

## His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 11

### Nathan

The sleek black town car rolled to a stop outside an impressive modern clinic. I peered up at the gleaming rows of windows critically.

Hard to believe somewhere this pristine held the answers my father's life depended on. But I trust Dr. Amara, the last doctor that suggested her friend.

Doesn't look like much, Derek grunted, echoing my skepticism. But we had exhausted all other options. This Dr. Terra came highly recommended, with remarkable success treating obscure conditions. If she could not help Father, no one

Squaring my shoulders, I stepped through the automated doors while Derek parked. The receptionist's bored expression shifted to surprise then flustered deference when I introduced myself.

"Of course, Alpha, we've been expecting you. I'll inform Dr. Terra right away. She hurried off down a gleaming corridor.

I paced the s\*\*s waiting area impatiently, ignoring the curious glances from nearby patients. Likely they thought I was some eccentric billionaire seeking obscure experimental therapies, not the supernatural ruler I was,

Thankfully Derek's looming presence discouraged any attempts at conversation.

At last the receptionist reappeared. "Right this way! Dr. Terra had to finish with a patient but will see you shortly."

I followed her brisk clip down the hall, anticipation mounting. But when she gestured me through a plain wooden door labeled "Dr. Terra Wolfe, the name jolted through me like lightning

Wolfe. It couldn't be. How many female wolf shifters became doctors? But surely fate would not deliver us such an unbelievable twist....

All thoughts s\*\*d the moment I stepped inside. Fiery red curls, delicate features. wearier, but unmistakably, impossibly her. Terra those telltale emerald eyes older.

We both froze. I drank in the stunning vision before me, scarcely trusting my senses. Terra – my dearest friend, first love, lost mate. Here after endless years spent scouring the earth for her.

"Terra," I finally rasped, her name the sweetest sound on my lips. Is it really you?"

Shock slowly melted from her face, shuttering into a cool detached mask “Hello, Nathan. I wasn’t expecting you. How may I help?”

Her formal tone cut through me. Of course she harbored bitterness. I deserved no warm reunion after the pain I had carelessly inflicted. But hearing that voice again was bliss enough for now. We had found her against all odds. Time could heal the rest.

I stepped closer, desperate to touch her, confirm this dream was reality. But she retreated stiffly behind her desk. The rejection stung, but I accepted it for now. She had every right to guard herself around the mate who broke her heart.

“Terra...” My voice cracked with emotion. How to explain all that had transpired in the years apart? “There is much to discuss But first, you must know my father is gravely ill. We need your help”

Wariness darkened her expression. “You seem to have done quite well without me before.”

The cold accusation was no less than I deserved. “Please, I entreated. “I know I committed unforgivable wrongs. But this is about my father’s life. He needs you.” I needed you. But that truth must wait until she softened.

Terra’s cool detachment shattered my fragile hopes that our impossible reunion might rekindle the powerful bond once between us

Of course she had earned the right to guard herself closely, after the “s way I severed our hearts so cleanly years ago. But her aloof dismissal still cut cruelly deep.

“Please, Terra,” I implored, scrambling for persuasive words that might sway her. “I know you have no reasons left to show me kindness or compassion after how I wronged you. But this is bigger than just us now. My father’s life hangs in the balance. Without your help....

My voice broke as I forced the painful truth past reluctant lips.

“He will die. You are our sole remaining hope.”

Terra’s emerald eyes flashed, two feverish spots of color rising on her porcelain cheeks. And so I should hurry back to serve you now that it’s convenient?” she snapped. “You didn’t seem concerned about my life when you so easily cast me out after our years together.

I flinched under her blistering fury. She was right – I deserved no grace or favors after so callously throwing away her heart. But desperation drove me relentlessly onward.

“You’re completely justified in despising me, I agreed quietly. “I know that mere words can’t undo the damage I inflicted on us both. I risked approaching her desk, keeping my hands spread in supplication. “But I swear on my father’s life and the moon herself, you will never know such pain at my hands again

Terra searched my face, looking for any hint of deception. Finding none, her rigid posture finally softened slightly. But suspicion still lurked in her intelligent gaze.

“Pretty promises cost little,” she said bluntly. “Yet I seem to recall similar ones whispered under the stars that were easily forgotten come dawn.

Her oblique reference to the tender nights we had shared stabbed painfully. She was right flowery vows had come easily when caught in our passion. I had proven my oaths woefully fragile once tested by harsh reality. Why should she trust renewed sincerity?

I ran a hand through my hair, grappling for the words to convey my true remorse, to win just the slightest chance at redemption in her guarded eyes.

“You’re completely justified in your doubts,” I conceded raggedly “I know I may never regain your trust. But please believe me when I say the greatest regret of my life has been losing your light, and the love we shared. Not a day has passed when I did not think of you.”

Her icy facade briefly slipped at my raw confession. But she turned away, avoiding my earnest gaze. The past remains past. Now return home, and I will send word if I choose to assist your father?

Her dismissive words lanced through me, but I merely bowed my head. “As you wish. I’ll await your message.”

I reluctantly moved toward the door, pausing with my hand on the k\*\*b. “No matter what you decide, Terra, I swear I’ll never stop striving to someday be worthy of your forgiveness.”

Her face remained reserved, but the glistening sheen in her emerald eyes whispered of emotions still lingering beneath the surface. Hope flickered tentatively in my chest. Not all was lost between us. The powerful bond we had shared could be pieced back together slowly, if I proved myself deserving this time.

Over the next day I wore a rut in the polished floor pacing my suite, two wary guards posted discreetly by the grand doors leading out to the hallway.

Not that I had any intention of charging back to Terra against her wishes. But Derek knew me too well to think I wouldn’t at least consider it

I’ll patiently wait for her reply.

Just then I get a call from her and I rushed there immediately.

Terra studied me silently, emerald eyes inscrutable. The gulf between us yawned cavernous and deep, occupying all the years lost. Finally she sighed, her rigid posture slacking slightly

“Very well. For your father’s sake. I will consult on the case” Guarded hope rose in me before she added sternly. “But I cannot simply abandon my practice and patients with no notice.

Make arrangements, and in one week’s time I will travel to assess his condition.”

One week felt agonizing after so many years apart already, but I dared not argue and risk her changing her mind. “Thank you. Terra. Truly. Please let me know any needs for your visit, I’ll see to it personally.”

She inclined her head in cool agreement. I wished desperately to embrace her, but clearly future contact must proceed strictly on her terms only. I had forfeited any former closeness through my own shameful actions.

“Until then.” I murmured regretfully. Our first reunion deserved celebration and reconciliation, not stilted arrangements.

But the damage between us would not be undone quickly or easily. Patience and understanding were my only hopes of regaining her trust. I could not fail her this time – not with her guarded heart, nor my father’s fading life on the line.

After relaying the news to Derek, who was as shocked and elated as I at this impossible twist of fate, we departed to make ready for Terra’s visit

A suite in the Alpha’s residence would provide comfort and privacy during her stay.

I stocked it with fresh flowers, artisanal soaps, fine linens anything that might soften her sentiments toward the home I hoped would someday welcome her permanently again.

The lavish gestures eased my restless agitation as the long week crawled by

But I’m really hoping... Is she really coming back? My Terra?

## His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 12

### **Nathan**

I strode through the clinic doors exactly thirty minutes before Terra’s shaded, earning curious looks from staff and patients alike at my punctual arrival. But after a week apart, I refused to miss a single possible moment in her presence, however brief

Derek trailed after me, amusement crinkling his eyes as I made directly for the small waiting area by reception I had staked out as my own over the past days.

“Eager today, are we?” he remarked wryly, lowering his bulky frame into the chair beside me. “Most men only pine so for their acmal mate.”

I narrowed my eyes in warning, not appreciating the implication “I merely wish to show Terra I intend to keep my word the time. Being here when she’s available proves my reliability

Derek held up his hands peaceably, though his grin remained unapologetically knowing. “As you say, Alpha. I’m sure she’ll be positively thrilled at your dedication to loitering outside her workplace every day.”

I bit back a sharp retort, not wishing to attract unwanted attention from nearby patients. But his joking barb hit painfully close to my own gnawing doubts

Would Terra interpret my persistent presence as a comforting sign of my commitment to rebuilding trust? Or as the possessive hovering of an obsessed suitor unable to relinquish his claim on her?

In truth, my own motivations likely blurred somewhere between the two extremes. The mate bond between us throbbed as painfully alive as the day Terra first disappeared, though she refused yet to acknowledge it.

And seeing her with another man, however innocent, twisted me with a primal jealousy no logic could defeat. But until she, welcomed me at her side again freely, I had no right to interfere in her choices.

Brooding uneasily over where the line lay between protective mate and domineering scoundrel, I paused, mid-pace at the sound of Terra’s voice rising lightly down the hall. My inner wolf perked up instinctively at our mate’s nearness as Terra came into view, clutching a thick folder and speaking intently with a blonde nurse about proper post-op care for one of her patients.

The fierce intellect and compassion that made her an exceptional healer shone through with each precise instruction and word of encouragement for her staff. Though I remained the interloper peering wistfully through glass here, witnessing Terra in her element stirred profound pride. The pack would surely come to love her as a Luna as deeply as I always had,

When she glanced up and noticed me waiting. Terra’s determined stride faltered briefly. I offered a small smile, hoping to appear nonthreatening despite my imposing presence in this world that was rightfully hers. After a moment’s hesitation, she nodded politely in return before turning her focus back to her colleague.

“You’ve got this covered, Rose. Call me anytime if you need guidance. Otherwise I’ll see you tomorrow.” With an encouraging pat on the nurse’s shoulder, she dismissed her and approached me, curiosity mingled with wariness in her intelligent gaze.

“Nathan. I wasn’t expecting you again so soon.” Her tone held a note of accusation.

I scrambled to explain. “Apologies for the intrusion. I only wished to confirm the travel arrangements I’ve made in preparation for your arrival tomorrow. If any details are unsatisfactory, just say the word.”

Terra’s expression remained aloof and distrustful. “My assistant has already reviewed everything thoroughly. Your presence here is unnecessary.”

The blunt dismissal stung, but I forced an understanding smile. Of course, forgive my pestering. I’ll leave you be.”

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Dark sighed but obliquely went to place the cedar. Alone again my traitorous mind tortured me with vivid imaginings. Terrance dinner sight with her new lover. Laughing so together, her emerald eyes sparkling with joy for him hand covering hers affectionately across the table. Terra leaning close after dessert, 1

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roar claws splitting through my human fingertips before I could restrain my fury. Blood stark against cream as struggled to calm my labored breaths. Losing control

I had reneged any claim on Terra when I chose Jade under the mate bonds spell. Her right to choose her own future was the acting consequence

By the time Derek returned I had reigned in my inner beast, slipping back into my shift once more. But he took one look. on of sales on the rained carpet and understood regardless. His heavy hand rested on my shoulder briefly in ty. We are dinner in silence, the rare steak sitting like ash in my mouth. I had to release this torment

somehow before it unceremoniously consumed me

ble meal. Derek announced truly he would be out for the remainder of the evening I envied his freedom to escape these suocating rooms that had become my self-inflated

prison. The city's dazzling nightlife held nothing but bitter reminders of the happiness cruelly denied me. But remaining alone with my corrosive thoughts would pactly drive ree trad

"I join you" I declared abruptly, grabbing my discarded jacket Derek's brows lifted in surprise but he merely nodded and led the way downstairs. I welcomed the bracing chill of the night air after feeling trapped all day. Together we strode directly toward the grish neon beckoning through the dark like a tawdry mirage. I craved the refuge of noise and Sew reckless boun

anonymity for a

The pulsing lights and pounding music enveloped me as we entered some crowded club recommended by our hotel's clerk Here power and prestige meant nothing. The press of heated bodies and cloying perfumes drowned out conscious thought. Grebel burned away reason until only primal instinct remained

The night passed in a blur of faceless drinks and dancing partners. But their voluptuous curves and coquettish laughs brought me ou pleasure. No amount of meaningless sensual indulgence could fill the ragged void in my soul, or erase the memories of one delicate fame-haired mate seared into my being.

Near dawn we finally stumbled back upstairs, the walk sobering me slightly. Safely in my suite, away from indiscreet eyes, I sagged back against the door, leak despair crashing down on me anew. All the distractions and denial could not alter the harsh truth – my very spirit felt sundered without Terra. Her rejection had shattered me utterly.

Derek's gruff voice cut through the haze of drink and gloom still logging my mind. "Drowning sorrows never washed any away, Alpha. Believe me, I know,"

I turned hollow, bloodshot eyes up to meet his. The ghosts haunting his clark gaz me he spoke from experience. We had never discussed the tragedy that took his family years ago, but in this moment sur shared understanding of love's agony connected us.

"I don't know what else to do," I admitted h\*\*ly. "The pain is crushing me, yet I'm powerless to regain what was lost."

Derek clapped my slumped shoulder bracingly. "Any battle can be won with patience and resilience. Yours will come again in time".

I shook my head despondently. All fortitude had deserted me. She despises the sight of me now. I ruined the most precious gift fate ever bestowed."

"She is still here, is she not? That alone proves the spark between you yet lives. Keep faith, and tend it gently



Wise counsel, though in my despair it barely penetrated. I needed rest from this ceaseless torment. But even in my dreams, Terra's reproachful emerald eyes followed me unrelentingly. A fitting punishment I richly deserved.

Over the next days, I maintained a polite facade in Terra's presence, never betraying the raging tumult within. She remained aloof, speaking to me only as necessary about my father's treatment plans. The affectionate ease we had begun rebuilding between us retreated again behind walls of courtesy. My rash jealousy had only driven her farther away.

During her scarce free hours, Terra often disappeared to dine with the brown-haired doctor I now knew to be her lover. Just glimpsing them together, his hand alighting casually on her lower back as they laughed over some private joke, made my claws threaten to burst free. But I kept my volatile emotions ruthlessly leashed. She would not see me falter.

Tonight they sat tucked discreetly in a corner booth at an elegant restaurant where Derek and I stopped for a morose drink after another useless day.

I tried ignoring their presence, but my traitorous gaze kept drifting back to admire how Terra's fiery curls caught the low light. Her companion leaned close to whisper something that brought an alluring flush to her fair cheeks.

With a guttural curse, I tossed back the remains of my whiskey. Derek eyed me warily as my hand snapped the heavy glass down. "Steady on. She'll only retreat further if you make a scene.

"So I should just accept this constant torment?" I growled. Every instinct roared to confront the interloper threatening my mate claim.

Derek shook his head. "Accept it or not, lashing out will only worsen the hurt. Patience and understanding are your only

I raked a hand roughly through my hair, grappling for fractured composure. Derek spoke wisdom, but rational thought stood no chance against the raging creature snarling and clawing inside me.

"I need air," I bit out abruptly, throwing down a wad of bills. Before Derek could respond, I stormed outside into the bracing autumn night. Even the icy wind could not cool my fevered skin or clear the red haze clouding my mind. Nothing but the sweet coppery tinge of blood would satisfy this savagery.

I scarcely registered shifting my fine clothes shredding away as snarling jaws and razor claws took form. Then I was racing down abandoned alleys, giving my fury free rein. In the quiet industrial district, none would mark my passage as anything more than a stray dog's shadow.

By the time my pulse finally slowed from its frantic hammering my massive paws stood planted amidst shredded and mangled debris. Crumpled metal sheeting bore jagged claw marks, Dumpsters were overturned savagely, their contents strewn across cracked asphalt, I had no memory of the destruction, lost in the scarlet fog of rage. But seeing the evidence sent ice through my veins, calming the last simmering embers,

Another feral outburst like this in a public place would reveal my true nature irrevocably. Terra already considered me little more than a monster from her past, unworthy of trust or tenderness. Such unhinged violence would only prove her harsh judgment justified.

Shame cooling my blood further, I turned and loped back through the silent streets, .., Jury's aftermath lending clarity. As desperate as this separation felt, becoming the very beast Terra feared would only drive us farther apart. I had to master myself and remain patient.

Nothing worthwhile ever came easily, after all. The moon had granted Terra and I a second chance, however narrow the path back to her graces. I could not fail now.

No matter the anguish, I would endure until she turned her kind heart toward me once more.

## His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 13

You're being irrational, I chided myself once insomnia finally gave way to fitful slumber. This was about an innocuous medical consult, nothing more. I would help if possible, then immediately return to my clinic, my life here. No threat existed unless I lost perspective.

Yet uneasy dreams of running alone through moonlit forests pursued me until dawn. A shadowy black wolf lurked at the corner of my vision, familiar and strange at once. But each time spun to face it head on, the specter vanished like smoke through my fingers.

Even in sleep I could not confront the lingering ghosts of my past. Perhaps I never would find courage to stand and fight.

The next morning, supplies had to be restocked and charts updated, providing welcome distraction from restless thoughts. By mid-afternoon, I had almost achieved some sense of normalcy again. Until a shy knock at my office door heralded Collins poking his head in, his tentative expression setting me instantly on edge.

"Hey, Nathan is back, asking to speak with you. Up for sec simmered just beneath the casual words.

in, or should I send him away?" His protective temper

I considered briefly. My raw emotions likely couldn't handle facing Nathan again so soon without unraveling entirely. But refusing him outright could appear callous when a life hung in the balance.

"Tell him....I need a few days to make arrangements here before traveling. I'll send word when ready."

Collins nodded shortly. "You got it." His head disappeared, followed by receding footsteps and the clinic door chiming. I released a shaky breath. A temporary reprieve, at least. Time to shore up my defenses before confronting fresh ghosts.

The rest of the day passed in a strained haze. By the time the last patient left and we closed up the clinic, exhaustion weighed on me. But Collins breezed in bearing takeout bags and a determined smile.

"Figured you could use comfort food tonight. Brought all your greasy favorites," he announced, unpacking styrofoam boxes of pizza, fries, and milkshakes onto my office coffee table.

I couldn't help laughing even through my weariness. "Trying to clog my arteries along with my brain?" But in truth, junk food and mindless TV with Collins sounded like the perfect means of distraction. And goddess knew I needed that tonight.

Soon we were parked on the sagging office couch, boxes of now-cold pizza s\*\*ed around us. Some silly sitcom played on my computer, volume turned down low. Collins's shoulder pressing against mine kept me grounded amidst the swirling chaos in my mind.

As the credits finally rolled, Collins regarded me gently. "Doing any better? I know seeing Nathan again must have rattled you."

I leaned my head back against the c\*\*ns with a bone-d\*\*p sigh. "Honestly? I have no idea how I feel. Angry, hurt, terrified...yet some traitorous part of me actually cares whether he's found any peace all these years." I laughed harshly. "Pathetic, right?"

Collins shifted to face me directly, expression serious. "Not at all. You have every right to feel conflicted. He was your first love, the father of your children." He lifted my chin until our eyes met. "But this time, remember – the choice is fully yours. You don't owe Nathan, or anyone else, a second of your time."

His quiet conviction helped cement my wavering resolve. I was no longer the timid human girl desperate for a powerful Alpha's affection. Fate had proven I possessed grounding strength and courage all my own. The fruits of that trials showed in the rich life I had built alone. This time, I controlled the course. Nathan could not unmoor me unless I allowed it.

I hugged Collins fiercely, tension easing from my shoulders for the first time all day. “Thank you for talking sense into me.

I’m still not sure what I choose. But knowing I have your support means everything.”

Collins hugged me back just as tightly. “Always.” Pulling away, he began packing up our trash, respecting my need for space to process. But I caught his hand, struck by a sudden thought.

“Actually, would you mind staying the night? I really don’t want to be alone.” The prospect of silence and solitude felt unbearable.

Collins paused, surprise flitting across his face before he smiled gently. “Of course, if you want company. It’s a slumber party.”

I laughed, the sound rusty from disuse. “I hope you like watching cheesy rom-coms and braiding hair.”

“Lucky for you, those rank among my greatest passions.”

Soon we were bundled on the lumpy clinic couch beneath a pile of spare blankets, an appropriately melodramatic rom-com playing at low volume.

Collins’s soothing presence beside me kept darker though comfort of old friendship, appreciating this unexpected D. night.

bay. For just a few hours, I could simply relax into the sing the moon had brought me. A flicker of light in the blackest

When we finally drifted off, Collins’s even breaths subtly easing the lingering tension within me, my final drowsy thought was that perhaps, with him beside me, I could face the demons and shadows of my past once more.

If love long lost still had claim on some fractured piece of my heart, at least now I was no longer helpless to its dangerous eall. This time, I chose my path without blind hope or fear to guide me.

By week’s end, practical matters of preparing for an absence were sorted. My lead nurse Rose would oversee the clinic, with other trusted physicians covering my caseload Not ideal, but manageable for a short trip. The thought of letting my patients down, even briefly, choked me with guilt. But this was the lesser evil.

My boys absorbed the news of my imminent departure with customary dramatic flair. Luke, my sensitive one, followed me around the house clinging tearfully no matter how often I assured them this was just a quick boring work trip.

Levi demanded endless specifics about exactly how long I would be gone while allowing me to fill his favorite superhero backpack with favorite toys and books “for comfort.”

And Landon, my little irrepressible escape artist, somehow slipped out the front door the morning I was leaving to latch onto my leg and refuse to be dislodged.

“No Mommy, stay!” he wailed, big alligator tears streaming down his plump cheeks as I pried his small fingers free. My heart tore, but Collins stood ready to whisk him away the second I broke free.

“Be good for Uncle Collins while I’m gone,” I pleaded, choking back my own tears as Landon reached back bawling for me. Fatherly instincts kicking in, Collins quickly tucked my inconsolable son against his chest, murmuring soothing words until the screams faded to hiccups.

Luke and Levi looked on with round solemn eyes, lower lips trembling. I knelt and hugged them fiercely, memorizing the sweetness of their scents. “I’ll be home before you know it,” I promised. “Mind your uncle and don’t drive him too crazy, okay?”

They nodded, damp faces still pressed into my shoulders. With a final flurry of kisses and reminders to Collins about snacks and bedtimes, before my resolve shattered entirely, I slid behind the wheel of the idling town car that had arrived to transport me.

As the sleek vehicle headed down the twisting clinic driveway, I twisted in my seat for one last glimpse of my little pack clustered around Collins outside the main doors, waving bravely

My heart ached with every agile gained farther away from them like a tether stretching to its limit. But I could endure this brief separation, for their future.

To distract my restless thoughts, I reviewed Father’s medical charts yet again. Every detail had been burned into my mind through repeated scrutiny this past week, but focusing on the clinical complexities brought some sense of calm purpose.

I could do this – help the kindly old wolf who had treated me as his own daughter, then return swiftly home to my new life. No complications or lingering ties needed to bind me there permanently any longer. I finally controlled my own fate.

Lost in jotting treatment notes, I scarcely noticed the sleek car navigating out of the forested backroads and joining the main highway. Only when buildings and traffic increased did I glance up to realize we were nearing the sprawling outskirts of the human city neighboring my old pack territory. An icy chill skittered down my spine. Too late for doubts now.

I steeled myself as the car turned down an isolated winding drive through the trees, heart hammering madly. Calm down, I scolded silently. This was only a brief visit, an

errand. But even with Collins's steady strength fortifying my spirit, facing the ghosts of a past

## His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 14

### Nathan

I paced anxiously in the courtyard outside my father's private rooms, pausing every few moments to glance down the tree-lined drive for any sign of Terra's arrival. After endless torturous days spent negotiating her help from afar, today she finally returned in person to assess my father's declining condition. The prospect of having her near again was both a blessing and exquisite torture.

From atop the stone steps, Derek observed my restless prowling with a knowing smirk. "Relax, Alpha. Wearing a trench in the pavers won't hasten her arrival."

I shot him an irritated scowl, even as his teasing words brought heat to my cheeks. Of course I knew hovering here obsessively would not actually summon Terra faster. But remaining cooped up inside had proven unbearable. Out here, at least the fresh autumn air soothed my f\*\*\*d nerves slightly.

"I only want to be on hand when she gets here, as any good host would," I defended. Derek's grin only widened, clearly seeing through my feeble justification.

Before he could voice another vexing quip, the crunch of tires on gravel drew both our gazes toward the ornate front swinging open.

gates

The sleek town car rolled slowly up the drive, finally coming to a stop just before the steps where we waited. I straightened reflexively, heart leaping into my throat.

This was it – after so many years and trials, Terra had returned. Fate had miraculously granted us a second chance, however slim. I could not fail her now.

I watched raptly as the back door opened, anticipation near choking me. But the vision emerging in her tidy business attire was even more breathtaking than memory had preserved. Terra lifted her chin as our eyes met, radiant even in her guarded poise. For a suspended moment, neither of us moved, the space between us heavy with our tangled history..

With monumental effort I remained still, allowing Terra to dictate the terms of our reunion. I must not pressure or presume, no matter how my traitorous body ached to pull her into my arms. She was owed the chance to approach in her own time. I could be patient a little longer.

After a strained silence she seemed to brace herself and climbed the steps. I focused on keeping my breathing even and posture relaxed so as not to sp\*\*k this skittish truce between us. Her intelligent gaze swept over me, likely cataloguing the ways time had changed us both.

Finally, just when the thick tension became unbearable, Terra extended her slim hand politely. "Nathan. Thank you for inviting me to consult."

The cool formality was no less than I deserved after breaking her heart so carelessly years ago. Forcing aside the instinctive longing to grasp her outstretched hand between both of mine, I simply shook it, letting the delicate contact ignite my whole arm. Even this little was bliss.

"Terra. Welcome." My voice came out gratifyingly steady despite the emotion clogging my throat. "Please, come inside. My father awaits eagerly."

With utmost care not to accidentally brush against her and cause alarm, I ushered Terra up the grand staircase and down the corridor toward Father's suite.

Silently I cursed myself for not having the foresight to bring her things in first so she could settle into her own guest room. But I had been too eager for this reunion to think rationally.

Outside the ornately carved doors, I hesitated, turning back to Terra. "I should perhaps warn you he has worsened considerably these past weeks. The sight may be...difficult."

Her piercing green eyes-softened subtly, the firs alright."

k in her professional armor. "I've treated many terminal patients. It's

Her confidence steadied my own lingering unease. Of course Terra had witnessed far worse through her work as a gifted healer.

And her compassionate spirit was precisely what my father needed most now. With her near, he would be made comfortable and at peace. I only prayed she could buy him a little more precious time.

Pushing open the heavy doors, I ushered Terra inside. The lamps had been dimmed to a soothing gloam per her instructions, the sickroom's lavish décor muted.

Still I worried the imposing environment might intimidate someone raised far from such opulence. But Terra's gaze took in the surroundings without reaction before settling on Father's frail form amidst the silken sheets.

At our quiet approach, he struggled to lift his wispy head. But his wan face brightened immediately recognizing our guest. “You came...” he rasped in unrestrained joy, reaching for Terra with his undiminished spirit if not strength.

Terra stepped forward immediately to grasp his outstretched hand in both of hers, gracing him with a warm, although reserved, smile. “Of course. I’m here to do everything possible for you.”

The simple empathy resonating through her words eased my chest slightly. Whatever her feelings toward me now, at least she did not resent my ailing father for my youthful mistakes.

Her natural compassion clearly remained undimmed, a balm to all it touched. Watching her interact gently with him now confirmed I had made the right choice entrusting his care to Terra.

Throughout her thorough examination, Terra maintained a soothing stream of commentary, distracting Father from any unpleasant symptoms and putting him at ease.

I looked on silently, not wishing to interrupt their rapport. Her skill and poise left me humbled and spellbound. In only a few short years she had gained such wisdom and grace, while I felt barely grown from the arrogant youth who had spurned her.

Afterwards, Terra stepped quietly into the hall, beckoning for me to follow. I glanced back to see Father already slipping into an untroubled sleep thanks to her ministrations. With more optimism than I had felt in months, I joined Terra in the corridor, searching her carefully schooled features for any reaction.

“His condition is quite advanced, as I’m sure you know,” she remarked candidly, though not without compassion. “But not beyond hope. With an aggressive treatment regimen, we may be able to prolong his time meaningfully.”

Profound relief left my legs nearly buckling under me. She had not given up on him. Fresh confidence kindled in my chest – Terra would find a way succeed where all others had failed.

Fate could not have brought us together again in this crisis merely to tear us apart anew if she could not preserve Father. I had to believe our reunion was destiny, not a vicious trick.

Grasping her hand impulsively in fervent gratitude, I blurted out, “Bless you, Terra, truly. We are in your debt.”

As soon as her slim fingers tensed reflexively at my ill-considered touch, I remembered myself and released them, shame scalding my cheeks. “Forgive me,” I muttered awkwardly to the lush carpet. “Just...thank you. For everything. Already.” Risking a



glance upward, I saw Terra's expression had softened subtly. The frost between us seemed to recede, if only for this shared moment of hope. While nothing was yet forgiven or forgotten, this first small step felt significant.

No longer did she shut me out entirely as the callous rogue existing only to torment her. We had a chance still to find redemption in each other's eyes, however slim. That hope alone could sustain me through whatever trials lay ahead.

In the days that followed, Terra devoted herself wholeheartedly to stabilizing my father. I largely left her to direct his animated and engaging. The protective caregivers and prescribe treatments, not wishing to get underfoot. But I made certain she knew I was fully available to fetch anything required, should she only ask.

While immersed in her healing work, Terra revealed more of her true detachment melted away as she conferred avidly with our mages and, sicians, collaborating to weave Father back from the precipice. I

lived for those brief glimpses of the passionate, vivacious girl I had lost, now matured into an astounding woman I barely recognized, and felt unworthy of knowing.

When possible, I sought out chances to speak with Terra alone, hoping to gently thaw the lingering awkward tension between us. At first she answered my tentative overtures only with polite disinterest before finding excuses to away. But gradually her replies grew less guarded, even occasionally warm in tone when we spoke of innocuous topics or reminisced over fonder memories.

The instinctive rapport that had always flowed easily between us began to emerge once more. Yet she still tensed warily if I drew too near, or spoke with anything beyond light friendliness. The damage my thoughtless choices inflicted could not be undone so swiftly. But earning back even this sliver of her trust felt like a victory, proof I yet had hope of rediscovering what we had lost.

On sunny afternoons when Father felt well enough for short excursions outdoors, I would often find Terra reading alone in the gardens during her scarce free moments. Today I approached her chosen bench quietly, not wishing to disturb the rare peace gracing her delicate features as she lost herself in some massive textbook.

But despite my stealth, she glanced up as my shadow fell across the open pages, eyes briefly wide and vulnerable before her polite mask slipped back into place. "Nathan. Hello."

"Terra. I hope I'm not intruding."

Her expression remained neutral, but she obligingly slid her leather satchel off the worn stone bench in silent invitation to join her. I lowered myself cautiously to the vacated

spot, leaving a careful distance between us. After so many years stolen, even sharing this sunlit space felt intimate.

“How is your father today?” Terra asked gently, breaking the awkward tension.

I smiled, the mere thought of his improving condition lightening my mood. “Better, thanks to you. The treatments have worked miracles already.”

She gave a small pleased nod at the praise, though still appeared ill at ease alone with me. I racked my mind for how to put her further at ease, longing to regain the closeness we had shared so effortlessly as children. But the yawning gulf between us now would require time and care to bridge.

Grasping for a safe conversational thread, I remarked, “I’m impressed you find time to keep up with dense medical texts even outside your duties.” I gestured at the imposing volume open across her lap.

Terra glanced down, pale cheeks coloring slightly. “Oh, it’s...not for work.” She tilted the embossed cover toward me almost shyly.

“Wuthering Heights,” I read aloud, surprise lifting my voice. I had not taken T\*\*a for a fanciful romance devotee, especially given her wariness toward me now. But I quite preferred imagining her secretly a dreamer at heart.

“A favorite from school days,” she explained, fingertips drifting unconsciously to brush the worn cover. “Sometimes after long hours poring over technical manuals, a bit of poetry restores my spirit.”

“It’s good you have such outlets to recharge and relax,” I said sincerely. Her admission surprised me, but also hinted at lingering romantic depths beneath her composed exterior. I filed away that insight for later reflection.

Silence stretched between us then, but oddly less strained than prior attempts at conversation. Just as reluctantly prepared to take my leave before overstaying the tentative welcome, Terra spoke again, so softly I almost missed her words.

“You look well, Nathan Leadership suits you.”

I blinked, unsure for a moment I had heard correctly. It was the first personal remark she had offered since arriving, not trace of guarded civility. The glowing sentiment shone through despite her carefully lowered eyes, bringing fervent hope surging wildly in my chest.

“Thank you,” I managed unevenly past the sudden thickness in my throat. “That...means more than you know.”

Color rose higher in her fair checks but Terra remained silent, picking absently at loose thread on her worn bag. I should say something more, keep this first c\*\*\*k in her icy armor from sealing up again. But profound words failed me.

In the heavy silence, Terra slid her textbook back into the satchel and rose gracefully. "I really must be getting back. Excuse me."

"Of course." I stood hastily, helplessly watching her slender figure retreat swiftly up the garden path without a backward glance. The sun's warmth dimmed in her absence, leaving me cold once more.

I sank back to the rough stone bench, awash in bittersweet melancholy. Even that brief, tentative bloom of connection between us stirred longing I could scarcely contain. Having Terra close yet just out of reach exquisitely tortured my fractured spirit. Each accidental brush of her hand seared painfully, reminding me of everything lost.

But I clung to fragile hope we were slowly thawing the walls between us. Just being near Terra eased the gnawing ache of our, broken bond in a way nothing else could. With time and care, surely we might rediscover the love that had come so naturally once. I only needed patience to guide us there.

Buoyed by cautious optimism, I headed back inside to relieve Terra for a break. She had been putting in long hours tending Father.

Convincing her to rest awhile could provide opportunity for us to speak privately again, gently stoking the embers beginning to glow once more between us.

I knew now the spark of our union yet lived. I need only keep faith through these trials to rekindle it into cleansing, glorious flame once more.

## His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 15

### **Terra**

The ornate bedroom doors closed heavily behind me, sealing away the outside world for a brief respite. I leaned back against the cool wood, eyes squeezed shut as I focused on slowing my breaths.

The whirlwind of emotions since arriving yesterday had left me dizzy and reeling. I just needed a moment alone to regain some fragile composure before facing it all again.

This lavish suite was larger than my entire apartment back home. But its opulent grandeur only emphasized how jarringly out of place I felt.

Like a feral alley cat wandered unwittingly into a pedigreed parlor. I may have shed my downtrodden orphan identity, but sliding back into the role of pampered princess did not come naturally either.

Collapsing into a plush armchair by the marble fire/ I pulled out my phone and dialed the familiar number, craving the comforting voice of my rock in the storm. Collins picked up on the second ring.

“There’s my favorite doctor! How is the mysterious house call going?” His playful warmth instantly eased some of the knotted tension in my shoulders. Just hearing Collins’s voice grounded me, reminding me I had a new life and identity apart. from this suffocating place now.

Still, I could not fully relax or speak freely here, acutely aware of potentially prying supernatural senses. “Oh, you know doctors married to the work,” I deflected lightly. “But the kids must be driving you crazy. Please tell me the clinic is still standing.”

—

Collins chuckled. “We’re managing somehow without our wonder woman. The boys miss you of course, but we’re keeping busy. Plenty of movies and junk food to distract them.”

Homesickness and worry tugged sharply. I wished I could simply scoop up my rambunctious boys and cuddle their soft warmth to soothe my unease. But that comfort remained weeks out of reach yet.

“You’re the best, Collins. Seriously, I don’t deserve you.” I hoped he could hear my immense gratitude through the simple words. I never could have weathered this emotional upheaval without him steadying me quietly from the sidelines.

“I’m happy to help. Just focus on your work and come back soon, okay?” His caring tone wrapped me in much-needed warmth. We talked a while longer about inconsequential matters, allowing me to pretend for a few moments that my world was not tilting off-balance again.

After we eventually signed off, I sat staring into the empty marble fireplace, emotions churning.

Reuniting with Nathan had cracked open the scar tissue around wounds I thought permanently healed.

Seeing him again with fresh perspective made me realize how young and naive we both were during our disastrous mating attempt. Perhaps in another life, if fate had not divided us so cruelly...

Abruptly I stood, breaking off that dangerous train of thought. Lingering fantasies served no purpose now. I could not undo the past or the immutable mate bond that had shattered my life once.

My duty was ensuring no lasting complications came of this temporary return, then returning swiftly home to my newfound peace and purpose.

With fresh resolve I changed from my rumpled travel clothes into a coolly professional long dress and swept my unruly curls up into a practical twist that felt foreign after so many years wearing my hair down and natural.

But the severe style matched my determined mood. I would interact with Nathan only as necessary to treat his father, then keep my distance. It was safer for us both that way.

Satisfied I looked capable and detached, I took a fortifying breafft and exited to begin my work.

Nathan had shown me to a fully supplied clinic suite I could use for examinations and treatments. Though still luxurious compared to my modest office back home, at least here I felt confident and focused.

Within these clinical walls I could be Dr. Terra, not the uncertain girl left floundering by Nathan's presence.

I had just finished organizing instruments when a knock preceded the suite doors opening. Nathan's towering beta Derek entered, ducking his head politely. "Pardon the intrusion. But the former Alpha is asking for you. I can tell him you're busy preparing if needed."

I offered the imposing man a reassuring smile, appreciating his tactful interference running defense between me and the complicated past I wished to avoid. "It's no trouble, thank you Derek. Please let him know I'll be right in."

After the beta departed, I took a steadying breath before following after him down the grand hallway toward the ornate master suite. Despite me\*\*y steeling myself, he on still slowed my feet as I approached those towering doors concealing so many ghosts and memories. But I can not avoid this forever. Better to rip the bandage off swiftly.

My brisk knock was answered by a raspy invitation to enter. Pushing past the heavy doors, my gaze fell immediately to the massive canopy bed dominating the lavish room..

Propped there amidst what seemed endless embroidered pillows was the former Alpha, appearing so diminished and frail that I scarcely recognized the proud wolf who had loomed large as a second father in my childhood memories.

But his sunken eyes kindled warmly seeing me, his cracked whisper still rich with gracious authority. "Terra...so good of you to come, my dear."

I quickly crossed to clasp his outstretched limp hand, offering a gentle smile. "Of course. There's nowhere I'd rather be right now."

And despite my turbulent emotions around this visit, the sentiment rang true. However much it complicated my orderly life, refusing the dying old wolf's plea for help was unthinkable. Not even Nathan could harden me that fully against my compassionate instincts.

Drawing up a velvet chair beside the bed, I settled in to begin taking thorough notes on symptoms and vital signs, keeping up a stream of soothing chatter throughout the lengthy examination. Though obviously weary, the former Alpha remained stoic and cooperative, only occasionally wincing at some indignity. My heart went out to him as I helped prop pillows and straighten his bedclothes once finished.

Before I could withdraw, he stirred slightly, clouded eyes seeking me out. "Thank you...for coming. My son wronged you terribly once. I cannot blame you for harboring resentment."

An old sadness welled up in me. I had revered this wolf for most of my childhood, basking in the attention and approval I craved from a father figure. Hearing him acknowledge the unjust humiliation his own kin inflicted upon me stirred a bittersweet mix of emotions.

Grasping his gnarled hand in both my smaller ones, I met his faded silver-blue gaze earnestly. "The past is done. I'm only glad fate allowed our paths to cross again when you need me most."

The former Alpha searched my face with penetrating eyes that likely saw far deeper than I wished. But he merely smiled gently and gave my hand a feeble, grateful squeeze. "You've grown into a fine young woman, Terra. A credit to your lineage."

I returned the smile weakly, the oblique praise kindling complicated feelings. My own obscure parentage remained shrouded in mystery.

Part of me had always harbored a secret hope that perhaps my long lost mother or father might have been someone important, like Nathan's family. That could explain why the pack's influential Alpha had taken personal interest in raising a random stray orphan like myself.

But fanciful speculation served little purpose. I had long since accepted the likelihood I would never know my true origins. The family and life I had painstakingly built alone meant far more than abstract bloodlines ever could.

Still, discussing the past always stirred an odd disquiet in me lately, like a crucial puzzle piece hovering just out of reach. There were secrets here I perhaps did not want dragged fully into light, but my curiosity increasingly burned to understand.

Realizing I had lingered lost in contemplative silence too long, forced a brighter, professional smile and withdrew my hands gently from the former Alpha's weary clasp. "I should let you rest now," I said briskly, straightening the tapestry quilt covering his thin legs. "We can discuss treatments tomorrow which you're feeling stronger."

He nodded, eyes already drifting shut, their silver gleam dimming. But his whispered "Thank you, child," followed me out of the gloomy sickroom. More ghosts than the living seemed to linger in this place. I wondered if I would someday join their haunting ranks.

Over the next days I focused singularly on my healing duties, grateful for the distraction. Evaluating tonics with Vera, strategizing novel treatments with the skilled ph blessedly occupied. Within the clinic rooms Tali whatever chaos brewed outside those walls.

15, and updating the meticulous charts kept my hands and mind It like myself again, confidently navigating a familiar environment

Nathan kept a respectful distance, only approaching when necessary to confer privately about his father's condition. To his credit he did not attempt resuming any pretense of intimacy from our complicated past. I remained cautiously reserved in our interactions, but his solemn sincerity made it difficult to entirely resent his presence. This new gravity well suited the Alpha's bearing, unlike his impetuous youthful mistakes.

Still, glimpses of the charismatic boy who had stirred my young heart despite all good sense now and then broke through Nathan's stoic mask when we spoke. The echo of that magnetic pull left me rattled each time. I needed to remain vigilant against even a flicker of fledgling trust that could leave me burned once more.

During scarce hours of rest, I often lingered by the wide window overlooking the moonlit forest behind the estate, searching the stars as if seeking answers there. But their cold light revealed little, just as it had all those years ago when I fled heartbroken under their impassive gazes. Sometimes it seemed the moon's guidance itself had abandoned me. I had only my own resolve to cling to now.

At night my chaotic thoughts blended seamlessly with restless dreams. Visions of strong arms wrapping me in tender warmth interspersed with hazy recollections of tears spilt over cruel words. Serene acceptance warred endlessly with bitter anger and hurt. Would I forever be torn between past and present, unable to find resolution?

A week after my arrival, when the estate's cloying atmosphere and isolation threatened to fully smother me, I escaped into the nearby village on a supply run. The errand provided a welcome chance to clear my head and remember the wider world still existed beyond these oppressive walls haunted by ghosts.

While the pack shops displayed the same charming rustic wares I remembered from childhood visits, new fashion boutiques and trendy cafes revealed encroaching modernity. Surrounded by the lively bustle of everyday mundane concerns, the painful memories lost some of their immediate intensity. I could breathe easier again.

At a cozy bakery emitting heavenly aromas, I indulged in coffee and fresh pastries while skimming messages on my phone greedily.

Collins sent regular updates and photos to let me share in the boys' daily antics. Seeing their precious smiles lifted my spirits exponentially.

I wished I could reach through the screen and pull them close, bury my nose in their tousled hair, cradle their plump warmth on my lap. Their unconditional love was the only balm powerful enough to soothe all hurts.

On impulse I decided to video chat Collins briefly, desperate to see and hear my little pack, if only electronically. Their rambunctious shouts and giggles washed over me as soon as Collins answered, bringing instant tears to my eyes. When their chubby faces crowded eagerly close to see me, the dam broke entirely.

"Mommy! You're crying!" Luke immediately exclaimed in distress, his sensitive soul mirrored in those big amber eyes, so like his father's. I laughed wetly, wiping my cheeks on my sleeves.

"Happy tears, baby. Mommy just misses you all so much!" My voice hitched dangerously on a s\*\*b. But Levi and Landon's barrage of chaotic chatter quickly made me laugh again.

"When are you coming home? Uncle Collin is fun but not as good at your special pancakes," Levi complained. Before I could answer, Landon grabbed the phone, screen briefly going dark as he pressed his nose to the camera.

"I drew you pictures!" he announced, holding up pages full of colorful scribbles. "Are you bringing presents?"

My heart overflowed watching their perfect faces scrunched in concentration to decipher my grainy image. How had I ever thought I could manage weeks apart from their precious energy? But I would endure anything to secure their well-being and happiness. They were my guiding stars, the reason to keep fighting through darkness.

After Collins eventually managed to peel the phone away despite loud protests, the boys' glowing faces lingered in my mind long after the chat ended, buoying me up. Their sweet innocence remained untainted by old heartbreaks still haunting their mother. I needed to remember what truly m 1. amidst the ghosts vying to drag me down – creating a life of joy and possibility for those boys to inherit.



With my perspective realigned thanks to a cherished glimpse of home, I continued my errands recharged. Even passing the bakery's cozy little apartment upstairs no longer brought a sting.

The bright colors and elegant trim now seemed garish compared to my tastefully decorated clinic and cozy home overflowing with love and laughter. My true place in the world had become clear.

I need only stay strong a while longer until this brief obligation was fulfilled, then happiness awaited back where I belonged.