

The Luna's Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 20

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Chapter 20: Ayla

Instead of returning to the room, I made my way toward the back of the house. Floor-to-ceiling windows lined a large portion of the lodge and looked out into a beautiful, wooded area. I found the back door and let myself out.

The porch was huge. The house was built on an incline, so this deck sat about ten feet from the ground. I hobbled my way to the stairs. It wasn't pretty, but I managed to make it down them to the bottom. I swung myself through the yard, plopping on the ground not far from the tree line.

I wanted to run. To shift into my wolf and disconnect from the world. But I still couldn't sense Dasha. Even if I could, I wouldn't try to bring her back yet. The ache in my chest reminded me why she needed time.

I caught Kingston's scent as he approached me, sitting on the grass beside me.

"Are you okay," he **asked**.

I grinned. "Yeah, I'm okay."

"Did **he** upset **you**?"

I chuckled softly. "No, he didn't upset me. He actually seemed nice. I'm kind of **sad** I won't **get a chance to know him better**."

We sat in silence for a while. It was a beautiful morning. The sky was so bright and clear that I could see far into the trees. The ground continued a slow and shallow descent, and I could see a lake off in the distance. It reminded me of my little

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pond.

"I **miss** Dasha," I finally said.

"Can you sense her **at all**?" Kingston asked.

I shook my head. "She needs time."

"What about you? How are you feeling about everything?"

I sighed heavily.

"I'm still in pain. I'm still processing the loss of my family. I'm frustrated that I can't heal and will be stuck like this for months. And I really want to go for a run. But I'm dealing, and I'm ready to push forward. However I manage to do that."

"I may not be able to make the pain go away," Kingston said. "**But** I will do whatever I can to help with the rest."

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brow furrowed. I hadn't wanted to say anything to him, mostly because I thought I was going crazy. But I really didn't see any reason not to anymore. I liked Kingston.

"Actually," I began, "you do make the pain go away."

He **sat** up straight **next** to me. "What do you mean?"

I couldn't help the blush that crept up my cheeks. "I don't know why, but whenever I'm close to you, whenever we're touching, the burning goes away." I rubbed my chest absently.

Kingston suddenly stood up, moving behind me **before** sitting back down, his **legs** stretched on **either side of me and his** arms going **around** my middle. I **wasn't expecting that**, but I **smiled as he pulled me against his chest**.

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"If it helps," he whispered, "then I'll be here."

"Well, you can't be here **all** the time," I teased. "I doubt your pack would appreciate you going missing."

Kingston laughed gently. "Perhaps, but I'll be here whenever you need me nonetheless."

I leaned back into him, letting the feeling of the bond fade away. I let his scent engulf me. Even sitting next to an actual forest, I could distinguish his smell from the rest.

"Do you think this will help bring your wolf back?"

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"I don't know," I said solemnly. "I doubt it."

"Why do you say that?"

"It wasn't just Theo and Kieran that hurt Dasha," I said. "**I did**, too. I made her accept the rejection in the first place. She loves Kylee and Evie as much as I do, but she didn't agree that saving her from some heartache was worth losing our fated mate. Not without a fight. I still made her accept it."

"But she understood your reasons. She knows you meant well. And it's not **like** you issued the rejection **first**."

"No, but I **still** pushed for **it after**," I said. "And when she heard what Kylee had said and realized that was **who we** gave up **our** mate for, she couldn't **take** it. But in the end, I was the one who made her do it. I was the one who didn't fight **for** them. And **I did it** for nothing."

"Regardless of who Kylee turned out to be, it doesn't make your sacrifice any less admirable, Ayla," Kingston said.

“Maybe, but she still thinks it was all for nothing.”

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“She’ll come around.”

“I hope **so**.”

Silence settled over us again. This time **it** was Kingston who spoke **first**.

“Are you feeling better?” he asked.

I nodded with a smile.

“Does this mean you’ll stay here?”

“I definitely don’t have any better offers,” I teased. “Yeah, I’ll stay.”

Kingston squeezed me, kissing the top of my head.

“Good.”

“I’ll need your help figuring out what I’m going to do. I’ll need **a** job, **a** place to stay, **a** car. I’ve got money. I just might need to be chauffeured around for a little while,” I said.

“I can help with all that,” he said. “But as far as living arrangements are concerned, you can just stay here until you get your **cast** off. After that, we can revisit the subject.”

“Okay,” **I said**.

“You **ready to go** back in? I’m sure you want to finish **getting settled** in.”

Inodded. “Yeah. I just needed **a** moment.”

He started to stand up. “**How did you manage to get out here?**”

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Chapter 20: Ayla

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I shrugged, taking his hand **as** he **lifted** me to stand on my **good foot**. “I hobbled my butt down the **stairs**,” I said, leaning **on** my **crutches**.

“Yeah, that’s not going to happen again. Come on. I’ll carry you up,” he said, turning so I could climb on his back.

“Um, I don’t think so,” I laughed. “I can make it.”

“Ayla, either you get on my back, or I throw you over my shoulder. But I’m not letting you walk those stairs with crutches and a broken leg.”

“I made it down,” I said, “I can make it back up.”

Kingston swooped down, moving faster than I could react. I yipped as he did exactly what he said he would and picked me up over his shoulder. He was careful with my ribs, avoiding grabbing me around that area.

“Kingston put me down.”

“I **will**,” he said. “Upstairs.”

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