Chapter 15

Cheers, jokes, smiles, laughter, everyone seems happy, everyone seems to be enjoying themselves, enjoying this lunch but not Leila, she is just stabbing her food, occasionally giving comments when she has to and keeping that placid yet fake smile on her face.

She used to be the centre of attention whenever she visited Alpha Darren, his questions and riddles to test people's wit used to be directed at her but now, it's like he doesn't even see her, no one sees her, not him, not his wife, not even her own husband.

"Saving Leila's life came as an instinct to me. I always thought I was going to be Luna since I was ten and I thought of it as my duty to save the life of a subject," Carmela replies to a question from Alpha Darren and the room goes silent, all eyes falling on Leila.

Leila keeps her head down, avoiding the many eyes leering at her, knowing Carmela just put her on the spot.

"But of course, Leila wasn't just any subject, she was also my best friend. I'm glad she's the one Tatum chose to be Luna, if it was anyone else, I would have fought them for my position once I returned," Carmela said in a light hearted tone bursting into laughter.

But it was only her laughing, no one else. Carmela may have meant that as a joke but it was very sensitive, she has no idea what Leila has had to endure, being seen as an impostor in that position.

Leila's heart lurches and she glances at Carmela, then at Tatum who holds a completely emotionless look in his eyes, sitting beside

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Carmela, while she, his wife, sits at the far end of the table.

"You should try the beef kebabs Carmi, they're very good," Tatum says to break the eerie silence that followed Carmela's joke, his cold eyes lighting up with affection as he put the food in Carmela's mouth with his hands.

Leila looks away, standing up from the table, feeling like the air is being sucked up from her lungs, the room becoming too small for her to exist in, her heart churning with pain, her mind clouded with worry.

"Excuse me," she mutters, briskly walking away from the room.

She makes her way to the garden, her favourite place in the mansion. Her late father was Alpha Darren's Beta and whenever they came here to visit before he died, Tatum would chase her around the garden until they both tumbled over and were covered in grass and dirt.

Here, they would lay on the green foliage, goofing around and talking about their wishes as adults.

Leila sniffs back her tears, remembering one such occasion when Tatum asked her if she thinks they would be mates and how that would make him happy, the little Alpha even said she would bear him a lot of children because he's an only child.

She runs her hand down her stomach. Is it really wise to get rid of the one she's carrying? She sobs, feeling a terrible pain seize her broken heart and she wipes her face with the back of her hand.

Why didn't she just get the mark? Why isn't she the phoenix Luna?

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"Leila," Carmela's voice comes from behind and Leila quickly wipes the rest of her tears, putting on a stoic look as she turns back to face Carmela.

"I'm sorry," Carmela says softly, approaching the concrete bench Leila is sitting on cautiously. "I shouldn't have made that joke. Believe me Leila, I have no intention whatsoever to take the title back from you."

Leila suddenly feels a wave of guilt wash through her, seeing Carmela's eyes coat with tears. The situation they are in is none of their faults, it is just life playing its cruel hand.

She forces a smile at Carmela, despite the nerve wracking pain tearing through her heart at the words she is about to utter. "You were born to be the Luna, I was just lucky to become her. If it comes to, I will willingly step aside for you."

"No..." Carmela rests her hand on Leila's thighs, giving it a gentle squeeze. "I don't want it, I just want to be home, to be among my friends and family, to feel safe, to never have to look over my shoulders."

A tear breaks free from Leila's eyes and she takes Carmela's hands in hers

"Forgive me Carmi, I've been a selfish friend. You must have been through a lot. I remember that day, when the rogue barged in, you charged up first and hurt your arm, I will always be gra-"

Leila can't finish her sentence, shocked to see Carmi's arm is smooth

