

The Luna's Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 181

Chapter 29: Ayla

The rest of the evening went by flawlessly My dress was ruined. but it didn't seem to phase anyone Theo and I stayed occupied for the remainder of the reception I didn't want to take anything away from Mina and Briggs, but there were a lot of people in attendance who hadn't met me formally yet and wouldn't take no for an answer. We made sure to meet them off to the side throughout the evening, so the focus remained primarily on the happy couple.

We left the banquet hall a little before midnight and went to the garden, where we watched Mina and Briggs say their vows to the goddess. I may have teared up a time or two. The whole experience was so beautiful and I couldn't be happier for either of them.

After Mina and Briggs had left, Theo and I said goodbye to all the guests. We were sending the last few people off when Grace came up to us.

"You two get out of here," she said. "The staff can handle the cleanup."

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Yes, of course," she said "I'll make sure everything is in order. We won't be far behind you"

She gave us both a hug, and Theo took my hand, guiding me back into the packhouse I leaned against his shoulder as we walked, fatigue setting in We were both quiet as we returned to our apartment. Now that the excitement and anticipation of the day were over, I started to dwell on what happened with Julia Neale earlier.

"What are you thinking about?" Theo whispered in my as he held me in the elevator.

"That I made trouble for you with your business," I sighed. "That whole mess with Julia wasn't a good thing."

“Don’t waste any time worrying about that, babe,” Theo said firmly as we exited the elevator. “Her behavior was absolutely unacceptable. I won’t let her get away with that blatant disrespect.”

“But if her uncle is so powerful...”

“Her uncle is a strict traditionalist,” Theo interrupted. “She may be spoiled, but he takes authority very seriously. Malcolm is only a Delta within their pack, and Julie doesn’t hold a rank at all. He won’t put up with her insulting someone of a higher rank, let alone the Luna of the largest pack in the country.”

“Well, I’m not technically the Luna yet,” I said.

“The title transfer is a formality,” he insisted. “No one sees you as anything less than our Luna. She will be punished, Ayla.”

“I’d prefer just to never have to see her again,” I said bitterly.

“That can absolutely be arranged.” Theo opened our door and led me inside. “It shouldn’t be an issue regardless. I will make sure she loses her job in the company.”

“I don’t know if we need to go that far.”

Theo stopped and gave me a stern look. “That’s the least that will be done. By right, I could have sent her home without her tongue. I will not allow anyone to treat you that way, let alone a woman like her.”

“Okay, okay,” I said, wrapping my arms around his waist. “Calm down. I get it. Even I can admit that smacking her around a bit was pretty tempting earlier.”

Theo chuckled. “I would love to see that happen.”

“Just not tonight,” I chided. “I’m exhausted.”

“I second that,” he said, taking my hand again and dragging me to the bedroom. As soon as we were there, he started taking the pins and ties out of my hair. “Tomorrow, we’re spending the whole day in bed.”

I groaned as his fingers tugged through my hair gently. Then his hands slid my dress off my shoulders.

“Your Beta will be on his honeymoon, babe,” I said regretfully. “I think we’ll need to be around.”

“It’s Sunday,” Theo stated. “My parents can handle any immediate concerns.”

“And the rogues in the cellar?”

“Fully sedated and will remain so,” he replied. “We agreed to make us a priority. I’m enforcing that right now.”

I wasn’t about to argue with that. We both needed time to unwind after the ridiculous week we had. So, I gave in as he guided me to the bed. He pulled the covers down before laying me down slowly. He undressed and climbed in with me, pulling the blankets up over us.

“Did you enjoy the ceremony?” he asked as I snuggled up to him.

“I did,” I replied with a yawn. “It was beautiful.”

“I can’t wait for ours,” he told me.

I hadn’t been able to think much about ours lately, but now that he mentioned it, I was excited about it as well. My fingers trailed along the muscles of his back as I reveled in the feel of him. He had been so supportive and helpful to Briggs and Mina the past two days. More times than I could count, I found myself stopping to admire how amazing he was. I loved him so much. The thought of sharing that with our pack was exhilarating.

My lips found his. I pressed in closer as he wrapped his arms tightly around me. He groaned as I deepened the kiss, wanting more of him. He rolled me onto my back, his hand moving down my body as his erection hardened against my belly.

“You know I love you, right?” I breathed.

“I hope so,” he replied with a gentle grin. “Because you mean everything to me, Ayla.”

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Chapter 30: Ayla

Sunday had been amazing and exactly what both Theo and I needed. We spent most of the day talking. It was like our first days together. Before everyone knew about us, and we were just Theo and Ayla getting to know each other better.

But Monday came around, and it was time to return to real life.

Maggie was with me in my classes today, which was even more pleasant than I had expected. It wasn't just because we got along so well. I no longer felt like I was drawing so much attention. Maggie wasn't supposed to appear as a bodyguard, and she didn't. She blended right in as a fellow student. I had missed a couple of classes the week before, which I felt guilty enough about since it was the first week of the semester. But not feeling like eyes were on me allowed me to catch up in my first class quickly. I expected the same for Professor Armand's class as we entered.

We weren't the first to arrive by far, but we were still a few minutes early. Like I had with Jimmy, I let Maggie pick our seats to choose the most advantageous position. She picked the same general area that Jimmy had, and I smiled to myself. We took out our textbooks and laptops and were discussing an upcoming assignment when a familiar voice made my skin crawl.

"I guess I shouldn't be surprised to see you here," Amy said from behind my shoulder. "You really are so jealous of Kylee that you just stole her entire life."

Maggie hadn't even realized she was talking to me until I glanced over my shoulder.

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"Hello, Amy," I said casually. "I didn't realize you were in this class."

"Stealing her mate wasn't enough. You had to steal her education, too?" she hissed.

Maggie started to turn around.

'Don't.' I mind-linked her. 'It's not worth it. I'm not even bothered.'

'Who the hell is that?' she replied. 'And is she really talking to you?'

'Her name is Amy, and unfortunately, yes,' I told her. 'She's a friend of my sister's. Just ignore her.'

Professor Armand entered the lecture hall and greeted everyone. He was in an energetic mood, as usual. He jumped into the lesson for the day, and I was intrigued as he started to talk about ancient architecture. I remembered it was the professor's research that had helped Briggs find Randy's underground hideout.

I packed up and approached Professor Armand's desk when the class was over.

"Hey, Professor," I said cheerily. "Thanks again for sending the information I missed last week. I really am sorry I missed the classes."

“Not a problem at all, Luna,” he said with a smile.

“Alpha Theo and I would like to invite you to the packhouse this evening,” I said. “I know we talked about you helping us look into some information. If you think you can spare the time, we’d love to get you introduced to the project.”

His face lit up. “I would be delighted.”

“Wonderful,” I said. “We’ll meet you at the packhouse café at seven if

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that works for you?”

“Sounds perfect,” he confirmed.

Maggie and I headed out of the lecture hall and started to make our way to my car.

“Are you guys going to tell the professor about the rogues tonight?” Maggie asked as I started the engine.

“Most likely,” I said. “We’ll show him the cellar and what we’ve gotten from the investigation so far. But we mostly want him to look at the books my father left me. I’ve learned some stuff, but it’s a lot to go through, and I just don’t think I’ll have the time to do it all on my own.”

“I can help you some, too,” Maggie said.

“Thanks, Mags,” I replied with a smile.

We were quiet for a few minutes until Maggie spoke again.

“So... who was that Amy chick and why was she being such a bitch?”

I sighed. “She’s a close friend of my sister, Kylee. Obviously, Kylee didn’t take the break-up with Theo well, and it didn’t help that he was my mate. I guess she still hasn’t accepted that I’m not the bad guy in that situation.”

“You know I can’t let her talk to you like that again?” Maggie said sternly.

I shook my head. “Really, don’t even acknowledge her. I never really liked her to begin with, so what she thinks about me doesn’t mean anything. And we can’t risk you blowing your cover on her account. She’s no real threat. She probably won’t even bother with me after

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today.

“I don’t know,” Maggie said slowly. “Something seemed off about her. Not just her stupidity for disrespecting her Luna.”

I laughed. “Yeah, that ‘off’ feeling isn’t anything new. Kylee brought her home her freshman year, and I didn’t like her back then. But she was strangely devoted to Kylee. So her behavior now isn’t that shocking.”

“Well, I won’t make a scene about it if she tries to say something again,” Maggie stated. “But I will have it addressed. And I’ll have to tell Alpha about it.”

“I know,” I conceded. “I’m not going to stop you. But don’t worry about it unless she harasses me again. Dirty looks on campus don’t count. After our last encounter, I doubt she’ll do anything out in the open.”

“Wait...” Maggie perked up. “Is she the one you beat up in the packhouse lobby a while ago?”

I groaned. “I didn’t beat her up,” I said. “I just put her in her place. Or at least, I thought I did. Obviously, she’s had enough time to wallow over it.”

“Don’t worry, Luna,” Maggie assured me. “I’m not going to let her bother you.”

“Thanks, Maggie.”

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Chapter 31: Theo

“So, does it seem doable to you?” I ask Harmon.

“Yeah, I don’t see there being too many issues,” he replied, checking the blueprints in his hands. “We’ll want to start digging here first to ensure we can go deep enough without damaging the original foundation structure.”

“That was the plan I had laid out.” I confirmed. “I’m already putting a list together of employees to vet. How long do you think the project will take?”

“Maybe a month at the most,” Harmon said. “We’ll know better once we know what’s beneath here.”

We needed a less conspicuous way to access the cellar. I had thought about installing a private elevator from the Alpha’s wing, but there wasn’t a way to make that work without attracting attention and rumors. So, with Harmon’s help, we settled on renovating one of the houses next to the packhouse and tunneling over. We’ll turn the house into an office building with restricted access to the tunnel.

“Good,” I said. “I’ll let you know when we’re ready to move forward.” We headed for the cellar exit. “What did Malcolm want to speak with you about on Saturday?”

Harmon sighed heavily. “He’s been pressuring me to bring on a new - stonework company. I keep telling him we’re not interested. But even if I wasn’t happy with the craftsmen we already have, the crew he wants us to go with is questionable at best.”

“Who does he want us to switch to?” I asked with concern.

“It’s a group out of Shadow Claw territory,” he said knowingly. “The manager has some connection to a high-ranking pack member, and they’ve been trying to use their influence to build business.”

“By paying Malcolm to pressure his clientele to use them,” I guessed grimly.

Harmon nodded. “Seems so. However, I asked around, and he’s only approached companies that are handling pack projects.”

“Seriously?” That was suspicious. Pack projects could often mean higher budgets, but there was always competition from private developers. “Send me the information.”

“You’re not thinking about...”

“No, of course not,” I assured him. “I want to look into the company and see what they’re up to.”

I had just returned to my office to start preparations when my phone rang. I checked the ID and ground my teeth.

“Hello, Delta Charles,” I greeted.

Delta Charles Anderson was Malcolm and Julia’s uncle. I was expecting this call after what happened over the weekend. I would have contacted him first thing that morning, but I wanted to allow him the opportunity to reach out. Mostly because I was curious to see how Julia would spin the incident to get her way.

“Alpha Theo,” Charles replied. “I hope to find you well this morning.”

“I’m doing quite well,” I said happily. “I hope the same goes for you.”

“Well, I wish I could say that, Alpha,” he said. “I received your message requesting to speak with me. I’m assuming it concerns the altercation that occurred while my niece and nephew attended an event in your territory this weekend.”

“Crashed,” I interjected. “They crashed an event in my territory this weekend.”

“I see,” he continued. “However, I’m not sure that constitutes the poor treatment Julia received.”

“Ah, yes, that,” I said sternly. “I’m guessing she informed you of exactly what happened.”

“I understand that your mate is new to her position, Alpha, but our pack does not condone insulting guests, let alone having them manhandled and thrown out by security for defending themselves.”

I chuckled bitterly. “I’m afraid Julia neglected some vital information in her story. Well, actually,” I backtracked, “she has downright lied to you. So, Delta Charles, I’m wondering if your pack condones attacking another pack’s Luna. Because ours certainly does not. And if it wasn’t for my Luna being so

forgiving – despite her inexperience, as you pointed out – your niece wouldn't be safe at home right now."

Charles was silent for a moment.

"Would you mind explaining?" he finally responded.

"After I turned down Julia's inappropriate advances, yet again, she decided to insult my mate," I said forcefully. "When Ayla stepped in to stop me from acting on my very justified anger, your niece not only continued to insult her but threw a drink at my Luna. I think you can agree that having security escort her out was the best outcome she could have hoped for."

"He's lying, Uncle," I heard Julia's voice in the background. "That bitch came after me."

"Quiet," Charles snapped at her.

"Delta Charles," I continued, emphasizing his title, "I have a banquet hall full of witnesses. Not that I need them."

"Julia will issue a formal apology to your Luna immediately," Charles said urgently.

"It's too late for that, Charles," I said. "She had an opportunity to accept accountability, and she is still choosing to slander and disrespect my Luna. She is no longer welcome in my territory. I suggest you think about having such a contemptuous employee representing your company. In fact, if you intend to continue to do business with me, Delta, I want her fired. She doesn't belong in a position that exposes others to her depraved behavior."

"Uncle, no," Julia whined.

"Shut up," Charles spat at her. "Get out."

"Uncle..."

"Now," he yelled. There was a pause and I heard the sound of a door slam. "Alpha, I understand you are upset, but think twice before you tell me how to run my company."

"I'm not telling you how to run your company," I retorted. "I'm telling you how to wrangle your family, Charles. Now, you can fire her and keep her away

from my Lunce and my territory. Or I can reach out to Alpha Anthony and discuss a fitting punishment with him. And for the sake of transparency, this conversation is a courtesy thanks to my forgiving and kind-hearted mate, Charles. If I bring this to Alpha Anthony, I will have no problem relaying the punishment I think she deserves.”

“That won’t be necessary, Alpha,” Charles replied bitterly. “I will inform Julia of her termination shortly. Please accept my apologies for her behavior.”

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Chapter 32: Theo

I was satisfied with how the call went. However, I was kind of hoping Charles would have continued to protest so I could bring this to Anthony. If it were up to me. I’d have Julia groveling at Ayla’s feet before I was through with her. But I suppose that was fueled by my general dislike of her. As Ayla so gracefully pointed out, she didn’t do any real harm, and the rest of the evening was still perfect. I still felt better knowing that she would suffer some consequences for her actions.

Now that that had been addressed, I moved on to my next project.

It was a side project that I knew I probably shouldn’t get started on with everything else going on. We still hadn’t gotten that far with the Waar Pak investigation and had the rogues to deal with. But I was too damn excited. I had a perfect opportunity fall into my lap and couldn’t pass it up.

Now, I just had to hope I could keep it from Ayla until I was ready Charles Anderson

I called Julia back into my office. I sat behind my desk with my hands steeped before me, eager to hear what she had to say next.

“Uncle Charles,” she said as she entered, shutting the door behind her and taking a seat.

“You threw a drink at her?” I asked angrily.

She huffed, crossing her arms over her chest. "She annoyed me, acting like she's so high and mighty."

"She is," I snapped. "Regardless of anything else, she is a Luna. I hope you don't show this kind of behavior with any of the other pack leaders."

"I got the information you needed, didn't I?" she snarled. "She commanded me. Just like you thought."

Excitement washed through me. I knew she was different. As soon as I saw her at the Alpha's Gathering. But we needed confirmation, and it proved harder than we expected to get to her in Sablemane. Then she was gone. I knew she was bound to resurface soon. With all the Alpha's reactions to her, there was no way she would drop off the radar again.

But Alpha Theo wasn't at the Gathering this year. So when I heard the news that he had found his mate, I wasn't sure it was her. When

Malcolm described her after their first meeting. I knew we had to get confirmation, and this was it.

"Good." I replied. "I'd say job well done. However, that would be a lie. seeing how you botched the job and now can't get anywhere near Theo or his Luna. Oh, and you're fired."

"What?" Julia bellowed, jumping out of her chair. "Uncle, you cannot be serious? Over that little whore..."

"You will watch your mouth, young lady," I yelled "She acts like she's better than you because she is And who are you calling a whore You throw yourself at any ranking pack member with a pulse You better pray that your brother manages to stay under the radar, or losing your job will be the least of your concerns"

"What did you expect me to do? Walk up and ask her to command me?" she whined.

"There were better ways," I growled.

"Whatever," she mumbled. "And she is a little tramp. Alpha Theo was supposed to be mated to her own sister. From what I hear, she waltzed in and stole him right out from under her without a second thought."

My head snapped up.

“There’s a sister?” I asked urgently.

Julia shrugged. “Apparently. Some little twit followed us out of the pack house and approached me at the car. Seems not everyone is as taken with Theo’s precious new mate as he thinks.”

“This girl told you there was a sister?” I insisted. “Where is she now?”

“She didn’t know. She tried to imply that Ayla made her disappear.” Julia rolled her eyes. “After that kind of humiliation, I suspect she’s off somewhere hiding in a hole.”

“Did you get a name for this girl or the sister?”

“I think she said the sister’s name was Kylee,” Julia replied. “I didn’t really care about who the girl was. So no, I didn’t catch her name.”

I growled my dislike for my niece’s incompetence.

“She gave me her number, though,” I added, fidgeting uncomfortably “I think I can find it.”

“You do that,” I snarled. “And send it to me when you do. I may just be able to salvage the mess you made. Now, get out

Julia stood up with a huff and stormed out of my office. I’m sure her mother would be calling to give me an earful but I couldn’t care less. Honestly, I wasn’t all that concerned about firing the little brat. Family or not.

But at least it wasn’t a total loss.

Now that I know there is a sister, we can use that. Especially if the story is true and she’s feeling the betrayal of her sister taking her mate.

I’ll have to track down this Kylee. And soon.

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Chapter 33: Ayla

I spent the last two evenings going through my dad's box with Professor Armand. He was very impressed and excited about the selection of books. I didn't show him Harry's notebook just yet. There were some references that I had deciphered that I wasn't sure about, and I wanted to see if we could find the information by chance.

I met Maggie in the packhouse lobby on Wednesday to head to campus. I was feeling a little anxious, but I didn't know why. Dasha seemed to be feeling it, too, as she paced in my head. I asked her what was up.

'Mate,' she whined.

It had only been a few hours since we saw him after training that morning. He was in a great mood, so I didn't know what could be stressing her. But to assuage her concern and mine, I reached out to Theo through the mind-link.

'I'm heading to class, babe. Everything okay?'

'Yeah, all is good here, love. I have to run an errand out of town, but I should be back in a couple hours,' he replied. I could feel excitement pulsing through our connection. 'Have a good day at class.'

'It's a good errand, I'm guessing?' I followed up.

'It's a great errand,' he said almost giddily. 'I'll tell you about it tonight'

'Okay, just be careful,' I said. 'Dasha's a bit anxious this morning. She's worried about you two.'

'Tell her we'll be just fine,' he chuckled. 'I'll message you as soon as I'm back.'

'Okay,' I replied with a smile. 'I love you.'

'Love you, too, baby.'

We disconnected the mind-link and I pulled out of the packhouse grounds. I calmed Dasha, letting her know that everything was fine. She calmed down for a while but stayed near the surface of my mind throughout the day. I was starting to feel anxious again when Theo messaged that he was home, and everything went great. But Dasha still didn't calm down, and I began to get a headache. Luckily, we were heading to the last class for the day.

“Everything okay?” Maggie asked.

“Yeah, Dasha is in a mood today,” I said. “I’m going to run to the restroom real quick. I’ll meet you back out here.”

“Okay,” she replied.

We weren’t far from Professor Armand’s classroom and were a few minutes early, so I had time. I dipped inside and was grateful that there wasn’t anyone else in there. I turned on the tap and wet a paper towel with some cool water, pressing it to my forehead. The headache wasn’t that bad, but I was having trouble focusing. Although, that could have been because of Dasha.

‘Mate,’ she said again.

‘He’s fine, Dasha,’ I said frustratedly.

I threw the towel in the trash and straightened myself out. I would be home in a couple of hours and we’d see Theo. She could wait until then. I was leaving the bathroom when I heard a familiar voice just outside.

“I’m just trying to look out for you, Maggie,” Amy said sweetly. “She’s not who you think she is. She tries to act all innocent, but if she’s so innocent, where is her sister? I haven’t heard from her in over a month. Not since she confronted Ayla for stealing Alpha Theo from her.”

“Luna Ayla is Alpha Theo’s fated mate,” Maggie snapped. “Kylee had no right to be with him in the first place.”

“So, Ayla says,” Amy insisted.

“So Alpha Theo says,” Maggie hissed.

I don’t know why I was getting so angry. Yes, what Amy was saying was insane, but I had gotten over her crap. No one really cared what she had to say. But I felt my body start to get hot as my rage grew.

“Regardless, fated mates or not, she’s an awful person,” Amy said. “She’s a liar and selfish. She only wants to be Luna for...”

“Okay, Amy,” I said firmly, stepping out of the bathroom. “I suggest you shut your mouth and move on. I am not in the mood to deal with your shit today.”

“It’s hard hearing the truth, isn’t it?”

“You have no idea what you’re talking about,” I replied. “You’re just an ignorant little girl who can’t get over the fact that the girl she followed around like a puppy turned out to be a lying brat.”

“That’s some way to talk about your own sister,” she snarled. “Where is Kylee, anyway? How did you manage to get rid of her? Did you...”

My body flushed with heat. I could feel sweat break out on my forehead as Dasha began panting and pacing in my head. I wanted Theo. No. I needed Theo. Dasha needed Kieran. I barely registered the curse that escaped Maggie as she was suddenly dragging me across the campus.

‘All females and mated males in the western quad,’ her voice sounded through the mind-link, ‘protect your Luna. All unmated males clear the area between the quad and parking lot C.’

I saw groups of males and females start to circle us, staying close. A few would disappear, holding back males that began to charge us.

“Maggie, what’s going on?” I asked quietly, my stomach tied in knots as my temperature rose.

“You’re going into heat, Luna,” she replied. “Just stay close to me and give me your keys.”

Shit. This wasn’t good.

I had never experienced a heat before. She-wolves didn’t go into heat until they became sexually active. Even then, it wasn’t often until they were marked. But when they went into heat, they had to mate. If they didn’t, it was extremely painful, and the condition would last for days. To ensure a mating, any unmated male would sense a female in heat and could go into a frenzy if they lost control. That’s why campus security was required to consist of females or mated males. They couldn’t have their own guards succumb to the mating haze.

We reached my car and Maggie tucked me into the passenger seat. I started to buckle my seatbelt when a sharp pain radiated through my abdomen. I cried out as I clutched my stomach. That wasn’t right. My heat just set in. I

should have had several hours before the pain should hit. I should have had more time to get to my mate.

Maggie looked at me in concern as we pulled out of the parking spot. I was gasping for air as the waves of pain subsided and renewed. My body felt like it was on fire.

“Call Theo,” I gasped.

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I was practically vibrating with excitement as I filed the paperwork away in my office safe. My meeting had gone smoothly. Not that I had expected it not to. It was in situations like these that the advantage of being the Alpha didn’t make me feel guilty. I was smiling from ear to ear as I shut the safe and my phone rang.

My smile faltered when I saw Maggie’s name on the screen.

“Maggie, what’s up?” I answered quickly.

“Alpha, we have a problem,” she replied urgently. “We’re on our way back. Luna has gone into heat.”

Kieran shot to the front of my mind. He had been a little restless today, but I thought it was his own excitement about the closing. Then I heard Ayla cry out in the background and I shot out of my chair.

“How far away are you? How long has she been like this?”

“It came on really fast, Alpha,” Maggie said worriedly. “We’re ten minutes out, but sir, I don’t think we’ll make it through the packhouse. Her scent is really potent.”

Fuck.

I was down the hall and taking the stairs two by two. I wouldn’t have time to clear out the packhouse at this time of the day.

“The grey house nearest the packhouse is empty,” I said. “Meet me there.”

I ran down the street to the empty house. We kept these homes fully furnished when they were in between residents. We would use them for ranking members of other packs when they came to visit. I hadn't had time to get the key, so I punched in the garage code to let myself in. I mind-linked to Jimmy what was going on. With Briggs still on his honeymoon for another day, he would really have to step up.

I got inside the house and turned the air conditioner to the max. Both of our temperatures would be extremely high soon enough. Kieran was practically bouncing in anticipation. I was worried about the pain Ayla was experiencing so soon after her heat set in, but knowing Kieran and I were the only ones who could make it right was exhilarating. I knew Ayla was almost here as I felt my body preparing for this experience.

I heard the car pull into the garage and I rushed out. Ayla was already getting out but hunched over as she cried out in pain. I ran toward her, but our scents overwhelmed each other, and she launched herself into my arms. Her mouth slammed into mine as her legs wrapped tightly around my waist. I growled as I held her, pushing myself to keep my head for a few more minutes. I had to get her inside.

"Theo," Ayla gasped as she tore at my clothing, "it hurts. I need you."

"I know, baby," I assured her. "I'm here."

She was grinding her hips hard against me with a heavy groan, desperate for relief as her arousal engulfed me. She was making it hard to hold her. I pressed her against a wall, prying her legs off. The sound of tearing fabric filled the hall as I ripped her leggings away. She was too far gone and needed quick relief. My hand dove between her legs and she cried out.

"Theo," she whimpered, her fingers digging into my shoulders as I worked her clit.

"I'm going to take care of you, baby," I said through gritted teeth.

I pushed Kieran back so I could maintain my last bit of control. He was practically foaming at the mouth, wanting me to bury myself deep inside her. We'd get there. But I would make sure she wasn't in pain first.

Ayla quickly fell apart on my hand, trembling in my arms as I held her up. It wouldn't be enough for long, but the waves of pain would subside. Her hand darted between us, undoing my belt and jeans feverishly.

"More," she whined, reaching beneath my waistband.

I pushed her hand away and dipped an arm behind her knees. I stifled her protests with a kiss as I carried her to the bedroom. I laid her on the bed and removed her shirt and bra. I pulled away to remove the rest of my clothing. My eyes landed on hers and I nearly lost my mind. The lust and hunger in her eyes were consuming.

She stood back up, helping me undress as she kissed and licked along my chest. She spun around as I reached for her, rubbing her ass eagerly against my hard, aching cock. A rumble thundered in my chest, my hand digging into her hair and gripping hard. I pushed her forward over the bed. She pulled her knees up onto the mattress, lifting her hips into the air as her hand went between her legs to her clit. I growled, pushing her fingers away to replace them with mine.

She moaned, rocking back against me. "I need more, Theo."

I rammed into her, filling her up to the hilt. I groaned loudly as sparks of electricity tingled through every nerve ending. Ayla swiveled her hips, begging me to give her what she needed. I gripped her hips as I thrust into her fast and rough. She screamed as another orgasm quickly hit her, but I didn't stop. I fought my own release, knowing the more pleasure I could give her, the longer I could stave off the pain of her heat.

I switched positions, pulling her up against my chest. I kissed her neck as my hand reached around to massage her breast, tweaking her taught nipple between my fingers. I buried my face in her neck as I continued my onslaught, feeling her walls tighten around me again. Feeling her convulse against me, my jaw clenched. I wouldn't be able to hold back much longer.

I threw her on the bed, flipping her onto her back. Resting her ankles on my shoulders, I kissed up her body. I took her breast in my mouth, swirling my tongue over the sensitive peak, then the other. Ayla arched her back as her fingers laced through my hair. Moving up, I took her mouth, sliding my length between her folds, making my mate moan beneath me.

I slipped into her again as my body shook with my need for release. The effect of her heat was taking over and my control snapped. I plowed into her. It felt as if I was going deeper with every thrust. My lower back tingled as my balls contracted. Ayla tightened around me again. I roared as we exploded together. Her whole body shaking violently as I filled her with everything I had.

I collapsed onto the mattress. I pulled Ayla against me, holding her tightly as we both struggled to steady our ragged breathing. We would be okay for a while now so our bodies could rest and replenish. When my mind finally began to clear, a wave of happiness washed through me. It was sheer and utter happiness that had my heart practically bursting from my chest.

Ayla giggled in my arms.

"It was pretty incredible for me, too," she murmured against my chest.

She would have felt my joy through our connection. I supposed part of that was me feeling hers as well. At least, I hoped that it was. I grinned against her hair.

"You know it's not just about the sex, right?" I asked. "Although, experiencing a she-wolf's heat for the first time definitely lived up to the expectations."

She looked up at me curiously. "You mean the first heat since being mated?"

"Nope," I chuckled. "I've never seen any other she-wolf through her heat."

"But..."

"It was my biggest rule," I told her. "It didn't matter if we were dating. I told them they should have someone else ready to get them through should it happen."

"Why?" she asked, still seeming surprised.

"Because that experience is yours." I shrugged as my fingers played with her hair. "Our heat is meant for mates. I know she-wolves have no control over it, but as a male, I did. I never wanted to experience that with anyone but you."

Ayla cupped my cheek and leaned in to kiss me firmly and lovingly. This was one of the proudest moments of my life. While most males felt seeing a she-wolf through her heat was a favor, albeit a very enjoyable one, it was never a

temptation for me. I couldn't risk a pregnancy. Children produced outside the mate bond weren't common, but it did happen. Being the future Alpha, I couldn't let that happen. Knowing that was a possibility and taking that chance felt hugely disrespectful to my future mate. I never wanted to take that from her "Any regrets on that choice?" Ayla asked with a wicked grin.

"Absolutely not," I insisted, burying my face in her neck and nipping at her mark.

She laughed beneath me, pushing me away. "So, is that why you're so happy?"

"That's part of it, yes," I said.

I shifted our position, pushing Ayla to her back as I kissed down her chest. I stopped at her stomach, inhaling deeply as I rested my head there, my arms holding her waist. Her fingers trailed through my hair, sending me into an even more relaxed state.

"You know it may not happen this time," she said gently. "It doesn't always take during the first heat."

I smiled knowing she was also thinking about whether we just made a pup or not. Not that we didn't have a few more days to keep trying.

"That's okay," I assured her. "It just feels like such a real possibility now."

I wanted so badly to tell her what I had done that morning. It was even harder to hold back now. But it wasn't time yet. Soon. I just had to wait a little while longer. I started to drift off, thinking about what our future would look like, when Ayla's stomach growled loudly in my ear. I laughed, lifting up to look at her.

"I guess I should be more worried about taking care of my mate first," I said, moving up to kiss her.

"Let's head to the café," she said. "Annabelle said she was making her beef wellington, and I could eat the entire thing right now."

I chuckled and shook my head. "Sorry, babe, we're not going anywhere. We're stuck here for the next few days until your heat passes." I brushed her hair away from her face. "But I'll tell you what. Jimmy is bringing some

groceries by anyway. I'll have him drop by the packhouse café and pick some up for you."

Ayla looked around the room like she was finally registering where we were.

"Yeah, um, where is here, by the way?" she asked shyly. "I wasn't exactly paying much attention to my surroundings earlier."

"No, I wouldn't think so." I smiled. "This is one of the family houses near the packhouse. There was no fucking way I was traipsing you through a packhouse full of unmated males in the state you were in. I picked the closest place we could have immediate privacy"

Ayla made a face as she thought about the events of the last two hours.

"Good thinking," she stated.

I laughed as I kissed her again. I started to deepen the kiss just as her stomach growled again. I grunted as I pulled away.

"I'll go raid the cabinets," I told her. "There may be something still stocked up. I'll make something to tide you over until Jimmy delivers."

I kissed her again and she snaked her arms around my neck.

"Or... you could just distract me until then."

Her lips trailed along my jaw, creating a distraction of her own. I breathed deeply. This wasn't a result of her heat, just my beautiful mate being insatiable.

"As tempting as that sounds, love," I groaned, "we need to get you fed. We don't know how long we'll have before the next wave. And it's only going to get more consistent from here. There's no way I'll be able to hold out that long again."

And I wouldn't. I managed the first time because her pheromones hadn't fully begun to affect me yet. That ship had sailed now. I'd probably know when the next wave hit before she did.

I dragged myself off the bed and pulled the covers down to cover Ayla before slipping my boxers back on. She sat up and looked around the room.

“Someone’s going to have to bring me something to wear, too,” she said.

“Why?” I looked back at her with a mischievous grin. “I’m not planning on letting you wear anything for the next few days.”

The Luna’s Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 186

I was practically vibrating with excitement as I filed the paperwork away in my office safe. My meeting had gone smoothly. Not that I had expected it not to. It was in situations like these that the advantage of being the Alpha didn’t make me feel guilty. I was smiling from ear to ear as I shut the safe and my phone rang.

My smile faltered when I saw Maggie’s name on the screen.

“Maggie, what’s up?” I answered quickly.

“Alpha, we have a problem,” she replied urgently. “We’re on our way back. Luna has gone into heat.”

Kieran shot to the front of my mind. He had been a little restless today, but I thought it was his own excitement about the closing. Then I heard Ayla cry out in the background and I shot out of my chair.

“How far away are you? How long has she been like this?”

“It came on really fast, Alpha,” Maggie said worriedly. “We’re ten minutes out, but sir, I don’t think we’ll make it through the packhouse. Her scent is really potent.”

Fuck.

I was down the hall and taking the stairs two by two. I wouldn’t have time to clear out the packhouse at this time of the day.

“The grey house nearest the packhouse is empty,” I said. “Meet me there.”

I ran down the street to the empty house. We kept these homes fully furnished when they were in between residents. We would use them for ranking members of other packs when they came to visit. I hadn’t had time to get the key, so I punched in the garage code to let myself in. I mind-linked to Jimmy

what was going on. With Briggs still on his honeymoon for another day, he would really have to step up.

I got inside the house and turned the air conditioner to the max. Both of our temperatures would be extremely high soon enough. Kieran was practically bouncing in anticipation. I was worried about the pain Ayla was experiencing so soon after her heat set in, but knowing Kieran and I were the only ones who could make it right was exhilarating. I knew Ayla was almost here as I felt my body preparing for this experience.

I heard the car pull into the garage and I rushed out. Ayla was already getting out but hunched over as she cried out in pain. I ran toward her, but our scents overwhelmed each other, and she launched herself into my arms. Her mouth slammed into mine as her legs wrapped tightly around my waist. I growled as I held her, pushing myself to keep my head for a few more minutes. I had to get her inside.

“Theo,” Ayla gasped as she tore at my clothing, “it hurts. I need you.”

“I know, baby,” I assured her. “I’m here.”

She was grinding her hips hard against me with a heavy groan, desperate for relief as her arousal engulfed me. She was making it hard to hold her. I pressed her against a wall, prying her legs off. The sound of tearing fabric filled the hall as I ripped her leggings away. She was too far gone and needed quick relief. My hand dove between her legs and she cried out.

“Theo,” she whimpered, her fingers digging into my shoulders as I worked her clit.

“I’m going to take care of you, baby,” I said through gritted teeth.

I pushed Kieran back so I could maintain my last bit of control. He was practically foaming at the mouth, wanting me to bury myself deep inside her. We’d get there. But I would make sure she wasn’t in pain first.

Ayla quickly fell apart on my hand, trembling in my arms as I held her up. It wouldn’t be enough for long, but the waves of pain would subside. Her hand darted between us, undoing my belt and jeans feverishly.

“More,” she whined, reaching beneath my waistband.

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Ayla cupped my cheek and leaned in to kiss me firmly and lovingly. This was one of the proudest moments of my life. While most males felt seeing a she-wolf through her heat was a favor, albeit a very enjoyable one, it was never a temptation for me. I couldn't risk a pregnancy. Children produced outside the mate bond weren't common, but it did happen. Being the future Alpha, I couldn't let that happen. Knowing that was a possibility and taking that chance felt hugely disrespectful to my future mate. I never wanted to take that from her "Any regrets on that choice?" Ayla asked with a wicked grin.

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Ayla looked around the room like she was finally registering where we were.

"Yeah, um, where is here, by the way?" she asked shyly. "I wasn't exactly paying much attention to my surroundings earlier."

"No, I wouldn't think so." I smiled. "This is one of the family houses near the packhouse. There was no fucking way I was traipsing you through a packhouse full of unmated males in the state you were in. I picked the closest place we could have immediate privacy"

Alya made a face as she thought about the events of the last two hours.

"Good thinking," she stated.

I laughed as I kissed her again. I started to deepen the kiss just as her stomach growled again. I grunted as I pulled away.

"I'll go raid the cabinets," I told her. "There may be something still stocked up. I'll make something to tide you over until Jimmy delivers."

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"As tempting as that sounds, love," I groaned, "we need to get you fed. We don't know how long we'll have before the next wave. And it's only going to get more consistent from here. There's no way I'll be able to hold out that long again."

And I wouldn't. I managed the first time because her pheromones hadn't fully begun to affect me yet. That ship had sailed now. I'd probably know when the next wave hit before she did.

I dragged myself off the bed and pulled the covers down to cover Alya before slipping my boxers back on. She sat up and looked around the room.

"Someone's going to have to bring me something to wear, too," she said.

"Why?" I looked back at her with a mischievous grin. "I'm not planning on letting you wear anything for the next few days."

The Luna's Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 187

Chapter 38: Ayla

I slowly opened my eyes. The room was dim, but I could tell it was still daylight outside. However, that was the extent of my knowledge of the time or day. I reached for my phone on the bedside table, but it was dead. I smiled. There wasn't much of a reason to charge it.

I stretched my limbs, rolling over to see Theo sprawled out next to me. I scooted over, draping my arm across his waist and resting my head on his chest. After a moment, his arms came around me, holding me to him.

"How are you feeling?" he asked without opening his eyes.

"Pretty damn good," I replied. "You?"

"Same," he chuckled. "How long have we slept?"

"I have no idea."

Theo fumbled for his phone and checked the time.

"Well, I think it's safe to say your heat has passed," he commented. "We've been out about fourteen hours. It's Sunday afternoon."

I groaned. "We're going to have so much to do this week."

Theo chuckled. "We'll manage. We've got a good team."

The last few days had been such a blur.

Well, not really a blur. I remembered every second of it. And holy crap.

But we definitely had a one-track mind the whole weekend. Theo was right when he told me the waves would become more consistent. It seemed like the last two days we had gone at it non-stop. I couldn't even begin to describe how incredible it had been. But it was also exhausting. So it was no surprise we had slept as long as we did.

"Is it always like that?" I asked.

“How should I know,” he teased. “But no, I don’t think it’s like that for everybody. I think it was better for us because I love you so much.”

I giggled. “Yeah, I suppose so.”

He kissed me sweetly.

“I’m going to take a quick shower, then get us something to eat,” Theo informed me, brushing my hair from my face. “I’m sure we’re both dehydrated, and I know I’m starving.”

“I’m not going to lie. I could eat an entire cow right about now,” I replied. “So, you clean up first. I’ll go get started with the food.”

“Deal,” he said, kissing my nose before dragging himself out of bed.

He tossed me a robe from the hook in the bathroom, and I heard the shower turn on soon after. My legs were a bit wobbly as I stood up. I laughed, knowing there were a number of reasons why. But lack of food was definitely one of them. So I eagerly went to the kitchen and looked through the fridge. Immediately, I found two large steaks on the top shelf and took them out. I washed my hands, prepped some veggies, and threw a couple of potatoes in the oven to bake. I was munching on some fresh green beans when Theo entered the kitchen.

“My turn,” I announced. “I left the steaks for you to cook. I hope you saved me some hot water.”

“There should be plenty,” he said, snagging me by the waist as I walked by. He kissed my neck before letting me go.

I took a quick shower. I was tempted to linger under the hot water for a while, but my stomach wasn’t having it. When I stepped out of the steamy bathroom, my mouth instantly started watering. The house was filled with the delicious aroma of dinner. I rushed back to the kitchen but froze when I saw Theo on his phone. His shoulders were tense, his knuckles white as he gripped the counter.

“I said Tuesday, Kingston.”

Shit. He was talking to Kingston. Was he here? I completely forgot he was supposed to arrive on Friday to help us deal with the rogue situation. Did he

know what was going on with Theo and me? Goddess, I fucking hope not. Theo looked up at me, his eyes full of aggravation and concern.

"If you show up tomorrow, you'll be wasting your time," Theo said mildly, but I could see he was working to control his temper. "We won't be there. You can come on Tuesday."

He paused as Kingston replied to him. I couldn't quite make out what he was saying at first, just that his tone was angry. Then I heard my name.

"Fine," Theo conceded. "She's right here." Theo covered the phone receiver. "Are you okay talking to him? You absolutely don't fucking have to."

I sighed and took the phone.

"Kingston, it's me."

"Ayla," he said, sounding relieved. "Are you okay? Why haven't you been answering me?"

"I'm fine, Kingston," I assured him. "I... I haven't been home in a few days and my phone is dead."

It wasn't a lie. He paused for a while on the line. I could tell he was trying to decide whether he was going to accept that answer and leave it at that. I really needed him to.

"Theo is saying I need to come on Tuesday," he said shortly. "But if you want, I'll be there tomorrow."

"No," I said. "We won't be available tomorrow. Tuesday will work great."

Another pause.

"Fine," he replied. "I'll see you then. Oh, and Ayla..."

"Yeah?"

"I've missed you," he said gently.

—

My heart broke a little. At that moment, talking to him – yeah, I missed my friend. But I had a hard time believing he was that person anymore. And even if I could, there was no way I could say it back, not without feeling like I was sending mixed signals.

“I have to go, Kingston,” I said sadly, “I’ll see you on Tuesday.”

I hung up the phone and handed it back to Theo. He sighed as he pulled me to him, wrapping me in his arms as he kissed my head.

“You okay?” he murmured against my wet hair.

I nodded. “I don’t want to keep hurting him. Theo,” I said quietly. “I had hoped he was moving on, but the way he sounded just now...”

Theo’s hold tightened. “I know, baby,” he replied. With a deep breath, Theo led me to the kitchen table. He sat down and pulled me between his legs. “It was his choice to come here. Whether or not I’m happy about it, we kind of need him for the moment. So, maybe we can get more than just some information from this visit. Maybe we can help him find some closure, as well.”

“I don’t know how to do that,” I said.

“That’s why I said ‘we,’ babe,” he teased, brushing his nose against mine.

“I don’t think that you threatening to rip him limb from limb is going to help with the situation,” I said firmly.

Theo chuckled. “As fun as that sounds, that’s not what I meant, sweetheart,” he said. “I’m not sure how to do it, either, but I’m willing to try. And not just for your sake.”

“Really?” I asked skeptically.

“Hell, yeah,” he replied. “It would keep both me and Kieran from going insane from thinking about him pining away after our mate.”

“Ha ha,” I replied.

The Luna’s Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 188

Chapter 39: Ayla

We stayed at the house until Monday morning. Even after returning home, Theo insisted we take another day to fully regain our strength. I felt guilty missing class again, but I was still feeling a bit drained. So, I didn't argue too much. Theo worked from the living room while I spent the day catching up on some classwork.

And stressing about Kingston's impending visit.

I wasn't sure how I felt about seeing him. I still felt terrible about how things ended up between us. I missed the friendship that we had before things got bad. But I also wasn't sure I could trust him the way I used to. Dasha agreed with me. She still held a grudge against him for trying to mark us.

I never told Theo what happened that day I went to Sablemane to get my father's ring back from Kingston. His apology didn't help rebuild that trust much. Since he said he wasn't giving up, I didn't know what he would do to try to win me back.

Whatever happened, Theo couldn't find out about what he had done. He wouldn't be able to let it go, and he wasn't wrong when he said we needed Kingston right now. I just hoped that Kingston didn't do anything dangerous.

"Are you sure you're okay with this, Ayla?" Theo asked as we waited in the packhouse lobby with his parents for Kingston to arrive Tuesday afternoon. "If you don't want to see him, you don't have to."

"I'm sure," I told him with a gentle smile. "You need me to question the rogues. And Sablemane is still an important ally to our pack. There's no reason this can't be a civil experience."

The corner of Theo's mouth twitched. "Well, I'll promise to try my best as long as he does."

"You better," I said, poking his shoulder. "Whether he behaves or not, remember, you're the one who got the girl in the end. You could cut him some slack."

"That's true," Theo replied with a sigh. "I'll do my best."

He leaned down to kiss me.

“He’s here,” Briggs said from the door.

I copied Grace’s stance with my arm hooked onto Theo’s beside me. The doors were open, and I watched a man get out of the driver’s seat and walk around to open the door for Kingston to get out. Alpha Torin and Luna Grace stepped forward to greet him as he entered the building. Dasha retreated into the back of my mind with a huff, and I had to stop myself from rolling my eyes.

“Alpha Kingston,” Alpha Torin said, “we’re pleased to have you as our guest.”

“Thank you, Alpha Torin,” Kingston replied politely. “I hope my visit is as fruitful as we hope.”

“Indeed,” Torin agreed.

“Luna Grace, I’m delighted to see you again. You look as beautiful as ever.”

“Thank you, Alpha Kingston,” Grace answered with a smile.

“Alpha Theo,” Kingston said, turning to the two of us. “Luna Ayla, I hope you are doing well.”

“Very well, thank you, Alpha Kingston,” I stated politely. Hearing him use the title felt odd, but I was glad he had.

“Alpha, we have prepared a suite for your visit,” Theo informed him. “If you would like to get settled in, Beta Briggs will show you where you will be staying. We planned a dinner later for us to catch up on any other pack business that would be beneficial to address while you’re here. We will address the reason for your visit this evening.”

“Of course,” Kingston said.

Briggs came up and led Kingston up the stairs to the guest wing.

“Why did that feel too easy?” I asked quietly after they had left.

“Diplomacy,” Theo said. “He’s not going to push his luck during a formal greeting.”

The situation still felt so strange. It was like we were practically strangers. It was confusing.

Theo grabbed my hand and led me up the stairs to his office. He went to the credenza and poured two glasses of amber liquid.

“Are you sure you’re okay with this, babe?” he asked as he handed me a glass.

I took a sip, focusing on the burn to help organize my thoughts.

“Yeah, it’s fine,” I said. “It’s weird seeing Kingston here, but it’s not just that. We’ve been putting off this whole rogue business for almost two weeks. We’re about to get more information on what is happening and why. I guess we’ve had a little bit of a break from all this. Now, we have to deal with it, and it kind of sucks that this is our normal.”

Theo sighed, setting his glass on his desk before coming to stand before me.

“I know, sweetheart,” he said, rubbing his hands along my arms. The tingles running through me calmed me. “But it’s not forever. The sooner we get answers, the sooner we can take care of these assholes and move on.”

“I know,” I replied. “And I’m ready to get through this.”

“Good,” he said. “So, are you going to tell me what’s going on with Dasha?”

I chuckled. “What did Kieran say?”

“Just that she’s distant.”

“Well, she’s not ecstatic about seeing Kingston here,” I said. “Her loyalty is to Kieran and you. So she’s being a little temperamental about him.”

I rolled my eyes as Theo failed to hide a smug grin.

“You better learn to hide that a lot better real soon,” I insisted, snaking my arms around his waist.

“I’m not going to apologize for enjoying the validation,” he replied. “I may have gotten the girl, but that doesn’t mean I deserved to.”

“Theo, what?”

“I still can’t forgive myself for what I did to you, Ayla,” he said seriously. “It doesn’t matter what Kylee or Harry or whoever did to influence it. I hurt you. I

rejected you. By some miracle from the goddess, you gave me another chance. I will spend the rest of my life doing whatever it takes to deserve that chance. Your love Dasha's loyalty – helps me know I'm doing things right."

I held Theo's gaze. The night we marked each other, we promised each other a fresh start. So, we haven't talked about those past mistakes we made since. I didn't feel the need to. However, I guess having Kingston here reminded Theo of why I have a history with him in the first place. Of course that would be hard for him. I felt terrible that I hadn't thought about that before.

I pulled him into a kiss. My arms moved around his neck as I let myself get lost in his taste.

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"I love you, Ayla."

"I love you, Theo."

The Luna's Choice by Kat Silver Episode 189

Chapter 40: Theo

Ayla and Briggs were already down in the cellar. I was waiting in the lobby for Kingston to come down. Dinner was about what I had expected — awkward and tense. I let Dad and Kingston do most of the talking. Leaving that time for them to discuss regular pack business. Now, I just had to get through the five minutes alone with him during the walk to the cellar.

Kingston exited the cafe with his Gamma, who had driven him here, and headed in my direction.

“Ayla and the others are already downstairs,” I told him. “Follow me.”

I led them through the packhouse to the back exit and turned toward the utility shed. It was a quiet walk. I couldn’t tell if Kingston didn’t want to risk starting a fight out in the open or if he was biding his time. But I highly doubted it was because he had nothing to say to me. His energy was telling me plenty I walked us down the stairs and met the others in the investigation room. We needed to talk before we started questioning the rogues. I took the seat next to Ayla at the table. Kingston sat across from us next to Briggs while his Gamma remained by the door. Mina already had everything ready to present her findings.

“Okay,” Mina said after I nodded to her to get started. “I know we’re all ready to get some answers from those assholes stinking up the place down the hall. So, I’ll make this brief for now. We can review any questions later.” She handed files to me and Kingston. “We know Harry was involved with the Waar Pak somehow. Our initial theory that he was helping them develop tactical weapons appears to be correct. In the folders, you’ll find a list of schematics and chemical formulations found during my investigation.

Kingston was looking over the documents. “There’s not a lot here to tell us exactly what any of this was for. Just some possible applications.

“Yes, that’s about as far as I’ve gotten with that so far.” Mina said. “We’ll have to send some of this off to a company specializing in this field to better understand Harry’s research. Due to the sensitivity of the investigation, we’re still narrowing down an appropriate candidate. But we have enough to give us a broad idea of what we could be up against

“I’ve deciphered about half of Harry’s journal,” Ayla said. “We know he was just using the Waar Pak for their resources. He couldn’t use some of his prior contacts because of their loyalty to the pack. So we’ve been able to get a starting point from that.”

“Do we know what his plan was regarding the Waar Pak?” Kingston asked.

“He was going to betray them once he... re-established my family name.” Ayla put it delicately, not wanting to bring up his attempt to force her to mate with him. “He was working on fail-safes and counter agents to his work to help bring them down. We’ve included what we can find in the information that will be sent for analysis.”

“It’s one of our top priorities at this time,” I stated. “Beta Briggs and Gamma Jimmy should have a decision by the end of the week to get started on the research and development project.”

“Have you determined any more about why he was so fixated on Ayla, particularly why rebuilding the Onxycrown Pack was so important?” Kingston asked

“I’m still working on that.” Ayla said. “His journal gets a bit convoluted the further you get into it. His code is evolving as well. The best I can tell is it has something to do with the Blessed One story. However, we kind of assumed that already I gently squeezed Ayla’s leg in support. Kingston had watched her intently through the whole interaction.

“Right now, the most important thing is that we know the Waar Pak is targeting her,” I said. “That brings us to the rogues. I have a task force working our border and providing regular updates. You said you had more information on these attacks and who may be behind them.”

“I do,” Kingston replied, laying the file on the table. “The man behind the attacks is named Arthur Grogan. I’ve been tracking him for several months now.”

“How are you so sure about this?” Briggs asked “Because I know him,” Kingston said. “He was Jack’s Gamma.”

“What?” Ayla said. “You didn’t tell me that part, Kingston.”

“Forgive me, Ayla,” he said sincerely. “I wasn’t in my right mind that evening.”

Ayla nodded to him, gesturing for him to continue. I draped my arm around her shoulders.

“Grogan betrayed us,” Kingston continued. “He’s the reason the Waar Pak were able to get into the packhouse. Your father never figured it out and confronted him that night as we escaped. I wouldn’t have thought anyone could have survived what Jack did to him, but apparently, he did. Either way, he must have been working for the Waar Pak ever since. My guess – he’s a higher-ranking member at this

“That doesn’t tell us why you’re so sure about his identity,” I commented.

“He paid my private cabin a visit a few months ago,” Kingston said. “I caught his scent and have been searching for him since. He’s left other traces along the way. I got close once. Really close to catching him. By following up on one of our own rogue attacks, actually. After he slipped away, the bastard made contact. Trust me, it’s him.”

“And you think these rogues can give us information that can help us find him?” Ayla asked.

“That I’m not entirely sure about,” he replied apprehensively. “There’s likely only one rogue in any group that may have met him, if any. The ones I’ve questioned could only lead me to dead ends. Well, dead bodies, usually. He has a habit of dispatching his messengers once the job is done.”

I looked to Ayla. “Well, it’s good we’ve got the best person to question them.”

The Luna’s Choice by Kat Silver Episode 190

We stayed at the house until Monday morning. Even after returning home, Theo insisted we take another day to fully regain our strength. I felt guilty missing class again, but I was still feeling a bit drained. So, I didn’t argue too much. Theo worked from the living room while I spent the day catching up on some classwork.

And stressing about Kingston’s impending visit.

I wasn’t sure how I felt about seeing him. I still felt terrible about how things ended up between us. I missed the friendship that we had before things got bad. But I also wasn’t sure I could trust him the way I used to. Dasha agreed with me. She still held a grudge against him for trying to mark us.

I never told Theo what happened that day I went to Sablemane to get my father’s ring back from Kingston. His apology didn’t help rebuild that trust

much. Since he said he wasn't giving up, I didn't know what he would do to try to win me back.

Whatever happened, Theo couldn't find out about what he had done. He wouldn't be able to let it go, and he wasn't wrong when he said we needed Kingston right now. I just hoped that Kingston didn't do anything dangerous.

"Are you sure you're okay with this, Ayla?" Theo asked as we waited in the packhouse lobby with his parents for Kingston to arrive Tuesday afternoon. "If you don't want to see him, you don't have to."

"I'm sure," I told him with a gentle smile. "You need me to question the rogues. And Sablemane is still an important ally to our pack. There's no reason this can't be a civil experience."

The corner of Theo's mouth twitched. "Well, I'll promise to try my best as long as he does."

"You better," I said, poking his shoulder. "Whether he behaves or not, remember, you're the one who got the girl in the end. You could cut him some slack."

"That's true," Theo replied with a sigh. "I'll do my best."

He leaned down to kiss me.

"He's here," Briggs said from the door.

I copied Grace's stance with my arm hooked onto Theo's beside me. The doors were open, and I watched a man get out of the driver's seat and walk around to open the door for Kingston to get out. Alpha Torin and Luna Grace stepped forward to greet him as he entered the building. Dasha retreated into the back of my mind with a huff, and I had to stop myself from rolling my eyes.

"Alpha Kingston," Alpha Torin said, "we're pleased to have you as our guest."

"Thank you, Alpha Torin," Kingston replied politely. "I hope my visit is as fruitful as we hope."

"Indeed," Torin agreed.

"Luna Grace, I'm delighted to see you again. You look as beautiful as ever."

“Thank you, Alpha Kingston,” Grace answered with a smile.

“Alpha Theo,” Kingston said, turning to the two of us. “Luna Ayla, I hope you are doing well.”

“Very well, thank you, Alpha Kingston,” I stated politely. Hearing him use the title felt odd, but I was glad he had.

“Alpha, we have prepared a suite for your visit,” Theo informed him. “If you would like to get settled in, Beta Briggs will show you where you will be staying. We planned a dinner later for us to catch up on any other pack business that would be beneficial to address while you’re here. We will address the reason for your visit this evening.”

“Of course,” Kingston said.

Briggs came up and led Kingston up the stairs to the guest wing.

“Why did that feel too easy?” I asked quietly after they had left.

“Diplomacy,” Theo said. “He’s not going to push his luck during a formal greeting.”

The situation still felt so strange. It was like we were practically strangers. It was confusing.

Theo grabbed my hand and led me up the stairs to his office. He went to the credenza and poured two glasses of amber liquid.

“Are you sure you’re okay with this, babe?” he asked as he handed me a glass.

I took a sip, focusing on the burn to help organize my thoughts.

“Yeah, it’s fine,” I said. “It’s weird seeing Kingston here, but it’s not just that. We’ve been putting off this whole rogue business for almost two weeks. We’re about to get more information on what is happening and why. I guess we’ve had a little bit of a break from all this. Now, we have to deal with it, and it kind of sucks that this is our normal.”

Theo sighed, setting his glass on his desk before coming to stand before me.

"I know, sweetheart," he said, rubbing his hands along my arms. The tingles running through me calmed me. "But it's not forever. The sooner we get answers, the sooner we can take care of these assholes and move on."

"I know," I replied. "And I'm ready to get through this."

"Good," he said. "So, are you going to tell me what's going on with Dasha?"

I chuckled. "What did Kieran say?"

"Just that she's distant."

"Well, she's not ecstatic about seeing Kingston here." I said. "Her loyalty is to Kieran and you. So she's being a little temperamental about him."

I rolled my eyes as Theo failed to hide a smug grin.

"You better learn to hide that a lot better real soon," I insisted, snaking my arms around his waist.

"I'm not going to apologize for enjoying the validation," he replied. "I may have gotten the girl, but that doesn't mean I deserved to."

"Theo, what?"

"I still can't forgive myself for what I did to you, Ayla," he said seriously. "It doesn't matter what Kylee or Harry or whoever did to influence it. I hurt you. I rejected you. By some miracle from the goddess, you gave me another chance. I will spend the rest of my life doing whatever it takes to deserve that chance. Your love Dasha's loyalty – helps me know I'm doing things right."

—

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