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ABIGAIL

Abby hovered by the window, watching Roman look at something on Bell.

"Do you feel okay, sweetheart?"

She felt her mom's hand brush her shoulder. "I'm tired, but that's normal. I'm just worried about Bell."

Roman signaled for her to come out while nudging her in the link. "*Mate, bring parents.*"

"Mom, Dad...Roman wants us to come outside."

They stepped out onto the porch just as Logan and Mara walked up with the Oracle, who was wearing her seer's robes.

Abby's parents both dropped to a knee, threw one arm across their chests, and lowered their heads.

ROMAN

As soon as Roman realized Fiona and Michael were kneeling for the Oracle, he gestured for Logan and Rye to stand beside him, as they did for formal occasions. Bell and Mara stood off to the side, smiling. Abby stayed with her parents.

The Oracle stepped forward and put her hands on the heads of the kneeling warriors.

"Michael and Fiona Canaver." Her eyes misted over while everyone stood quietly. "I see where Luna Abigail gets her fierce warrior blood." She stood back as they got to their feet.

Michael spoke first. "Oracle, it is an honor."

"I am very humbled," Fiona sounded flustered, something Roman had never heard from her.

They kept their heads bowed until Roman cleared his throat. "Would everyone like to come in for coffee?"

The others nodded and started for the house, but Fiona and Michael lagged behind with Roman and the Oracle. They kept stealing glances at her.

"Your bloodlines are blessed," she said to them. "You're both direct descendants of original warriors." Then she smiled and walked past them, leaving them temporarily speechless.

"I believe I'll need something stronger than coffee," Michael eventually mumbled, and Roman laughed.

ROMAN

Roman took his place at the head of the table, and the Oracle sat at the opposite end. While everyone else found their seats, Abby brewed coffee and Mara cut and served the cake.

It was nice to see Logan's mate outside her home and looking so happy.

When everyone had cake, coffee or whiskey in front of them, Abby and Mara sat down and the Oracle spoke.

"As we move closer to the marking, these pulses will get more frequent. It is the Moon Goddess healing Abby and using her to heal the pack. The alpha is adding to that power with his strength, which is why the projection is much stronger."

Roman could hear Mara weeping softly as Logan purred beside her. "I'm sorry," she sniffed. "These are tears of happiness. I feel hope for the first time in two years."

"And my scar is gone. Completely gone." Bell bared her neck again, while Rye held her other hand.

The Oracle nodded sagely. "All of it comes from Abigail and her enhanced strength."

Roman could feel Abby's joy at their words but also her discomfort. He knew it still overwhelmed her that she was a graced luna. "But it seems to happen randomly," he said.

The Oracle laughed. "It's not random, Alpha. It's the connection, the bond building. As you and Abigail get closer, it will only get stronger. And when you're physically joined, the results could be explosive."

Roman nudged Abby through the link.

"You hear that? Physically joined. Explosive."

Abby's cheeks flamed, and he winked at her. He loved how easily she blushed.

Michael and Fiona gripped hands. "Should we be worried about what could happen to her?" Fiona asked hesitantly. "No disrespect meant, Alpha Roman. We know you intend to protect our daughter."

"But this is uncharted territory," Michael added.

The Oracle's intense violet eyes met everyone else's in turn. "There hasn't been a graced luna in so many years, I cannot say exactly what will happen.

"But I do know that the Moon Goddess holds Abigail in her loving hands, and we have to trust her."

Roman nodded. "Thank you, Oracle."

She held his eyes, and he knew she was thinking about their history, how they'd saved each other, and this pack, together. "It is my pleasure to serve, Alpha."

The cake was demolished—with Roman doing more than his fair share—and more drinks were poured. Light banter dominated the rest of the conversation.

Logan and Rye were particularly interested in the Canavers coming to train, and they got into a lively discussion with Abby's parents about technique.

Fiona held court as she explained a technique that Abby had used during training, and the Oracle just sat back and observed, her glittering eyes missing nothing.

Roman noticed Abby's eyes were drooping. The pulses she'd been putting out to all of them were taking their toll. He stood.

"Thank you all for coming to share your joyous news. We are truly blessed."

He held out his hand to Abby, and her answering pulse felt like sunshine. He could tell the others felt it too—and the entire pack. Abby took his hand and stood, wobbling on her feet.

"We need to get you to bed," he told her.

Abby's parents spent a few quiet moments with the Oracle, then his leadership left with their mates, with promises of meeting in the morning, and escorted the Canavers and the Oracle home.

Abby left to get ready for bed, and Roman kept watch until he received word that everyone was safely home and the guards were switched out. Satisfied, he closed up the house.

ABIGAIL

Abby could hardly keep her eyes open.

She nudged Roman through the link to come to bed, and as her soul reached for his, she curled on her side and waited for him to join her.

When Roman finally slipped into bed behind her and pulled her close, she sighed happily.

Being held by him was the best feeling in the world.

As she heard his breathing slow and deepen, she felt herself relax as well. She and Roman were so connected, she could even sense his dreams as they both drifted into sleep.

And then—she sensed something else.

Someone else.