

The Defiant Luna Chapter 51

Jay-la POV

Jay-la found herself standing in the middle of a ravine, in knee-deep snow, turned and looked about her. She had no idea where she was. In the mountains somewhere was all she could tell from the terrain around her. The trees were all tall and covered in snow, as much as the ground was.

Looked up at the sky, to try and gauge what time it was, how long she'd been out here? Was anyone's guess. It was late afternoon and the sun, though partially hidden behind the trees, was in the western sky. She could see its glare low on the horizon through the trees and knew it was going to be dark soon.

Stood there alone in an unknown location, it was already cold here at the bottom of the ravine she now stood in, and it was only going to get colder, she could imagine, with every passing minute as night fell. Turned about her, didn't know what to do right this very second, looked down at herself as she and Kora returned to their normal state of being, and registered the scent of blood. She was covered in it, and not just her own, but many others.

She was also hot and sweaty from all their running. Neither she nor Kora had any idea how long they had been running for, only that shed been practically blinded by the brilliance of the sun at one point. So it had to have been close to mid morning or lunch time when she had escaped her captors. That she was now covered in sweat from it and not knowing what time it had been when she'd fled, couldn't even gauge how long she had felt, it was not a nice feeling. could only presume many hours.

'Kora?'

Yes?' Kora sounded tired to her, their fighting and running had tired her out. It had not just been Jay-la fighting or running, it was like they were of one mind, everything that had happened they'd done together to save themselves.

'Our pup?' she asked, placing a hand on her stomach nOW.

'Safe. Kora told her We protected our pup, like we did before.'

Jay-la closed her eyes for a moment and just breathed a sigh of relief. She didn't even know how far along they were. Didn't even know if Nathan and Havoc knew about it.

It was unlikely, she thought, they'd not know about the triplets. Kora knew about it first the last time. It was probably going to be the same this time as well.

Opened her eyes and sighed heavily, as she realised that her affliction had caused her to fight and flee, but they had not had the presence of mind to save Stephen. They didn't even know if the man was alright back there. Had Sophia hurt him, had those men hurt him because she had gotten away? We left Stephen back there. She murmured as she bit her lip worriedly. 'Just left him.' felt tears brim, what if those horrid people killed him? She tried to reach out for him but got nothing, was hoping that she was just too far away to feel him. That not feeling him or being able to connect with him meant the worst.

"No choice.' Kora huffed inside her mind

They were at the bottom of a ravine of some sort. She didn't even know which way she'd come from, how far they had run, how fast they had been, knew nothing at all.

Rubbed a hand over her face and took a long steadying breath in. 'think Jay-la. she told herself, what was the first thing you saw, when you came around and stopped running.

Looked around her, it all looked the same, everything was just covered in snow, she was standing knee deep in snow right now. Turned her eyes to the ground, looked for her foot prints or track through the snow, to see which way she had come from. She was going to have to track her own prints if she wanted to get back to where she had come from. Thankfully, she was more acclimatised to the cold nowadays. Being back in the pack had helped with that.

But she also didn't know just how cold it was going to get out here in the mountains at night, or if more snow was going to fall either.

She picked her way back through the ravine, following her own tracks, there were deep pockets of snow and shallow snow covered ground, before long night started to fall, and the sky darkened around her.

'Kora, keep yourself open for Havoc or anyone.'

1 am.' She replied, though still sounded tired and Jay-la knew why, could feel her healing the wounds that they had sustained. To much adrenaline and now the healing as well, Kora was working harder than she likely ever had right this minute. She recalled how very tired she had felt the last time they had fled, exhausted completely, even Nate had looked at her worriedly when he woke her up that next day.

Jay-la continued to track her own foot prints back the way she had come, she was more than tired but had to keep moving. It appeared that she had not fled in a straight line, crossed that ravine three times before she was making her way up to the top of it. But had no choice other than to track her prints, or she could get lost out here even more so than she already was.

It was completely dark, within minutes of the sun dropping below the horizon, not a skerrick of light shone by the time she got to the top. She stood and looked around using

all of Kora's senses, to see anything at all, hear anything at all, or smell, for anyone out here looking for her, friend or foe.

She could only smell herself and the blood on her clothes, the forest around her and the crisp smell of snow. Likely she was the only one out here deep in the woods.

Jay-la could only hope that there were no rogue wolves roaming about out here, where they could smell her, smell the blood that she was covered in and start tracking and hunting it. She didn't need that either, had just fled her enemy, didn't need to flee rogues as well. Sighed heavily as she realised that her enemies could well be using that smell of blood to hunt her as well.

But there was not much that she could do about it at that point. She needed the clothes that she had on for some protection against the cold, would any other time just shift into Kora and be warm under her thick coat of fur. It would also allow them to blend in with the snow as well and keep them hidden from those that would hunt them.

I was always a much harder thing to do, track Kora in the snow, due to her colouring, but they couldn't do that right now, not without risking their pups life. They hadn't shifted to flee for that very reason. To protect their pup. They weren't about to go risking its life now either.

She rubbed her arms with her hands as a breeze passed through the trees and a chill hit her "We've been colder! She told herself, and they had, that escape, from the Luna suite down the drain pipe had been colder than it was out here, she'd been but a*s n***d for that and the winter was much colder in the pack than here.

She was still standing at the top of the ravine, she had come to a stand still, trying to decide if tracking her own footprints back was actually a good idea or not. What if doing that just puts them back in the hands of the enemy, back in danger once more? She did not want that. She was healed up now but every fight they were to get into would put their pup at risk. She didn't want that and neither did

But the more she just stood there indecisive, the more she worried about not just herself, but Stephen weighed on her mind as well. She abandoned him back there to those wolves, to fend for himself. That wasn't right. He had a Mate waiting on him, not that she knew what she was to him yet.

But Suzy really did like him and was open to coming to stay in the pack for a month to trial living there. Jay-la just knew deep down that she would fall in love with Stephen Ch 5)

and, quickly so, the man was the perfect gentleman, sweet and kind, never rushed Suzy into anything, had the patience of the Goddess, as he told her he had

She thought about him and sighed, as she recalled he'd been encouraging her fear, telling her things to set off her Night and fight responses. The man was crazy, completely crazy it seemed. Thank the Goddess, he'd been in another cell altogether or he could well have ended up dead at her hands.

"He saved us. Kora huffed now, as Jay-la stood really thinking about it, and felt Kora's unease at leaving him behind now 1Qo.

He'd not been able to physically help them, being in another cell, but he had told her he would do everything he could to help her. He had gone out of his way to trigger her affliction on purpose, said only things that would increase her fear, not calm her down. Not once did she recall feeling his Gamma Charm either.

He had used her affliction to help her, to save herself, to make her scared and feel overwhelmed, and then fight like a demon under the control of her adrenalised fight response, before fleeing the moment she was clear of the fighting.

'Our Gamma is smart.' Kora told her, a little pride in her voice.

'I have to agree with you on that, Jay-la nodded her head, they were all in agreement that they didn't want to set it off, needed her to be calm and happy, feel safe, so that she could reduce the adrenalin in her body and get rid of the affliction. He'd done the complete opposite, activated it on purpose

At the time, though, she didn't think it was a smart thing, she didn't like feeling scared and overwhelmed. She didn't really recall much once the fighting started though, had become a mindless fighting machine. Tried to remember it as she stood there and recalled only that shed been in a frenzied blur of claws, all fury and rage.

"Do we go back or stay put?" she wondered aloud to herself.

"Havoc is coming for us! Kora piped up 'Make our way back.'

"I guess so.' Jay-la nodded, though who knew what they would find back there? The worst case scenario, Nathan had yet to find out where they were and they would have to fight again, though something was ticking inside her brain, itching at her like she'd seen something but couldn't recall it.

Headed off as she thought about it, come to a halt at one point, as Kora snorted, as they finally recalled what it was, seeing a half-shifted wolf, fighting that Alpha they had been fighting, had to have been Havoc.'

'Havoc is a beast of

a Mate. Good and strong, I'm gonna mate him good in his half-shifted form.'

Jay-la shook her head, why did that not surprise her with her wolf? You're crazy! She told Kora.

Continued on, though now they felt better knowing that Nathan had been there, had found them and come for them. Knew he would be out looking for them, he'd made her promise to always return to him, when he'd told her they would let her flee if her affliction was activated. He'd likely done that after the fight had stopped. Reached up and touched her mark spot, it was still there. She'd not been severed from him, he'd not lost that fight. Kora was right.

Havoc was a beast of a Mate, but he loved Kora with all he had, was never not coming for her.

She had no idea where this mountain range was, how long it was or how wide for that matter, but surely there had to be a road somewhere back the way they came. They would have had to have been brought here in a vehicle of some sort. If she couldn't find her way back, the next best option was to find a road and a pay phone to call Nathan. Two plans of action she now had.

Although it would be nice if she could feel a tether to anyone in her pack while she was out here lost in the mountains, if she got that, she'd be able to mind-link to them and tell them that she was okay.

Use that tether to whoever it was, to track them back to their location and then knew Nathan would be on his way right to her, everyone would link right to their Alpha, to tell him they had her or could feel her. He'd come for her, and she knew it, he loved her and wanted her, he would never leave her, and she would never leave him. Loved him.

The Defiant Luna Chapter 52

Nathan POV

Stephen walked from the cell and sighed heavily, as he looked at Nathan, "That's not what I meant."

Nathan looked at his Gamma and frowned at him a little, "What then?"

"I enacted her affliction on purpose. I had to state not so nice, even horrible things to her, she was trying to stay calm, but I knew I had to encourage her fears, all of them."

Sophia said not so nice things. Threatened not just her with horrid things to be done to her, but then the triplets as well."

Nathan nodded, likely the only option the man had being in another cell, and unable to physically help his Luna.

“I did it, Nathan, because I knew activating it would help her to survive, it was all I could think of, to play the devils advocate, not be the Gamma at the time. I needed her affliction to bring them all down, so she’d have a chance it was going to be three against one, and they were all liking, the look of her.”

“It’s alright Stephen, I understand.” He nodded “I am even thankful for your activating of it, I know you would do anything to protect her. But being locked away from her yourself.” He sighed. “it was the only thing to do. We all know she’ll be in a bloodlust-like state, nothing survives that, or at least not many”

“Thank you for understanding Nathan. She got away, I can only presume, seeing that Havoc was still in control when he came down here.”

“Yes, though we got here to see her fighting an Alpha, he is very dead, I assure you. Jay-la fled into the mountains as to be expected, I guess. Will come back when she calms down.” He sighed, really didn’t like that she was just out there all alone, but they couldn’t go running after her. She’d turn on them without thought.

“How long will that take? She was missing for like 6 hours last time, left for dinner at 7 and didn’t get back till nearly 1 or something. That was in a city where she could call for help. She’s now out in the mountains, and it’s covered in snow, the middle of winter, only wearing a dress.”

“I know,” Nathan didn’t much like it either, but there was nothing he could do about it “Kora will have to keep her as warm as she can. Probably be fine till they stop running.”

“Maybe,” Stephen sighed now. Nathan realised, he didn’t look any happier with the situation at hand. “What are we doing with her?” Stephen’s attention moved to Sophia, who was screaming in pain as she was baring down trying to push out her pup.

“She is not my problem.” Nathan muttered and walked away across the room. “Leave her out here with nothing and no-one and see how she bloody likes it.”

“Nathan?”

No

“No,” he snapped “Look at what she did, the horrendous things she made me say, with Jay-la right here listening on.

Deserves to be out here alone with nothing and no one to help her.”

“Nathan, Jay-la knew you would come for her, she trusted in both you and Havoc.”

He was glad to hear that, as he made his way to the bottom of the stairs, put his hand on the rail to head up the stairs.

“Nathan, if you leave Sophia here to get up and leave.

She’ll still be a threat to Jay-la, to the triplets. What she told you was not what she told us.”

That grabbed his undivided attention, “What do you mean?

“She had that Alpha out there, not in here for a reason. The deal she struck was not just to give Jay-la to him, which she was going to do, but to have that Alpha kill you. She intends to return to the pack and try and take it for herself, kill the triplets.”

His eyes moved to his ex, a vicious, nasty piece of work all around it seemed, though he couldn’t just kill a pregnant she wolf, or one giving birth.

“She’s not just your ex anymore Nathan, she is your enemy, the Luna’s enemy, and a direct threat to Jay-la and her children. To our pack. It won’t end here, the she-wolf is insane.”

He looked at Stephen with a deep frown, “What do you suppose I do with her, I can’t kill her while she’s like that, or has a new born, that is a despicable thing to do.” Though he did want to “Id be no better than her, herself.”

“Turn her over to council, to Alpha Austin himself. I’m sure he would help, with all that has gone on and how close he is to her grandmother.”

It was possible that Alpha Austin would see to it that Sophia was indeed punished, he would likely want to see Jay-la and the triplets were safe. He also knew about her affliction and why she had got it. He’d informed Alpha Austin of his belief that it was both he and Sophia’s fault.

When he’d been shown the information. Not that he had said much, he’d just sighed and said he’d look into it himself, see if there was something the council knew to help.

“He might, I suppose.” Nathan nodded, “though there is no guarantee that she will be formally punished, they could simply put her in another pack to raise that child.”

“They might imprison her, they do have them, you know, Wolfen prisons, in the royal kingdom. Well away from our world, through those portals.”

He did know that, he was required once a year to go to the Wolfen Kingdom for a large Alpha meeting with the King. ” They are for the worst of the worst, is she that? I don’t know if the king’s seers would see her as that.”

“Either way, you can’t just leave her out here, she’ll come and seek revenge once again, I can guarantee it. She really does hate Jay-la, that much I understand.”

Nathan glared at the woman in question and then just turned and stalked up the stairs, needed a moment to think on it, he did not want her coming back and being a threat and yes, killing her would solve that. But she was giving birth right this minute, and wolven life was sacred. That child had done nothing to deserve dying and if he killed her right this minute, the pup would surely die as well.

Up there outside of that rank-smelling place, he found all his men waiting for him. Jackson and Ethan were checking their men over for serious wounds, but it was the sound of a man's yelling that grabbed his attention, someone was still alive, it seemed.

Stood and waited to see what was going on, as he mulled over the issue of Sophia and just what to do with her. It took a few minutes before he saw Jodi and Bradley hauling a man along with them towards him into the clearing, caught movement to his left and whipped his head around all tensed up and ready to spring into action only to see one of his warriors still "Cloths boss." He stated realising his own Alpha had been ready to attack him.

Nathan relaxed and he felt Havoc settle as well. The man was carrying several bags in both hands, where all their clothes had been put in the trunk of his car for easy retrieval.

He turned his attention back to the prisoner that was being hauled towards him. Hed stated that everyone should die.

Why was this one still alive? He was curious now. Though it was possible, Jodi and Bradley had no idea of Havoc's order. That man was dumped right in front of him, "He went after Jay-la." Jodi stated flatly "We got him though."

"Jay-la got away Alpha." Brad sighed heavily "She's bloody fast now," he shook his head "I never seen her run like that before."

Nathan nodded, it was what he expected with her affliction, so much extra adrenaline pumped into her body, "Not even Havoc would catch her in this state." He told them, then turned at the sound of screams peeling out from the shack behind him.

Sophia was clearly delivering her baby right this minute, turned right to the man before him one more as he realised something, turned that man's head, he was still marked, could smell it, she was his mate. He was a scrawny looking fellow.

"Tell me how you could let this happen. Your own mate offering to trade herself to another?" He was curious if this man knew the truth of her plans. Was in on them.

"That's not it." the man shook his head "They took my mate," he sounded sad, "for themselves many times, knew she'd been a Luna previously. Liked that thought, I tried to get her back." He sounded despondent. "I couldn't, just a warrior, it was years of it. She offered a trade, her freedom, for another Luna."

“That is not what she told me.” He grated out.

He saw that man’s eyes move to the shack as another scream came from it, from his mate, looked fearful of what was happening to her, he supposed.

“Giving birth right now.” He stated. “She just happened to offer up my Mate, out of the blue?”

“No.../ did that, put that idea into her head one day when she was upset and trying to recover from her injuries. Shed recognised her before, was angry about you and that she wolf. I also knew the Alpha was watching it on TV.

Everyone heard him and his unit stated she was fuckable”

He whimpered as Jodi grabbed a fistful of his hair and yanked his head back

“That’s my daughter your talking about.”

“I had Sophia make a deal with him, she knew you, told our Alpha, you were her Previous Mate, made a deal with him, said she could get her from him.”

He felt anger roll right off of Havoc “Mine.” He snarled, pushing forward without warning “You can’t take what is mine.”

“It was the only way to get Sophia back, to stop them from taking her and hurting her. The deal was they wouldn’t hurt her anymore, touch her anymore, if she got them that she-wolf and killed you as well.”

Nathan stood staring at this pitiful excuse for a man.

Although he could see why he was now scrawny and pitiful, he’d likely been suffering the pains of betrayal while his own Alpha took to his Mate against her will by the sounds of it.

It was this man that had proposed the plan to kidnap and trade his mate to another, to give her to an Alpha and his unit for a lifetime of pain and suffering. Turned and stared hard at him, or was he just covering up for his mate?

Desperate to save her from a death sentence that he would surely know was coming.

He didn’t know which it was, didn’t really care to be honest, they had both plotted against his Mate and Luna for her to be brutalised by more than one, “Kill him” He stated and stood and watched as Jodi snapped that man’s neck without hesitation, watched as the mans lifeless body fell to the ground. They all heard an agonising scream of pain come from the basement inside that shack, and knew it was Sophia feeling her mate being severed from her, heard a baby crying a moment later.

“Jodi, Sophia is down in that basement. I can’t kill a mother with a newborn. I would be no better than her. What do you want done with her?” he asked, “I believe, as does Stephen, that she is likely to come for your daughter, my Luna, in the future if we let her go.”

Stood and waited on the man as he thought about it, for a long time. Seems it was not an easy decision even for him to make. None in the pack liked Sophia, but they had all just heard that her life was horrid, and she had just giving birth right now.

“She doesn’t even know who’s child she is carrying.”

Stephen commented.

Looked at that man with a frown, didn’t really care to be honest, but it was still not a nice thing, no she-wolf deserved to be treated like that, not ever. If she had not been pregnant or hadn’t just given birth, then he would have killed her himself, or let Havoc rip her head off of her body as he had wanted to when he laid eyes on her. But he knew it wasn’t right, that child had done nothing wrong.

It was several long minutes of silence before Jodi spoke I’ll take her, I’ll hand her over to Austin, and let him and Clara deal with her, and he will listen to Clara. They are very close, known to be lovers on occasion. He’ll not let Sophia near Jay la ever again.”

Nathan nodded “Good to know, please go and handle her,

Havoc is likely to kill her for her crimes.”

“My daughter?”

Nathan’s eyes moved to the mountains around them, landed on the last place he’d seen her as she fled from the fighting and sighed heavily “I can’t feel her, she’s too far away. It took several hours before she returned to normal the last time. Stephen says about 6. We’ll hunt, slow and steady, no threat must be discerned by her or Kora or she’ll just run again.”

“I’ll let you find her Alpha. You just bring my baby girl home to me, where she belongs. Brad and I will deal with the other.” he muttered. Nathan saw Brad nod his head.

Nathan nodded and looked at his men. “Clean up here and then go back to the hotel, rest up. Thank you for today. For helping to free my Luna, your Luna. However, I can’t have us all out there. It could make her run once more. I and my unit will find the Luna” He told them.

No one argued with him, and they all knew that they couldn’t just leave all these dead bodies about, would have to pile them up and either bury them or burn them.

Otherwise, come summer, the humans would likely find them and any blood tests on them or DNA tests to try and find out who they all were, would lead them to know about their kind.

All bodies had to be disposed of, to hide them from the world, to keep their kind safe and all the other worldly

creatures safe as well. He knew they understood what to do, were his elite warriors, they dealt with this all the time after battles, whether it be allied pack assistance, or rogues attacking them, or a pack war on their own doorstep.

Clean up was the same for every instance.

The Defiant Luna Chapter 53

Jay-la POV

It was dark and cold out here in the mountains, and not being able to shift to keep truly warm under Kora's coat.

Jay-la knew that they needed to find somewhere to stay put for the night, rather than be out in the open with not only the freezing cold air, but the breeze that blew through the trees as well. It wasn't so bad when everything was still. But that wind dropped the chill factor considerably

Both she and Kora were now hunting and searching for a place to spend the night, a place that kept them out of the direct breeze. It took a long time for them to find an old hollowed out, half-burnt down tree trunk. It wasn't all that big but she would fit inside it if she curled right up. It wasn't likely going to be very comfortable but it was all they could find. They were too tired to go on anymore.

She glanced around and found a few low hanging branches, pulled them off and shook the snow from the foliage, was thankful for evergreen trees right this minute.

Dragged them over to the hollowed out tree trunk and climbed in. It wasn't very comfortable, but she was able to sit with her knees pulled up to her chest, pulled those tree branches across the opening in an effort to reduce the wind and chill factor.

Hooping that her own body heat would also be able to warm the biny space a little, and they could not only get some rest but sleep She knew that kora was really tired and needed to sleep. She sat there with her arms across her knees and her head resting on her arms and tried to relax

Wolves ran hotter than humans did, and though it was freezing out, she should be able to survive the night. She had pulled the skirt of her dress around her legs, not much

protection there, but it was all she had. She had no idea how long shed been awake for, but she was also tired like Kora was.

There was just too much low lying fog or clouds for her and Kora in the dark of the night to be able to continue tracking their own footprints now. They were going to have to wait for daylight and hope it didn't snow over night and the tracks were covered over.

Nathan was coming for her, she knew he would never give her up, never stop looking for her, they would find her somehow. She reached out with her mind and tried to feel for him, got nothing and then tried to reach for Stephen himself. There was no tether to either of them. No connecting a mind-link to either of them. Even Kora huffed inside her mind, she didn't like not being able to feel her Mate.

Though there was no ache inside their chest to indicate they were so far away from him, so he had to be relatively close by, just not within mind-linking range. So likely they were only a few hours away from him on foot out here in the mountains, it was nothing like she had felt when flying across the country away from him.

'He's out here somewhere Kora. She told her wolf quietly' Rest up, he'll find us. Just needs time is all.'

They were both tired and despite being lost in an unknown mountain range, in the middle of winter, they slept curled up tightly in that hollowed out tree, with branches covering the open side of the hollow, to not only help keep their body heat in, but to keep them out of sight from any unknown dangers to them, that maybe lurking out here.

Jay-la's eyes flickered open a few times as it was becoming light,

dawn was here, they'd slept soundly and

undisturbed or set upon by anything. She sighed as she lifted her head and tried to wake up, and knew it was going to be another long day out there.

But she felt Kora was already up inside her mind, and her ears were pricked right up and her head tilted to the side, she was listening for something. Something that had likely woken her 'Kora?'

'Havoc. She answered and Jay-la reached out for that tether to their Mate. It was right there, and it wasn't the only one either, could feel Jackson, Stephen and Ethan.

Nathan's tether to her felt stronger and closer to her as well.

Was getting closer by the second, she tried to mind-link to him but couldn't, he was still too far away.

Then they heard what had clearly woken Kora from her sleep, and had her undivided attention. It was Havoc's howl, he was calling for his Mate. His howl could be heard through the forest for a good 6 to 10 miles, depending on the terrain around them.

Jay-la pushed the branches from in front of the hollow and climbed out, groaned as her body protested against standing up from its cramped position all night, stretched out a little to ease her aching muscles. Felt Kora push forward and then just howl right back for Havoc to hear her.

They stood and felt their tether to him to locate which direction he was in and headed that way. They knew he was coming, and fast, he would hear her howl for him and hunt relentlessly till he found her. They felt their tether to him good and strong and suddenly it was moving faster and they both knew it was Havoc in wolf form coming for them, that tether was getting closer very fast. Too fast for it to be Nathan in human form.

His mind connected with hers not long later 'Jay-la, She heard Nathan's voice inside her mind 'are you alright?' he asked right away, could hear the worry and concern in his voice.

She sighed as relief flooded through her body, at just the sound of his voice 'I'm okay! She answered him.

'Stay put, we're coming.'

I know, I can feel just how fast Havoc is running! She told him. Where am I?' Jay-la asked, wanted to keep talking to him, hear his voice until he was right there in front of her.

Was a comfort to know he was out here with her.

'Sequoia Mountains. The boys and I have been tracking you all night.'

'Is Stephen alright?' she asked, still felt bad about leaving him behind.

'He's fine, a few welts from the silver bars, but is good.' He told her, it seemed like he was happy to talk to her the whole time as well.

Teft him, just...'

No, you didn't. He set off your flight and fight on purpose.

It was the only way he could see to help you. Allowed you to be lost to it on purpose.

She sighed, had thought as much, caught movement in the distance, a flash of black against the crisp white of the snow, coming right towards her. She stopped walking herself as she watched Havoc come into full view through the trees. His brilliant glowing green eyes were locked right on her.

Nearly sagged with relief at just the sight of him, watched him shift mid run, from his wolf form to their human form, didn't even miss a step, stopped right in front of her, was pulled right into his chest, his arms around her tightly, holding her to his body, leaned right into him and hugged him back. Stood there for a minute with him and just said nothing

His hand tilted her face to look up at him and she found it was still Havoc on the surface, he was still in full control, slid his hand into her hair and then his beast just leaned down and kissed her softly right on the mouth. She felt Kora huff a little. She was connected to him right that minute and heard his gravelly voice tell Kora he loved her, even as he kissed Jay-la.

He relinquished control back to Nathan a moment later and he smiled down at her, touched her face. "Sorry, he's just happy to see you."

"I got that." Jay-la nodded up at him "It's alright."

Nathan's mouth was on hers in a long deep kiss as he held her body to his, as much as Havoc had done. Leaned on his bare chest when he pulled back from her a little, but still held her close to him, rested his chin on the top of her head

"Aren't you cold?" she asked him. He was completely n****d

"Not really." He murmured "You must be though." He looked down at her, saw him look over her as he put her a little away from him, his hands stayed on both her arms. "You were injured, we could smell your blood, when we got to you."

"Kora healed us." She told him "When did you get to us?"

"You were already fighting that Alpha male, Havoc ripped him away from you, you fled. We had to let you go. Do you recall anything?"

"Pretty sure we saw Havoc in his half shift state." She nodded "I am too dangerous even to our own pack." She murmured "Did I hurt anyone of ours?"

"No. Your affliction likely saved your life, Jay-la. Right at this minute, I'm glad you have it. I honestly don't know what I would have done if something terrible happened to you." he pulled her right back into his chest "I've never been so scared in all my life." He whispered as he hugged her.

She turned her head at the sound of more wolves coming, saw three of them, his unit in wolf form. They were coming much slower than he had, likely already knew he had found her, "You've all been out all night haven't you?"

"Of course we have." He nodded "would you expect me to wait till dawn and leave you out here?"

“No.” she shook her head “I knew you were coming.” She looked right up at him, she had done, had faith in him coming for her. “Never doubted it.” she told him.

Saw him smile softly at her. “We really should start the journey back, it’s a long way.”

“Um.., I can’t shift right now.” She told him as she looked up at him, it was early on but she had to tell him, knew his whole unit would hear her, “I’m with pup.”

“I know.” He said gently “Havoc picked it up the other day.”

“Why didn’t you say anything?” she asked, a little shocked.

“I was happy waiting for you and Kora to find out. To tell us. I was not trying to get you pregnant, just wanted to be with you, for us to reconnect. Babies can come later, we already have three.”

She shook her head a little, but it was nice to hear that from him, heard Kora snort ‘Havoc wants a pup.’

Jay-la knew that, she also knew Kora wanted to give him one as well. One that he would be around to see grow in their belly, and be able to touch and be there for its birth, watch it grow up, all the things they had missed out on with the triplets.

“How far did I get?” she asked.

“About 20 kilometres. I’d say, though tracking you was not easy.”

“I was all over the place.” She nodded, “Crossed one valley three times myself trying to get back, following my own footsteps.”

He nodded “All of us could only guess at why, came to the conclusion that anything that startled you, turned you around or changed your direction.”

Jay-la had no idea herself, didn’t recall much of anything of her flight away from danger. “How many people did I hurt?”

“None of ours,” Nathan reassured her. “I’m going to shift back to Havoc, and you sweetheart, are going to ride him back to where our car is.”

She looked right at him. “I’m not small like the children, you know.”

Saw him smiling “Havoc is insisting, and his fur will help to keep you warm, he’s good and strong Jay-la. Let him do this, he needs to be close to you and Kora right now as much as I do.”

She could only nod “Alright. But if he gets tired, I’m walking.

Heard him chuckle before shifting to Havoc, his wolf walked around her, rubbed himself all over her, then bowed before her before settling to the ground so she could climb onto his back, heard Kora chortle inside her mind as he stood up, never thought they'd ever ride on their Alpha.

CH 5.3

"Big bloody softy you are" Jay-la leased Havoc and scratched behind his ears as they were off

Not once did Havoc seem to even tire in the slightest, or labour ever so slightly at her weight on him, he just trotted along like she weighed nothing at all.

They came into a clearing where she could see both her father and brother standing waiting by two cars for them.

She saw her father look from her to Havoc and back, and shake his head a little as he smiled. "Now that's something you don't see every day." He chuckled.

She hopped off of Havoc as he settled to the ground to make it easier for her, slid her hand over his face and smiled right down at him, "Thank you."

Both her father and brother hugged her tightly. "Are you alright baby girl?" her father asked.

"Yeah." She nodded.

"We need to lo-jack you." Brad teased her gently.

She just stood staring at him for a moment, it probably wasn't a bad idea at all. Her affliction was going to take years to cure, in all likelihood. It might actually. be a better way of tracking her and finding her to bring her back. If this happened again, she sighed a little. She didn't want it to happen again.

She looked around her, there were the two four-wheel drives in the clearing, and an old shack looking building over behind them. "Is that where we were held?"

"Yes." Stephen answered her.

"What happened to Sophia?" She asked, had to know, had threatened to kill her already herself, wondered if she had done that, didn't recall

"Went into labour when your Luna's distress poured out of you, is still alive at said time."

"I'll be handling that Jay-la." Her father told her "I have called Alpha Austin, he is aware of the situation, her part in it. He was sending someone to pick her up. A specialist that

the council use in retrieval services, someone no-one messes with ever, apparently she won't be getting away.

Take them a bit to get here, coming from Seattle I believe.

So she is under guard in a hotel room till then. She could well have been picked up by now. I called him yesterday afternoon."

Jay-la nodded, stepped away from him, didn't really know what to think about the woman, was actually a little surprised that Havoc hadn't killed her, but it was likely that she being pregnant had been all that saved her from him.

She walked over to Stephen, looked up at him and sighed softly, then just hugged him "I'm sorry I left you."

"It's what I wanted. What had to happen, Jay-la. It's all good." He hugged her back. "I was safe inside the cell, I assure you. Glad of it, you, my friend, fight like a demon."

"I didn't want to leave you behind."

"It's all good." He smiled down at her and put her away from him. "Let's get the hell out of here, hey"

She just nodded, slid into the back seat of one of the four wheel drives, along with Nathan, while Jackson got in the front and her dad was behind the wheel, saw Ethan and Stephen get in the other, Brad behind the wheel Was given a bottle of water which she drank from.

It was a long drive back to L.A. and she watched as both

Jackson and Nathan dozed off and then were out cold

"Neither slept a wink, from the time you went missing." Her father told her quietly "I don't think I've seen Nathan that worried, ever before. Or throw up like he did either."

Jay-la frowned at that "Throw up, from what?" she asked," Is he sick?" her eyes moved to him as he slept next to her.

His hand was still in hers, not even in sleep did he let go.

"Not sick, baby girl. He was disgusted at the words he had to say to Sophia, knowing you were right there, made him sick to his stomach, literally."

She sighed softly as she looked at him.

“He didn’t want to say any of that, Jackson and I, even Brad had to talk him into it, he was worried you’d believe what you heard. Think the worst of him, and leave him.”

“Not going to happen, I know he loves me.” Smiled as she looked at him, it wasn’t just him sleeping, Havoc was also out cold as well. “Also know Havoc loves both Kora and I.”

“I’m glad to hear that baby girl, your mother and I, Brad.

None of us want you to ever leave the way you did, cut us all off from you like that.”

“I just left dad, didn’t stop to get any of my things, not even my phone, just got in my car and left.”

“Don’t you ever do it again. Always keep your phone on you.”

“I don’t even know where it is now. I had it when I was taken, but not anymore.”

“Probably destroyed by your captors, I get you a new one.

The Defiant Luna Chapter 54

Nathan POV

He watched as she leaned into her father’s embrace, watched as Bradley hugged the two of them. He could see the relief on their faces to have her safe and with them once more. It was late in the afternoon when they got back to where Jay-la and Stephen had been held

Knew that they’d left yesterday evening, all of them, to go back and rest, to have Jodi call Vera and Alpha Austin to sort out Sophia’s containment or punishment. He didn’t yet know which it would be, though he would be pushing for punishment.

He had seen Sophia get put in a car, carrying her child. She looked much older than her years, was only 2 years younger than him, but had looked much older, she had not aged well. He had seen her stagger and nearly drop the baby she was carrying at the sight of her dead Mate.

Stephen had actually caught her and the baby, and escorted her to the car. She’d been sobbing the whole time, it had not drawn any sympathy from him or Havoc. But Stephen obviously felt her pain and that Gamma part of him had risen up to try and either aid her or comfort her in some way.

Nathan nor Havoc had liked seeing it, but it was what it was, that man could very well understand more about the situation at hand. Sophia’s particular circumstances. Her Mate had said that his Alpha and his unit had taken her for themselves and more than once. He would certainly know, and feel all of it himself. That could well be why he was so thin and

scrawny looking himself. Why Stephen helped her, after what she had done to him and his Luna.

He nor Havoc wanted to know at all. Were going to let the council deal with her, he would put in his report that he knew he was going to have to make, ask for punishment, severe at that. Would allow Jay-la to state what she thought was a good punishment as well. But if that she wolf ever showed up again, he was likely to kill her, or Havoc was, regardless of being a mother. Had made sure that Jodi informed her of this before he'd taken her away.

Watched on as Jay-la stared up at Bradley as he teased her about lo-jacking her, it wasn't a bad idea, if she would agree to it, until her affliction was resolved. That could mean he could track her where abouts. Though he would need, or want, as he thought about it, a real-time tracking device.

Thankfully, that was actually his thing. He was good with computer programming, already owned the patent to half a dozen well-used apps out there in the human world Mind-linked to his whole unit about a real time tracking app for her, if she would agree to wear it, when they figured out the logistics of it.

Knew without a doubt there would be a use for it in the wolfen world, likely to tailor it just to wolves, not for the human world, something specific for his own kind. Knew that Alpha's in particular would like it, use it to keep track of not only their Mate's but their children as well. Likely, most ranked members would want it as well.

He finally slept on the trip back to L.A., he was tired. His entire unit was. Havoc was open to Kora and they were communicating freely with each other, had been right from the moment Jay-la had climbed onto his back for the ride back through the mountains, she weighed nothing to his beast. He actually liked having her on his back, her legs wrapped around him and her hands in the fur at the base of his neck.

He woke up at the hotel and sighed heavily to himself, it was her birthday and nothing had gone as planned. Their dinner was out the window, as was the dancing and his gift to give to her. He'd had her change in the back of the car into some clean clothes. Her clothes were still ripped and torn in places and blood stained as well, he couldn't walk her through the hotel like that.

It gave him a few moments to check her over for any wounds that were not healed properly. She'd said she was all healed up, but seeing that she was for himself, was good. She had a few fine but still reddish marks across her back, likely only another day and they would be gone. She was however, going to have a couple of scars on her right upper arm. The skin was risen and red still, he touched it and sighed as he saw it.

"It doesn't hurt." She reassured him.

"Going to scar though." He murmured.

“It’s just a scar, don’t worry about it.”

“A permanent reminder, for you.” he sighed again. He didn’t want her to have to recall this every time she saw that scar on her arm.

“It’s fine.” She assured him “I would like to have a hot shower and get some food in me. I’m starving, we didn’t get fed.”

He nodded “I’ll order room service for us.’

Nathan ran a bath for her. When they stepped into their suite, he had been handed a key card and told a suite had been arranged for them. He’d thanked Rolland, one of his elite warriors, for thinking ahead and organising it.

Ordered that room service and sank down on the lounge and pulled Jay-la into his lap and just held her close to him. Both his arms were around her, she leaned right into him, was already eating a giant cookie from the minibar while the bath filled and they waited on proper food to arrive.

He slid his hand through her hair much the same way

Havoc always did, smiled at himself, it was still messy, felt Havoc purr softly, his beast liked the feel of her hair, he realised. Saw those green eyes of her look up at him. “I love you Jay-la.” He said softly, cupping her face with his hand, ” will always come for you.”

Saw her smiled back at him “I love you too, Nathan.” She said softly and was nearly deafened by his beast’s sudden purring, so bloody loud for her. They both chuckled at him and he, for once didn’t try to quieten Havoc, let him purr for her. He could hear Kora purring right back as well. “We knew you would come, even lost out there, disconnected from you. We knew you would find us.”

“Til always find you,” he told her and leaned down to kiss her softly, lingeringly, then he leaned back away from her and just looked at her, sighed a little “Happy birthday sweetheart.”

“What?”

“Today is your birthday.” He told her.

“Oh, I’d not realised.”

Nathan nodded at her, he wasn’t really surprised that it had escaped her attention, with all that was going on. “I had all these plans, very romantic plans. A nice dinner in a quiet restaurant, candlelit dinner and a violinist, flowers. Then some dancing at a nice Jazz club, black forest cake waiting for you when we got home, a nice gift even.”

“Sorry it got ruined. It sounds perfect.”

“Not your fault, don’t you apologise.” He told her.

He got up when the doorbell to the hotel suite rang, room service was here. He saw Jackson standing right there with room service. To see his Beta standing there? That was a little odd, Nathan thought he would have crashed out already, thought all of his unit would have to be honest, they’d been up all night, out searching for her and then it had taken most of the day to get back to the area where they were to be picked up. They should all want to sleep.

He was standing with the two warriors that were posted to the outside of their suite. Nathan knew that the guards would be there, had sorted that out himself, there would be no chance of anyone getting to Jay-la now, not ever again.

She was going to have warriors around the clock if she was off pack territory.

He would not risk Jay-la’s safety ever again, though he didn’t think she was going to particularly like this, having guards all the time. His need to protect her was now stronger than ever. This situation had shown him just how quickly someone could take her from him, from their children, from the pack, heightened all his needs to keep her safe from harm.

Nathan didn’t think that he was going to be able to contain her in the pack for the rest of her life. She was too bloody headstrong for that, and it wasn’t exactly fair to do so, she had to be able to live a normal life as well. If he did try to contain her, he just knew she would be sneaking out to get away from him and his controlling ways. She was bloody likely to have one of his own unit, help her do it as well.

He had felt both her and Kora’s relief come down through the mind-link when Kora had responded to Havoc’s howling for his Mate. She’d not heard the first few, it had taken four howls for her to finally hear him and return the call, to let him know where she was, that they were out there and could hear him. He and Havoc had been just as relieved to hear her, He didn’t know one could be flooded with such relief but his and his entire wolf’s body had damn near sagged with it.

Nathan waved the room service guy in and asked him to just leave it by the table. The man nodded, he turned to his Beta. “What’s up Jackson?” he asked.

“Nothing.” Jackson shook his head slightly, but then he stepped right up to him and mind-linked to him ‘I thought you might like this.’ he stated as he put that black velvet box in Nathan’s hand, he knew it contained Jay-la’s present.

He’d left it in her apartment, had been going to take her back there after their night out, surprise her with it after their romantic evening, saw Jackson looking at his watch ‘You still have time.’ He continued with the mind-link ‘Her birth time is 2251 I believe.’

Nathan smiled at him 'Thank you.' trust his Beta to go off and sort things out to still make her birthday have a nice ending. "How's Margaret?"

"Good, she is glad everyone is okay, everyone is more relaxed inside the pack knowing this. I'll leave you to it, hey.

" Smiled right at him.

Nathan nodded, stepped aside for the room service man to leave and closed the door, turned to find Jay-la already standing by the cart with a fork in her hand. He smiled right at her, already had a mouthful of food as well. Was starving hungry shed told him.

Didn't even wait for him to join her, slipped that box into the pocket of the bathrobe he was wearing, she wasn't looking at him, paid him no attention, was taking the covers off all of the food, it was getting close to the time of her actual birth, which was the intended time he'd planned on giving her that ring.

Walked over with a slight chuckle, steered her to a seat and laid the food out on the table in front of her, then sat down next to her. She looked up at him and he nearly burst out laughing. Wondered if she could fit anymore food in her mouth, her cheeks were all puffed out and he just knew there was no room for anything. She was so cute sometimes.

Had just gone ahead and shoved a whole mouthful of food in there, trying to sate her hunger needs, he thought.

Leaned over and kissed her temple before picking up his fork. "Your adorable you know."

- Got a raised eyebrow from her and then she just shrugged and continued to eat. He'd not eaten for as long as she hadn't, sat and watched her eat, laughed a few times when she couldn't get anymore food in there and seemed annoyed about it. It likely wasn't just her she was trying to feed, Kora was probably ravenous as well, and they were also eating for two now.

Or at least he thought so. Look at her, shed had triplets the last time she was pregnant, could well have another multiple birth. Though his father had said he'd seen her son playing with his. So possibly just one in there.

Something hed always seen, even before she left. While she was gone too, his father had always known she was going to come back to the pack. Likely why he never cut her pack card off or kept real track of her, she was a pack member and, as far as he'd been concerned, was coming home at some point.

That and hed always liked Jay-la. Now wondered if he had seen her as the Luna to the pack in that vision of his, her son had been playing with his, could only presume she'd been in that vision. Had he known what she was? The future Luna?

He knew that his father kept many secrets where his foresight was concerned, stated as did his mother, it could be obscure at times, or clear as crystal at other times. Also, he knew that trying to make something happen ahead of the natural timeline, could ruin what the man saw, change it.

His father had once told him, that he'd learned that seeing something, didn't mean you had to do something to achieve it. Most of the time it was best not to do anything at all, to just let it play out as it should or one risked changing it altogether.

Nathan got up and checked the bath that was running. It was a deep two-person jetted spa bath. They were both going to get into it tonight, relax in there together, they'd already showered and cleaned up but she looked at that bath and sighed "Goddess I could use a soak." He'd just smiled at her and turned it on, stated "after we eat then." Gotten a smile from her on that.

Stopped it from filling up. It was good and ready for the two of them to get into, and strolled back out to her, watched her giggle and cover her mouth as she burped quite loudly. "Sorry."

He smiled at her; "Good and full, I see."

He watched Jay-la nod her head up at him, "It was so good.

"Saw her eyes turn to the cake still untouched on the table, it was her favorite, black forest cake. "I don't know if I can fit that in." she sighed as she eyed it off, sounded a little remorseful.

"Perhaps, a little later." Nathan smiled down at her. "Come on, the bath is ready." He held out his hand to her "Let's go and relax for an hour or so."

They did just that. He stepped into the bath first so she could relax back against him, smiled as she sighed softly in the hot water with him, her head was leaned back on"updated by jobnib.com" his shoulder, he slipped his arms around her and relaxed himself, it was good to just be here with her like this.

"I got you a gift." He murmured softly a little while later, he had placed that ring on the surround of the bath behind a decorative bar of soap when he'd turned it off.

"Mm, you didn't have to. I only asked for cake." She replied, but he heard the smile in her voice.

"Which you couldn't fit in your belly." He chuckled softly "

Ate too much dinner."

Heard her chuckle herself, “I had to feed Kora too, you know. She eats way more than I do.”

“I know, that’s why I order so much food.” He smiled down at her as she looked up at him.

He reached out and picked up the ring with his right hand, from where he had hidden it, as he kissed her softly. His left hand slid down her arm and took hold of her left hand, lifted it from the water and he slipped the ring onto her finger.

His mouth left hers and he said words he thought, as a wolf, he would never say “Marry me?”

Saw her blink up at him, a little surprised by his words herself, they were already Marked and Mated, there was no need for a wedding, in their world they were already bound to each other for all eternity. Hadn’t been expecting it herself, those words.

He watched her turn and look at her left hand, held out her own hand, stretched all her fingers out and look at it, touch it with her right hand “It’s a rare green diamond. Beautiful and unique just like you are. Green like your eyes. I hope all our children get your eyes, Jay-la.”

He saw her turn those green eyes that he loved so much, right to him, they were so beautiful, he knew he was never going to tire of seeing them turn to him just like they were now. “Will you Jay-la, marry me Nathan?”

Watched her smile right up at him “Yes, I will.” She stated softly, then turned all the way around in the bath to slide her arms around his neck and kiss him long and deep.

The Defiant Luna Chapter 55

Jay-la POV

She sat with Suzy and her mother, along with Stephen, and apologised for the sudden leaving the other night. They had discussed how they were going to explain the issue, not really something that they could tell the truth about, with humans.

Many things had been discussed or proposed as to why Nathan and Jackson had just suddenly gotten up and excused themselves without receiving so much as a phone call, that they’d been gone for more than a day.

In the end, Jay-la had stated “I’ll do it, I got a plan.” and she did have. She hadn’t told them what it was, just figured she had a perfectly good reason, that would be acceptable now.

Jay-la had asked both Nathan and Jackson to wait in their suite upstairs, that she was going to do this with Stephen.

Nathan had not been overly happy about it, didn't want her going anywhere without him, she had Ethan and a warrior outside Suzy's hotel room right this very minute. Stephen had walked next to her, Ethan in front of them and that warrior Warren was walking behind them a full guard escort between hotel floors.

Maya had gone off to attend a class already this morning, she had to leave early due to being further away from her university than normal. She had a detail trailing her, not that she knew that. Nathan and Stephen were both in agreement, as was she for that matter, that Suzy's family should be watched over, till a decision was made on their part.

Shed had to push Nathan from her mind at one point, tell him she was just three floors below him to calm down, had Stephen, Ethan and an elite warrior, though this didn't really seem to help him or his beast for that matter. They were paranoid about her safety right this minute, it seemed. The man was going to smother her and she just bloody knew It.

Smiled at Suzy and Elena, "My apologies for the sudden rushing off the other day, there was a bit of a medical emergency. Stephen here had to rush me to the nearest hospital emergency department."

"What!" Suzy gasped "Are you alright?"

"I am." She nodded "Nathan wears an earpiece all the time, very small. It is likely you wouldn't have seen it. The man is crazy about protecting me." Shook her head "protecting everyone in his company, in fact. So, he likes to keep in direct contact with all his CEO's here." Waved a hand at Stephen, who just waved it off himself.

"What happened to you?" Suzy asked her, concern lacing her voice.

"I had severe abdominal pain, it came on very suddenly and nearly crippled me with pain." Raised a hand to halt the question that she saw coming "I'm all good. Apparently, I am pregnant and it was just one of those weird things, that can happen during pregnancy."

"Oh, a baby."

"Yes." She shook her head "a bit of a surprise and a shock to the system." She smiled. "All is well though, the baby's heartbeat is good and strong." Which she knew it was, had woken up to Havoc staring at her, this morning those brilliant glowing green eyes right on her, he had complete control over Nathans sleeping body it seemed

He'd been smiling right at her, his hand caressing her belly,

“our pup Jay-la.” He’d practically purred right at her “Good and strong like me and Kora.

” He’d told her, before he

kissed her himself “I’ll be a good father wolf, I promise you.

” he’d murmured to her his forehead on hers, before receding away.

She didn’t doubt him at all, had the feeling she was going to be seeing a lot of him on the surface. Kora had chortled inside her mind, ‘he really wants to mate you.’

‘might have to wait until the pup is born.’

Kora had chortled even more ‘Good luck with that, he’s attracted to the smell of you even more than before, might just have to let him.’

She’d asked Kora how she felt about that. Kora had not seemed to mind it at all, We are one and the same. Was all she’d said, ”I feel what you feel’

Nathan was trying to keep his beast at bay from her, but even he was of the opinion it was likely that Havoc was going to just take control of him to have his way with her in human form. Shook his head himself, “he loves you as much as he loves Kora. Though I was warned I’m not allowed to Mate Kora, she’s his and his alone.” He’d chuckled softly “possessive beast I have.”

“Nathan insisted I stay in the hospital for a few days, to be thoroughly checked out, and wouldn’t leave my side.

Still won’t. I was hard pressed to get him to let me come here with Stephen.” Shook her head. “He is only upstairs and paranoid something will happen to me.”

“Paranoid is an understatement.” Stephen chuckled softly, he likely knew more about whatever Nathan was planning for her safety than she did. She just looked at him and sighed and shook her head once more.

“Going to smother me.”

“Mm.” Stephen nodded but still looked amused to her.

She turned back to Suzy and Elena. “Again my apologies for the sudden leaving.”

“Understandable.” Elena nodded “Children are precious, love both my girls.”

“They are precious.” Jay-la nodded, looked right at Suzy “I will really need your help with the triplets now. I know you still want to wait for your mother and sister’s decision but, I would like you to come back with me when we leave. To help me out.”

Watched on as Suzy looked to her mother, the girl was only 24 and very attached to her family. "Mama?"

"You were going to go for a month." Elena nodded slowly."

Seems to me that Miss Freeman needs you."

"I do need her, I trust your daughter with my children. She is a gift given by your god to me, a true blessing Elena. I see why you love her so much. Has a beautiful soul, kind and caring, and I really don't want to lose her...my offer still stands for you and Maya to come out for a visit, stay as long as you like. See where Suzy will be living." She offered

up

Saw Elena smile at her daughter, agreed with Jay-la's sentiment over her daughter, was proud of her. Proud of both her daughters and she knew it, they were both raised well by their mother.

"Elena." It was Stephen. "Did Maya happen to fill out that scholarship paperwork, she could come and have a look at the university, you could go with her."

"She can go to school wherever she likes." Elena stated, "I don't need to see it, and yes, she and I discussed it. A scholarship would help our situation at the moment, so yes, she filled out the application, though there was no postal address for us to send it off."

"My apologies, I can handle that for you though, if you give them to me," Stephen told her.

Jay-la sighed internally, it seemed Nathan and Jackson had missed that one little detail, probably thought that Maya would just hand it back to them to deal with.

"Alright." Elena nodded, "I'll get the paperwork for you." and she got up to do so.

Jay-la looked at Suzy. "Do you think she will come?" she asked quietly. "I really would like you to have your family with you. I know how much they mean to you."

"She has been talking about owning her own store, seems that idea Mr Browning suggested has pricked her interest, and she is..." saw Suzy's eyes move to Stephen but then say nothing at all. Took a breath in and looked back to Jay-la "Til come for the month, I'm hoping mama and Maya will come too, though it's likely they'll stay here till the outcome of the scholarship is known. Mama has been looking for a place for the two of them to stay, not an easy

- task without my income to help supplement them."

Watched Elena walked back into the room, and hand Stephen the paperwork for Maya's Scholarship as she sat down. "When would you be leaving to go back to your new home?"

“Nathan would like to leave this afternoon, I’m trying to push for tomorrow but,” she shook her head, “He’s a busy man, and needs to get back to his company.”

“Hasn’t he got someone to run it while he’s away?”

Jay-la chuckled now, “Yes, his father stepped up.”

“That’s funny because.”

“His father is retired, but loves mischief, and he’s already laughing about being in charge again, goodness only knows what he’s bought or sold or who he’s hired. It concerns Nathan greatly.” She smiled at Elena.

“I heard from my mother he bought a yacht to travel around the world in. Nathan doesn’t know yet.” Stephen laughed,

“It will be very interesting to see the outcome, when we get home.”

Jay-la’s eyes widened as she stared at him, oh she was in real trouble if he did that when she left him in charge to come here. Shook it off, it was too late now. Would have to suffer the consequences of that little hiccup.

“You speak to your mother regularly?” Elena looked at him a little surprised

“Daily.” He nodded, “My father too, we are all very close. We still eat meals together nearly every day, breakfast or lunch and we have a family dinner twice a week when I’m not away on business. I’m as close to my family as you are Yours.”

“That is nice to hear. I’d like to meet them, also would like to know what your intentions are with my daughter.”

“I’m an honourable man, Mrs Martinez. I also like to take my time in getting to know someone. There is no rush for me. I like your daughter more than like her. I would like permission to date her officially once we get home. I would, of course, have asked her father this, but...” he left it unsaid. They all knew her husband had passed away years ago. When both the girls were little.

Jay-la sat back and watched as Elena eyed him off for several long minutes. “A wealthy man like you, looking at my daughter who has nothing, I don’t know if that is normal.”

Saw him frown a little, I may have money, Elena. But don’t think that is all I am about, I am a family man first. I will also never rush your daughter. Everything about a relationship between us, will be on her terms. I am a proper gentleman. You’ll see.”

“I will see.” She stated flatly. “I’d also like to meet your family. The wealthy can be rude and not so nice to poor people like myself and my daughters. We’ve come across it before, unfortunately.”

“It wouldn’t have been very nice for you to feel that. You won’t get that from my family. We don’t judge people’s monetary status solely on who you are.”

Jay-la blinked at him, he was bordering on insulting the woman, though she had started it, sat and watched the two of them stare at each other, something else was going on here she thought. Perhaps they were testing each other.

She didn’t know. Wasn’t going to intervene either.

“Mama.” It was Suzy who interrupted them ‘Please, be nice.

“I am nice, I just have concerns about the difference in your social status’s is all.” She looked right at her daughter. “I can see that you like him. I’m not blind.” Her mother sighed

“I also see how he looks at you, at times.”

“I think she is beautiful, I enjoy looking at your daughter.” Stephen commented with a smile.

“I’ll go and pack.” Suzy stated “Jay-la I’ll come with you when you leave, Mama here can come when she’s ready.” She sounded a bit annoyed with her mother.

Elena turned and watched her daughter stalk away across to her room and bang the door shut. “If you could wait until tomorrow afternoon, Maya only has one class in the morning, we’d both like to come out and see this place for ourselves.” Heard the woman sigh heavily “there really is nothing left for us here.”

“I’m sorry you lost everything, Mrs Martinez. I truly am.

Perhaps though, this is what your god has planned for you.

A new life, a better life for you and your daughters.” Jay-la smiled at her reassuringly.

“Perhaps.” She nodded “Will your...”

“Fiance, we got engaged last night.” Jay-la smiled at her, looked down at the engagement ring she was now wearing, smiled at it. Nathan had totally surprised her with that one.

Not often does one get engaged in their world. Just

- Marked and Mated and for her a Luna Ceremony.

“Will he wait one more day?”

“Yes.” She nodded “I’m certain he will, knowing you’re all coming will make him happy.”

“Why?”

“Why? because he, like you is also a family man. His mother, father, brother and sister all still live there, as does my family, it’s like a family corporation. You’ll see lots of family’s and their generations all still there. Nathan also thinks having you as a business partner is going to be good for him. For his company.”

“What? I’m not in business with him.”

“You will be if you open your own florist store. All his business’s will use your store to buy flowers, it’s a win, win for him.”

“I hope that man of yours isn’t expecting a discount.”

Jay-la laughed now, “Oh, he’s going to love doing business with you. I will enjoy watching you stand your ground.” She chuckled to herself “feel free to up the price and make him pay that little bit extra.”

She saw Elena smile now, and shake her head.