

## Fated out Chapter 57

57 Twenty years ago...

Miriam (Nanny)

Twenty Years ago...

The Moon Temple was quiet, save for the soft hum of the morning wind brushing through the windows.

I was kneeling beside High Priestess Liora – Mother like we fondly called her, my hands clasped in words. front of me in prayer, my heart beating in sync with the chants but there was no life in my I was scared.

Scared that the secret I'd been trying to keep these past few days would finally come to light. The like only person I had managed to tell was my best friend Terra – she was a moon worshipper just

The Moon Temple had been home to me before I said my first words. I was born a Sigma Wolf—a rare breed of Wolves dedicated to the service of the Moon Goddess. We are often called messengers of the Goddess herself and as such, must keep ourselves pure.

I never knew my parents – because I was brought to the temple as soon as I was weaned and as per the culture here, every trace or means we could use to trace our origin is removed, that is done to make us fully dependent on the Moon Goddess and her service alone.

We are not allowed to mate – because we are born without mates and if a Sigma wolf goes as far as getting mated, the penalty is death. I moved up the stages of the Worshipper faster than anyone has in the history of the temple. By the time I was 19, I was already a 'Moon Devotee' and was chosen by

e Moon Goddess to become the next High Priestess.

As a direct apprentice to the High Priestess, I was among the few chosen to learn the deeper mysteries of the Moon Goddess, I could perform healing rituals for packs, spiritual guidance to the Alpha and pack members, assist in ceremonial events, prepare sacred items and spaces for the rituals held by the High Priestesses

The list is long, but basically, I get to replace High Priestess Liora when she dies and everything was going well, I already accepted the life of solitude, knowing that love, marriage and motherhood were forbidden. We were never taught about it and had little or no knowledge of what goes on between a man and a woman.

That was well, until, I had fallen in love.

He had come to the Golden Gates Pack as one of the entourage from the White Mountain Council, our eyes had met briefly across the hall when I had escorted Mother Liora to go greet the Lycan Leader.

I've seen a lot of men – tall, handsome, ugly and they never affected me the way this man did. His gaze lingered on my face for a little while before moving to my body, making me flush with embarrassment and leaving me with a tingling between my legs.

The second day, while I was taking healing potions to the visitor's quarters – mostly to the Alphas to hain almenote their etranth after their inumane it was dark and the Night of the moon

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wasn't as bright as it used to be. I had stumbled and was almost going to fall when strong hands. grabbed me.

It was that Alpha from before.

I remembered how his eyes had undressed me before his lips captured mine, so tenderly, that it made my knees weaken. Every evening, I would sneak to his room and let him touch me and please me, until one of the days, we couldn't hold back our passion anymore...

It was painful at first but beautiful, so beautiful that the mere thought of it, sends a sweet, burning sensation through me. I knew I had erred but strangely, I didn't feel convicted. I still followed Mother Liora in rituals and every other thing.

But last month, I didn't bleed.

At first, I thought it was the stress, but it's been three weeks since I was supposed to bleed and yet nothing has come. Scared, I had gone to the Alpha's pack and told him what was happening to me. He snuck me to a healer who confirmed I was already 7 weeks pregnant. (w)wW.novétwor@.com

But that was not the only thing I discovered – this Alpha, the one I had fallen desperately in love with, had a Luna. His eyes had grown cold when he discovered I was with child and he had told me to my face to get rid of it, but I couldn't.

In that bound us Aside from the three oaths (Do not kill, Do not lie and remain true to yourself) together as Sigma wolves, I couldn't bring myself to take a life. I just couldn't. And now, kneeling beside Mother Liora, I was looking for the best way to break the news. Terra had insisted I run away because if they knew I had been with a man, death would be the penalty but I wanted an honourable death. wW.Nov@lwDR@.CoM

I wanted to remain true to myself until the very end.

I placed a hand on my stomach, now gently growing with life. The initiation ritual should have been my crowning achievement, my first step toward one day becoming a High Priestess. But everything had changed in the blink of an eye.

The temple bells rang, indicating the end of the morning devotion. I felt Mother Liora stir beside me, coming out of her morning trance before rising gratefully to her feet. She noticed that I was still kneeling in front of the altar and came to where I was, tapping me gently.

"Miriam," she said softly, her voice filled with warmth. "You've been quiet today – for some days now. Is something troubling you? Are you anxious about the Initiation tests?"

My throat tightened and I lowered my head, unable to meet her gaze. The weight of my failure pressing down on me, suffocating me. But I had to say it. I couldn't hide the truth any longer.

"Mother!" I whispered, my voice trembling. "There is... something I must confess."

Her serene expression gave way to concern as she stopped bent down beside me, touching my forehead, her sharp blue eyes taking in my appearance.

"What is it, child?"

I closed my eyes, my hands trembling as I clutched them together. The words stuck in my throat,

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"I—I'm pregnant."

The silence that followed after the confession was deafening. The air in the temple seemed to be still as if the walls were holding their breath. Liora's eyes widened, and for the first time in my memory, the High Priestess was speechless. The shock on her face was obvious.

"Pregnant?" she finally managed; her brows arched in confusion. "But how? Is it even possible?" she closed her eyes, shaking her head as she slowly rose to her feet. I mean, of course, it's possible, because you're a woman but, When? I'm sure no man is living in the temple and... maybe it was a mistake. There's no way..."

"It's true, Mother!" I interrupted her softly. "It happened the day after my appointment as your direct apprentice."

"Miriam... what have you done?" Mother's voice was barely above a whisper. "Do you understand what this means?"

Tears welled in my eyes as I tried to reach for her feet, but she took a step back.

"I'm sorry," I cried. I'm so, so sorry. I know I have betrayed my vows, betrayed the Moon Goddess herself."

"I had so much fate in you, Miriam," she shook her head, still staring at me with disbelief. You were one of my star students, Do you know how elated I was when I learnt that you had the Silver Mark and would replace me... Now you let a man desecrate you and for what? For a few minutes of pleasure. Did all my teachings, all of my warnings... did they mean anything to you." wW.nov@lwDR@.CoM

"I'm so sorry," I sobbed. "It just... happened. I didn't mean for it to."

"When you were actively, giving yourself to a man – you didn't mean for it to happen?" she scoffed. "Hou were on the path to greatness, Miriam, what do you expect me to tell those women?" she cried, running her hands through her hair. "They'll have your head, the council of Priestess are bitter women who keep strictly to the laws. Is this your plan? To kill yourself?"

"No!" I shook my head, looking up at her. "I let myself go, I forgot, all your teachings and..."

"Stop talking!" Liora began to pace the temple, biting her index finger. "Your tears would not solve anything. You think those women would take pity on you if you go to them crying like this. We need to find a way around this. They'll kill you, Miriam... if they ever find out, they'll have your head. Who is the man that..." she paused, her cheeks turning red "that deceived you. Who is he?"

I shook my head. There's no need to know his name, Mother. He won't have me or the child and..."

"What!" she shouted, her eyes growing wide with panic. "You not only got yourself pregnant but you ended up with the wrong person? What is wrong with you, Miriam? Couldn't you have found a better man? Someone powerful?"

"I'm sorry!" I sobbed harder. It was all I could say.

After a while, she came and lifted me from the ground. "Stop crying, Miriam!" she said sharply. "Tears doesn't solve anything. Tell me, who else knows about this?"

"The Terra!" I hiccupped cleaning my face

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"Terra, the red-haired girl. Can she be trusted?" she asked.

I nodded.

"Fine! You'll carry on with your duties and not tell a single soul about this. I'll look for a way to get the bitter women to leave the Temple first so that the more empathetic priestesses can pass you judgment. Okay? Ww.nov@lwDR@.CoM

I nodded. "I'll accept whatever punishment the council decides."

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