

The Alpha God's Luna by Marissa Gilbert

Chapter 51

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Chapter 51. Blazing Sunset

Astrea didn't know how to react. She did not expect to meet the Queen of the Western Lycan Kingdom ever again, yet here she was.

Riannon Stormhold in the flesh.

It wasn't like they were great friends during her brief visit to the Luna Trials in the North, but a few simple interactions made a lasting impression on Astrea. For some reason, she thought of Riannon often.

She knew at once that the woman recognised her too, but at the same time, it was hard to tell whether it was a good thing. The Queen was heavily pregnant the last time they saw each other. Now, her stomach was flat, hugged by a tight dress.

On the day they met, Joran ordered her to kill everyone, including Riannon and her unborn baby. This was probably the tipping point for Astrea. She took life before, but it had never been someone so pure-hearted as the people she met in the North. It was never a child.

However, there was something else she was constantly worried about. To save everyone, she had to take their death without them realising it. Sadly, she knew only one way to do it – with a potion from a witch, who made it using rare berries that grew only on the outskirts of the North and South. This potion was often used to fake death during assassins' missions if things went wrong and an unlucky Firstborn needed a last resort. They hoped their persecutor would take them for a dead person and leave them alone.

The problem was that the poison could harm the ones who took it.

Astrea figured it was better than dying back then, but now she couldn't stop thinking about it.

What if the baby was harmed because of what she had done? In that case, she wouldn't be able to live with herself.

"Gentlemen, you are making a scene." Riannon managed to stop the two angry men with just one phrase, the two of them looking at her in shock. However, what surprised Astrea the most was that Forrest stood beside her.

"Vincent, allow me to introduce Queen Riannon Stormhold," the southerner pursed his lips, his facial expression clearly judging by the mess they created. "And King Gideon wants to speak to you, too."

"Your Majesty," Vincent acknowledged the guest. "Forgive us for this ugly scene."

"Apology accepted." The Luna arched her brow at him. "And my husband can't wait to talk to you. I think the photographers want to take a few pictures, too."

"We will finish this later," Vincent gave Joran a withering glance.

"Don't forget your jacket!" The dragon gritted his teeth as he was already next to Astrea, helping her to get rid of the garment and throwing it back at his rival with force.

Vincent clenched his jaw and offered him a fiery glare right before he stormed out, followed by Forrest, who surprisingly did not seem confused by all of this at all.

Astrea was afraid to breathe, knowing Riannon recognised her.

"So, we meet again." The Queen smiled as if she wasn't on the balcony with two of her potential murderers. She acted as if she was well-versed in handling such situations. "You look great, Astrid." Astrid... The name she used at the Luna Trials. "You look wonderful too, Your Majesty—"

“Please,” the woman shook her head as the corners of her lips turned upwards, “Just call me Ria. After all, you are the one who saved my life.”

Astrea was not sure how to react. The Queen was not supposed to know anything but said it confidently, taking no objections. “And your child?” The Dragonfly heard herself asking before she realised it.

“He is fine too,” the Luna nodded with a sweet smile, bringing her instant relief.

“It’s a sweet little reunion, but I am afraid we have to go,” Joran interjected. “Good to see you, Riannon

“It’s Your Majesty to you!” The woman’s demeanour changed when she shifted her gaze to him.

“We need to go!” The Serpent cut her off, grasping Astrea’s hand and trying to lead her away, but the Luna stood in his way. “Last time, you were more eager to speak to me!” she smirked, blocking their exit and knowing very well there wasn’t a damn thing he could do about it. “Why leave so fast now?”

He definitely couldn’t cause another scene with so many people around. Pushing the Queen of the neighbouring country would cross the line for someone who wanted to be elected as a High Chancellor.

“You’ve met?” Colour drained from Astrea’s face. This couldn’t be good.

“Oh, we did!” Riannon chuckled, and Joran’s grasp tightened so much it became painful.

“I don’t recall it!” he lied.

“Well!” Ria huffed a laugh. “I guess shoving a pregnant woman against a wall to make her perform seidr wasn’t that memorable for you! Just another Monday, right?”

Astrea yanked her hand back, shocked by the revelation. “What?” Her head snapped to her Teacher, and only then she realised she knew

exactly what seidr was, although no one ever explained it to her. It was an old form of premonition magic. Ancient as can be.

“He was looking for you, by the way,” the Queen added. “I am sorry he found you. I really am—”

“We have no time for this!” Joran bristled and grabbed her wrist again. “This Is some petty revenge plot!”

“On the contrary,” Riannon’s smile deepened, “I don’t have to do anything.”

Joran froze. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Exactly what you think.” Ria calmly smoothed the creases on her dress. “There is no need for me to do anything. I did perform seidr, and I saw your ending. I am good.”

“I see the game that you are playing.” Joran was at a tipping point, and Astrea decided to de-escalate the situation. She didn’t want Riannon in harm’s way.

“Maybe we should go, indeed.” She placed her free hand on his shoulder, and bringing him out of this state.

“It was good to see you – Astrea,” Riannon said as they walked past her, and the Dragonfly smiled at her. “You’ve changed, but it’s for the best.”

“Th-thanks. I am glad you are all right,” the Dragonfly said, stalling slightly. “I swear.”

“I know,” Ria touched her arm briefly, a tiny bolt of electricity going between them. “By the way, there is nothing wrong with solving some of your troubles with weapons. Even though sometimes it can be a nightmare.”

The words puzzled Astrea for a moment, but Joran pulled her roughly behind himself.

“Enough of this!”

He navigated her through the crowd of people who still wanted to congratulate them. However, this time, all her Teacher wanted was to leave the event.

Astrea did not object. It was best to leave and keep the others safe.

The elevator was painfully slow, but the moment it stopped on their floor, Joran yanked her out of it, his chest heaving rapidly. “You have to reject him!” he commanded, and she realised that, even after everything, he was most worried about her mate. Not the fact that one of his victims practically called him out a few minutes ago.

“It’s easier said than done,” she sighed, deciding to play some more.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” he narrowed his eyes at her, clenching his fists.

“He is—” Astrea turned away and walked towards the glass wall, leaning over it. “He is my mate, Joran. I have never felt anything like the connection we have. Those tingles—”

“Don’t tell me that those tingles mean so much to you. Remember that no one knows you as well as I do!” The dragon insisted.

“What do you want me to say?” She glanced at him over her shoulder. “I am afraid that rejecting him will break me. We talked just once, but Vincent—”

“That’s not even his real name!” He snapped, and she did her best not to demonstrate her excitement. This was exactly what she needed — information.

“You know him, don’t you?” She furrowed her brows. “You knew him before all this!”

“I do,” he finally admitted. “And I know that a mate like that will not bring you anything good!”

“And you know better.” She rolled her eyes. “You always do! n

“Believe it or not, but yes, I do! I’ve spent years gathering power and learning everything there is to learn. I am the one who kept you safe all those years! I am the one who made you this strong! I am the reason you are standing here today because he is the one who sent monsters to kill your family! Everything I did! Everything I taught you, was to prepare you for what had to inevitably happen to you! And I am the only one who can help you go through this!”

She couldn’t agree with him.

“You threw me into the silver pit!” Astrea reminded him. “What were the months I spent in there supposed to do to me?”

“Anyone else would have killed you for the betrayal!” Joran reasoned, stepping closer and towering over her. “I only taught you a lesson that there is a price for good deeds. Riannon, Savannah and their friends were enjoying life while you were suffering, and not one of them cared to look for you—their saviour.”

“I didn’t do it for praise!” Astrea’s face contorted into a frown. “I did it because it was the only thing I could do alone for them, and it was the right thing to do! I knew it back then, and I sure as hell know it now!”

The Serpent roughly cupped her chin and crashed his lips against hers, brazenly demanding entrance with his tongue. His fingers laced into her hair, not letting her pull away as he stole her breath and when she inevitably gasped for it, he finally got what he wanted, devouring her greedily and hastily.

“Too — late —he muttered, “you belong to me now!” Everything inside her rose against this, and she pushed him away with as much force as she could muster.

“This is where you are wrong!” Astrea hissed. “Our deal was that I will stay with you if I lose. It said nothing about me belonging to you. I am not an object to possess! So, I will be by your side as promised, but don’t expect it to be anything more than that!”

He brushed his fingers over his red, swollen lips, realising she managed to bite him, drawing blood. Joran assessed the ruby red drop on his finger before licking it away.

She expected another burst of outrage at her defiance, but it did not follow.

“I did save you,” her Teacher said as he exhaled heavily. “If I wasn’t there that day, you would have died.”

“And then you turned me into your puppet!” she added bitterly.

“No, then I hid you away from everyone,” Joran explained without looking at her. “And I trained you to protect yourself when the need arises.”

“In the meantime, you made the other dragonflies feed on my power!” Her voice dripped with fury.

“It’s not exactly like that—” The dragon locked his gaze with her, pressing his lips into a thin white line.

“It’s exactly like that because I witnessed it myself! I can’t believe how stupid I was to believe everything you said when you only lied to me from the very beginning!”

“I did it for you!” The man did not give up, trying to persuade her.

“You used me! You were never honest with me, and now you only want to own me!”

“No, Astrea, no!” he rubbed his forehead. “It’s — It was never the plan to fall in love with you.”

Her lips parted upon hearing this. She knew he wanted her, but the confession was too unexpected.

The sound of alarms in the distance pierced their ears, and they both turned to look at where it was coming from. The horizon of the southern capital transformed into a mesmerising canvas of vibrant hues as the sun

was setting down, blending deep crimson and fiery orange. The city's silhouette was painted against the backdrop of the blazing sky, and Astrea knitted her brows together when she noticed several helicopters flying in the same direction.

"What is this?" She gasped, placing her hands on the glass to have a better look.

Joran did not respond, so she kept looking... until a large dark shadow became visible in the flames. Taller than the buildings and more menacing than death itself.

Only now, Astrea realised it wasn't a colourful sunset before her. It was an enormous black fire wolf walking down the streets of the Southern capital.

"Fenrir—" she whispered, still finding it hard to believe her eyes.

She recognised him at once; no doubt crossed her mind even once.

"What the hell!" Joran growled, balling his fists. "Is he out of his mind?"

"See?" Astrea pointed at the smouldering silhouette before

them. "You are not the only one to care about me. And this is how a selfless act is done."

Joran clenched his jaw.

"This changes nothing" He warned her, to which she replied nothing. "Stay here until I come back for you!" Joran waited for a response, but Astrea didn't say or do anything, simply staring at the scene unfolding before her eyes. The giant fire wolf mesmerised her, and she was impressed by what he was doing for her, but mostly, she was surprised by how confident she felt it was Fenrir. There were no doubts about that. Joran's phone rang, and he switched it on, barking angrily, "What is it? I am busy."

Astrea listened carefully, knowing that no device could overcome a werewolf's hearing.

“Master,” Dominica’s shaky voice sounded. A few seconds passed, but she added nothing else.

“What do you want?” Joran grew increasingly furious. “I told you I have no time for—”

“Th-the firstborn island — It is — destroyed,” the last false Dragonfly told him, barely holding back from crying.