smell was so intense. But, oddly, her smell was not coming from inside. So, his girlfriend has her own room? I thought to myself. He must have wanted to be with her so bad, and then I came and messed it all up. Well, I tried to leave, asshole, you wouldn't let me.

I'd be damned if I would let him keep a mistress. I know I was only a mate in name, and I definitely didn't want him laying his hands on me. I don't care how irresistibly handsome I found him, or how I could actually feel his deep, smooth voice rubbing against me when he spoke. Or that his body looked so sculpted and sexy it drove me to fantasize about him in dreams. Nope, none of it mattered. I would never let that overgrown mutt lay one finger on me.

I continued to creep down the hallway as quietly as I could. I couldn't hear anyone moving around, but I did hear the faintest beat of someone's heart. She must be sleeping. At least I know what room she is in now. I can confront her later. I don't want to deal with some she-wolf who might be half naked and asleep. I turned slowly around, not making a sound, so I didn't wake her.

"What the hell do you think you're doing Little Bunny?" Reece roared at me as soon as I turned around and bumped into his chest. I jumped at seeing him so close and blinked in surprise. I wasn't expecting him back so soon. I stepped back and walked around him.

Chapter 32 - Trinity-Talking To Nothing

Trinity

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"Don't walk away from me." He said walking after me. I ignored him and kept walking down the hallway at a brisk, but mostly normal pace. "Dammit Little Bunny, stop right now." I hated when he used that stupid nickname, but I wasn't going to give him the satisfaction of a response, so I kept walking.

He caught up to me after just a minute. I was almost to the end of the hall, almost out of the south wing and back to the comfort of the north wing that I knew so well.

"I said don't walk away from me." He grabbed me by the wrist, forcing me to turn and look at him. He didn't grab me hard, and it didn't hurt in the least. That surprised me. For all his threats he'd made, he hadn't hurt me physically, yet. Once he had me facing him, he asked me his question again. "What the hell were you doing down here Little Bunny?" He asked me, his voice growing firm and deep as he got more and more angry.

He was only gripping my wrist lightly, so I yanked hard and pulled myself free. I then turned my back on him and continued walking. This time he had had enough. He spun me around, threw me over his shoulder, and marched me to my room, which was at the end of the hallway I had just entered. I managed not to yelp or gasp as he did this.

He sat, or for a better word threw, me on my bed and then stalked back to the door and leaned against it. I had no escape, unless I could make it to the bathroom before he caught me. He noticed where I was looking and narrowed his eyes with annoyance.

"Don't even try, I would catch you." He growled, still glaring at me. "Now, start talking. First why have you been ignoring me?" He demanded. I put on a smile that was filled with fifty percent fake sincerity, fifty percent annoyance, and once hundred percent I hate the Alpha.

"Oh, well you see Reece, I just didn't think you were in that habit of talking to nothing." I told him. He looked at me perplexed. "That's what I am, right? I'm nothing to you. I just didn't think you would want to talk to nothing. And believe me, I was really surprised when you managed to touch nothing too, though I would really rather you didn't." I said in my I truly hate you, but I'm going to ruin you tone of voice.

I saw his face go from annoyed to shocked to pissed off then he spoke.

"Feel better yet Little Bunny?" He asked me, annoyance filling his voice.

"Not in the least Benji." I told him. He cocked his head to the side, confused.

"Benji?"

"You showed an intense displeasure to Fido, so I had to rename the puppy." He growled at that.

"You think you're funny, don't you?"

"Extremely, just like you think you're so strong, just cause you're tall and can carry me over your shoulder."

"No, I know I'm strong, but I've been holding back out of respect, don't make me lose that for you. Got it."

"Same to you." I grumbled at him.

"Moving on." He shook his head, like he was trying to move past the meaningless, trivial blabber. "Why were you down that hall?"

"No one has ever shown me around, so I decided to show myself around." I said matter-of-factly. "So, who is she?" I asked him flat out.

"Who is who? I don't know who you're talking about." He avoided the question.

"Don't give me that." I thundered at him in as loud of a voice as I could. He quirked an eyebrow as if he thought my yelling was just for show.

"Who is that woman you have staying down that hall? Is she your girlfriend? Lover? Was she who you wanted to be with before I showed up? Because remember I tried to get away fr-."

"First, I couldn't get you to answer me, now you won't shut up long enough for me to answer." He complained, interrupting me.

"You know what they say, be careful what you wish for." I told him with a small laugh.

"Smart ass." He snapped at me.

"Dumbass." I snapped right back. I wasn't going to let him get me off track. I wasn't going to let him think I was that easily quelled.

"It's no-." I could already tell he was going to brush me off. Then he would just think that he could walk all over me.

"Don't tell me it's nothing. Whoever she is, she has her own room here at your house, she's obviously someone that you care deeply about."

"You don't know what you're talking about." Every time he spoke it was in a growl, his anger was worsening.

"I know that there is a woman down that hallway. I smelled her scent and heard her heartbeat." I told him.

"Drop it." He snapped at me.

"No. You've told me that I must not embarrass the pack. That means that even though you and I are mates in name only, I can't find someone else. If I can't have someone else, then neither can you." I yelled at him.

"You've got it wrong."

"I highly doubt that. I refuse to let you have a secret lover, especially living in the same house as me. I may only be a mate in name only, but I am also the Luna of this pack and I will banish her if I have to."

"She's my mother for Goddess' sake!" He screamed at me.

His words shocked me. I was floored. His mother? The previous Luna? No one has seen or heard from her for about seven years now. Not since Reece had taken over the pack. I had assumed that she was dead, most of the pack had assumed that.

"I thought your mother died." I told him, confused.

"A lot of people think that." He sighed while looking down at the floor. "But in truth, my father's death broke her."

"Broke her? What do you mean?" His voice sounded so sad when he had spoken that I felt the need to comfort him, but I fought against it and asked to know more instead.

"She is nothing but the shell of the person she used to be. She just sits there, day in and day out. There is a maid that goes in there to take care of her. A doctor that checks on her. But she has not moved, spoken, or even looked at me in seven years."

"She's catatonic?" I asked, shocked at what I was hearing.

"Yes." He sighed, nodding.

"That must be rough." I told him. "I'm sorry to hear that."

"I don't need your pity." He snapped.

"That is such a man thing to say. Empathy is not the same thing as pity you idiot." He growled at me again. "If you keep growling like that you will likely lose your voice or turn into a dog for real, one or the other." He growled yet again causing me to laugh at him.

"Why am I just now hearing about your mother?" I asked him. "I'm living here with you, and obviously misunderstandings are bound to happen. Why didn't you tell me before today?"

"Because it's none of your business."

"Actually, it is."

"How do you figure?" He asked.

"Well let's see, first is because I am your mate and therefore what affects you affects me, even if I am a mate in name only I still must know about the major things, especially those inside the house. Second is because I am the Luna, and she is a pack female which makes her my business." He opened his eyes wide at my words like he didn't expect me to have such a compelling answer for him.

"Fine, I will tell you about major things from now on." He grumbled. "But leave my mother alone. There isn't anything that can be done for her."

"So, you just leave her there? Letting a maid take care of her and a doctor see her?" I asked, shocked. I loved my family, even my grandfather for some reason, I could never ignore them like that.

"Don't try to tell me how to run my family." He yelled. "You know nothing about me, my family, or my life."

"And whose fault is that?" I yelled right back at him. I was on my feet now, marching across the room, I couldn't hold my anger in any longer.

"You don't need to know any more than what I tell you." He growled as he flung the door open and left the room, slamming the door shut behind him.

"JERK!" I yelled after him for good measure. I knew full well he could hear me, in fact I was glad he could.

Chapter 33 - Trinity-Pack Visits Planned

Trinity

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It was Friday now, three days since I had explored the house and found out about Reece's mom, and six days since I was marked. The mark was still just the crest surrounded by dark gray blurs, almost like a giant bruise. It was no closer to changing into its final tattoo-like image.

I was now being forced to have a meeting with the Elders and Reece again. Ugh! I had hoped when he said we were nothing to each other and we were going to ignore each other outside of pack business, that it would be more than three days in between each time I had to talk to him.

Noah had come to get me when I was in the solarium reading. It had quickly become a favorite place of mine. And since I could handle the cold better than a human, though not as good as a wolf (I hated being so different sometimes), it didn't bother me that it was October and got chilly sometimes.

He marched me straight to Reece's office and into the room. He had asked me how I was adjusting to my new life. If I was ok, and how my classes were going. I don't think it was easy for him to be loyal to

the pack and me at the same time. He seemed to be having a hard time since he knew that there was still a division running between us all.

When we walked into the office, I saw Reece sitting at his desk, my eyes going to him immediately as if of their own accord. Stupid traitorous eyes. Then I saw that the only elder in the room was Michael, which was confusing, but I said nothing.

I took my usual seat, which seemed to be reserved just for the Luna.

"Welcome, Miss Luna, how are you girl?" Michael asked me. It was a little condescending, the way he spoke to me, but I had heard him talk to Reece the same way. I know he respected Reece, so I guess it was just how he spoke, especially to someone so much younger than him. Maybe this was how other old men talked to their grandchildren and people young enough to be their grandchildren, who knows.

"I'm fine Michael, and how are you today?" I asked him, trying to sound like a proper Luna, I noticed Noah hide his smirk behind Reece and fought the urge to glare at him.

"Wonderful, I'm simply wonderful my dear. I can already feel the power increasing among the pack now that the Alpha has formed his mate bond and finished his circle." Michael beamed at me. "I am certain that the two of you will be the greatest Alpha and Luna there ever was." Yeah, don't hold your breath Michael. I thought to myself all while smiling sweetly at him.

"Thank you so much for that lovely sentiment." I told him sweetly. "Now, to what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?" I asked.

"I am here to discuss the Hunter's Moon event, and there are a few packs that the Alpha needs to go and visit over the next few months, you will need to accompany him on a few of those visits. Mostly as an introduction to formally introduce you as his mate." Michael was beaming as he spoke, like he couldn't be happier.

"Well, sounds like I will be busy then, doesn't it?" I giggled.

"It does indeed." He laughed as well. Reece cleared his throat to get our attention, grudgingly, I looked back at him.

Reece was sitting at his desk wearing a dark green button-up shirt, once again he had the top two buttons undone to show just a little flash of skin at the top of his chest. He had undone the buttons at the cuffs as well, pushing the sleeves up to his elbows. I couldn't see if the shirt was tucked in, or anything else, as he was blocked by his large desk, but the color of the shirt was striking against his honied complexion.

"I'm so sorry sweetheart, we have so much to discuss and you must be busy. We should get to work." I smiled at him sweetly. He blinked in surprise momentarily.

"Isn't she just so considerate?" Michael cooed looking at Reece with a smile as well.

"You have no idea." Reece smiled as well, the tension between us was thick, and probably misunderstood. "Let us get to business. As Michael said, we have a busy schedule coming up. This time of the year isn't usually as busy for me, but we need to introduce you to the neighboring packs. Especially the ones we have treaties with and those that swear fealty to us in exchange for protection.

They may have their own Alpha and Luna, but we are still Alpha and Luna to them as well." He informed me, sounding serious.

"So how many packs do we need to visit?" I ask him, nervously.

"In all, we will be visiting ten packs. But we will not be visiting them all at once. We will break the visits up so that we do not leave our pack for that long." I looked at him confused.

"Some of the visits will be a quick exchange, but it will still be difficult to visit more than one in a single day and not have to stay away for the night." Michael answered for me.

"Ahh." I breathed, letting his words sink in. I hope we can have separate rooms, and that it's in a hotel and not another Alpha house. I said to myself.

"When we visit fealty packs, we will most likely spend very little time there, a morning or early afternoon meeting, then we can follow that up with a treaty meeting in the evening. We will be invited to dinner and stay in their Alpha house. The neighboring packs are close enough that we do not need to stay at most of them. If we end up needing to stay overnight, we will stay in a hotel along the way." Reece seemed to be able to read what was going on inside my head, that was disconcerting. I've gotta work on my poker face.

"When will these visits start?" I asked him. "And on what days of the week?" I wanted to make sure I didn't have to miss class, but I had a feeling that I wasn't going to be very lucky in this case.

"We will begin on November the 6th and return the next day. We will try to leave either Friday evening or Saturday morning when we are able to. This should work out for the both of us, as you have your studies, and I have business to attend to."

I was starting to think he was doing this for me, a sort of kind gesture, but then Noah spoke and almost made me laugh. As it was, I barely hid my smile.

"You would choose any weekday if I let you, but you have work, and I won't let you push that off onto me." Noah laughed, grinning at the back of Reece's head. Reece growled at him.

"Shut up Penguin boy." I wrinkled my eyebrow at that. He really does like making up animal nicknames for people, doesn't he? Michael laughed while I silently thought to myself.

"You kids are what keep me so young." He said laughing at Reece and Noah. Reece glared at him while Noah smiled.

"We will let you know the finer points of the travel plans a few days ahead of time, but for now, Noah will give you the list of prospective dates." Reece droned on, ignoring Michael.

"Thank you."

"Now, about the Hunter's Moon event." Michael smiled, moving the discussion onward. "That will be in two weeks yes?" He asked.

"I don't see why we have to have this meeting every year, the only thing that ever changes is the date of the event. It always happens on the day of the full moon." Reece grumbled.

Now that I thought about it, the last gathering was actually two days after the full moon. The Harvest moon on October 1st, but the gathering had been on the 3rd.

"Umm, can I ask a question, since the pack business is still new to me?"

"What is it, child?" Michael asked me. I know he didn't mean it condescendingly, so I tried not to take his wording personally.

"Why was the last gathering not actually held on the day of the full moon?"

"Well, we felt since it wasn't ceremonial or traditional in nature, that we could move things around a little. And since it was a party and people were supposed," he paused looking at Reece. "supposed to be out until late, we felt it would be nice to have it on the weekend so they would be less likely to have work or school the next day." He answered with a smile.

"That makes sense. Thank you." I smiled.

"Not a problem. I'm glad you're trying to be a good Luna for your people."

"Anyway." Reece grumbled, drawing the attention back to the discussion. "The Hunter's moon event will be the same as always. Any adult member of the pack, or teenaged member with a wolf, may participate. Nothing in the way it is run will change from previous years."

"Yes, I know, but we still have to have the meeting, it is tradition. I have to make sure there is nothing changing. You know what they say about assuming. If I went into this assuming it was to stay the same and it was different, what would that make me and the rest of the Elders look like."

"You're just insufferable." Reece told him, but he was actually grinning. I think he was just mentally calling Michael what you call someone who assumes something.

Chapter 34 - Trinity- Plans For The Full Moon

Trinity

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"You're just insufferable." Reece told him, but he was actually grinning. I think he was just mentally calling Michael what you call someone who assumes something.

"Fine, we've got it all figured out, we will have the same event at the same time." Michael said. But as he was about to stand, I stopped him.

"I've never been to the Hunter's moon events, could you explain them to me, at least briefly?" I looked at Reece and saw the frustration flash in his eyes, I smiled at him as sweetly as I could.

"Oh, that's right, you wouldn't know." Michael said in a kindly voice. "I will be happy to explain it to you."

"Thank you, Michael, you're so sweet."

"No." He smiled, blushing briefly before he continued. "You see, Child, the Hunter's moon event allows all pack members with a wolf to run through the forest and mountains in search of prey. We spend

much of the night running freely. As we have to keep ourselves hidden from the humans, we're not really able to run through the forest in our wolf forms most of the time. We can manage it in small numbers or for short periods of time. And since the impact on the wildlife in the immediate area would suffer too greatly if we all started hunting freely year-round, we are allowed one night a year when we can hunt without having to worry. Of course, we can get permission from our Alpha to hunt, but we can't hunt in excess or it will affect the natural way of things."

Michael's explanation definitely helped me to understand why the Hunter's moon event was so important to the pack members. They would look forward to it all year. In that moment, I kind of envied the rest of the pack for having their wolf.

I started thinking about what I would be doing on that day of the Hunter's moon. Then I remembered what day the Hunter's moon fell on.

"Wait a minute, what about all the children?"

"They don't have a wolf, they can't participate." Reece answered firmly, as if he thought I was stupid.

"No, that's not what I meant. The Hunter's moon is on Halloween. How are the children going to spend it?" I asked them.

"Well, if they're old enough, they can go trick-or-treating alone. Or with friends and older siblings. But if not, I guess they'll just have to skip it."

"I've heard some grandparents are taking their grandchildren into the city, but there's simply not enough to take them all." Noah added. That broke my heart, the kids shouldn't have to miss Halloween.

"It's just a silly holiday, there will be more." Reece tried to put an end to the discussion.

"There will be others." Noah added.

"I'm sure the children will be fine." Michael finished for them. I just nodded my head.

This was breaking my heart. I know that it was an important day in our pack. But the parents have had several Hunter's moon events, they could skip it. It's not like the Hunter's moon was always on Halloween, the next time it happened their kids would all be grown, next year they could have both, but this year put family first.

Perhaps I was just taking this personally because I was never allowed to go trick-or-treating as a child. Every year I watched my cousins get excited about their nighttime excursion. They would get dressed up and head out into the night with Aunt Eve and Uncle Wesley.

Grandfather would always come on Halloween and pick me up, telling them I was not allowed to go. I had insisted on getting a costume a couple times, but then I by the time I turned four I learned that I would never be going with the others.

Seeing them leaving without me always made me cry. Grandfather would tell me to stop my blubbering, that it was not ladylike to cry as I was. I would be given extra studies on Halloween, learning something he deemed I needed to improve upon.

Sometimes, I used to tell myself that Grandfather was just worried I would disappear on him, like his daughter did that weekend. He had failed and something happened to his daughter. He never did believe that she had betrayed him, not deep down in his heart. And I think her suicide hurt him so much more than I, or anyone else, could fathom. That he was overprotective of me, and that he was just always a man that was bad with his words. At least that's what I used to tell myself, anyway.

The meeting was over now, and it was time for Michael to leave. Noah was showing him out. I was about to leave, as it was just Reece and myself in the room now.

"Did you enjoy delaying my day?" He asked me.

"I didn't do it just to be inconvenient." I told him honestly. "I truly hadn't ever been told about the event before." I told him.

"But you admit you wanted to be inconvenient?" He asked me. I just shrugged my shoulders. "You're playing with fire here." He told me.

"Good thing you're covered in so much ice." He arched an eyebrow at my words. "It'd be no fun if I melted you too soon after all, I need you to hang in there at least a little." He growled at me like he usually did. "Careful Benji, or I might need to rename the puppy again." I cooed as I walked to the door. "Bye, sweetie." I chanted in a sweet voice, batting my eyelashes at him as I left the room.

I hurried back to my room. I had a plan, and I would need help to make it happen. I shut, and locked, my door before flopping onto my bed with my phone in hand. It only rang twice before Juniper answered.

"Hey there Trin, what's up?" She asked me in a cheerful voice.

"I've got a plan, but I need assistants to help me." I told her. I could tell that her attitude had changed completely, she was excited on the other end of the line now.

"What do you need?" She asked me. I smiled at her eagerness.

"Do you know what day the Hunter's moon falls on?"

"Yeah, Halloween." She answered automatically.

"Uh huh, what do you think that means for a lot of kids?" I heard the gasp as she realized what was going to happen.

"Oh my Goddess, Trin, they're gonna miss it." Her voice was full of anguish as she answered.

"Yup."

"The poor kids."

"I want to do something about it."

"What can you do?" She asked me curiously.

"Well, I can't go to the event, so-." She interrupted me immediately.

"What do you mean you can't go?" She demanded.

"I don't have a wolf, Juniper." I reminded her.

"Oh, yeah, duh." She said laughing. "So, what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to throw the kids a Halloween party."

"Cool, where at?"

"Here." I told her. I heard her gasp at my declaration.

"You mean like out in the forest?" She was still in denial.

"Nope."

"You're going to throw a Halloween party for the kids, inside the Alpha house?" She asked.

"Yup, want to help me?" I was hoping she wouldn't be too afraid to come here and help me pull this off.

"Oh, you bet your tiny little ass I'm going to help." She told me firmly.

"What's that?" I heard Paul yell in the background.

"Trinity is throwing a Halloween party for all the kids at the Alpha house." She told him.

"Why?" He was confused.

"It's the same day as the Hunter's moon."

"Oh Goddess, I never even put it together until now. I can't believe we never even thought about it. We were only thinking about the wolf aspect of it I guess."

"Hey, ask Paul if he wants to help out too, you guys will have to miss the event though."

"You want to help Paul."

"Hell yes." He said.

"You'll have to miss the event." She told him.

"So, who cares, I've been to a few already, and there will be more. This is bound to be more interesting."

"Awesome." I was smiling to myself.

"Hey, can I help too?" I heard Cedar yell somewhere in the background. He must be at Juniper's house right now, that saved me a call.

"He was going to be my next call." I told Juniper.

"She said you saved her a phone call." Juniper answered him.

"You all should come by tomorrow, I don't want the wrong guards hearing about this, and since my room isn't being watched anymore, it's safer here than anywhere else." With that, my plan was set into motion, I just needed to get the rest of the help.

Over the next two weeks I enlisted the help of several others, secretly of course. Carter, Aunt Eve, and Uncle Wesley were of course willing to join me. Nikki would help but Noah had to prioritize his business as assistant but promised to keep Reece out of our hair while we got everything set up. He said, Reece just so happened to, conveniently, have a board meeting that day. An in person, in corporate office, meeting. I couldn't thank him enough, I threw my arms around him and hugged him tight as I thanked him for his help.

Chapter 35 - Trinity-Ready For Halloween

Trinity

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Abigail, the cook, agreed to help me make anything and everything I needed for the party and to stay to help out afterwards. Peter said he had to be here anyway, so he would help us as well.

Vincent was happy that we were doing something, his wife was going to miss the event as she had to stay home with their three-year-old and six-year-old, and she was apparently pregnant again. So, the two of them would be coming to help and would be bringing their kids.

Since about ninety percent of the pack would be at the event, there was nowhere to go trick-or-treating in the compound. Anyone wanting to take their kids would have to do so by going into the city. According to Vincent, a lot of parents didn't want to take their kids into the city for Halloween.

Vincent and his wife would spread the word about the party. I hoped that the word wouldn't get back to Reece just yet, but I'd deal with him when I had to. I had started overnight and express ordering lots of Halloween decorations online. I had them delivered to Aunt Eve's house, so Reece wouldn't find them yet. I had the staff clean the ballroom in preparation of the party, and I planned tons of games and different treats for the kids.

I had learned from Noah that there were about eight-hundred members of the pack total. That included adults and children. I knew that many of the pack members still didn't trust me as the Luna yet, so I probably wouldn't get everyone here for the party. But I would be happy with about half, which would put me at around seventy-five kids. But some of them might have a wolf and be at the event instead.

After the two weeks of prep time, we were finally ready for the day of the Halloween party. Noah got Reece out of the house by 8 AM, that gave us all day to set up. The Hunter's moon event started at sunset, which was at 6PM tonight. Kids would be here by 5:30 so parents had time to get to the clearing and stash their clothes. We needed to work fast. Good thing I had helpers.

Everyone worked hard. We got the ballroom turned into a proper Halloween themed party room, a little scary, but not too scary for the little kids. We set up where the food would go, and little tables spread around for them to eat at.

There were game stations the kids could go to and play for prizes. The games included things like ring toss onto the spider legs, zombie brain toss, pin the bandage on the mummy, and a few others.

Being the artist that she was, Juniper wanted to let the kids do crafts, which I was all for. So, we got lots of things for them to create their own monsters, and there was a draw or color your own monster zone. Juniper had drawn a few different designs, and we made several copies.

Wanting something more 'manly' Paul, Cedar, and Carter suggested we turn the dining room into a haunted house full of those animatronic Halloween decorations, so we bought a bunch of them and made it as scary as possible. The first thing we did was send the guys through it when I was done setting it up, I laughed maniacally when I heard the three of them yell in fright at the end.

Ok, ok, I might have added a personal touch just for them and have since removed it. I had blown up a picture of Reece acting like his big bad Alpha self and placed it right at the end with motion activated recording saying.

"What are you doing?" It wasn't even Reece's voice, it was Vincent's, but the effect was still priceless. They, however, were not amused. Seriously, they have no sense of humor.

Abigail and I spent a couple days preparing things in the kitchen so we could cook everything easily the day of the party. We were going to order a bunch of pizzas to make sure the kids would all have something they would eat, just in case. But I loved to cook and invent some new things, so I wanted to have some fun.

I made some pumpkin pie bites that would be easy to pick up and eat without a fork, best of all they had a graham cracker crust, so good. And I made some homemade cinnamon rolls with pecans and pumpkin pie filling, alright those were for the grown ups (me) cause we (I) needed something too.

I also made a bunch of fun Halloween themed foods. I made grilled hotdogs that looked like fingers, complete with a small breadstick coming out of the end for the bone and a spot cut off where the fingernail should have been, they looked pretty real.

There were lots of different kinds of Halloween and just seasonal foods the kids would love. We also wanted them to decorate their own miniature candied apples. We used a melon baller to make tiny apple balls so the kids could cover them in caramel or chocolate then add sprinkles, or nuts, or crushed cookies.

They were all encouraged to wear a costume, and we were going to have a costume contest. The kids could vote, but they'd probably pick their own costume. So, we adults would pick winners in different categories and age groups. I went out and got prizes for each of the winners.

I was super excited for the party. It was the first Halloween I was going to be part of. Once we were done setting up, we all dispersed so we could put on our costumes. It was almost showtime.

I had decided to dress as Snow White for the party. It actually kind of fit me, really. I had hair that was almost black, and my complexion was milky pale. I didn't watch Disney much, but I'm guessing the major difference was my eyes, hers probably weren't blue. Oh well, I couldn't be an exact match.

I looked at myself in the blue over yellow dress that was what Snow White apparently wore. It had slightly puffy sleeves and a cape that was red. There were red accents on the sleeves too. Along with the shoes and headband. I thought I looked ridiculous. But it's all I had.

I put on the blood red lipstick that Nikki had used on me before, along with some light blush and blue eyeshadow. Mascara was last, to make my lashes stand out. I felt ridiculous, but I went down to the party, anyway.

"Oh my Goddess, Trinity, you look AMAZING!" Juniper screeched as soon as she saw me step off the elevator. I didn't want to take the stairs in the heels I was wearing.

"Don't over exaggerate." I told her.

"She's not." Carter told me.

"They're right, Luna, you do look amazing." Heather, Vincent's wife gushed.

"I must agree." Vincent added. I blushed hearing them all praise me. I was glad I was wearing the blush on my cheeks to hide it somewhat.

"More importantly, what are you wearing?" I asked Juniper.

"I'm dressed as Happy, one of the dwarves." She told me.

"We're all here." Carter indicated showing me his outfit. "I'm Doc."

"I'm Dopey." Paul declared coming up behind him.

"Are you sure you want to admit that?" I asked him.

"Shut it Astro." We laughed at the old joke. I watched as they all walked over. Juniper, Carter, Paul, Cedar, Nikki, and Vincent were all dressed as dwarves.

"You're missing one." I told them.

"Sorry, I'm late." David called out, running into the room and putting on his dwarf hat. I smiled. "You can't have Snow White without her seven dwarves." He added smiling.

"You guys are really great." I was beaming at them.

"Don't forget us." Aunt Eve called. I turned to look. "I'm the Evil Queen." She grinned.

"And I am the magic mirror." Yelled Peter, the butler.

"I'm the Evil Queen as the old witch." Abigail explained.

"I'm the Huntsman." Uncle Wesley boasted proudly.

"I can't believe you all coordinated your costumes because of what I chose." I was almost ready to cry, they put so much into this for me.

"This is your first Halloween ever, we wanted to make it special." Carter smiled as he came up and hugged me.

"Yeah, you're our friend, and we wanted to make this your best Halloween ever." Juniper said coming up and hugging me as well.

"Yeah Astro, we love ya." Paul added, throwing his arms around me. It soon turned into a mass of everyone telling me they loved me and a giant hug pile. But I loved every second of it. It even made me happy that Vincent and David were part of that circle.

"Don't forget me. I coordinated too." Heather smiled. "I haven't known you as long as the others, but I came as the apple." She said laughing as she pointed to the huge decorated pregnant belly that looked like a big red apple.

"That is perfect Heather, and I am so very happy that you are here."

Just then, we heard the approach of several vehicles outside. We all moved to the hall to greet the children for the party, opening the large double doors to welcome them in. It seemed that everyone had chosen to arrive in groups.

About twenty kids and their parents were on their way inside. Their eyes opened wide as they saw us. Most of the pack members had never been inside the house itself, they were either too low rank or had work elsewhere.

"Welcome!" I called to them, beaming. I went around introducing myself to all the children and their parents as they were dropped off. Women with young children like Heather were staying so they could partake in the celebrations since they were expected to miss the event, anyway.

Chapter 36 - Both-Halloween Party For The Pack

Trinity

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Once everyone arrived and the party was about to get into full swing, we had forty-five kids altogether, less than half the kids in the pack, but a good start. I can get the people to trust me slowly over time.

The music was playing. The kids were having fun. The food was a hit. Everyone was enjoying themselves.

The next I knew I heard an angry voice growled quietly beside me after I handed a child a bag of treats.

"What in the world is going on here Little Bunny?" Reece's voice was filled with anger and frustration.

"What a wonderful surprise." I called out, raising my voice. I knew he would come home at some point, and I was prepared for this. "Look everyone, the Alpha has come to help us with the costume contest. Which category do you want to judge, Reece?" I tried making it clear that he had no choice since the children had all heard. He growled low in his throat. I noticed everyone else looked at me nervously.

"We will talk about this later." He whispered before turning to the happy kids with a smile. "Which category would you like me to judge, sweetheart?" He asked me, playing along.

"I think it would be best if you should just pick your overall favorite. I have a special prize for the Alpha pick." I told him.

"You planned this." He whispered, I just shrugged at him.

I had all the children line up in front of Reece and he picked his favorite costume. I don't know if he picked at random or not, but his choice ended up being an adorably sweet little girl who was dressed as a beautiful princess. She was so happy when he chose her that she actually started crying, it made my heart melt.

Reece gave her the prize then excused himself to change for the event. He was ready and back down to leave in no time. He glared at me slightly before walking out the door.

The party lasted a while longer, but soon the kids were tired. I had planned for this. As their parents still weren't back and we couldn't send them home yet, we had set up a room as a sort of theater.

We put down pillows, blankets, and bean bag chairs so they could choose a place to sit or lay down. We then put on a family friendly Halloween movie and settled in waiting for everyone to get back.

Many of the children were asleep when their parents arrived. The parents were so happy that they and their kids got to enjoy the night. I received many thanks as I watched them carry their kids out of the house.

Reece hadn't come back with them, as I thought he would. He must be blowing off some of his frustration or building it up some more. So, I decided to take a shower and change for bed.

I noticed something was off as soon as I walked out of the bathroom. I didn't even wait, I needed to say something right away.

"What are you doing in here?" I demanded. Reece was leaning against the bedroom door, same as last time. "And why do you always do that? Do you think it makes you look cool?" It kind of did in fact. But then again, everything he did was cool, and sexy. Stupid mate bond.

Right now, I was just glad that all the towels I had in the bathroom were the oversized beach towel. They kind of swallowed me whole when I wrapped them around me, covering everything except my shins down and my shoulders up.

I noticed the shock fill his face when he saw me.

"Why didn't you take clothes in there with you?" He growled.

"Because this is my room, and I didn't feel like it, is that alright with you Benji?" I yelled at him. Stupid overgrown brute of a dog. I growled in my head. "Stay there, I'll take my clothes into the bathroom and get dressed." I told him.

"Make it quick, I don't have all night."

"Oh, I wouldn't dream of wasting your time." I said in my falsely sweet voice I had been using on him lately.

"That's going to get you in trouble, Little Bunny." He warned me. I just grabbed some clothes from my dresser and went into the bathroom, laughing.

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Reece

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I had thought things were going to be alright between us, work wise at least, when she was being decently civil at the meeting for the Hunter's Moon event. She was taking in all the information and acting like she might be a good Luna.

But then she went and asked Michael to explain what the entire event was about after I had expressed a desire to skip the entire thing. Apparently, she just wanted to waste my time. I mean, I understand she has never been to a Hunter's Moon event before but still, she could have asked at another time. Why waste my time?

And her fake sentiments, well, at least she can fake those pretty well. She called me sweetheart and Michael seemed to believe it was real. That was a relief at least.

I should have known she was planning something, and that that traitor Noah was in on it. After all, why would I have a board meeting on a Saturday, on Halloween, of all days.

I got back and saw that my house had been decorated and overrun by a horde of pack children and mothers with young cubs. I couldn't make a scene and scold her in front of everyone, they assumed she had my permission. This would be an issue I took up with her.

But then she went and manipulated me even further. She turned around with that fake smile of her, looking so sweet and innocent. And I had to admit that she kind of took my breath away. Her choice of costume suited her, her complexion was pale, and her hair was dark, so she made a perfect Snow White. And I saw that everyone who helped her had coordinated and dressed to accommodate her costume. Traitors.

She announced to the entire party that I had arrived to judge a special category of the costume contest, Alpha's favorite. She had even gotten a special prize for me to give the winner. She planned the whole thing. That sneaky little devil Bunny.

But I had to admit, she was smart. She knew how to get around things to get what she wanted. I played along. But I told her we would talk about it later.

So, what do I find when I come to her room? Her taking a shower, that's what. I have to wait and hope she doesn't take too long. So, I just lean against the door and bide my time. I hadn't been there long when I heard the water shut off. After a few moments, the door opens, and I have to fight to keep my jaw off the floor.

"What are you doing in here?" She demanded as I stood there, dazed, watching the light glisten off her slightly wet skin. It nearly made my wolf lose his mind as he screamed at me. Mate, mate, mate!

"Why didn't you take clothes in there with you?" I growled at her.

"Because this is my room, and I didn't feel like it, is that alright with you Benji? Stay there, I'll take my clothes into the bathroom and get dressed." She snapped at me.

"Make it quick, I don't have all night." I told her impatiently.

"Oh, I wouldn't dream of wasting your time." She said in that infuriatingly fake sweet voice.

"That's going to get you in trouble, Little Bunny." I grumble. She grabbed her clothes and went into the bathroom laughing. I growled at her in response.

Calm down! I told my wolf as I threw a metaphorical leash over him. He whined in my ears trying to tell me to claim our mate. He just didn't understand that it wasn't time yet. I wasn't ready for my heir now, and there was no other reason to claim her.

I heard the click of the door. Little Bunny came out wearing a pair of skin tight black pants, I don't know women's fashion so don't ask me what they were called, but it left nothing to imagination when looking at her bottom, which looked perfectly shaped. I nearly shook my head to get the thought out of it, but I couldn't be that obvious.

She had a red hoodie on over it. It was loose and comfortable looking in comparison to the pants. The color and the fact that it had a hood brought an image of little red riding hood to mind. Now that was a costume she could have chosen. After all, she already has a big bad wolf. I chuckled to myself, I couldn't help it.

"Is something funny?" She asked me as she sat at her table brushing her long dark hair. The brush moving slowly through her locks was nearly hypnotic. Dammit, she has too much hold over my wolf.

"No, just thought of something for later, that was all." I told her, pushing past the thoughts. "Do you want to tell me what the hell you were thinking? What made you think you could throw a party in my house like that?" I demanded, letting my earlier anger seep back into my voice.

"I live here too, isn't it my house as well?" She asked, feigning innocence.

"This is the Alpha house, you live here with me, but it is my house."

"Then I will move elsewhere." She countered, what crazy thoughts were going through her head.

"Like hell you will." I snapped. "I refuse to let my mate live anywhere but here. The rumors that would spread."

"I don't care about any damn rumors. I refuse to live with someone who treats me like a third-class citizen. If I am the Luna, if I am your mate and live here with you, then this is just as much my house as it is yours."

"Whatever." I yelled. "Why did you throw the party?"

"Because the kids were going to miss Halloween otherwise. I couldn't let that happen." Her voice sounded hurt when she spoke.

"What does it matter to you?"

"Kids deserve to have fun and make memories. It's better when they can make them with their family, but as long as they aren't made to suffer, to cry, to feel ignored, to think that they're not as important." She was lecturing me now. "As long as I was able to make them happy, that was enough for me."

"But why did it matter to you so much? It was just one Halloween, there will be lots of others for them."

"You don't know that. I never had a single Halloween growing up. I never went trick-or-treating, I never went to a Halloween party, I never dressed up. I never celebrated at all." Her words confused me. Why would she not have celebrated? Everyone else in the pack did.

"Why didn't you?" I asked, perplexed.

"Grandfather never let me associate with anyone in the pack. I literally never met any pack member outside my family until I went to college."

Her words actually made me sad for a moment, and it made sense why she was so intent on having the party for the kids tonight. This was special for them, but it was special for her too. Noah had told me that their Grandfather had been exceedingly strict with her, but I didn't know it was that bad.

"Just, clear it with me next time." I told her, my anger seeping away. "I would have approved of the party. It was for the pack after all. And it would help make the women and children accept you more."

"You've been so against me since the beginning, and you told me to stay away from you unless we were leaving on pack business or having pack meetings, so I didn't think you would want to hear it." She told me. She was right, so I had dug my own hole with this one.

"Next time, I will listen if it has to do with the house. I don't want any more surprises. Send Vincent if you have to." I told her. "He seems very comfortable plotting with you."

"He didn't plot, he just helped where I asked him to."

"What's the difference?"

"He didn't plan anything, he just followed orders."

"Fine, nitpick." I grumbled. "I'm leaving, goodnight." I left the room, this time not running away and not slamming the door but leaving semi-peacefully.

That girl is going to be the death of me, I swear. I need to watch myself. And I need to keep my wolf under control. He's about to lose his mind.

Chapter 37 - Trinity-Preparing For The First Trip

Trinity

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It was nearly time for my trip with Reece. I was nervous, because I didn't know how to be alone with him. Just the two of us. I knew he would act like his normal (asshole) Alpha self, and that would make me act like my typical grouchy, sarcastic self. Yeah, this was going to be fun. NOT!

The nerves continued nonstop all week, almost reaching a fever pitch. That is until Vincent asked me on Thursday if I was ready for the trip we were taking.

"You're going too?" I asked him, confused.

"No one told you?" He asked me, the shock clear on his face.

"No, no one told me anyone was coming with us."

"It would be best for you to have a guard with you, for when the Alpha is in his meeting or if you wish to explore the area a little." He spoke so matter-of-factly, like I should have known this. I was so relieved I could have kissed him in that moment.

"I am definitely ready and looking forward to it." I told him. Now. I added mentally.

I had meant it too. It would be easier to travel with Reece if Vincent were with us. I'm very certain Vincent would keep us in check, making it so we didn't kill each other while trying to spread the joyous news of our mating. I mean, what could possibly have gone wrong? No, I'm more than happy with the arrangements now. Thank you, Vincent. I kept saying inside my head all day long.

We were staying overnight apparently, but just one. So, I was packing my bag now. It's Friday afternoon, and we would be leaving shortly when Reece returned from a meeting at the office.

Hmm. I know I am only going for one night, but Aunt Eve always told me to be prepared. Going for one night, pack for two. You never know if you're going to mess up an outfit or get delayed. You need to have the extra clothes just in case. So, I followed her advice. Best not to chance things now. My luck, I would end up spilling something all over myself.

My bag was packed, and I was waiting in the front hall with Vincent. Reece had gotten home a little while ago and we were now just waiting on him. I was nervous, but excited. I knew things were going to be tense and awkward still, but I would still be seeing new people and places.

Noah was taking some much-needed time off with Nikki since he wasn't needed for the night. It seemed several pack members were all trying to use this trip of ours to wind down since the Alpha was going to be gone.

As the excitement and nerves were both growing, my tension was at its max. I was basically rambling nonstop to Vincent while waiting in the hall when he got a phone call and excused himself. Great, now I'm all alone. I thought to myself. I just hoped he would get back before Reece came down. I did not need that kind of pent up frustration for the trip. I wanted to have a good time this weekend.

I got my wish. Vincent came back almost immediately, looking distressed.

"What's wrong Vincent?" I asked him, worried that something had happened.

"Heather might be going into early labor. She's not due for another few weeks." He confessed, still staring at his phone. "Is she alright? Will the baby be alright?" I genuinely cared for Vincent and Heather. They were some of the nicest people I had ever met. I didn't want anything happening to their baby.

"She is on her way to see the pack hospital now, to have things checked. They want to keep her overnight, just to make sure." His voice was full of concern for his wife and child. He clearly didn't know what to do. Werewolf pregnancies only lasted six months, so going into labor nearly a month early could mean that something was very wrong. Then again it could also mean that they had just been wrong on conception dates, but that was unlikely with modern technology and wolf senses. He clearly wanted to be there with his mate.

"Go Vincent." I told him.

"But, Luna, what about the-?" He started, but I cut him off.

"Your mate is more important right now. Go, that's an order." I told him firmly. He smiled at me gratefully.

"Thank you, Trinity." He said, hugging me quickly before running out of the house. He forgot his bag. Oh well, he would just have to come back for it later.

"Now, to break the news to a certain someone. I'm sure he's bound to be grumpy about it." I groaned as I walked up the stairs. No need to rush, this was going to be painful enough.

When I got to the south wing of the fourth floor, I could tell that Reece was not in his room. He was, however, further down the hall in his mother's room. I was walking toward the door when I heard his voice.

"I'm going to be gone tonight and most of tomorrow, Mom, so I won't be back to talk to you until late tomorrow night, after I'm done working." His voice was gentler than I had ever heard it. "I have to go visit the other packs, it's that time of year again. But I need to start early this time. I need to introduce my mate to them. Have I told you about her yet?" His voice held none of the anger and frustration I was used to hearing from him. It was odd, but I couldn't stop listening.

"She's younger than me, just over six years, I think. Pretty, in a different way than the rest of the pack. And she's smart, according to her cousin at least. But she doesn't have a wolf. I'm worried that she will not be strong enough to protect herself if she needs to. That she can't protect the pack. I don't know what the Goddess was thinking pairing us together." Some of his words made me happy, others infuriated me.

"I just don't want to see anyone in the pack get hurt, Mom, including her. It's my responsibility to protect everyone. And now, I have to find a way to protect someone who can't even help protect them self. What am I going to do?"

What's with this man? I can so protect myself. Doesn't he know that I have been training to fight since I was a little girl? I first learned to use a sword when I was four. Dude's gonna have to learn a lesson. I said sarcastically to myself.

I didn't want him to know that I had heard him talking, so I tried to sneak back down to his room. When I got there, I knocked on his door loudly and called out to him.

"Reece, I need to talk to you." I heard him stand up down the hall and turned toward him as he opened the door.

"What?" He snapped at me as soon as he was in the hall.

"Oh, I didn't know you were down there." I lied, trying to look shocked. You were nicer a minute ago, talking to your mom. I thought to myself. Are you a momma's boy? But that wasn't fair, his mother was in a bad state for a long time. I know she was a sore spot for him.

"What do you need, Little Bunny?" He asked me, I swear he uses that name just to make me mad.

"Well, I have a bit of bad news." I told him. He raised an eyebrow in curiosity then looked at the floor sighing.

"Fine, come in." He opened his door and went into his room. I stood there, nervously for a moment, not sure if I wanted to go into his room. "Are you coming or not?" He growled from inside. I took a breath to steady myself and followed him in.

His room was set up a lot like mine. The color scheme was done in dark green and dark wood. The number and type of furniture were the same, but the style was different. My room had looked a little more feminine from the get-go, but his definitely looked masculine. There were fewer intricate carvings in the wood, the dark wood stain just brought out the natural pattern in the wood itself instead.

The rooms were about the same size, and aside from the color scheme and design style they looked like the exact same room. At least I was being treated fairly in that aspect. He went to sit on the sofa in the sitting area, lounging into the corner.

He sat with his right arm flung across the back of the sofa, right leg bent with his knee pressed up against the back of the cushions. He was turned with his back to the corner so he could face me.

"Sit." He ordered.

"Where?" I asked, looking for a chair or another piece of furniture.

"Are you too good for the couch?" He asked me.

"No, I just didn't think you wanted me to sit with you." I told him honestly.

"You need to get over this aversion, we are going to be in other packs, they must think that we are mated."

"And whose fault is it that I have an aversion to you?" I snapped at him with a hint of a growl in my voice. He just glared at me.

"I'm fully aware. Be that as it may, we need to learn to put up with each other." He said, surprisingly not getting angry at my outburst.

"I know." I told him, letting my anger deflate as I sat apprehensively onto the sofa.

"So, what is the problem?" He asked, getting straight to the point.

"Heather is on her way to the pack hospital. They think she may be having the baby early. She isn't due for almost a month." I told him.

"Do they know what's happening?" He asked, I could hear the concern in his voice.

"Vincent didn't have that information yet." I told him.

"Where is Vincent now?"

"I told him to go. He needs to be with his mate at a time like this." I saw the surprise on his face.

Chapter 38 - Reece-A Slight Change In Plans

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Reece

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I was surprised when Little Bunny called out to me when I was talking to mom, but she never willingly came to me, so I knew it had to be important.

"Reece, I need to talk to you." Her voice sounded nervous but still strong.

"What?" I snapped when I went out to the hall. I was worried she had heard my earlier conversation.

"Oh, I didn't know you were down there." She looked tense.

"What do you need, Little Bunny?"

"Well, I have a bit of bad news." She clearly didn't want to tell me what was going on. I raised an eyebrow in suspicion before looking at the floor sighing.

"Fine, come in." I opened my door and invited her in. She seemed nervous, like she wasn't going to come in at first. She really was scared of me, good. "Are you coming or not?" I growled from inside. She took a breath and followed me in.

I flopped into the corner of the couch and watched her flounder, looking around the room for somewhere to sit. Was it that bad sitting next to me?

"Sit." I told her, that got her to talk at least.

"Where?" She asked.

"Are you too good for the couch?"

"No, I just didn't think you wanted me to sit with you." She seemed embarrassed.

"You need to get over this aversion, we are going to be in other packs, they must think that we are mated." They would never buy it if she couldn't even sit next to me.

"And whose fault is it that I have an aversion to you?" She snapped at me with a hint of a growl in her voice. I just glared at her in defeat.

"I'm fully aware. Be that as it may, we need to learn to put up with each other." I tried to be calm with her tonight, usually I just yelled and growled at her, and the desire and habit to do so was warring with me still.

"I know." She deflated and sat apprehensively onto the couch.

"So, what is the problem?" I asked, getting straight to the point.

"Heather is on her way to the pack hospital. They think she may be having the baby early. She isn't due for almost a month."

"Do they know what's happening?" I was worried for Heather the minute Little Bunny had told me what was going on. Vincent was one of my best warriors, and I considered him a friend. He had also been very vital in keeping the new Luna happy and under control.

"Vincent didn't have that information yet." I sensed a but in her words.

"Where is Vincent now?" I asked.

"I told him to go. He needs to be with his mate at a time like this." That shocked me. I know she would have preferred to have Vincent with us, of all people, but she sent him away.

"That was a wise decision."

"Are you saying I'm incapable of being wise?" She asked, annoyed.

"No, just that you have made unwise decisions in the past." I told her.

"Yeah, I'm looking at one." She snapped. I growled at that. I didn't like that she considered me an unwise choice. I was not putting myself in that category, and as much as I wish I could have a different mate, a different Luna. I never considered that taking her was unwise because I knew I had no other choice. I just didn't accept it on a personal level, that was different. "Anyone ever call you Cujo because you growl so much?" She asked me, sarcasm all but physically dripping from the words. I fought the urge to growl again.

"Why do you insist on calling me the names of different fictional dogs?" I demanded.

"Why do you insist on calling me Little Bunny?" She countered.

"It's amusing."

"Right back at you Scooby Doo."

"What was that one for?" I asked.

"Well, I could say it's because you're asking questions trying to be a detective, but the real answer is, because I wanted to make a rhyme." I laughed.

I think it was the first time I had laughed in front of her, I hadn't intended to do it, but I couldn't help it. I was laughing and not just chuckling at her. She was shocked at first then she also laughed lightly. Her laugh was cute, like music.

Not bells tinkling or ringing or anything like that. It's hard to describe. It sounded like normal laughter, but when I heard it, it felt like I was listening to soft, sweet, happy music. It made my wolf stand at attention, but he was a good boy and just sniffed the air, not trying to push things at the moment.

When the laughs between us ended, and I took a deep breath to settle myself, I continued the conversation.

"So, we need to find a replacement, and fast."

"That's right." She agreed.

"I will call Noah and ask him-." But she interrupted me before I could finish.

"No can do, he took Nikki to the cabin for the weekend." She told me.

"That's right, I had forgotten. What about David?" I asked her, I knew she was comfortable with him as well.

"We can give him a call." She agreed.

I pulled out my phone and called the warrior, but there was no answer. He had better have a good reason for ignoring my call. I was not about to call my Beta and ask for his help. My Beta had not been my choice, it had been those meddling old fools who had forced my cousin on me. I didn't think that my spineless twit of a cousin had enough brains to be a Beta. So, who did that leave me with?

"I can call Jeremy or Leslie." I saw the revulsion on her face and wondered which one that face was for.

"Is there anyone else you trust?" She asked me, did she not like either of them?

"Is there a problem with my warriors?" I asked her. She looked uncomfortable. "Fine, you can answer that later. And to answer your question, no, no one that I would trust to go on the trip with us. I was in the middle of having them trained. I hadn't been able to focus on training the warriors, as much as I would have liked, I was too busy running too many things." I told her, letting her know that I clearly expect her to do her fair share.

"So, what, we reschedule?" She asked me, confused by the situation.

"We can't, we have to go."

"Then what do we do?"

"We go alone, just the two of us." I declared. I swear, her face froze, and she looked like I told her I was going to kill her puppy. "We simply cannot reschedule."

"I understand." She frowned, nodding her head. She may have understood, but she clearly didn't accept it. What am I going to do with her?

I grabbed my bag, which was already packed, and left the room with her. I led the way down the stairs, so I didn't have to see the disappointment on her face. I know she feared me, I wanted that, counted on it, but I was no disappointment to anyone.

I grabbed her bag and marched quickly off down the hall, forcing her to jog to keep up. I was going to show her that she was lucky to be chosen as the Luna. That even though she was Luna in name only, she was still one of the luckiest women in the pack.

I walked past most of the cars, coming to a stop in front of the brand-new Portofino M I had purchased earlier this year. I rarely ever drove it, and I wasn't even sure why I had gotten it. But now I want to show off a bit. The Italian sports car was usually much too flashy for the roads around here, and for me really, but maybe she would like it.

I threw the bags in the small trunk and had the passenger door opened for her before she had even caught up to me.

"Get in." I told her trying to soften my voice. The look on her face was one of pure shock. The car probably took her breath away.

"We're taking this?" She asked.

"It's just the two of us now, we don't need anything bigger." I smirked at her. She sighed and got into the car. I shut her door and walked around to get in. She had buckled and was ready.

I started the car, the roar of the engine reminding me, partly, of why I had bought the car in the first place. I revved the engine a few times, reveling in the glorious sound and grinning to myself. I shifted the car into drive and started down the large, long driveway. I sped through the compound and out of the gate in no time at all.

This trip we were going on was to visit a cousin of mine. One I wish I could have traded for Caleb growing up. Riley grew up in a different pack and I only ever saw him on visits, but he was a hell of a lot better than Caleb, that's for sure. We would be staying at Riley's Alpha house tonight and then visiting a fealty pack tomorrow morning before going home. This would be a quick trip, thankfully.

I pulled the car onto the freeway, wanting to open it up a bit. It was Friday night, most people were already home from work, so the roads were pretty empty, thankfully. I was able to let the engine roar as I sped up on the empty highway.

"Ugh!" I heard my little bunny scoff next to me.

"Something wrong?"

"No, not really. Just seeing that most men truly are the same."

"What's that supposed to mean?" I asked her.

"Could you be more predictable with this ostentatious death trap of yours?" She snorted. "Seriously, men are their toys."

"Hmm. So, you don't like the car?" I asked her. That's a first. All the women who had seen it had completely adored it.

"Not really, it's too much. I mean, don't get me wrong, it's sharp and I can appreciate its beauty, but I would much rather have a car that stands out a little less." That threw me through a loop.

"You're not like other girls, are you?" I asked her.

"You still hadn't figured that out yet Marmaduke?" She asked, calling me yet another ridiculous dog name.

"I'm still learning. And I'm not like the men you know." I told her.

"Really? Well I guess that's true in a way. Unless I compare you to my grandfather. My cousins and uncle were all very nice. Grandfather not so much. The men I've met since have varied, so I guess you are like half of them." That kind of hurt me personally. Also to know that someone so close to her had treated her so bad for so long.

"You'll see, I'm one of a kind, I am the Alpha after all." I chuckled.

"Yeah, which means you're more conceited." She retorted with a laugh.

"No, just more confident." I countered.

Oddly enough, conversation continued easily like this until we got to Riley's. It took about an hour and a half to get there. It wasn't far, but Riley and I were always too busy to see each other regularly.

Thankfully, we were both still in a good mood when we got there, it would be easier to pretend to be a proper couple that way.

Chapter 39 - Reece-Azure River Pack

Reece

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It was a bit after nine when I pulled the car to a stop outside the Azure River Pack Alpha House. It was the house that my cousin Riley had been raised in and lived in still. Like me, he took charge of his pack seven years ago, we both lost our fathers in the same battle. He was lucky enough to still have the former Luna, his mother, there to help him transition into the role. My Aunt was stronger than my mother, that or my mother just loved my father more and his loss was harder on her.

I had no sooner shut off the engine than Riley came running out of the house.

"Reece!" He yelled, giving me a bear hug like he's always done since we were kids. He's two years older than me but you'd never know it based on the way he acts.

"Hey Ri." I smiled hugging him back. He was my best friend growing up. Between the two of us, we convinced our fathers to make monthly visits just so we could spend more time with one another. But that was in a simpler time.

"So, where is this new sister of mine?" He asked just as Little Bunny was getting out of the car without waiting for anyone to open her door. I should work on training her too. She needed to wait for someone to open doors for her, pull out her chair, things like that. That wasn't me being chivalrous. No, she's the Luna now, people need to treat her a certain way, and she needs to learn to let them.

I walked around the car and slipped my arm around her shoulders, putting a smile on my face as I did so. I hoped she would understand my gesture as me saying Play along Little Bunny.

"Riley, this is my mate, Trinity." I smiled down at her. She was smiling sweetly at Riley and playing the ever devoted and loving mate properly as she had slid her arms around my waist hugging me gently but firmly. My wolf was standing at attention, panting in my ears just from her touch. Down boy. I snapped at him and told him to calm down.

"It's a pleasure to meet you Trinity, I'm Riley, the Alpha of the Azure River pack and Reece's cousin. But I've always considered him to be more like a brother, since we were both only children, he was the closest thing I had to a brother." Riley introduced himself with a big grin.

"Hello, it's wonderful to meet you." She smiled brightly, the light of which looked like it nearly blinded Riley.

"She's absolutely gorgeous Reece, I have absolutely no clue what she sees in you." He said pointedly. To my horror Little Bunny laughed at his remark which set Riley laughing hysterically. "Oh, she's going to be fun. Shall we go inside so I can introduce you to everyone?" He held out a hand to her. She slid her

hands off of me and took his hand instead as they started walking. My wolf and I both growled simultaneously.

Without thinking much about it, I reached out and took her hand from his and held it firmly in my own. To lock her in place I put my arm around her shoulder. She was my mate, she was supposed to hold my hand, not his. She looked up at me perplexed while Riley just laughed at us both.

"Look at you, being all jealous, I never thought I'd see the day." He smiled at me. I wasn't jealous, I just had to put on all appearances. "I'm not jealous." I grumbled. "Not of you, that's for sure." Little Bunny was still looking confused and unsure of the situation, but she didn't fight me off, good.

When we got inside I nearly roared. I did growl low under my breath. Riley had done something he shouldn't have. He had gathered a large number of his pack members in the house, and the moment we went inside confetti was dropped and shouts and cheers rang out.

"Congratulations!"

"Way to go Reece!"

"Cheers to the happy couple!"

"To the Alpha and Luna!" I heard so many different voices yell out to me at once that it nearly gave me a headache. It did, however, piss me off.

"Allow us to celebrate with you tonight." Riley said, grinning like a fool. This explains why he had come running outside when we got here. This was an ambush, and since I was in comfortable, familiar territory I had let my guard down. Damn that meddling cousin of mine.

I saw Riley's mate coming up to him. She seemed to be expecting again. This would make his second pup. He had found his mate four years ago. According to him, he was the happiest man alive with his mate and a little one. I would never have that. That thought was depressing.

Riley's pack was smaller than my own, which is why our packs had a long-lasting treaty. They only have about one third of the pack members that we did, meaning if someone tried to invade their lands, or if they were to go to war with another pack, that pack would actually be attacking me. Riley was a good Alpha to his people, I would never doubt that, but they didn't have enough people to protect themselves. That's why we always visited as a kid, to strengthen their lands and borders. These people were also my people, making them Little Bunny's people too, something I would need to fully explain to her later.

We were forced to be the center of the party. Everyone was coming to introduce themselves to us. Everyone was eager to meet my new mate and introduce themselves to the new Luna that governed over them. I could tell that she was uncomfortable with all the attention, even though Little Bunny did good. She smiled through the whole thing and handled herself like a true Luna. She just might have what it takes to be there for the people. If only she had a wolf, then she would be strong enough to take care of herself and the pack.

It was after all the introductions were done that the low music playing was cut off and I heard Riley's voice ring out. I had a bad feeling.

"Welcome everyone and thank you for joining us in welcoming the new Luna of the Red Springs pack and my cousin Reece's new mate. I'm happy for you man. You know that I think of you as a bother, so I thank you for giving me a beautiful sister-in-law who will now grace us all with beautiful children who will hopefully call me Uncle Ri." He exclaimed, laughing. I noticed the slight blush form on my Bunny's face, it was funny what affected her and what didn't.

"Now, I would like to ask you to grant a selfish request of mine. I was not there for your mate announcement. I didn't get to see any of the typical firsts. I would like to see some here, they will be your firsts here." Riley was saying with a huge grin on his face. Yup, I was definitely getting a really bad feeling, and the Little Bunny was looking more and more like her namesake every second.

"Yes!" Echoed throughout the room.

"Now, Reece, dear cousin and brother from another mother, please have your first dance in this territory with your mate."

"Dance, dance, dance." The people in the room chanted after his request. I looked down into my mates terrified eyes, the question clear on my face. She sighed, lowering her eyes momentarily, then looked at me with resolve and nodded her head.

"Fine, let's give them what they want." She nodded. She was at least emotionally stronger than I thought.

"Fine." I said, turning to look at Riley with a stern look.

"Excellent. Does the lady have a song request?" He asked. She shook her head. "No, then allow us to pick one." He and his mate, Katie, put their heads together before starting the music up. I hadn't noticed at first. But everyone had completely cleared the dance floor. Little Bunny and I were now alone on the floor.

I didn't know the song that started, but I could tell that she did, by the look in her eyes.

"You say you'll be down in five." The song started with light piano music and someone snapping their fingers in a slow rhythm. "The smell of your perfume is floatin' down the stairs." I took her left hand and pulled her close, wrapping my other hand around her waist. I knew she had had dance lessons as a kid, so she should be able to keep up, even though we had never danced together before.

I started to slowly spin her around the floor, staring into her eyes as we went. The tempo was picking up slightly as the song went along.

"I thank god you can read my mind, cause when you look at me with those eyes, I'm speechless." The song seemed to be a love song, a man singing his devotion to his lover. In a normal mate bond this would be perfect, but for us it didn't fit. But I had to play the part, as did she.

Chapter 40 - Both-The First.....

Reece

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We moved around the room. I spun her around a few times. But mostly, I held her close staring into her eyes, as we moved gently around the floor. I was looking into her eyes closer and more intently than I had ever really done before. I noticed that she didn't just have that bright sky-blue color, there was also a dark blue ring inside that, and yet inside that was a thin golden ring around the pupil. She had a triple iris.

"Kiss her!" I heard Riley yell at me. I glared at him, but it was too late. The chanting had started.

"Kiss her, kiss her, kiss her!"

I looked at her, hoping she knew that I wished I didn't have to do this, but we had to play along. I took my hand from hers and slid it up her arm and to the back of her head. I tilted her head back into my palm and leaning down I placed my lips on hers.

I had intended it to be a quick chaste kiss, but my wolf took control for a moment and with a slight growl I pressed against her mouth a little harder than I had intended. She gasped, either from the feel of my mouth on hers or from the unexpected intensity.

I took advantage of her gasp. I slid my tongue into her slightly open mouth, forcing it open further. The taste of her exploded on my tongue. It was like eating her scent. I could taste warm, freshly baked apple pie one second. The next second, I could taste the air before a thunderstorm. The ozone and slight electrical charge that filled the air right before the storm started.

I used my grip on the back of her head and her lower back to pull her closer to me and up onto her toes. I felt her hands grip my shirt tightly, I wasn't sure if it was with fear or desire. I didn't care. At that moment my wolf was ruling me, and I couldn't stop myself.

I heard applause and whistling explode in the room around us. The sound brought me back to my senses. With a growl I let her go abruptly. So abruptly that she nearly fell, and I had to reach out to steady her.

"I'm glad you stopped there, man, we don't have any sprinklers installed in case of fire." Riley said laughing. I glared at him. It was not that great of a kiss. I tried to convince myself as my wolf called me insane.

The party continued on for a little while longer, but Riley and I had business we needed to discuss, so I asked Little Bunny to stay put right where she was while I was gone. She promised she would, so I accompanied Riley to his office upstairs. This Alpha House was not as large as my own. So, I wouldn't be that far away.

"I was surprised when I saw that you have a mate that you truly care about now." Riley commented when we were inside. I wasn't going to correct him. He was one of the people I wanted to convince the most. He didn't need to know the truth. But I really didn't know why he thought I cared about her so much.

"You know how it is." I joked with him.

"Yeah, I just never thought you would." He joked with me. "Try not to blow it, alright man."

~~

Trinity

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I was beyond shocked when I got to this new territory and found out they were throwing us a mate party. I guess it was kind of like an engagement party. Most of the people in the pack run by Reece's cousin were here. And it was overwhelming to be introduced to them so soon.

Then, his cousin said he had to see our firsts, wanting to see our first dance in his territory. Well little did he know that it would be our first dance ever. Reece was a surprisingly good dancer. He took my hand and started moving us around the floor in perfect beat as Speechless played over the speakers. He was staring at me intently as I stared back, like he was memorizing my face or something.

The next thing I knew, they were chanting for him to kiss me. This was too much. We had never kissed, I had never kissed anyone ever. Reece and I were never meant to kiss. And here we were expected to do so in front of all of them. I couldn't do it. But Reece ignored my distress as he slid his hand up my arm and to the back of my head. He pulled me to him as he leaned down and kissed me.

His lips pressed against mine. Hot and unyielding. What surprised me though, wasn't the pressure or intensity of his kiss. It was the intense electrical shock that seemed to flow through my whole body as he kissed me hard. I gasped as the shock ran through me.

He took my gasp as an invitation. His tongue slid into my mouth, conquering it for his own. His tongue slid across mine and I felt a fire blaze deep within me. He moved his tongue around my mouth as if he were trying to eat me, starting at my mouth. I thought of Little Red Riding Hood momentarily, and just what it would be like to be eaten by this particular big bad wolf.

I grabbed his shirt to hold on as he lifted me onto my toes. I was terrified by the fire leaping inside of me, it felt like it was going to burn me from the inside out. But my body was very excited at the feel of his mouth on mine. If I had a wolf, she would have been howling at that moment. I imagined what it would sound like.

I could hear the whistling and cheering around us. That brought me back to my senses. And judging by how quickly Reece let me go, it brought him back to his just as fast. I could see heat in his eyes, but there was anger clear on his face as well. He was mad, and it almost seemed like it was directed at me.

Not long after the kiss, Reece and Riley needed to go discuss their business in the office. I was ordered to not leave the spot where I stood. I promised him, not wanting to receive the brunt of his anger from before.

Not long after Reece left, I was surrounded by people. Several females from this pack came to talk to me.

"That sure was something, Luna." One pretty girl about my age said.

"I thought I was going to melt just watching." Another said as she fanned her face. I blushed at their words.

"You're one lucky girl." I saw a very pretty girl say as she looked at me with envy. "We all had hoped that Alpha Reece would have to come here to find a mate." She sneered while laughing.

"Yeah, I just lucked out." I laughed nervously.

"Alright, give her space ladies." Katie, Riley's mate, said as she came to my rescue. Katie was pregnant, not as far along as Heather, but seeing her made me think of Vincent and their baby. I was worried about them all.

"Excuse, I need to make a call." I mumbled, excusing myself from the group. Reece would never know I left if I made it back before him.

I walked to the entry hall by the front door and then out into the night. I wanted privacy for this call, Vincent's business was not their business. When I was outside and leaning against Reece's stupidly expensive car, I pulled out my phone and opened my contact list. Vincent was at the top since I needed to call him to escort me frequently, I pressed his name and waited while the phone rang. He answered on the fourth ring.

"Hello Luna, is something wrong?" His voice was filled with concern for me when he should have been focusing on Heather.

"No, everything is fine. Reece is in a meeting and I was worried about you and Heather. Truth be told, the Luna of this pack is expecting as well, and she made me think of you two. I hope I am not intruding."

"No, you're not intruding. I am happy that you were thinking of us. Heather is resting. They have managed to stop the contractions for now. They do not know what caused them, but as long as she takes it easy from now on, she should have no problems. As long as she makes it another two weeks the doctors will have no worries."

"That is great to hear." I told him. I was so happy and relieved to hear that. Things should hopefully be alright. I heard a branch snap somewhere in the trees near the house. It was nowhere near me, so I paid it no mind.

"Luna, if you don't mind me asking, besides calling me, what are you doing while you are waiting for the Alpha?" He asked, concern once again in his voice.

"I was talking to the pack members, but then I thought of you, so I stepped out for a moment."

"Outside?"

"Yeah." I answered him.

"Alone?"

"It's just for a few minutes. I'll be back before Reece even knows I left." I told him. "I didn't think that the members of this pack needed to know your business. It's your personal matter after—."