

## The Luna's Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 26

### Chapter 26: Theo

It was after midnight when I could finally head to my room. I soon as I opened the door, I smelled her. I immediately wished I could just close the door and leave without her noticing, but that wasn't going to happen.

"What are you doing here, Kylee?" I asked. I didn't even have the energy to sound angry, but I still was.

"You left me there," Kylee cried angrily.

"Excuse me?" My energy returned, fueling my anger.

"You just left me at the hospital. I went all the way there to make sure you were okay after being worried sick, and you just left me there."

"Had you been at the library in the first place, you wouldn't have had to worry about me," I bellowed. "You should have been there by my side. It was our pack that was suffering. They needed to see their Alpha and their Luna there. But you couldn't be bothered."

"Theo..."

"When you did decide to show up, I just had to console a friend who had just lost her mother because I hadn't made it to her in time. We lost a pack member, a good woman, and you're mad because you had to find your own way home?"

"How ignorant can you be?"

Kylee threw herself against me, wrapping her arms around my waist

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“You’re right, Theo. You’re right,” she cried. “I understand I should have been there as the pack’s Luna. It was a mistake. I’m sorry.”

I didn’t move to return the embrace. Her behavior was unacceptable.

“Please, baby,” she sniffled. “It was a mistake. I’m still learning to be a Luna. This is all a lot newer for me than it is for you. I promise I will do better. Just, please, don’t be mad at me anymore.”

That’s what she was worried about? That I was mad at her?

I gripped her arms, pulling them from around me and pushing her away slowly. I went to my armchair and fell into it, closing my eyes as I pinched the bridge of my nose. Exhaustion had started to make my head ache, matching the one in my chest.

I felt Kylee come and sit on my lap, and I had to fight the urge to push her off.

“I am really sorry, baby,” she said, running a hand along my chest.

I sighed. “Kylee, I think we should postpone our mating ceremony.”

“What?” she gasped, jumping off my lap. “You don’t mean that. Because I made one mistake?”

“Because you’re not ready for this, Kylee.”

She fell to the floor before me. “But I will be. I promise I’ll do better, Theo. Please, I love you. Don’t be mad at me, please. I’ll prove it to you. I promise.”

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Her begging both hurt and disgusted me. Part of me hated that I was upsetting her, but I also knew it was necessary. Her actions needed to be addressed. But her reaction to the confrontation was a bit pathetic. It wasn't the show of strength and conviction and humility that a Luna would experience after a mistake like this.

I looked down at her. Tears were streaming down her face, and the fear and pain were clearly etched across her face. Ayla flashed into my head. I remembered the steely resolve in her demeanor. The neutral expression on her face as she experienced the extreme pain of the broken mate bond, the severing of her pack, and the loss of her wolf all at once. The only evidence of her turmoil was the tears that ran silently.

It took a strength I couldn't match at the time. And apparently, neither could Kylee.

I tore my eyes from hers.

"Please, Theo," Kylee whined. "I can't lose you. I love you."

I had to remember that Kylee was young. She was five years younger than me, and she was right that this role was new for her. There may not be much of it there now, but she had to have some of the same strength Ayla had. I just needed to give her more time to find it.

I could do that.

I rested a palm against her cheek.

"Okay," I said. "We'll keep the date for now. But we're still going to talk about this later."

A smile returned to her face. "Oh, Theo." She climbed back

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onto my lap, her arms going around my neck as she kissed my face. “Of course. I promise you won’t regret this.”

I rested a hand on her back. It was all I could muster.

“You should go,” I said gently. “I’ll talk to you in the morning.”

“Theo, no, I’m not leaving you tonight. I thought I was going to lose you today. I’m not going...”

“Kylee,” I interrupted. “I’m not in the mood. Please, just go.”

She looked hurt again, huffing as she stood. “Fine.”

She stormed out of my room and slammed the door behind her. Again, her behavior left something to be desired. I had been adamantly telling myself that I wasn’t doubting my decision in choosing Kylee as my mate, that my thoughts were just being influenced by the mate bond with Ayla.

But tonight, I was doubting my decision. And I had to admit that to myself.

There was a soft knock on my door. Briggs mind-linked me to let me know it was him. He had arrived back a few hours after the fire died out and jumped straight into the mix. With him, taking over the supervision of the investigation at the library, we hadn’t crossed paths since he got back.

I told him to come in. When he entered, he looked about as tired as I did.

“Did you discover anything at the library today?” I asked.

“Nothing definitive yet. It appears the fire started in the basement around an electrical panel. But the fire marshal thinks, there may be something suspicious. He’s going to pick

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first thing in the morning,” Briggs informed me as he sat in the chair next to me.

“So we’re thinking the fire was set deliberately?” I asked, leaning forward. That wasn’t what I had expected to hear.

“He wasn’t ready to say that. Just that it wasn’t a typical cause,” Briggs clarified.

I would have to meet the marshal at the library. I wanted to be there to see what he found when he found it. If there was any chance the fire was set on purpose, then it was an attack against our pack. I didn’t think I could handle that on top of everything else going on. I needed to clear some things out of my head.

“What about Ayla?” I asked quietly.

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## **The Luna’s Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 27**

### Chapter 27: Ayla

I wiped the tears from my eyes as I held my side. The laughter hurt, but I couldn’t stop.

“You cheated,” Kingston said again. “There’s no way you could have figured that out.”

I gasped for air. “I told you it wasn’t the husband.”

“But the gun and tire treads...” Kingston said, looking through the list of clues again. “Everything leads back to the husband.”

“Sure, but it was the daughter,” I said with a shrug, taking a sip of my drink to calm my giggles.

“But that’s not possible,” he protested. “She was out of the country at the time of the murder. Her passport was stamped.”

“It was.” I leaned forward and picked up the stack of fake passports. “But so was her twin sister’s. Coming into the country the morning of and flying out of the country the morning after the murder. So, Alpha, why would someone with an airtight alibi fly into the country just to create another airtight alibi? And how did she get on foreign soil in the first place?”

Hooked at him expectantly.

“She used her sister’s passport to come back, murder her mother, set her father up for it, and leave the country again,” I said. “Using her own to establish an alibi.”

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Kingston looked at the paper that held the name of the murderer again. “Well, damn. I guess you win.”

“Without cheating, right?”

“Yeah, yeah, I guess you didn’t cheat,” he conceded.

“Nope.”

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He sighed, leaning back into the couch cushions and throwing an arm over my shoulder.

“I admit defeat.” He pulled me against him. “I say we turn on a movie and forget this whole thing happened.”

He was teasing me.

“Oh no, there will be no forgetting,” I replied, laying my head on his shoulder.

He began to trail his hand lightly up and down my arm.

“Well, as long as you enjoyed yourself.” His tone was gentle, without any teasing.

“I did,” I replied, looking up at him.

He looked back at me, and our eyes locked for a moment. He leaned in and his mouth touched mine. I didn't have time to stop him. I didn't think I wanted to stop him. The touch was tentative but firm. His hand went to my face, and he deepened the kiss, his tongue grazing my lips.

I opened for him, meeting him happily. The hand I had resting on his chest moved up and around his neck, holding him to me. It felt good. He felt good.

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The pain in my chest had been gone for hours, thanks to Kingston's proximity. I noticed he made an effort to maintain contact with me the whole evening. Just light touches. His

leg resting against mine. An arm over the back of the couch, grazing my shoulders. Little things. But they were enough.

Along with the painkillers, I felt fantastic. It was the most pain-free I had been in weeks.

But it wasn't just that.

Whenever he touched me, my stomach would flutter. And his kiss made my heart skip, followed by racing as he pulled me in tighter. His hand moved from my face and down my body.

I pulled away with a hiss. He had hit my sore ribs.

"Ayla, I'm sorry," Kingston rushed. "I didn't mean to hurt you. I didn't even intend for that kiss to happen. I know it's too soon for you."

"Kingston, it's okay," I assured him with a smile. "It's fine, really. It really didn't hurt that bad. It just hit suddenly, is all."

He shook his head. "Still, I don't want to pressure you, Ayla."

I chuckled. "You didn't. I wasn't exactly pushing you away."

Kingston smiled. "I was hoping that was intentional." His expression became serious again. "I really do care about you, Ayla. I know you're probably not ready to even think about being with anyone right now."

"Everything is just so complicated," I said quietly.

"I know," Kingston urged. "I know. And I know my kissing you doesn't make anything less complicated. But I guess I gave

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away my intentions."

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I met his eyes, not really knowing how to respond. He brushed my hair back from my face.

“I want you to be a member of my pack, Ayla. No matter what happens,” he insisted. “But I also want you. For me. I want to be with you.”

I held my breath. Many emotions were swirling through me, but excitement was pushing to the front.

“There’s no rush for any of that, Ayla. I have no expectations. I swear, you owe me nothing,” Kingston said. “But you should know that I plan to try.”

“I think I’m okay with that,” I said with a smile.

He smiled back. He leaned in and kissed me again. “Okay.”

“Okay,” I said.

He pulled me against him, just holding me for a while. I was so comfortable that I eventually started to fall asleep. I let my mind wander. I began to think about what Kingston meant and what that would mean for me. We didn’t have the intensity of the mate bond like I had with Theo. But with all the trouble that had caused me, I didn’t exactly think that was a bad thing. And sitting there in his arms, feeling no pain, taking comfort in his touch, I could imagine this being the rest of my life.

“It’s getting late,” Kingston whispered. “We should get you to bed.”

He helped me up and walked me to my room. He kissed me on

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the forehead and said goodnight. I shut the door and hobbled to the dresser to get my pajamas. I got changed and pulled the blankets down on the bed. I heard Kingston pattering

around in the kitchen.

I grabbed my crutches again and headed out of my room. I probably shouldn't have done what I was about to do. I doubted he would, but it wouldn't hurt to ask. I risked giving him the wrong impression, but I was willing to take that risk.

Kingston must have been getting a drink before going to bed himself. He was already in a pair of sweats and shirtless as he rinsed a glass in the sink. He turned to me when he heard me approach.

Goddess, he was attractive. All lean, chiseled muscle. He was taller than Theo but not as broad. But his dark features made his green eyes stand out in a way that was mesmerizing.

"Everything okay?" he asked.

I swallowed as I mustered the courage.

"What is it, Ayla?" he asked when I didn't respond.

"Will you stay with me tonight?"

Surprise, desire, and concern flashed across his face. "Ayla, I didn't mean you had..."

"I know," I rushed to interrupt him. "It's not that. I know you won't push me. It's just that... the pain comes back. It makes it hard to sleep."

He nodded his understanding, closing the distance between

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"I can do that," he said with a gentle smile.

He followed me back to my room. He helped me settle into the bed, resting my broken

leg on pillows before climbing in next to me. He slipped an arm under my head, laying the other over my stomach, pulling me against him. His chin rested on my shoulder as he nuzzled into my hair.

“If you ever need anything,” he whispered, “you can tell me, Ayla. I’ll be here.”

I smiled as I drifted off to sleep.

#Lunas #Choice #theo #ayla #Kat #Silver #Chapter

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## **The Luna’s Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 28**

Chapter 28: Theo

“Briggs,” I ordered, “tell me you found her.”

He made a face. “I found her,” he said shortly. “She’s alive and she’s safe. We should leave it at that.”

I didn’t like what he was saying. There was something he didn’t want me to know, and now wasn’t the time to try my patience. Or Kieran’s. He was pacing in my head, ready to command Briggs to tell us everything he knew about Ayla.

“So she is in Sablemane territory?” I pushed. “Did you talk to her? Do you know where she’ll go next? A rogue won’t be able to stay in pack lands for long.”

“She will be safe.”

“How?” I wanted to know what he was keeping from me. “Did you talk to her?”

“Why does it matter, Theo?” Briggs asked calmly.

“Because it matters, Briggs.”

He sat there watching me for a few minutes, weighing his words carefully, which didn’t put me any more at ease. Finally, he sighed and started to talk.

“Ayla is with the Sablemane Pack. She was in a car accident in their territory and was taken to the closest hospital. Her injuries were pretty bad. She was in the hospital for four days.”

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So she definitely wasn't healing. Dasha hadn't returned to her.

“Theo, someone has taken an interest in her,” Briggs said.

My focus snapped to attention, my mind now only on my mate.

“What do you mean ‘taken an interest?’ Who?”

“She's staying with Alpha Kingston. He made it clear to me that she is under his protection. She won't be a rogue for much longer,” Briggs said.

“He's bringing her into the pack?” I shot up from my seat. “Why the fuck does he care? Why is she staying with him?”

“I don't know.”

“What kind of interest does he have in her?”

“He didn't exactly share that with me,” Briggs said.

“Then how do you know?” I yelled.

“His behavior made it pretty obvious. He wants her,” Briggs explained. “And he made sure I would give you the message to forget about her and leave her alone.”

“Excuse me?” I hissed. My whole body was tense with the rage and jealousy coursing through me.

“I’m just saying what I witnessed, Theo.”

“But did you talk to her? How do you know he’s not keeping her there against her will?” My chest was on fire. My wolf was going insane in my head, not knowing which situation would be worse.

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“I spoke to her myself,” Briggs said. “I met with her at his private lodge.”

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He saw her. He actually saw her. “How did she look? Did she seem scared?”

“No,” Briggs confirmed confidently. “She was beat the hell up from the accident. But she was perfectly comfortable with her surroundings. She was there by choice.”

Did that mean she was interested in Kingston? Did she want another Alpha?

Kieran was howling. I turned my back to Briggs as I clutched at my chest.

“What does it matter, Theo? What are you going to do? Drive her out of Sable mane because someone likes her? Are you really going to be so cruel as to force her to be alone the rest of her life?”

He was getting upset now. And he was right. What was I going to do? Even if I could get her away from Kingston, what would that do? It would make me the bastard Briggs was saying it would. But I still couldn’t get the image of someone else’s hands on Ayla out of my head. Or ignore the way my gut twisted at picturing it.

“The way I see it, this wraps this whole mess up conveniently,” Briggs said. “You have enough to put her family at ease and she’s out of the picture. If you really don’t want her, that should be enough.”

“Of course I want her,” I blurted out without thinking. I shook my head. “Kieran wants her. Between him and the mate bond, it’s hard to keep a part of me from wanting her.”

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“Or maybe you just want her anyway.”

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“What? No,” I said, pushing my hands through my hair. “Even if I did, it doesn’t change who she is or what she’s done.”

“And who is that, Theo?” Briggs asked, crossing his arms over his chest. “Because I have to say, the woman I met wasn’t the same person we’ve been told about.”

I threw myself back in my armchair.

“Has Kylee been living up to who you thought she was?” Briggs asked gently. “I heard she was MIA when everything was going down today.”

“I’ve already addressed that with her,” I said. “She’s young. She knows she made a mistake.”

“Have you?”

His question wasn’t accusatory. It wasn’t lined with anger or disappointment. It was genuine and full of concern and caring. A lump formed in my throat.

“I don’t know anymore,” I answered.

“Do you want to talk it through?”

I rubbed my hands over my face. This had turned into such a mess. And it hurt like hell.

“I guess I felt ambushed,” I finally said.

“When?”

“When I met Ayla,” I told him. “I was there with the woman I had just announced would be my chosen mate and Luna. I

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was meeting her family for the first time. We hadn't been in the house for two minutes and there she was.”

“Ayla?” Briggs asked.

I nodded. “She was incredible, Briggs. For a minute, I... I don't know. It was like I felt complete. But then I realized that she was Kylee's sister.”

“But why reject her in the first place, Theo? Why not talk to her first? Kylee would have gotten over it eventually. Ayla's your fated mate. It's not like...”

“She didn't want me, Briggs,” I rushed out. “She didn't want me. So I made things easier for all of us.”

“Wait,” Briggs said. “Theo, are you saying you rejected her just so she couldn't reject you first?”

I didn't respond.

“Fuck, Theo. Of all the times for your stupid pride.”

“It wasn't about pride, Briggs. I thought it would hurt less if I made the decision. That I'd be able to move on knowing I chose to walk away, rather than knowing she did.”

“But you didn’t know that she would,” Briggs yelled, jumping to his feet. “You have no idea what her reasons were for accepting the rejection. What about when you went back? What exactly triggered her to cut her ties?”

“I told her what Kylee told us about her. It hurt her – deeply.”

“Well, guilt can do that. Even if Ayla never intentionally hurt Kylee, finding out the consequences of your actions can still be painful,” Briggs said, pacing the floor.

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I closed my eyes, swallowing the lump forming in my throat again. I had to face what I had been ignoring since that day.

“What?” Briggs asked.

“There was no guilt in her eyes, Briggs,” I said quietly. “There was no shame. Just... pain, and confusion, and sadness. She didn’t understand, Briggs. She didn’t understand why Kylee would say those things.”

“Theo, I told you we didn’t know everything.” Briggs returned to his seat. “I think it’s time we looked further into Ayla.”

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Chapter 29. Kingston

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**The Luna’s Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 29**



## Chapter 29: Kingston

It had been two weeks since I brought Ayla home from the hospital. I continued to sleep in the bed with her after the first night she asked. I wasn't about to turn down the opportunity to be so close to her. I understood that it was because I had some kind of effect on the pain caused by her broken mate bond, but I even saw that as a good sign.

I was more careful about how far I took things. I wanted her to come to me when she was sure she was ready. There were still a few stolen kisses here and there between us, each one better than the last, but we both made sure to stop things before they went any farther than that.

But it was getting harder.

I pulled into the parking deck of the hospital. Ayla had been feeling a lot better. Her head wound and ribs seemed to heal quicker than expected, so I pushed her follow-up forward to today. They would do some x-rays and see if there was any progress with her broken leg.

I led her through the halls to the doctor's office, where we were immediately sent to the radiology department to complete the X-rays. The process went quickly – one of the perks of being the Alpha – and we were heading back to see the doctor.

We figured it would still take some time before they had the results for us, but they were kind enough to put us in a private room to wait.

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“So, have you thought more about what you want to do as far as a job goes?” I asked as I ran my thumb along the back of her hand that I was holding.

She shrugged. “I still keep coming back to either going back to school or getting into publishing. Maybe even both. Goddess knows I’m used to keeping busy.”

“And you’re sure you don’t want to just keep writing? I’m sure finding you a new publisher wouldn’t be hard.”

“Yeah, I think I want to take a break from novels for now,” she said. “I still love writing. But that still feels so much like my old life. After everything that’s happened, I’m not sure I have the inspiration I used to. I’ll go back to it one day. Just not right now.”

“Okay,” I said with a smile. That made my plans for after the appointment more exciting. I was hoping she didn’t notice that I was about to come out of my skin with excitement.

There was a knock, and the doctor finally walked through the door.

“Ms. Garner,” he said politely. “It’s lovely to see you again. Especially in such great shape.”

“Yes,” Ayla said with a smile. “I have been feeling much better.”

“I’m going to start with an examination, then we’ll go over the results of the x-rays.”

He checked Ayla over thoroughly. I checked her bruising daily and knew they had all cleared up completely. Even the

nastiest ones around her ribs. The stitches in her scalp had

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dissolved, and there was only a small raised scar where they had been.

“Well, Ms. Garner, you appear to be in great shape, considering you don’t have your wolf to heal you,” the doctor said. “In fact, you’re still healing rather quickly. Including” – he rolled his chair across the floor and pulled out the X-ray images, clipping them to the lightboard on the wall – “your leg. We had to put a small plate in to restore the bone. In a human, we would still expect to see space along the break line. But yours seems to have closed quite well already.”

“Not that I’m complaining, but what do you think is causing that? I still don’t have my wolf. I haven’t been able to reach her for weeks,” Ayla inquired.

“It could be that your wolf isn’t completely dormant. You’ve had her and shifted for years, so she may have just blocked herself off from you. But that could mean you can still access her residual healing ability,” the doctor explained. “Even shifters whose animals stay dormant from the start still heal faster than the average human. Not nearly as fast as a shifter with their animal, but still.”

“So, Dasha may still be watching out for you,” I told Ayla.

The corners of her mouth twitched with a small smile.

“Either way, we can remove the cast today and switch you over to a walking boot.”

“So I don’t need the crutches any more?” Ayla asked brightly.

“You may want to continue to use them for today while you adjust,” the doctor clarified. “But you should be good without them by tomorrow.”

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## Chapter 29: Kingston

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I waited while they removed her cast and fitted her in the boot. The appointment took longer than expected, but I was glad it was because Ayla was doing so well. When we finally got back to the SUV, I was ready to take her to the surprise I had for her.

“You ready?” I asked as she buckled in.

“For what?” she asked, confused.

“I have a surprise for you,” I said with a smile.

I pulled out and headed straight for an office building on the other side of town. I scanned my badge for the parking lot and found a spot close to the entrance.

“What is this place?” Ayla asked.

“There’s someone I want you to meet,” I said, squeezing her hand before I got out of the vehicle.

We entered the building, and I led her to the elevator. We rode it up to the fifth floor, and I took her straight to a corner office at the end of the hall. The door was open, so I knocked on the doorjamb. The woman behind the desk looked up and smiled.

“Alpha Kingston,” she said brightly, standing up and walking around the desk to greet me. “Welcome. And this must be the Ms. Garner you were telling me about.”

“Yes, Ayla this is Erica DeSantos. She’s the lead publisher here at Second Story Publishing,” I introduced. “Erica, this is Ayla Garner.”

“It’s wonderful to meet you, Ms. Garner,” Erica said, shaking

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Chapter 29 Kingston

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her hand. "Alpha tells me you're the real Sabina Heartwood. I must say, I'm a big fan of your work."

"Thank you," Ayla said with a smile. Although I could tell she was still confused. "It's nice to meet you as well."

"I hope you don't mind," I started, "but when you were talking about finding a job after you first got here, I reached out to Erica."

"Well, we've talked a few times since then," Erica cut in, "and he mentioned you were thinking about possibly going into publishing, maybe even opening your own publishing company."

"Well, perhaps," Ayla said. "I hadn't really nailed the details down yet."

"That's why you're here," I said. "Erica plans to retire in a few months but still hasn't found anyone to replace her. She wants to interview you and see if you are open to an internship."

"I'd be training you to take over the company," Erica clarified.

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Chapter 30 Ayla

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**The Luna's Choice (theo and ayla) by Kat Silver Chapter 30**

## Chapter 30: Ayla

My mind was all over the place by the time we pulled up to Kingston's house. I nearly fell on the stairs when I forgot about the boot on my leg and caught it on a step. Kingston was there to catch me.

"Everything okay?" he asked. "You were pretty quiet on the ride home."

I cleared my throat. "Yeah, sorry. It's just been a big day."

"I didn't overwhelm you, did I?" Kingston rushed. "I just know that you've been going a bit stir-crazy, and I thought this was a good opportunity for you to get back to work. I'm sorry if I just sprung it on you."

"I mean, you did plan for it to be a surprise," I said with a grin. "It's fine. It was very thoughtful. And you're right. I have been going a little nuts in here. I'm very excited. This was all great. Thank you."

"But..."

I chuckled. "No 'but.' Really, I appreciate everything you've done for me." I pushed up on my toes and kissed him on the cheek.

"I'm happy to hear it. Now let me help you up the stairs."

I rolled my eyes but let him take my arm and assist me into the house.

"I think I'm going to go change," said. "I'll be back out in a

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Chapter 30 Ayla

minute.”

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“Okay.” Kingston kissed me on the temple and headed toward the kitchen.

I went to my room and shut the door, taking a deep breath once I was alone. I wasn’t sure exactly what I was feeling. I was definitely excited. That was the truth. I really liked Erica, and from what I learned during our meeting, I admired the company that she had built. It was just a big move to go from being an author to running an entire publishing house within a matter of months.

But it was a really great opportunity, and I was grateful that Kingston had set it up for me. But maybe that was what was bothering me. Kingston had been so wonderful. But I felt like this was being handed to me because the Alpha was asking for favors. I didn’t feel like I had actually earned it.

I brushed off the feeling. I would have several months to earn my place there. It wasn’t like I was completely handed the job and expected to take over on Monday. I still had time to prove myself.

I changed into some loungewear and headed back into the living area. Kingston was coming back in through the front door with a pile of mail in his hand. As he flipped through the stack, his brow suddenly furrowed.

“What is it?” I asked.

“You have mail,” he said hesitantly, holding up a blue envelope.

“What?” No one outside of Sablemane knew I was here, and it wasn’t like I had any reason to receive mail from anyone. I

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## Chapter 30: Ayla

took the envelope from Kingston and looked at it.

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It had my name on the front, but that was it no address, no postage. Now it was my turn to furrow my brow. It was a dark blue, and for some reason, it looked familiar.

I opened the envelope, and there was a card inside. Pulling it out, there was a photo of a nature scene on the front. I opened it to read what was inside, and my heart leaped into my throat.

I guess you didn't understand.

You weren't supposed to find another.

Be smart, my love, and keep your distance.

Or you'll force my hand.

You belong to me.

"Kingston," I said, my eyes locked on the words in front of me.

He must have sensed my panic because he was at my side in seconds. He took the card from my hand.

"What the fuck?" Kingston pushed me toward my room. "Go to the bedroom and lock the door."

He must have realized the same thing I had. Whoever it was from had been here. They had to have put it in the mailbox themselves. I moved toward my room but ended up standing in the doorway until Kingston returned. He was on his phone when he came back in.

"Then they had to have masked their scent," he said into the phone.



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III

## Chapter 30: Ayla

Whoever he was talking to responded.

“I don’t know. Just get here.”

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He hung up and came straight to me, immediately pulling me into his arms. “Do you have any idea who could have sent that to you?”

“No,” I said, shaking my head.

He let me go and started to pace. “If Theo Arden is behind this, I swear to the goddess...”

“You don’t really think Theo had anything to do with this?”

“He obviously can’t let you go, Ayla,” Kingston snapped. “Who else could it be? I thought he was stupid for rejecting you, but I didn’t think he was fucking sadistic.”

I shook my head. That didn’t sound right. Sure, Theo may not have been happy to find out that I was under Kingston’s protection now, but to send ominous messages? I doubted he would go through that kind of trouble.

“I don’t think it was from him,” I said.

“Ayla, how can you think it wasn’t him?”

I rubbed my forehead, trying to clear all the thoughts running through my mind. I didn’t think this was Theo. It just didn’t feel like him. He was more emotional, confrontational even, with his reactions. This... this was calculated.

And there was something familiar that kept nagging at me.

“Okay, for argument’s sake, if it’s not Theo, who else could it be? Could it be a fan or someone from your old publishing

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Chapter 30: Ayla

288 Vouchers

house?” Kingston asked. “What about that friend of yours, Zeff? He wasn’t too happy that you left him.”

“No, absolutely not. He wouldn’t do that,” I said. “Besides, I told him where I was. If he wanted to take me back, he’d just come here and get me.”

“Okay, what about any fans?”

“That’s why we used a pen name and actor,” I said. “My publisher did a pretty good job keeping my identity a secret. They still got a few creepy letters at the office every once in a while, but as far as I know, nothing violent or anything like this.”

“Then Theo is our best guess,” Kingston insisted.

“Wait.” It hit me why the envelope was so familiar.

I rushed into my room to the desk and opened the top drawer. I had put some mail and other papers in there when I had unpacked and just hadn’t bothered to go through it. Near the bottom, I saw the same color blue peeking out.

“Here,” I said, pulling it out.

“Where did that come from?” he asked, taking it from my hands.

“I brought it with me when I left...”

Tearing it open, he pulled another card out, a different photo of nature on the outside. He opened it, closing his eyes after reading the contents.

“What?” I grabbed the card, almost dropping the photo inside. It. I gasped when I saw it.

III

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It was a picture of me and Zeff, but Zeff had been exed out. I returned to the card, reading the message inside. returne

I'm glad you got rid of the mate

But this one has to go too.

No one else will have you.

You won't be waiting long.

#Lunas #Choice #theo #ayla #Kat #Silver #Chapter

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