

# The Alpha God's Luna by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 22

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Fenrir took her to his favourite place. Ironically, he almost never was here in person, preferring the solitude of his "cave". So, the owner almost fainted when he saw him and Astrea walk into his small family restaurant hidden in the depth of Solace's streets.

"My-" he bowed his head respectfully, but the wolf waved him off immediately.

"No need for formalities. I am just Fenrir today, and this is my guest, Astrea. Astrea, this is Dylar, the owner of the best restaurant in Solace," he briefly introduced everyone and marched to the table in the corner.

Astrea quickly scanned the place and hummed to herself. It wasn't much to be called the best, but she was ready to give it the benefit of the doubt.

When the old man heard Fenrir's order, his eyes widened slightly, which

warned her that their bet was no joke. The Dragonfly regretted she didn't take one of her potions. She had one for almost any occasion, although it was probably risky now to use anything after Fenrir and his people went through her stuff.

"Sir, are you sure?" Dylar asked, giving Astrea a side glance as if he tried to warn Fenrir that those dishes were not for everyone. In fact, barely anyone could handle those.

"Sure," Fenrir's grin widened. "Astrea here likes it hot."

"Smoking hot," she corrected, narrowing her eyes at him and tilting her head. He wasn't going to intimidate her.

The rogue gave her a questioning look, and she knew it was her last chance to get out of this. Which only made her laugh. If he thought that some spicy food would stop her or make her change her mind, he thought wrong. She wanted answers and was ready to fight for them. Having dinner wasn't scaring her off.

“One course, one question,” Fenrir leaned over the back of his chair, crossing his large hands over his chest, impressed by her stubbornness.

“Perfect,” Astrea stretched her neck as if she was preparing for a fight. In a way... she was.

Dylar returned with a tray and placed two bowls in front of them, pausing slightly to see if one of them would change their mind.

“Last chance,” Fenrir taunted.

“Smells delicious,” she ignored him and took the spoon.

It was a soup, clearly just taken off the stove as the substance still seethed and bubbled like liquid lava. That still wasn't enough to stop her.

Astrea took a whole spoonful and blew on it to make it colder. Then, under the watchful eye of Fenrir, she took it into her mouth, letting out a loud moan. It was exaggerated, of course, but it still managed to elicit a guttural growl from the man in front of her.

“Ambrosial,” she closed her eyes and threw her head back to tease him more, chains dangling on her chest. “Wait for it.” His lips curled into a knowing smile as he started eating, and she quickly took a few more spoons just to prove him wrong.

“You know, Fenrir, it's so typical for a man to think that a woman can't handle a bowl of spicy soup. What's next? You'll decide that walking is too hard for me and carry me in your arms?”

“If you don't mind, I am in,” he scoffed, enjoying his meal but not taking his eyes off her.

“In the South, we have equal roles for males and females because, in reality, the difference is not that-” She stopped talking because a whole inferno exploded in her mouth and throat, burning out the rest of her insides inch by inch.

“There it is!” Fenrir commented, keenly observing her. Astrea's face contorted as tears started welling in her eyes, forcing her to recoil slightly and put the spoon back into the bowl. She felt like she could breathe fire if she wanted to. She needed a few seconds to regain her composure.

“It’s fine,” the rogue next to her cooed. “Even Warg and Kara can’t take...”

She slammed her fist over the table to silence him and grasped the spoon again, bending it slightly from the force she applied. He had no idea what she had been through. After Joran’s training for poison resistance, she could take the stupid soup in exchange for a valuable piece of information.

Astrea sped up, knowing there was no point in prolonging the torture. The sooner she ate, the sooner she would be done with it. When the soup was gone, she took only one sip of water, trying to rinse her throat from the damn spice but failing, so she ended up drinking it all.

“Come on, Astrea, we don’t have to continue,” Fenrir cleared his throat, putting his bowl aside.

“Ice, please!” The woman ordered, her voice unnaturally hoarse. She raised her empty glass and sent a begging gaze at Dylar, who was happy to obey. One look at him was enough to tell how scared he was that something would go wrong.

“So,” now it was Astrea’s turn to smirk, “tell me what you know about my tattoos.”

Fenrir took a gulp of his drink and gestured to Dylar to bring him another one.

“That’s not exactly a question.” He tapped his f\*ingers over the table’s surface, locking their eyes.

“Don’t be shy, Fenrir,” she giggled, finally able to speak again. “You know you want to tell me everything yourself, or you would have never mentioned.”

It was the truth with which he couldn’t argue.

“The snake around your neck,” he gritted his teeth, “I am sure you already know what it does. At least partially.”

“And yet I want to hear it from you. A deal is a deal,” Astrea insisted.

“It’s a mark,” Fenrir turned away because he didn’t want to look at that thing again. “It tracks your every movement, lets its owner know what you are feeling and how you are doing, as well as where you are and who you are with.”

She gulped. Of course, that wasn't the big news, but hearing it confirmed was still unpleasant. Her privacy was gone.

"It also means that you belong to the one who gave you this mark," the rogue continued, each word hard for him to pronounce.

"You mean metaphorically?" She decided to clarify.

"I mean that it's a claim." Finally, Fenrir's heavy gaze landed on her face. "But I am far from done."

The woman's brow quirked up. "It is also blocking the other tattoo," Fenrir said, and now she was confused.

"This doesn't make any sense," she admitted. "Why on Earth would he block-" She bit her tongue before she was the one revealing information to the... even in her thoughts, she couldn't call Fenrir her enemy.

"Why would he block a Firstborn tattoo?" A laugh rumbled through Fenrir's chest as he accentuated the secret word, and she clenched her lips tighter. He indeed knew too much. "Maybe because you aren't exactly a Firstborn?"

The man waited for her to give him any reaction, and she sighed, giving up.

"I guess I am not. I remember I had an older brother once."

Fenrir nodded understandingly, a glint of something she couldn't decipher in his eyes.

It still wasn't the answer to her question. The Firstborn tattoos were given after a successful Ascension. Those things were making the shifters stronger and faster. Sometimes, depending on Joran's wishes, those came with special powers and since she was one of the strongest, so was the tattoo given to her.

"So, you are not a Firstborn. Did you just assume that you were special and somehow the Ascension worked on you when it's only for the Firstborn children of powerful shifters?" he asked, a challenge in his voice.

She didn't say anything because it was exactly what she thought. Prior to this moment.

Fenrir gave her a second and then continued, "In a way, you weren't wrong, of course. You are special. But that dragonfly tattoo of yours has nothing to do with Firstborns."

Once again, Astrea remained silent, processing the information. Things did not add up.

"But there are other people with dragonfly tattoos, and they are Firstborns for sure."

"Let me guess," Fenrir chuckled darkly, "they appeared after your Ascension?"

They did. Astrea remembered clearly how Emma was announced the second Dragonfly by the Teacher and how hurt she felt because of that, not feeling that unique anymore. Back then, no one could compare to her, and she felt threatened. Emma also didn't make it easy on her, wishing to push Astrea off the first place and take it for herself.

The remaining four Dragonflies wanted the same, adding stress to her life instead being the team Joran promised they would be. This was why it was always so hard to unite with them for a monthly Dragonfly Circle where they were connecting their powers on a spiritual level. They spent about an hour each week holding hands and meditating, and Astrea always hated that practice, feeling drained afterwards.

*Wait!* Nova gasped as they suddenly came to the same conclusion.

The conclusion none of them was ready to sound.

"Wh-why would the second tattoo block the first one?" Astrea asked again, forming the question better. "Because he doesn't want you at your full power." Their eyes met again, and she instinctively knew that he wasn't lying to her now.

She wanted to ask what her power was but stopped herself before she did.

She could find out without his help if it was something within her. She didn't before because she didn't know she was supposed to be looking for something. Now that she was aware, it would be different.

At the same time, here and now, she had to choose the right questions and the opportunities were limited.

*Try to trick him into giving us more info* , Nova suggested, and Astrea cleared her throat.

“You know my Teacher,” she said, hoping to start a conversation. “You know what he is.”

“Very nice try,” Fenrir praised her with a chuckle. “But that’s not a question.”

Dylar returned with more food.

This time there were flatbreads and dips. After the soup, that could have been a slightly easier option.

“Very well,” she took a deep breath and broke the bread, dipping it and placing the piece into her mouth. There was no point in delaying the inevitable.

The dip was far spicier than she had anticipated, worse than the soup by a mile. Her taste buds screamed in agony, overwhelmed with the intense burn. Her face flushed with colour, and a sheen of sweat appeared on her brow as she tried to remain composed in front of her watcher. She reached for a glass of water, taking a long sip before trying again, hoping to acclimate to the heat. But every bite only intensified the burn, causing her to tear the scarf she had wrapped around herself.

A growl emerged from the Rogue King’s chest. She would have laughed if she wasn’t crying already.

“Just stop,” Fenrir ran his palm over his face. “You don’t have to-”

“Stop distracting me!” She growled, Nova healing her as fast as she could, but it was still too intense.

Nevertheless, with each new bite, Astrea felt the rush of endorphins, pushing her limits. Regardless, it was much h\*arder this time because the insides of her throat were still sore after the first course.

“We are done with this stupid bet!” Fenrir growled.

“You don’t get to stop!” She hissed at him, searching for a drink. He quickly moved a cup toward her, and she was happy to realise it was cold milk.

The flatbread and the dip were done, the drink bringing her the relief she needed. Even if it was temporary. At least, she got another question.

“I have to say I am surprised you managed to sneak a few cows in here,” she said before taking another greedy gulp to ease the burning.

“Who says it’s from the cows,” Fenrir scoffed, and her eyes widened as she spat the liquid out to her left, too afraid to ask where it came from.

“Would you relax?” The rogue handed her a napkin. “It’s camel milk. Nutritious and delicious. Just drink the rest!”

She did as she was told. After all, it was helping.

“Tell me what’s so special about your bracelet,” she pointed at the lines of colourful beads on his wrist, each different from the other, and noticed how his brows went up. He didn’t expect that question.