

The Luna's Choice by Kat Silver #Chapter 231 - Read The Luna's Choice by Kat Silver Chapter 231

Chapter 231

Chapter 81: Ayla

I called out for Theo as I closed the door behind me. He came out of the bedroom and met me with a big hug and passionate kiss.

"Everything go alright?" he asked.

"Mhmm," I said. "It was perfect. I really started to feel a part of something tonight. I just hope I can be half as good a Luna as the rest of them. Even Aniya has been flourishing in her pack and she's been in the position about as long as I have."

"Well, she was raised by Alpha Patrick. So she's been around pack leaders her whole life," Theo said. "You have been doing a fantastic job, love. And you didn't have close to the advantages she did. So I think you fit in with the group perfectly."

"Thank you, but I think you're biased," I teased.

"I may be," he replied. "But that doesn't mean I'm not right."

He kissed me again before pulling me against his chest. We stood there holding each other for a while, just enjoying the feel of each other. When he finally pulled away, he brushed the hair from my face as I looked up at him. His brow furrowed as he looked back.

"Are you feeling okay, babe?" he asked, pressing the back of his hand to my cheek. "You look pale."

"I'm fine," I said with a shrug. "I'm a bit tired and my stomach got a little queasy earlier, but I just need to take my medicine again. But other than that, we're all good."

"Okay, it's off to bed with you two then," Theo said, guiding me by the hips.

I covered his hands with mine but didn't stop him. "Can I take a shower first, Alpha?"

Theo sighed. "I guess, but it's straight to bed after. You need to rest. Whatever happens, it's going to be a stressful day tomorrow."

"The same goes for you too, you know," I insisted. "You've been up late every night with Harden and Cooper and the others. You need the sleep, too."

"Believe me, I know," he said exasperatedly. "I plan to do just that. As soon as you're tucked in first."

"Okay, okay," I said, kissing his cheek before heading to the bathroom.

I was tired, and climbing straight into bed was tempting. But I wanted to wash the day off me. Despite the evening going as well as it had, the rest of the day, and the days before, had been rough. A lot of the details that had been gone over included some graphic and terrible things. Cooper and his team had been able to link the deaths of Onyxcrown refugees together a while ago. Once they confirmed Delta Charles' involvement in the Waar Pa k society, it wasn't hard to tie it all back to him and Malcolm. That included the death of Mrs. Walport and the library fire.

Theo tried to find any evidence that Julia was also involved, however, Cooper said he couldn't find anything that supported her having a direct hand in anything. However, it would be safe to say she carried the same beliefs as her family. So, Theo made it clear she was never allowed on Greytooth territory again.

I waited for the water to warm up before stripping out of my clothes. The bathroom was filling with steam when I stepped under the steady

stream, feeling the tension melt from my body as it hit my skin. I sighed heavily, closing my eyes and resting my head back on my shoulders as the water flowed through my hair. After enjoying the water for

a while, I washed my hair and body, taking my time.

When I was fully relaxed, I cut the water off, gasping as a sharp pain radiated through my abdomen. I clutched my middle but the sensation passed quickly. It took a deep breath and opened the glass door of the shower. I was toweling myself off when another pain had me doubling over. It was like a vice squeezing my insides. The pain lasted a little longer this time but it did dissipate after a few moments.

Dasha was whining and whimpering in my head, pacing in fear and concern. I went to calm her but was stopped by another pain knocking me to my knees as I cried out. Panic and fear had taken over as I registered the warm wet feeling between my legs and the smell of blood hit me.

“No, no, no,” I cried as I pressed the towel between my thighs.

The cramps were coming in steady waves as I called out for Theo. My vision began to blur and my thoughts went back to the day I had been stabbed. But I had to save my baby. I wouldn't lose my pup.

I didn't notice the door burst open, only strong hands holding me as I drifted out of consciousness.

Chapter 232

Chapter 82: Theo

I sat next to the hospital bed gripping Ayla's hand, praying she would wake up but also wanting to keep her in this state of peace a little longer. I focused on the rhythmic sound of the machines so I could hold on to the numb feeling that held the storm inside me at bay.

What was I going to say? How would I tell her?

I felt Ayla's hand twitch and knew I would have to figure that out soon. Slowly, she regained consciousness, her eyes flickering open, and immediately, her gaze met mine. I forced the knot in my throat back in order to speak.

“Hey, love,” was all I could manage.

I could see the thoughts working through Ayla's mind and it wasn't long before I knew I wouldn't have to tell her anything.

She knew.

We had lost our pup.

Her eyes filled with tears and her chest rose and fell quickly, but her face remained stoic. It was like watching the wall she had built up when we had first met snap back into place. I moved to pull her into my arms but she pulled away. Ripping her hand from mine. I reached for her again but she pushed me away forcefully, rolling to her side without a word.

I was frozen.

She was breaking and she wouldn't even let me touch her. To make it worse, she had completely blocked our connection. I couldn't feel her

through our bond. I pushed my heartbreak back. She would need time. I would be here for her in any way I could. It was all I had.

"I..." I swallowed hard to keep my voice calm and steady. "I'll get the doctor."

I refrained from trying to reach out to her again and turned from the bed. I found a nurse and let her know that Ayla was awake. She paged the doctor and then went in to check Ayla's vitals. I wanted to go back in the room so bad it hurt, but I didn't think I could keep myself from holding my mate. So I waited just outside the door until Dr. Athens arrived.

The nurse came out just as he met me.

"Her vitals are strong," she said. "However, it's hard to tell how stable she is with the emotional state she's in."

The doctor nodded. "Thank you, Jackie." The nurse left and the doctor looked back at me with a severe expression.

"What did you find?" I asked desperately.

Dr. Athens gestured toward the door to Ayla's room. "Perhaps we should go over the results together."

I hesitated a moment, bracing myself for Ayla's coldness, but followed the doctor inside. She was still laying with her back to us.

"Hello, Ayla," the doctor said kindly. "I'm Dr. Athens. I've been overseeing your care. How are you feeling?"

Ayla rolled back over and pushed herself up a little farther in the bed, but she didn't say anything. Instead, she looked at the doctor

expectantly. But still not at me.

"You were brought to us last night," Dr. Athens stated. "You had suffered a lot of blood loss and I'm afraid your..."

"I know," Ayla said curtly.

The doctor nodded his head. "We have run some tests trying to figure out what could have happened."

I instinctively moved next to the bed. Needing to be close to my mate.

"We found a large amount of wolfsbane in your system, Luna."

"What?" I hissed.

"If I'm honest, I'm surprised you're still with us at all," Dr. Athens continued. "With that amount, you should have died."

"I'm immune to wolfsbane," Ayla said stoically.

My head snapped to her. "Baby, what are you talking about?"

Ayla looked blankly toward the window. "After Harry..." she faltered. "After Harry, I didn't want to be at risk like that again. My family was known for their immunity. I started dosing myself to build up mine."

"I see," the doctor commented quietly.

I didn't know how to respond. I was furious that she had done something so reckless without telling me but that only made me realize exactly why she didn't tell me. Would I have actually let her go through with it?

It didn't matter now.

"Well," Dr. Athens said, pulling me from my thoughts, "in any case, we are all glad you are still with us, Luna. You have the support and

love of the pack. I'll give you two some time."

"Thank you, Doctor," I replied.

Ayla still wouldn't look at me after he left. I slowly reached my hand out to brush her arm. She tensed and shied away again, making me stiffen. With a sigh, she closed her eyes.

"Not yet, Theo," she whispered, still facing away from me. "Please, not yet."

I didn't know what else to do.

'Mina,' I linked, 'Ayla's awake. You should come be with her.'

Mina and Briggs were in the waiting area so it didn't take long for them to be knocking at the door. Mina came in and went straight to Ayla's side. Her eyes were bloodshot and her nose was red. She had taken the news hard. Ayla looked at her and, after a moment's hesitation, threw her arms around her cousin's neck.

I felt my heart shatter. I turned to leave the room. I couldn't watch someone else get to hold her when I couldn't. I stepped into an empty room across the hall. Briggs was right behind me and shut the door. My hands clenched and relaxed. I forced my fingers through my hair as I paced short paths across the floor. Briggs put a hand on my shoulder to stop me. I let him pull me into an embrace and I wept.

"She won't even let me touch her."

"She needs some time," Briggs said.

I stepped away from him, taking a deep, calming breath. "I know," I said.

"Did they say what may have happened?"

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My mind went back to the doctor's words. Ayla's confession had distracted me, but the realization hit me.

"She was poisoned," I said, rage starting to boil inside me.

"What?" Briggs exclaimed.

"Someone tried to kill her, Briggs," I said. "And they succeeded in killing our child. When I find out who, I will destroy them."

Chapter 233

Chapter 83: Theo

I returned to the packhouse. I had tried to tell Ayla I was leaving but Mina said she wasn't ready to talk to me yet. I let my rage and determination take over to cover the pain of her rejection. Ayla would come back to me. Once I found out who was responsible for this, we could start to heal. She'd come back to me.

She had to.

Jimmy was waiting for me in the lobby when I arrived back.

"The Alphas are in the conference hall, Alpha," he said solemnly. "They're... they're waiting to be informed of the situation."

"I'm sure they have heard that Ayla is in the hospital," I said with more snark than I intended.

"Yes, they know something happened," Jimmy confirmed as he followed me down the hall.

I went straight to the hall. I knew I looked terrible but I didn't really care at the moment. As soon as I walked in the door, the room fell silent and all eyes were on me. I went straight to the podium.

"As I'm sure you have all heard," I began without ceremony, "Luna Ayla was admitted to the hospital last night. Sometime last night, she was poisoned... with a large dose of wolfsbane." The room erupted in whispers but I threw my hand up to silence them. "Gratefully, she has survived the ordeal. Thanks to her family's immunity to wolfsbane. However..." My voice broke slightly and I had to compose myself before continuing. "However, the assassin was successful in taking our pup from us."

My grip on the podium was so tight that the creak of the wood was the only sound heard in the silent room.

"As you all can understand, I will be requesting you all to answer some questions to clear your names of any suspicion," I said, expecting to hear opposition but receiving none. "Also, while I appreciate your assistance in determining how to handle the Waar Pa k, if evidence proves that either Malcolm Neal or Charles Anderson were involved in this egregious attack on my family, they will be executed."

I turned and walked out without another word. McCabe was already waiting outside with several officers ready to start taking statements. I nodded to him, then continued on to the security office, Jimmy in tow. There were two of the regular security guards at the monitors.

"I need all the footage from the cafeteria wing from yesterday afternoon to midnight," I ordered. "Jimmy, get Annabelle here, too."

"I believe she's gone to the hospital, Alpha," Jimmy said.

"Then call her back." I said stiffly.

"Yes, sir." Jimmy replied.

I watched intently as one of the guards pulled up the files and added them to a thumb drive for me. Once it was done, I took it from him and headed straight to my office. I pulled the information up and connected it to the big screen TV. I didn't want to miss anything.

I wasn't long into reviewing the footage when Jimmy came in with Annabelle. She looked as upset as everyone else I'd come across.

"Alpha," Annabelle rushed, "I'm so sorry. I don't know how this could have happened. I swear. I have no idea who could have done this."

"That's why I want you to help us," I said flatly. "You know every inch of that kitchen and dining room. I need your eyes on this. Please."

"Of course," Annabelle said shakily but with determination. "Anything I can do."

I was starting to get frustrated after several hours without finding anything suspicious. It didn't help that it hurt to watch Ayla with the other Lunas. She was so perfect. But I couldn't get distracted by her. With Ayla immune to wolfsbane, I couldn't be sure when she had been dosed. So I worried I hadn't gone back far enough in the day.

But then something caught my attention.

Or rather, someone.

I rewound the video and paused it.

“Annabelle, is that John?”

She looked up from the laptop she had been using. “Yeah, he helps with special events sometimes.”

I looked at Jimmy.

“We haven’t been able to find him since the night of the meeting,” he said seriously.

“What’s wrong?” Annabelle asked. “What meeting?”

“John’s Waar P ak,” I said, pressing play.

I watched John move through the crowd. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, but he did bring Ayla a drink. He was hovering close to her when he suddenly bumped into her, causing her to spill. I rewound the footage and watched it again.

“I saw it, too,” Jimmy said, getting the same feeling I did.

I went back farther, watching him up to the point he gave Ayla the drink.

“I didn’t see him put anything in the glass,” I said.

“He’s smoother than we thought.”

I continued to track him through the dining room until he was out of view of that camera. I searched the files for another location, pulling up footage from the kitchen. I watched John drop off the tray with the empty glass on the counter and rushed out. He was visibly upset. I pulled up a different angle and followed his path. He stepped outside of the kitchen and was stopped by someone we couldn’t see. It looked like they were having some kind of argument.

“Hang on.” Annabelle said. “I remember this. I get on to him for slacking in a minute. Then he just walks out and leaves.”

“Did you see who he was speaking to?”

“No.” Annabelle said, her shoulders falling.

"It's okay," I said. "We'll keep looking. I have a feeling he was sent in there to poison Ayla, but he had a change of heart. Whoever was expecting him to do it likely went in to finish the job."

Suddenly, the footage stopped and the screen went blank.

"What the hell," Jimmy said.

I quickly searched for the next file, but it skipped ahead an hour. I looked through every file but the time was missing. I called the security office and told them I needed that sent up immediately.

"What do you mean it's gone?" I burst out.

I slammed the phone down before the guard finished speaking. With a yell, I threw half the contents of my desk across the room.

"Someone wiped the cameras," I said, seething. "We have to find John. Now."

Chapter 234

Chapter 84: Theo

I opened my office door to find Kingston standing on the other side. I wasn't in the mood, nor did I have the time, to deal with whatever he was there for. But before I could voice a protest he stopped me.

"What do you need?" he asked.

That was it.

I paused for a moment. Then I grabbed a pen and paper and wrote down instructions, an address, and a time. I handed the paper to him. He looked at it and nodded.

"Thank you," was all I said before I brushed past him.

Jimmy was right behind me. Annabelle was staying by to continue to monitor the security footage to see if she could identify whoever John was arguing with. I rushed down the stairs. Once we reached the lobby I was stopped dead in my tracks as my parents walked into the packhouse. They saw me and were immediately heading in my direction. My mother wrapped her arms around me and I inhaled sharply, trying to hold back the flood of emotions.

I took a moment to hug her back, but not long. I pulled back.

"Ayla is still at the hospital," I said. "I have something I need to take care of."

"Theo," my mother hissed. "What dare you..."

"Grace," Dad said calmly, resting a hand on her shoulder, "let him go. We'll be here when you're ready."

I gave my father a grateful look. Hating that I had to leave. Having them home was more of a relief than I thought. But I needed to take care of this. I headed out of the packhouse and got into my car Once

Jimmy was in, I peeled out of the lot.

"Have you talked to Maggie?" Jimmy asked, breaking the heavy silence.

I sighed. "No, I haven't," I replied. "How is she handling this?"

"Not well," Jimmy stated. "I think you need to call her in on this search."

"Will she even leave the hospital?"

Jimmy nodded. "Yeah," he said flatly. "She'll want to find this bastard."

I thought about his advice as we made our way through the city. I pulled over at the curb in front of a duplex. My soul was already so heavy that day I wouldn't have thought anything could weigh it down anymore. But the thought of the conversation I was about to have did

I got out and walked up to the front door, knocking firmly. My jaw clenched as the door opened.

"Alpha Theo?"

"Sarah, I need to know where John is."

Hurt and fear filled her face. She knew something was very wrong. We had talked several times about his recent behavior, but I hadn't had the time to tell her about his connection with the Waar Pak. I don't know if I would've had the heart to if I had.

"What did he do?" Sarah croaked, stepping aside to let us in

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"He attempted to poison Luna Ayla," I said,

Shock washed over Sarah. "No, that's not possible," she insisted. "I know he's been acting a bit..."

"We have proof, Sarah," I interrupted. I sighed. "Right now, we just need to find him. We need to know who he was working with."

"I... He..." Sarah stuttered. "Is Luna okay?"

"She's alive," was all I could say. "Where is he, Sarah?"

"I don't know," she said. "I haven't heard from him since yesterday morning."

"I need you to call him."

She nodded slowly, picking up her phone from a side table. "What's going to happen to him?"

I didn't know what to tell her so I didn't tell her anything. "Please, call him, Sarah."

Her eyes filled with tears as she clicked on his contact in her phone. She put it on speaker so we could hear the call ringing. He didn't answer the first couple attempts but picked up on the third.

"John, where are you?" Sarah asked, struggling to remain calm.

"Sarah, I'm sorry," he rushed, his tone genuinely pained. "I screwed I screwed up big time. I'm so sorry."

"John, slow down," Sarah insisted. "What's going on? What did you do?"

"I... I can't tell you," John replied.

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"John, come home," she pled. "Please."

"I can't, Sarah," John said solemnly. "I'm sorry, but I can't. I need to go away for a while. You can't be seen with me."

"John, where are you?" Sarah pressed.

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"I can't tell you, Sarah," he snapped. "You can't help me. I just need to lay low for now. I'm so sorry. Just remember I love you."

The line went dead. Tears were flowing freely down Sarah's cheeks. She knew this wouldn't end well for him.

"Sarah," I asked, "where would John go?"

"I'm not sure," she said shakily.

"Please, anywhere you can think of can help," I assured her.

“Um... there’s a cabin,” she said. “It’s out near the lake, about ten miles from your parent’s place, I think. I’m not sure, we haven’t been up in a few years. But it was his aunt’s.”

“Thank you,” I said. “Is that the only possible place you could think of?”

“Maybe the old fairgrounds,” she said. “That’s where we first met.”

“Again, thank you,” I said. “And I’m sorry, Sarah. Truly, I am.”

“So am I,” she replied painfully.

I left Sarah’s place, sending Jimmy next door to have her neighbor come sit with her for a while. As I was waiting, my phone rang. It was Briggs.

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Chapter 54 Theo

288 Vouchers

“What’s wrong?” I asked panicked. “Did something happen to Ayla?”

“She’s fine,” Briggs said. “She’s about the same as when you left. But the doctor says she is stable enough to go home. He’s going to discharge her soon. I thought you would want to be here.”

“Does...” I swallowed hard. “Does she want me there?”

Briggs was silent for a moment, weighing his words as he did.

“Theo, right now, I don’t think what she wants matters,” he stated. “At least, not regarding you. You need to be here. For both of you.”

“I’m on my way.”

Chapter 235

Chapter 85: Ayla

288 Vouchers

Chapter 85: Ayla

Theo held the door to our apartment open for me and I walked in, careful not to brush against him. I paused two feet inside our home. It felt wrong now. Foreign and cold. I wondered if it would ever feel warm and welcoming again. I knew it would never feel the same.

The door shut behind me and Theo's hand went to the small of my back. I tensed and he pulled it away. It was just a force of habit. Why else would he touch me? Why would he want to touch me anymore?

I pushed the thoughts from my head. I knew it was the grief talking. Mina had spent the day by my side. Admittedly, I didn't speak much. One of the times I did was to say that Theo would never forgive me. That he'd never look at me the same.

It didn't help that I didn't want him to.

His touch just reminded me of every other touch. And what they led to. And what we lost.

I was such a mix of contradicting emotions that I couldn't make sense of it all. In my head, I knew I needed to grieve. I needed to mourn. But my heart didn't know how. When my father died, I had a purpose. I had something to keep me going every day. I knew what my father would want. I had his memory to guide me through it all.

But I never got the chance to know my child. I didn't know what my pup would have wanted me to do.

"Ayla," Theo's voice made me jump, pulling me out of my reverie.

I was standing in the middle of the living room. I was suddenly aware

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Chapter 85 Ayla

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of the warmth of Theo's hand on my arm. I shifted away. His hand fell away and he took a step back. I didn't look at him. I couldn't look at him. I couldn't stand the hurt that I saw there. Pain that I caused.

"Ayla," Theo repeated. "I... I understand you're not... but when you are, I'm here. I'm ready to talk when you are. You should get some rest." He stepped in closer and gently kissed my temple, making my breath hitch. "I love you."

I didn't know why, but it felt like he was saying goodbye. Before I could read more into the feeling, there was a knock on the door. Panic took over.

"Who's here?" I asked. "Tell them to go away. I'm not... I can't see anyone..."

"Shh," Theo said. "Ayla, it's okay. I've told everyone to stay away for now. However, I think you'll want to see who's here."

He went to open the door. I desperately wanted to stop him, but that would require touching him. And I couldn't bring myself to do that. So, I worked to steady my breathing as he opened the door. But I stopped breathing altogether when I saw who walked in.

I locked eyes with my mother. Behind her was Kylee.

My chin trembled, and we threw ourselves into each other's arms. My breathing came back in great so bs. I hadn't realized how much I needed her. How much I needed my family. My knees buckled and we sank to the floor. I don't know how long we sat there, crying as we embraced each other.

"What are you doing here?" I asked when I finally pulled away. "How did you know?"

Ma brushed at my face and hair. "Theo called. He said you needed us.

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Chapter 85: Ayla

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We weren't going to let you down again, my darling girl."

"He did?" I looked over her shoulder, but Theo wasn't there.

He had left.

"Yes," Ma said. "He insisted we both come home."

"Come home?" I asked. "You're back for good?"

"Well, only if you'll have us," Ma said.

“We just want to be here for you, Ayla,” Kylee sniffled. “We’ve missed you so much.”

We hugged each other again. It was the first thing that felt right. They were different. I could feel it. So much had changed between us, but I knew they were good changes. We looked each other over. Holding on for dear life. My heart and body still felt heavy, but the weight seemed a little easier to bear.

Eventually, Ma picked me up off the floor and led me to my bedroom. She retrieved a nightgown from my dresser and helped me change. I could smell something cooking from the other room. Apparently, Kylee was making dinner. Ma was going on about how far she had come since they moved to Blue Fang territory.

I could see the changes in them both. I was proud of them.

Kylee came in with a tray of food and we all sat and ate in the bed. When we were done, I watched as Kylee fussed about the room, picking things up. It was a mess from our sudden departure the night before. She had come a long way. She was so different that I couldn’t help the pit forming in my stomach.

Why had Theo insisted she come home?

Chapter 236

Chapter 86: Theo

I left after Marie and Kylee arrived. They needed time together. And it still hurt too much to watch them be there for her in the way I wanted to be. Kingston was waiting outside the door still. I didn’t know if she would want to see him either, and I couldn’t bring myself to allow it. Not when she was pulling away from me already.

“She needs time with her family,” I said gruffly.

“Of course,” Kingston said.

“Jimmy has tracked down one of the culprits involved in her poisoning,” I said. “My father is handling the other Alphas and Lunas if you would like to join me at the precinct.”

“Absolutely,” he said eagerly.

We traveled to the sheriff’s station in silence. Jimmy and Maggie had been able to catch up with John easily enough. He was holed up in an old management building at the fairgrounds. He didn’t put up much of a fight when they cornered him. His guilt was already eating away at him.

I looked at him through the one-way glass at the station. We used to be friends back in high school. We were never close, but as his future Alpha, I knew him well enough. At least, I did back then. The man sitting before me now was a stranger to me. An enemy I would have never expected.

“Do you want Sheriff McCabe to question him, Alpha,” Jimmy asked. “It may be...”

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Chapter 86 Theo

288 Vouchers

“No,” I interrupted. “I need to take care of this.”

I entered the interrogation room and sat down across the table from John. Anger and the sting of betrayal boiled under the surface but was tempered by pity. He looked ragged and disheveled. But I could tell this was a state he had been in for a while. He was fidgeting and his eyes darted everywhere around the room, except on me.

“John,” I began more calmly than expected, “We know what happened last night. I know there was a plot to poison Luna Ayla. I know you were involved.” He closed his eyes tightly and shook his head but he wasn’t denying anything. “I also know you couldn’t do it.”

John fell still, his shoulders falling. “She didn’t take a drink,” he muttered. “I was watching. Watching like a hawk. Like a wolf. Watching to see if she took a drink. I didn’t like it. I didn’t want to. But she said it had to be done. But she didn’t tell me. She never said...”

“Who, John?” I asked. “Who didn’t tell you what?”

“She didn’t say there was a pup,” he said with anguish. “I never would have if... I would have let them hurt me. I wouldn’t have... That’s why I stopped her. I heard the other Luna and I couldn’t do it.”

Luna Victoria had mentioned her conversation with Ayla about her pregnancy at the gathering. That was right around the time John knocked her drink from her hand.

“But then you had an argument with someone,” I said. “You tried to leave and they got mad. Who were you arguing with, John? Was it her?”

John was chewing his nails viciously. I could see where he had been drawing blood from doing so. He was losing his mind, but he managed to nod a confirmation to my question. I stood up and walked around the table, leaning on it as I reached out for John. He shied away, but I

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Chapter 86 Theo

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rested a hand on his shoulder, trying to offer some kind of comfort.

“John, I need you to tell me who you were arguing with.”

He shook his head vigorously. “No, no, I can’t,” he insisted. “They’ll hurt Sarah.”

“I won’t let that happen,” I said. “I swear. But whoever it was went into the kitchen after you left. They poisoned Luna Ayla. They tried to kill her. They killed our pup, John.”

John was still shaking his head and rocking back and forth. “She wasn’t allowed in,” he muttered. “That’s why it had to be me. She said so. She wasn’t allowed in.”

“But she did go in,” I said. “We have her on the security cameras, John. We can see her putting something in the drink. Who is she, John?”

He slowly stilled again. “It was Amy,” he said softly. “Amy poisoned Luna Ayla.”

My jaw clenched so tight I thought my teeth would crack. Kieran came growling violently. I had barely felt him since the doctor told me our pup hadn’t made it. He had been so devastated. I couldn’t let him out to run. So, he receded into my subconscious.

But now he was back with a vengeance. I could feel him trying to force the shift, but I couldn't let him take over. I wouldn't be able to stop him from taking his rage out on John for his involvement. The others must have seen what was about to happen because I felt strong hands grab my arms and drag me away. I pushed Kieran down, forcing him to back down. When I had settled, I was in another room.

"You back with us, man?" Jimmy said as he held my shoulders.

"Yeah," I grunted.

Chapter 86: Theo

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"I don't understand why you didn't let him tear the bastard apart," Kingston growled. "We know he's guilty. Just because he backed out at the last minute..."

"John isn't in his right mind," I snapped. I sighed, still working to calm my anger. "His family has a history of illness. His mother suffered from paranoid delusions. He was an easy pawn for the Waar Pa k."

"Amy wasn't," Jimmy snarled.

"No," I rumbled. "Hunt her down. And bring her to the cellar. I no longer have an interest in catering to appearances."

Chapter 237

Chapter 87: Theo

We rushed back to the packhouse. Nearly the entire police force was out searching for Amy. I didn't expect it would be hard to find her. She likely didn't think we suspected her yet. But I had something else to address first.

I made my way straight to my apartment. I paused at the door to push Kieran back again. He was pacing frantically in my head. I entered the apartment and found the living room and kitchen empty. I heard voices coming from down the hall and found Ayla with her mother and sister in our bed, deep in conversation. I cleared my throat to get their

attention.

"Can I borrow Kylee for a moment, please?" I asked tightly.

"Um, sure," Kylee said tentatively. "I'll be right back."

Kylee left the room and I looked back at Ayla. I wanted to ask her how she was doing more than anything at that moment. But I didn't think she was ready. The strange look she was giving me didn't help to change that feeling. I couldn't read its meaning, but I could see the oceans of pain in her eyes. I knew seeing me was hurting her. So, I left without another word.

Kylee was waiting in the living room for me.

"What did you..."

I grabbed her arm roughly and started hauling her towards the door, ignoring her protests, I dragged her down the hall to an empty room and threw her inside, closing the door behind me.

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Chapter 87: Theo

288 Vouchers

"What the hell, Theo?"

"I'm going to give you this one chance, Kylee," I growled threateningly. "I will get the truth. And so help you, if I find out you had a hand in this, I will kill you where you stand."

Fear filled Kylee's expression. "Theo, what are you talking about? A hand in what?"

"Ayla's attempted assassination," I thundered.

Kylee looked shocked and disgusted. It seemed genuine, but I couldn't bring myself to trust that with our history.

"How dare you?" she cried. "Why on earth would you believe I had anything to do with what happened?"

"Because it was your little friend, Amy, who poisoned her," I yelled.

"What? I..."

"Don't try to play dumb, Kylee," I continued. "She was always following you around like a damn puppy dog. She was the one responsible for all the rumors that Ayla stole me from you. Whatever trouble she

had caused has been due to some misguided, delusional' devotion to you. So, you better figure out a damn good way to convince me this wasn't your doing real fucking fast, Kylee."

"I swore I would never hurt Ayla again," Kylee bellowed with a newfound confidence that startled me. "I may have been a spoiled brat before, but I have spent months trying to change that. And regardless of who I was before, I would NEVER wish that kind of harm on my family. Especially Ayla."

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"Then why else would Amy do it?"

Chapter 87: Theo

1288 Vouchers

"I don't know," Kylee exclaimed. "I barely talk to her anymore. And when I do, I certainly don't talk to her about Ayla. With the exception of telling her to back off and get over herself. You can check my emails and text messages for proof of that. If Amy did this, it had nothing to do with me."

I forced my fingers through my hair. I wanted to both believe and not believe her. Even if she did have something to do with this, how could I break that to Ayla? She just got her family back. I couldn't take that away from her after this loss.

My phone rang in my pocket.

"Yeah," I answered gruffly.

"I've got her, Alpha," Maggie said over the line. "She was at the college. I'm bringing her in now."

"I'll meet you there," I said before hanging up. I turned back to Kylee. "You better pray Amy doesn't tell me anything you don't want me to know."

I turned to leave when Kylee called after me.

"I want to be there," she said insistently. "When you question her. I want to be there without her knowing."

I looked back at her. "Why would I allow that?"

"Because right now, I don't give a shit if you believe me or not," she said. "That bitch hurt my sister. I want to hear from her. And I want to be there when you end her."

I didn't say anything. I wasn't sure if she was trying to play some game.

“Look at this way,” she went on, “if she implicates me somehow, I’ll be

Chapter 87 Theo

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right there to do what you want.”

She had a point.

“Fine,” I grunted. “Find Jimmy. He’ll take you down.”

I left Kylee there. She was the least of my worries now. Now, I had to get Ayla to talk to me. She needed to know what happened. Amy’s fate was in her hands as much as mine.

Chapter 238

Chapter 88: Theo

I went back to the apartment and found Marie in the kitchen.

“Alpha Theo,” she greeted me. “I didn’t get a chance to thank you. Well, for everything, really. But mostly for letting me be with her now. It means so much.”

“She needed her mother,” I said.

“She did,” Marie agreed. “If I’m being honest, I never thought I’d see the day that Ayla needed me again. I know that is mostly my fault. But it means more than I can express that I can actually be who she needs me to be.”

“I’m grateful for that, too,” I replied. “But right now, I need to talk to Ayla. It’s important. Do you mind giving us some space?”

“Oh, yes,” Marie said with a nervous nod. “Of course. I’ll get our stuff settled into our room down the hall.”

“Thank you,” I said.

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I waited for the front door to close before I took a slow step towards my bedroom. There was a pit in my stomach as my nerves ate away at me. I didn’t know what to expect from our conversation, but I knew I needed to fix whatever was broken between Ayla and me.

I needed my mate.

So badly I needed her right now.

I crossed the threshold into our room and had the wind knocked out of me. Ayla was up out of bed. But she was packing.

Chapter BB Theo

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“What are you doing?” I growled.

Ayla jumped slightly as she turned to me. “I’m leaving,” she said defiantly before going about her task. “I can’t stay here.”

Kieran whimpered as my chest felt like a vice had clamped down on it. I knew she would need some time but I never imagined she would leave me.

“Ayla, please...” I was about to beg her to stay, but I stopped myself. That wasn’t the support she needed right now. “Ayla, we need to talk. I need to tell you something.”

“Don’t bother,” she snapped, her voice quivering. “I get it. I wouldn’t want me either. I’ll be out of your way soon enough.”

I took a step toward her. “What are you talking about? Of course I want...”

“I don’t need to hear it, Theo,” Ayla cried. “I can’t hear it. Please. Just let me go and I’ll leave you alone. I don’t need an explanation.”

“An explanation for what?” I urged, completely confused. “Ayla, you’re not making any sense.”

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“Am I not?” she seethed, turning on me. “I have failed at everything. I can’t even make it through a semester of college, let alone be a Luna. Now I can’t even keep your child alive. Of course you see it. Everyone sees it.”

“Sees what?”

“That you made the wrong choice,” she bellowed. “You had the right sister all along. And now that no one can deny that, you can get rid of me and take her back. Pick up right where you left off.”

Chapter 88: Theo

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“What?” I yelled incredulously. “You think I want Kylee?”

I rushed towards her, reaching out to grab her. She tried to push me away. Flailing her arms as she hit me. Agonizing so bs wracking her body as she

cried. I managed to get my arms around her and held her so tight I was afraid I'd break her. Tears streamed down my face as I felt her body shake as she howled in pain.

We sank to the floor as I rocked her, waiting for her to calm enough that she could hear me.

"Oh, love," I said as I buried my face in her hair. "For how smart you are, you really are being stupid. How could you ever think that?"

"Don't deny it..."

"Yes, I deny it. I deny it with every fiber of my being," I insisted strongly. "How could you ever think I would want her over you? That could never, ever happen, baby."

"But she's better..."

"Stop it," I snapped. I gripped her face, making her look me in the eye. "Stop. Don't do this to me, baby. Please. I can't lose you now. I don't want her. I could never want her. I want you. I need you. I need you so much."

"But I'm so broken, Theo," she gasped. "I lost our baby."

"I know, love," I forced through my own tears. "But you didn't lose me. I know it hurts. I'm hurting, too. But I swear you didn't lose me."

She held my gaze for a few moments before she fell against my chest, her arms clinging to me as another round of sobbing rippled through her. We held each other as we both cried, letting our grief and pain out. Mourning our loss together.

Chapter 88 Theo

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We let our emotions run their course. At least for the moment. We both knew we had a long road of healing ahead of us. But as long as I had her, I could get through it. I just needed her.

I was leaning against our bed, stroking Ayla's hair as she lay against my chest before I finally spoke,

"Please don't leave me, Ayla," I said. "I know you need time, but we can get through this together. Just don't leave me."

"I didn't think you would want me anymore," she whispered.

"I will always want you, love," I insisted. "That will never change."

She nuzzled into my neck.

“There is something I need to tell you,” I said hesitantly. I didn’t want to break that moment, but I couldn’t put this off.

“Hmm?”

I took a deep breath and sat her up to face me. I brush a strand of hair from her face.

“We found out who gave you the wolfsbane,” I told her.

She stiffened. Her mood transforming instantly.

“Who?”

“It was Amy.”

Chapter 239

Chapter 89: Theo

I held Ayla’s as we entered the cellar. It kept me grounded, even though we were both ready to burn the world down if anyone so much as looked at us wrong. But we would have justice soon enough. Then, all of this would be over. We could work on moving forward with our lives in peace.

Our closest friends stood in the hall outside Amy’s cell. Briggs, Mina, Jimmy, Maggie, even Annabelle. They all stood with determined stances. Kylee stood a short distance from them, but her demeanor was the same as the rest.

“Will is on his way,” Briggs said. “So is Sheriff McCabe. We need the witnesses.”

“Oh, there will be witnesses,” Ayla said as she stared through the glass at the woman inside.

“Has she said anything yet?” I asked.

“Other than nasty comments that earned her that fat lip and bloody nose, no,” Maggie said.

“How do you want to handle this?” I asked Ayla. “Do you want me to go in first or do this together?”

“We do this together,” she said decisively. She moved to go in but paused, turning back to Jimmy and Briggs. “Don’t let me kill her yet. I have something else in mind.”

Briggs and Jimmy shared a look. Jimmy didn’t even bother to hide his grin.

I opened the door and stepped in. Amy's head shot up, her eyes falling on me, then moving to Ayla as she followed me in.

"I thought I heard you somehow survived," she sneered. "Pity."

"Sorry to disappoint," Ayla replied coldly. "I guess you should have tried harder. Maybe been a little smarter about it."

Amy shrugged a shoulder. "I also hear it wasn't a total loss." Her eyes dropped to Ayla's stomach, then back up.

My hand flew to the back of her head, slamming it against the metal table before dragging her up by her hair. A fresh stream of blood flowed from her nose and mouth.

"Who put you up to it?" I commanded.

Amy laughed. She didn't even try to fight the command. "No one. I took it upon myself to end this whole charade."

"You don't seem the type to cater to Waar P ak rhetoric," Ayla said. "What's in it for you?"

"Other than getting rid of you?" Amy jeered as she struggled to breathe through a broken nose.

"I get that you hate me, Amy," Ayla stated. "But you knew this would mean death if you were caught. Even you aren't stupid enough to risk your life over a grudge. There's no reason to hate me that much."

"Wanna bet?" Amy gasped out viciously. "Who said I only hated you? Our pathetic Alpha here thinks there won't be consequences to his actions. An eye for an eye, dear Alpha. You take something from me. I take something from you. I wanted it to be your mate, but I can't deny robbing you of a pup is more satisfying. At least for now."

I slammed her head back on the table, holding her down as I gripped her neck. I felt her spine start to crack as she struggled beneath me. But Ayla stopped me before I went too far.

"Theo," she pressed.

I released my hold, stepping out of the spray of blood from Amy's coughing and spluttering. Suddenly, the door burst open and Kylee rushed in.

"How could you, Amy?" Kylee cried. "What kind of psycho kills someone because their friend moved away?"

"Don't fucking flatter yourself," Amy spat. "You really think I cared about you after you abandoned me? After you gave up on everything you worked for. You're the most pathetic of them all."

Kylee shook her head. "What happened to you, Amy? Did you even think twice after John told you Ayla was pregnant?"

A sickening smile spread over Amy's face. "Who said that's how I found out?"

"What do you mean?" Ayla demanded.

"I already knew," Amy replied. "Thank you for that, by the way."

Kylee's face paled. She looked at Ayla desperately. "I swear I didn't tell her, Ayla. I swear. I would never."

Amy laughed again. "Of course not. But you've always been easy to manipulate. You spill your guts to anyone who shows you a little bit of attention. Did he make you feel special, Kylee?"

Kylee looked like she would vomit. I started to believe she had been used to get to us somehow. Ayla must have figured that out too. She

was tugging on Kylee's arm, trying to get her to leave the room. Suddenly, Kylee launched herself at Amy. Her wolf flashed in her eyes as her claws extended. Ayla caught her in time, holding her back.

"Why then?" Kylee yelled. "Why kill her?"

"Because they took my mate from me," Amy bellowed. "If I can't have mine, neither can they."

We all looked at each other. None of us even knew Amy had a mate. I reached over and tugged the collar of her shirt away to find a mark displayed on her shoulder.

"Who is this mate we have supposedly robbed you of?" I asked. "Did we kill him?"

Amy looked at me with a look of pure hatred. "You will," she ground out. "The Alphas will side with you and he will die."

"Wait," Ayla said. "Malcolm Neal is your mate?"

"We were fated to each other," Amy said.

"So, you murdered my child because your mate was stupid enough to get himself caught?" Ayla hissed.

She closed the distance between her and Amy. There was a look on her face I had never seen before. It sent a chill down my spine. She leaned in close, grabbing Amy's chin roughly.

"You want to be with your mate?" Ayla said. "Then you will be with your mate."

Chapter 240

Chapter 90: Ayla

"Where's Malcolm?" I demanded as I left the cell.

"He's been taken back to the jail," Sheriff McCabe said as he walked down the hall with Will. They must have just arrived.

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"Bring him back. And Delta Charles as well," I ordered. "Briggs, Mina, I need you to get Alpha Torin and Luna Grace and help them gather all the visiting pack leaders outside. Jimmy — spread the word through the packhouse as well. I want everyone outside within the next half hour. Sheriff McCabe chain Amy up on the pavilion."

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"What are you going to do?" Briggs asked.

"I'm done," I said, my rage and anguish settling over me with an eerie calm. "Whether the Waar Pak makes it out of this tonight or I do, this ends now. But make no mistake, that bitch won't see tomorrow." I turned to leave. "And get Kylee out of there."

I stormed down the corridor and out of the cellar, Theo following behind me. I could feel he had questions, but I couldn't stop yet. My determination was quickly taking over every other emotion that had been coursing through me.

I took the stairs two at a time, pushing my sore body more than I should. I didn't know if what I was about to do would help me or destroy me. But I honestly didn't care. I had lost too much and too much was being threatened. The only thing I knew, even if I couldn't say why, was that my fate would be determined tonight.

And I was ready.

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Chapter 90. Ayla

288 (Vouchers

I burst into our apartment and went straight to my father's books. I was searching haphazardly through them when Theo finally rested a hand on my arm. Hauling my movements.

"I'm with you, love," he said softly. "Whatever you are planning, I'm by your side. But I need to know what else you need from me."

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. Turning to my mate, I snaked my arms around him and buried my face in his chest. He instantly returned the embrace, holding me tightly. I reveled in his touch. Concentrating on the tingling sensation that he still so strongly invoked. Dasha came to the forefront of my mind, connecting to Kieran. She, too, had a sense of calm about her that assured me we were meant to be doing this.

"This," I whispered. "I need this. Whatever happens, remember that this is real. This is everything to us. Remember that I love you."

"I could never forget that, love," he said, kissing my head.

When I finally pulled away, I turned back to the books and found the one I needed. I collected a few other items and place them in a box with the text. Holding it firmly, I took Theo's hand and we left our home.

'Malcolm and Charles are back on the grounds,' Briggs linked us both. 'Do you want them with Amy?'

'Not yet,' I replied. 'I want to talk to Malcolm privately first. Bring him inside. Put Delta Charles somewhere with a good view.'

I took the long way through the packhouse. I wanted everyone to see us, but no one dared approach us to speak. By the time we made it to the lobby, a group of pack members was following us out. I saw Briggs waiting at a door nearby. Theo and I left the group behind and entered the room where Malcolm was chained up.

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Chapter 90 Ayla

288 (Vouchers

For the first time, I could see his demeanor was truly rattled. He had seen the commotion outside and he was scared.

He should be.

I walked up to him and pulled his collar to away, checking each side of his shoulder and neck.

“That’s what I thought,” I said. “You marked her but didn’t let her mark you.”

He stiffened but failed to hide the reaction on his face fast enough.

“I’m betting you gave her some bulls hit line about it being to protect her,” I crooned. “That your enemies couldn’t know you had a mate or they’d come after her. But do you know what I think?” I leaned in closer to him. “I think you’re ashamed she’s your mate.”

Malcolm grimaced. “She’s young and stup id.”

“Yes,” I scoffed. “She is that. But she’s still fated to you. And you just couldn’t deny that bond. You feel for her the closest thing to love someone like you could feel.”

He dropped his head, refusing to look at me.

“Good,” I said softly. “That’s all I need to know.”

I indicated to Briggs to take Malcolm and follow us along with the two guards that were with him. I exited the room into a lobby that hushed as soone as we emerged. I headed out of the packhouse, Theo by my side, and walked toward the head of the pavilion. The crowd parted to make way for us.

I should have been looking at their faces. I should have been gauging the atmosphere. But I didn’t. I watched Amy’s face as her eyes

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Chapter 90 Ayla

288 Vouchers

followed Malcolm the entire way. The amount of devotion and adoration that was there almost made me feel sorry for her. But I needed that bond and I wouldn’t back down.

I stood on the platform at the end of the courtyard. Waiting as the last few murmurs died down and silence fell over the world. Until I heard nothing. Not even the sound of crickets chirping in the night. Just silence.

I moved to a podium near the front of the stage and placed the box down. I slowly removed the contents, placing them all where they would be visible, before turning back to the multitude.

“My name is Ayla Garner Dominis.”