Chapter 123

"You have been accused of murdering Alina, the pack witch, how do you plead?"

Once again, Leila finds herself in the elders' chamber, in the midst of the same men who were ready to condemn her days ago without proof and now, sitting in the middle of their judgemental circle with twelve sets of eyes leering at her, she knows her fate is sealed.

Especially since Carmela has created proof, proof no one will let her see or defend herself against.

A gross injustice.

"Where is the Alpha?" Leila mutters weakly, counting her words. She is tired, hungry and thirsty.

"You are in no position to ask questions, Leila! How do you plead?" Trent barks at her but Leila doesn't cower.

Looking into the green eyes of the man who murdered her father in cold blood and whose daughter is hell bent on taking hers, she finds strength in the rage that boils through her.

"Until I am convicted, I am still your Luna and you will address me as such."

Though weak, her aura still powers through her commanding voice and Trent grits his teeth, fighting the pressure to obey any sort of commands from her but the muscles in his neck take a life of their own and he bares it to her, seething with a deep hatred in his eyes.

"The Alpha will not be joining us. Luna," Trent replies in a cold and

sarcastic tone, smirking at Leila.

"I don't believe y—" Leila is cut off by a sharp pang in her stomach and she clutches her arm around it. Fear and worry slice through her heart as she thinks of her baby.

'Please be safe,' she muses in trepidation.

"I don't believe you," she powers through the pain and replies.

Tatum is her only hope. He is the only one that would at least allow her to defend herself, he will not let them convict her unfairly.

She knows what to do to exonerate herself, she will ask him to put her under the Alpha command and question her, that way she can only tell the truth and he will see she is not lying but will that even work? She doesn't have her wolf.

Then she will ask him to put the man that lied she hired him under the command, surely he cannot lie then, that is what she will do.

A slight feeling of hope fills her as she concludes her course of action.

"His letter of absence," Elder Mason says, stands up and walks over to her, throwing a piece of paper on her lap.

Leila takes it, glancing up at the man with curiosity in her eyes before she slowly opens and reads the content.

A letter of absence, written in Tatum's very own handwriting, his signature big and bold at the end of the letter which gives the council full power over her trial, a right to convict and mete out judgement to her as they deemed fit.

The little hope she had in her heart burst into flame and its ashes, the residue of fear and horror replaced it in her heart.

Why would Tatum do this?

Does he really believe she did it?

She doesn't feel bad that he hasn't even come to see her since she has been locked up, maybe he does believe her to be responsible, Carmela must have fed him even more lies by now but what about their child, his heir?

Does he not care for it too?

"How do you plead?!" Trent raises his voice, jolting her attention back to them.

"Not guilty," Leila replies through gritted teeth, scowling at him, rage bursting through her chest.

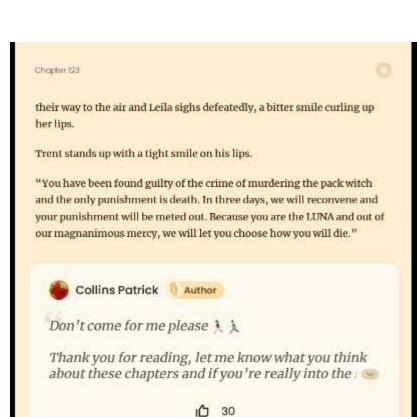
Tatum should be here. For all she knows, that letter is probably not real. Carmela has proven herself to be very crafty and so has her father.

In her desperation, she opens the mindlink to him but he blocks her immediately. She tries again but he does the same thing.

What has come over him?

"Very well. Now we will vote," Trent replies, "all those who find her guilty, signify with a show of hands."

Leila raises her head and he knows what is coming next. She can see her conviction in the cold eyes of the elders, their limbs itching to pass their unfair judgement on her as by one, slowly but surely, twelve hands find



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