

Chapter 67 - The Alpha God's Luna

TAGL-67

A group of maids wearing pale pink dresses walked in, bowing before her, and Astrea pursed her lips, gracefully acknowledging them with a nod. It was bizarre to be in this situation now, even though she was used to royal treatment in her first life.

“My Queen, we received an order to help you bathe,” one of them mumbled, eyes on the floor. She noted they did not look overly confident.

Astrea remembered this place as slightly more cheerful. Back then, the maids chirped, telling her all the latest gossip, laughing wholeheartedly as they brushed her hair. Now, everything was different. They looked as if they were scared to death.

What did Vidar do to them?

After a long day filled with disasters, a bath was not a bad idea. Besides, she had to kill time before she could act. However, there were things that had to be done first for the plan to work perfectly.

“I don’t need company while bathing,” Astrea announced, lifting her chin slightly to intimidate them.

“But, my Queen—” The maids hesitated to follow her orders.

“I am not even your Queen yet,” she retorted, noticing how one maid nervously fiddled with her dress. These women definitely had a task from Vidar. “I want privacy. I will call you if I need you.”

She sounded so confident that they didn’t dare to object.

“We will wait for you here,” one of the women forced a little smile onto her lips.

“Fine.” Astrea nodded and went in the direction pointed by the youngest-looking maid, waiting for them to close the doors behind her back. She discovered a spacious white marble bathroom adorned with gold and moonstones. She forgot how luxurious palaces were; it was strange that she felt so at ease here. As if centuries didn’t pass. As if she belonged here.

Not with Vidar, of course, but in general.

Remembering her main goal, she got out the nightmare's horn she had with her and quickly hid it on a little table behind a bushy green plant and added some towels there for extra coverage. Done with the primary task, she stripped and dropped her clothes onto the cold floor. Stepping out of her garments, she slowly entered the spacious bath, which would be enough for two. Or three.

The thought of sharing it with Vidar made her shiver, and she inhaled before submerging herself to the very bottom of the bath. Astrea wanted to stay there for as long as her lungs allowed it.

The water felt divine, and she had to admit it was enjoyable to soak in. The shadows in the room suddenly danced, which didn't surprise her. Someone was definitely in there, but when she returned to the surface, the room was empty.

From the corner of her eyes, she noticed the towels next to the plant lying not as neatly as she left them. One of the maids was probably already on her way to Vidar with the horn.

Astrea smirked and dove back underwater, allowing herself to glance at the beautiful beads on her wrist and a ring Fenrir had given her when they devised this plan.

"If he did this, then he would come for you soon," Fenrir said as they watched the buildings of the Southern capital burn before their eyes. So many skyscrapers had already collapsed in the cruel attack, but the Northern flag was still there to arouse more hatred and misunderstandings.

"Then we will let him have me," she announced coldly, her fingers clenching around the balcony railing as her beloved's head snapped in her direction.

"I hope you are not saying what I think you're saying." His words sounded like a warning, to which she only smiled, enjoying the possessive tones in his voice.

"I am," Astrea confirmed. "All we ever wanted was for him to leave us alone, but he will never do that. This is our last shot, Fenrir, and, gods know, maybe we will lose again, but if I'm destined to die without even tasting a full lifetime of happiness with you, I want to, at least, go fighting for what was right."

He stared at her for a few seconds with that discerning gaze of his, and she was afraid he would try to dismiss her offer.

"Then we fight," Fenrir stated dryly. He took no pleasure in this. "But I would rather die than let him have you."

"This is something I would prefer to avoid." Astrea gave him a stern glare but then took his large hand in hers, lacing their fingers together.

"Listen, I don't like it either, but—This may help us distract him. I am the only one who can get close enough to kill him. If you attack him now or challenge him for a duel in this realm, then he will disappear into Asgard, where you cannot enter. And everything will be lost for this world.

Then he will return when we least expect it, and—you know how that goes. We need to beat him in his own game.”

Fenrir grunted, hating all this already.

“I have Midnight’s horn,” she continued. “Riannon told me some riddle, and I now think that she meant the horn will be able to kill him. Midnight was my divine weapon, after all. Think about it. If he takes me to Asgard, if he feels like he won—Then I can try to kill him. I acquired skills in this life, Fenrir. I am confident I can do this.”

“He will search for the horn,” the wolf deity rubbed the bridge of his nose, already tired of this plan he hated so much. “He is not dumb.”

“I will hide it!” Astrea insisted.

“You are going to let him have it,” he interrupted, and now it was her turn to stare at him.

“Is it wise, though? This is the only thing I can use as a weapon against him.” Astrea arched her brow as the flames of the burning city illuminated their faces.

“If you get your full power, you will not need any special weapons,” he assured her, making her lips part. “All you need to do is get to the Source of Power in Asgard. Remember that each god is born from it, and when we die, our powers go back to their beginning. All divine sources are connected, so your power is somewhere there, waiting for you.”

“Are you sure? It’s been a while—”

“The Source goes through seven realms, helping to keep the balance. Your powers are in there, and only you can access them. If that power was a part of you once, it would want to reunite. This and only this is our best chance.”

Astrea furrowed her brows.

“Maybe.” She looked away. “But I still don’t have my divinity. If I remember correctly, only gods can come close to a source.”

“It’s fine.” He offered a reassuring smile. “Because there is another way.”

“Another way and you are only saying it now?” Astrea tilted her head.

“It’s not perfect,” Fenrir confessed with a sigh. “The perfect way would be to take my divinity and—”

“Fenrir, it’s out of the question. I will not take the divinity from you! You haven’t stepped foot in Asgard for centuries. If you sacrifice your divinity, you will probably die, and then everything

will be pointless. So, tell me the imperfect way, because I am not going into this if I know for sure I will lose you.”

He muttered something under his breath and got a little velvet bag with moon and stars embroidered on it from his pocket. Pulling two strings, he produced a ring, and her lips parted for the first time because she recognised it instantly.

She had seen it in both of her lives.

“Selene’s ring!” Astrea gasped. “The Moon Goddess—mother—”

“So, you know what this is,” he took her hand and locked eyes with her, seeking permission. “May I?”

“I never thought that the one ring you put on me would be my mother’s,” she giggled nervously as he slid the white gold up her finger.

“Trust me, if there was a choice, I would give you literally anything else but this. However, this is going to help you enter the Source.”

Astrea looked at her mother’s ring, still underwater. A crescent and a little star crafted out of diamonds. The ring of the Moon Goddess could be considered a divine weapon of sorts, but it was so much more than that. Each little gem in it had a particle of a divine soul encapsulated inside. Those were the souls of Selene’s deceased husband and daughters. Souls of gods.

With their divinity.

Just a few specs of it, but if they calculated it right, this would allow her to be recognised as a deity by the Source of Power enter it to get her divinity back.

Yes, the plan could have been better, but it was their only one.

Astrea bathed until her skin got all wrinkly and returned to the main room, glaring at the maids to make them stare at the floor again and hiding her hand with the ring and the bracelet from them. The nightmare’s horn was enough of a sacrifice for one day.

“One of you stole from me!” She folded her arms over her chest, piercing each woman before her with her angry gaze.

“My Queen!” They all fell to their knees synchronically as if they rehearsed this. “We would never!”

“Give me back what you’ve taken, and I will spare you!” she hissed, but they didn’t move.

“Please, understand!” The oldest maid in the room fell as low as she could, her face almost touching the floor. “We were told to discard the garments and everything you had from the mortal realm. We cannot disobey orders.”

Astrea huffed an indifferent laugh but decided it was enough.

“Leave me!” she ordered.

“But—” This time, the youngest spoke. “We have orders to prepare you for the dinner. All-father Vidar expects you to share a meal with him.”

She felt bile rise in her throat.

“I can dress myself,” she announced, and although the other women were reluctant at first, they left her alone, probably thinking it was a lucky escape.

“We will return in one hour to help you finish your preparations,” the head maid said before closing the doors.

The maids were back as promised, probably staying pretty close in the first place, and assessed her look.

She chose a minimalistic silk chiffon white dress with a cape that adorned her shoulders with intricate embroidery and glimmering sequins. The sheer fabric was draped tightly over the corset, pushing her breasts up a notch. It was slightly more revealing than she usually preferred, but today, she would prefer Vidar to look at her chest and not her hands.

She hid the most valuable items in plain sight, adding white gold and silver diamond rings to her fingers and several bracelets to her wrists. The jewellery shimmered in the sunset, attracting attention, but blending well with what she managed to smuggle in.

“Maybe we should add a necklace?” One of the maids offered.

“Or a crown?” Another chimed in.

“This is already more than I usually wear,” Astrea cut them off. “Take me to him.”

The maids passed her to two guards, and those led her through the labyrinth of a garden that she didn’t recognise. After all, it had been so long. Nothing here reminded her of the past. It was as if Vidar tried to erase it. The main palace and a few buildings were the only remnants of what used to be.

“This way,” both warriors stopped and gestured for her to continue down a stone path.

Astrea did as she was told. After all, she had to scan as much of her surroundings as possible.

However, her lips parted in shock when she walked out on a hill she had the most vivid memories of.

The scorched earth and charred remnants of trees lay before her eyes as she took it all in. Once a vibrant and serene place, it was now a desolate and barren landscape that never recovered its former beauty. The Glowing Garden she loved so much and built with Fenrir's help, had been burnt to the ground.

She paused before the biggest tree trunk that stood lonely in the centre and looked like it was merely a piece of charcoal. Fenrir used to press her against this glowing willow, and they kissed until her head spun.

“All the preparations for the wedding ceremony are ready, Uncle,” a tall and muscular man with long blonde hair informed Vidar as they stood on a cliff next to a table set for two. “Your bride will be happy.”

Astrea did not move, hoping to hear more information from her hideout. The two Asgardians did not seem to notice her.

“My bride should be happy I still want her after everything, Magnus,” Vidar scoffed. “So far, she was more trouble than she is worth.”

Astrea rolled her eyes.

“And yet you waited for her for so long,” the other Asgardian noted, patting his uncle's shoulder. “She must be really something, that future Queen of ours!”

“That she is,” Vidar smirked. “The mate bond—It intensifies everything. I just can't resist having her by my side, but she will have to be punished before I allow her to wield any kind of power, so don't misunderstand what she is right now.”

“What would that be?” Magnus' brows went up.

“My property,” the God of Vengeance stated, and Astrea clenched her fists.

“But you are still marrying her—” The nephew clearly did not know what kind of man his uncle was.

“To seal the deal!” Vidar shook with laughter, watching his nephew's confused face. “You still have so much to learn.”

“Then teach me,” Magnus insisted, a small wrinkle appearing over the bridge of his nose.

“Astraea came with the power that should have made our rule so much easier,” he explained. “When she died, that power was lost. Same as when my father, Odin, was killed by that mutt, his power vanished. There is nothing that could be done about the latter, but as for the star goddess power—”

“You are planning to give her divinity,” the young man gasped and Vidar burst out laughing again.

“Of course not!” He shook his head. “It will be millennia of her behaving like an obedient little wife before I even consider it!”

“I am afraid I don’t get it then.” Magnus ran his hand through his silky hair.

“Don’t worry, you are just like your father. Thor was the strongest god out there, but complicated plans were not his strongest point.”

The nephew flinched as if he was slapped on his cheek.

“Astraea will not get divinity as long as I can help it,” Vidar stated. “So, she will not be getting her powers back. Those will go to me.”

“H-how?” Magnus seemed as shocked as Astrea, who was still listening to every word.

“Easy. At the wedding ceremony, we will swear to share everything, binding words and everything. Then, we will mix our blood in the final ritual. I will go to the source of power as soon as it’s done. Alone.”

Astrea covered her mouth not to make any noises. Their plans were so similar.

“The powers in the source would recognise her blood and—” The Son of Thor stopped talking, pursing his lips.

“And come to me,” Vidar sneered. “See, that’s a good plan. I will have her powers and mine, becoming the most powerful ruler of Asgard to ever exist. I will wipe the mortal world clean, covering my actions with ongoing wars and restoring the balance, bringing prosperity here. As for Astraea, she will be my reward for the hard work I did. And I intend to enjoy her to the fullest, mate bond and all.”

They stood silent for a while, and Astrea used that time to control her anger. He was so smug, so confident. She wanted to push them off the cliff but knew that it wouldn’t kill him, so she had to restrain herself.

Finally, she walked out from her hideout.

“Vidar!” she called his name, and both men turned to face her. Her mate’s eyes grazed her figure in the sheer dress, and his lips curled slowly as he stretched his hand, gesturing at the table.

“Ah, Astraea, welcome home. I’ve been waiting for you.”

Fenrir was pacing around the penthouse's living room, constantly checking the clock. The elevator doors opened, and Gideon walked inside with his wife.

“It took you a while.” The Wolf God sounded impatient.

“Apologies,” Gideon shrugged. “Despite the promises, they still did not want to give her up without a fight.”

“What’s the point of them being here?” Joran placed his foot on his knee as he sat on the sofa.

“No one is here accidentally,” Fenrir assured him dryly. “Even you, brother.”

“Oh?” Joran lifted his brow up. “Now I am intrigued.”

“You are going to like this one,” Fenrir smirked. “See, the thing is—I want you to kill me.”