

Luna Graced | 21: Chapter 21

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ABIGAIL

Abby didn't protest when Roman—who felt as solid as a walking brick wall—carried her to his house instead of hers. They needed to talk, and if they truly were second-chance mates, then he was going to be protective.

When they arrived, their warrior escort quietly took their positions around the alpha's private residence, and Roman took her inside and set her down on a large couch.

He sniffed the air for threats, then shifted uncomfortably and cleared his throat. "What can I get you?"

Was the huge alpha *nervous*? "Tea, please."

"Bell's calming tea sound okay?" he asked from the kitchen as he put the kettle on.

"Yes. Thank you, Alpha." She smiled at him, and his wolf started to purr.

He walked back to her and looked her in the eye. "*Mate.*"

She blushed, but held his gaze. "Thank you, *mate.*"

He gave her a lopsided grin and blushed himself.

He *blushed!* She shook her head and smiled.

Roman left her just long enough to finish the tea. After he brought her a cup, he grabbed a beer and sat across from her in a large armchair.

"The Oracle says we are to trust the Moon Goddess."

"Yes, Alpha."

He growled.

"Roman..." She laughed softly and rolled her eyes. "*Mate.*"

“Better.” He rested his forearms on his thighs and leaned forward. “But how do you feel about all of this, Abby? We’ve been gifted to each other, but you do have a choice.”

“You’re a good man, a good alpha.” She took a sip of her tea.

“Strong...protective of your pack. You have been kind to me. Caring. Plus, you’re a beautiful man. I won’t deny that I find you attractive.”

She smiled when she heard his wolf purr. “I would be proud to have you as a mate. But you have a choice as well, Roman.”

ROMAN

Roman sighed and rubbed his forehead. “The Oracle can be cryptic, Abby, so it took me some time to sort things out. When she said you were dying because your mate hadn’t accepted you, I thought she was talking about Carson.

“But I understand now.” He looked up to meet her eyes. “I am the mate she was talking about. ~I~ am the mate that needed to accept you.

“And I do, Abby. I choose to accept you as my mate.

“I’m sorry I yelled at you about showering. And humming. It’s just...we have a connection even when the link is closed. I bit you on the wrist like everyone else, but this link goes beyond that.”

“You can hear me, even when I turn it off?”

“Yes. I have both heard and felt your grief. I’m sorry.” He wasn’t apologizing for listening, he was expressing sorrow for her pain.

She stiffened. “I don’t want you to accept me just because you feel sorry for me.”

“Abby...” He sighed. “Accepting you as my mate will save your life, but that’s not the only reason I want you. I saw you fight. You’re strong. Beautiful. And I saw how capable you are when you helped Bell in the kitchen.”

He chuckled. “It’s been a long time since our pack house ran so efficiently. You’ll make a perfect luna, and I was stupid not to see it right away. I was too caught up in the past.”

His voice cracked, but he kept going. He needed to make her understand.

“I feel sorry for you because *I care*. I don’t like to see anyone in my pack hurt, but I especially don’t want to see my mate hurt.

“If you think I’m like that arrogant young pup and can’t see the gift in front of me, then we need to talk, because I’m not going to give you up.”

Abby nodded, but she had a worried crease between her brows. “We know nothing of each other, Roman. We don’t know if we even like each other.”

“We have plenty of time to learn all that because you’re moving in here.” He drained his beer and let his wolf puff out his chest.

“I beg your pardon?” She narrowed her eyes. “I am not.”

“You’re moving in here and that’s final.”

She growled at him. “I want my own room.”

“No. I need you close to me.”

He paused, aware how harsh he sounded. He needed to slow down and explain.

“Abby...my protectiveness is off the charts right now because you’re my second-chance mate and a graced luna. The Oracle thinks your health might be exacerbating it as well.”

She sighed. “We don’t have to live together to learn about each other, Roman.”

“True. And under any other circumstances, I’d say we could take as much time as we need to get to know each other. But we might not have much time. You’re a graced luna, and you need to be mated or you’ll die.”

His voice deepened into a guttural growl. “I didn’t find you just to lose you so soon.”

If Abby knew he was thinking about Remi and his pup, she didn’t say so. She was quiet for a moment, then nodded.

“Okay. But I’m pure, Roman, and...I wish to remain pure. I’ve never lived with a man before.”

He was so happy to hear this his purr crescendoed. He grinned when she blushed. “I’m pleased, mate.”

“Roman!”

His expression turned serious. “I want you to feel comfortable here, Abby. I want my home to be your home. If we’re going to build a life together, we have to start now.”

He wanted time to woo her, but for the sake of her health, they needed to commit to their matehood right away.

“Besides,” he said with a wink, “how else am I supposed to get you to like me enough to let me kiss you?”

“It might help if you didn’t act like an overbearing jerk!”

He growled at her, and she growled back.

Roman could sense his warriors shifting outside at hearing the luna growl, so he sent them a message through the link to stand down before returning his attention to Abby.

“Would you have dinner with me tonight, Luna?”

ABIGAIL

She opened and closed her mouth as her wolf nudged her to accept. Letting out an exasperated sigh, she finally said, “Yes, Alpha, thank you.”

Roman sniffed the air and growled, and when a knock followed, he lunged toward the door.

“Alpha, it’s Rye and Bell!” she heard Rye call out right before Roman threw open the door. “We’ve brought Abby’s things as requested.”

Abby stood up. “Roman! You had them pack my things before you even asked me?”

“Yes,” he growled, and she felt him trying to push his alpha power over her through the link.

But she didn’t bow or bare her neck. Instead, she growled back and flashed her eyes.

“Alpha...Abby...,” Rye said calmly. “Let’s just take a deep breath. Abby, you need to understand that the alpha just wants to protect you.”

“I showed the alpha—and the master warriors—that I’m more than capable of protecting myself,” Abby snapped.

“Until you couldn’t and had to be taken to the hospital,” Rye gently reminded her.

The fight drained out of her, and she bowed her head. Roman reached out and pulled her to him.

“I lost my mate and unborn pup,” he said, his lips against her hair. “So I won’t apologize for wanting to protect you, my second chance, my gift. You’re my *mate*, Abby.”

She felt the vibrations of his purr against her cheek and looked up at him.

“Thank you, Bell, and thank you, Gamma Rye,” she said quietly as she gazed into her mate’s glowing eyes.

“You’re welcome,” Rye said, and Abby glanced back at them.

Bell winked. “Please call if you need anything.”

Then the two grabbed hands and slipped quietly out the door.

ROMAN

When Roman brought Abby’s things straight into the master bedroom, he noted her dramatic eye roll. But since she didn’t say anything, he ignored it.

Half his closet was empty and the space around the second sink in the bathroom was bare, reminding him he’d been only living in half measures since he lost his mate.

As if the half-moon in the center of his chest wasn’t reminder enough.

He pointed out which drawers Abby could use and sat at the desk in his room, spinning the chair around to watch her unpack. He purred his pleasure as she set a makeup caddy on the bathroom counter, making herself at home.

When she popped open her last suitcase, he spied something lacy and rumbled in appreciation. Warmth and happiness flowed through the link as he continued to watch her.

As she rummaged, a pale pink bra strap slipped over the side, and he shot to his feet and hovered over her. He touched the strap, and started purring so loud the windows rattled.

He grinned when he saw the back of her neck turn red.

Then black lace caught his eye, and his hand shot out and snatched it. He had to restrain his wolf from sniffing the delicate lace panties in his large hand.

“Roman...” Abby lowered her head, and he growled in approval as he moved his nose along her bare nape.

“I like these.”

“I can tell.”

Gently pulling on the pale pink strap revealed a simple cotton bra. He growled even louder. “I like this.”

“I wouldn’t have guessed.”

ABIGAIL

As she watched Roman pull out one delicate piece after another, each one earning approving rumbles and glowing eyes, she felt a flutter in her stomach and a warmth spread through her body.

This was her mate. Her second chance. Her savior.

Her alpha.

Heat rose inside her at the sight of his big hands stroking her underthings. She hadn’t packed anything imagining anyone would ever see it, but he even seemed to like the plain cotton panties she wore to work out.

He turned toward her—his eyes aglow, panting a little—and her breath caught.

His scent washed over her, and when she caught a hint of his arousal, her wolf surged, causing her to strain toward him.

But Roman took a step back.

She felt a sharp pain in her chest, but then realized he was protecting her still. Honoring her request to remain pure.

Still, she couldn't help but imagine what it would be like to kiss him...touch him...be marked as his...

“Go shower,” he growled suddenly. “I’ll start dinner.”

“Are you sure, Alpha? I’ll have to use...*soap*.”

“*Abigail*.” He raked a hand through his hair, then turned and walked out of the room, shutting the door firmly behind him.

She took her time in the shower, aware of the link still joining them as she ran soapy hands over her naked, wet skin. With every touch, she felt him sensing her, responding.

Deliberately, she moved her fingertips over her belly, then lower, between her legs. When she heard—and felt—a roar from the kitchen, she giggled. But it became a gasp when she felt the push of his power run through her.

Her life was about to change forever.