

Luna Graced | 24: Chapter 24

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ROMAN

Abby withdrew from him suddenly, her eyes clouded with concern.

“I’d like to talk to the Oracle, Roman. I don’t know what to expect with a second-chance mate and marking each other. What if it doesn’t work?”

He frowned. “What do you mean?”

“What if I still...die?” Her voice trembled and her eyes filled with tears. “What if being rejected as a graced luna means I don’t get a second chance?”

Roman pulled her onto his lap and held her close. “The Oracle would have told us. She can interpret what the Moon Goddess intends.”

She pressed her face to his chest and cried as he stroked her hair. He hated the sound of her weeping. He wanted to chase away any fears she might have.

She sniffled against him. “But what if you change your mind about being mates?”

His heart hurt for her, for the betrayal she’d already faced. “I promise you that won’t happen. I will protect you, Abby. I’ll be loyal to you.”

When she pulled away to look into his eyes, he was glad to see hope shining through the tears. He brushed a soft kiss over her lips, then deepened it, until Abby pulled away with a shy smile.

“Yes, Alpha,” she said softly, “I’d like us to mark each other.”

Joy rushed through him at her words. She not only wanted him to mark her, she wanted to mark him too.

He nosed the hollow of her neck. “If you’re feeling up to it...do you want to let your wolf out and we can run back to our house?”

“I’d love to.”

He jumped up and whistled for one of the guards, linking a request for him to grab their things after they'd shifted and drive the truck back.

He held up the blanket for Abby while she stripped and shifted, then disrobed and shifted himself.

He shook out his fur and chuffed at Abby, and she trotted over to him and lay on her belly. His wolf nipped her ear, and they took off running.

The guards kept their distance while Roman and Abby played and chased each other all the way back to his house. They were both exhausted and happy when they arrived.

He shifted back first, while Abby sat on her haunches with her back turned to him, and grabbed a towel from a bin on the front porch and wrapped it around his waist. Then he held up a large bath sheet for her.

He bared his teeth at the guards, who had the good sense to turn their backs when she started to shift, and gently wrapped her up in the towel when she was done.

Together, they went into the house.

"Hungry?" he asked.

"Yes. Are you?"

"Starving." He started to purr. He liked seeing her wrapped up in nothing but a towel.

She smiled. "May I make you something to eat, Alpha?"

"I'd like that." He moved closer to her, and she tipped her face up for another kiss. Slower this time. Reluctantly, he pulled away. "I need a shower."

She lifted one brow. "I'll allow you to use soap."

He growled and grabbed her, and she started giggling.

"Sassy woman." He kissed her under the jaw. "I'll be out in a few minutes."

ABIGAIL

Abby eyed Roman's gigantic frame as he stalked across the large bedroom and into the bathroom, admiring his broad shoulders, tapered back, and the tribal tattoos on his muscular arms.

She began to pull out clean lounge pants and T-shirts for them both, but paused when she heard the shower start. He'd looked good in that towel, and she imagined he looked even better without it...

Blushing, she laid their clothes out on the bed, and as she did, her eyes fell on her phone.

She picked it up and frowned, realizing she still hadn't heard from her parents. She texted them quickly again, then took the phone into the kitchen, where she found some steaks in the refrigerator and set to work prepping them.

After searching the kitchen, she found some potatoes and popped them into the oven to bake. She checked her phone again. Still no answer.

Her heart twisted. Were her parents ignoring her? Or worse, had something happened to them?

ROMAN

As Roman dressed in the clothes Abby had set out for him, he noticed a bit of black lace peeking out from beneath her own pile of clothes. He grinned.

The sooner they saw the Oracle, the better.

The smell of raw beef drifted toward him, and his stomach rumbled as he made his way into the kitchen.

She was still wearing a towel.

He let out a low whistle. "I like your idea of an apron."

It had been many years since he'd let himself even *look* at another woman, but he could feel his blood pumping to all the right places. And he could smell a hint of her own arousal—urged on by his.

ABIGAIL

"Alpha!" Abby scolded as heat rose to her cheeks. His appraisal excited her but also made her feel shy.

She knew being mates meant they'd share more than a few kisses, and she couldn't stop imagining his big, naked body pressed to hers.

"I am very much appreciating the view, and I'm not going to deny it." He leaned against the pantry cabinets and crossed his arms. "Thank you for setting out my clothes."

Abby chewed on her lip, trying to suppress a nervous laugh. "You're welcome. I'm just going to go take a quick shower while the potatoes bake."

Roman took a step toward her and she jumped, dancing around the island and out of his reach.

She could still hear him laughing as she shut and locked the bathroom door. She buried her face in her towel and let loose a stream of anxious giggles.

As she turned on the water, she was reminded of the other times she'd been in the shower. Hmm. Maybe she should engage in some more light teasing?

But then she remembered the passionate glow in his gaze and decided against it. Teasing the alpha would only get her into trouble—even if it was the good kind—and she wasn't quite ready for that.

A shiver tickled her as she felt him nudging through the link, trying to connect with her. But she ignored him. He'd be able to feel her nervousness—and her desire.

She finished as quickly as she could and got out.

ROMAN

When Abby emerged from the master bedroom, Roman was on the phone with the Oracle, a beer in his hand.

He winked, then sniffed the air to see if she'd put on the black lace.

Aha! He flashed his eyes at her, then rumbled in happiness at her blush when she realized what he was responding to.

"Thank you, Oracle," he said, his eyes still on Abby. "We'll see you in a bit." He ended the call.

"Everything okay?" Abby started fussing around in the kitchen.

“I asked if we could see her after dinner.”

“Good. I’m a little nervous about what she has to say.” She looked at her phone, which was sitting on the counter. “Alpha...I haven’t heard from my parents. Would you please try calling them?”

“Absolutely. Let’s call them now.” He pulled out his own phone and tapped the contact for her dad, who picked up on the first ring.

“Alpha Luko! Is everything okay? We haven’t been able to get ahold of Abby.”

“She’s right here, Warrior Michael. I’ll put you on speaker.”

Abby rushed over, drying her hands on a dishtowel, and sat down on the couch next to him.

“Dad! Are you and Mom okay? I’ve been worried.”

Roman grumbled. He hadn’t realized Abby was worried. He reached out with his free arm and pulled her into him.

“We’re okay—but worried about you. Your number was saying it wasn’t accepting calls.”

“I’ve been texting you and Mom since I got here!”

“I wonder if they’ve blocked your number on the pack phones,” Michael growled.

Roman was pissed. What the fuck was Pack Oru up to, keeping her from talking to her parents? “We’ll get Abby a new number so you can get in touch with her directly, but I’ll give you the lines to the pack house and my office as well.

“Don’t hesitate to call me. And please, accept my apologies, Warrior Michael. I should have realized something was wrong.”

“No apologies necessary, Alpha Roman. But we have a lot to talk about. Privately.”

That certainly piqued his interest. “Let’s plan to talk after you’re done catching up with Abby. I’d like to speak with you and Warrior Fiona together.”

“Yes, Alpha.”

He handed Abby his phone and kissed the side of her head, then grabbed the steaks and went out to the back deck to start the grill. The steaks were just about done when she appeared at the sliding glass doors, waving at him to come in.

He checked the steaks, then slid the thick slabs of meat onto a platter and brought them inside.

“I really do like it here,” he heard her say to her parents. “And I think you will too. The lands are beautiful. And...I have Alpha Roman here now.”

She handed him the phone and busied herself with setting the table and putting out the rest of the food.

He put it back on speaker. “Warriors Fiona and Michael,” he said, keeping his gaze on Abby. “I, Alpha Roman Luko, formally request your blessing and permission to mark your daughter, Abigail, and take her as my second-chance mate.”

Abby gasped, and the plate in her hands fell to the floor with a clatter.