

SECOND CHANCE LUNA

Chapter 13

As Jason stepped out onto the porch, Cameron and Noah cautiously entered the garden. Noah seemed confused by the situation though

Cameron had a knowing smile on his face. It was clear Jason hadn't spent the night outside, which meant he at least earned a place inside,

probably the bed.

"Alpha," they both greeted with a respectful nod, baring their necks to appease the sudden wave of his territorial aura.

~ "Have you been told what is expected of you?" Jason asked.

"Beta said to report to you," Noah answered.

"I'm pulling you two off the patrols today," Jason announced.

y the news. He opened his mouth to protest, but Jason signed for quiet.

Cameron nodded. Noah's next question spilled out of him, "Alpha, when you say our Luna...does that mean?"

"Yes." Jason answered as a smile broke his stern expression.

Before he said anything else, Phoebe stepped out of the cottage with a duffle bag on one shoulder. Though the pups brought their own

towels, she always took along extras. Sensing the tension between the three males, she looked up and gave the warriors a nervous smile.

"Luna," Cameron smiled and bowed. Since he had been debriefed previously, none of this surprised him.

Noah was slower to respond, his eyes wide as he studied the petite she-wolf. Jason growled, reminding him of his propriety. Noah quickly

averted his eyes and followed Cameron's example.

"Phoebe," Jason pulled her into his arms, standing forehead-to-forehead with her. "Please be careful."

"I think you worry too much," Phoebe smiled, stroking his cheek.

"I can never worry too much when it comes to you," Jason kissed her palm before capturing her lips. "You are my everything, Phoebe."

Her cheeks turned pink at his confession. No one had ever said such things to her before. It both pained him, but also made him grateful to

be the first who noticed her.

"Cam, Noah, I don't have to tell you what I'm asking of you, do I?" Jason asked, his gaze sliding towards the waiting warriors.

"No Alpha," Cameron assured him. "We'll guard Luna with our lives."

"Good." Jason tried to breathe easier as Phoebe stepped off the porch. "Phoebe..."

She paused, looking up at him with a curious rise of her eyebrow. He hesitated. Despite his worry, she seemed wholly carefree and happy.

He didn't want her to be afraid just because he was anxious.

Her eyes shimmered silver and she chuckled, "I'll be fine, Jason. Promise."

Jason smiled despite his lingering doubts. Swallowing a lump in his throat, Jason managed a nod as she turned away and continued to the

gate. Cameron and Noah nodded to their Alpha before following. Whether their Luna realized it or not, she already had Jason wrapped

around her fingers. The thought of their stern, businesslike Alpha brought to heel by such a petite and unassuming Luna made both

warriors fight smiles of amusement.

“Luna, let me carry that for you,” Noah suddenly said as they made their way toward the packhouse.

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“Carry?” Phoebe paused, unsure what he referred to.

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Noah nodded to the duffle bag and held out a hand. Phoebe hesitated. It wasn't heavy and she had carried it plenty of times before. Yet,

the warrior seemed earnest, so she handed the bag over. With a smile, Noah slung it over his shoulder and they continued on.

Nearing the packhouse Phoebe slowed, saying, “Could you two hang back a moment. I don't want to scare the pups.”

Sharing a look, the pair nodded and slowed their pace, allowing her to approach the packhouse on her own. Phoebe avoided the front,

making her way to the backdoor that came off the kitchen. There she found the pups already waiting with bathing suits under their q_

clothes and towels over their shoulders.

The pups let out a cheer as they quickly surrounded her, eager to be off. Because of the distance, they didn't get to swim often. Phoebe

chuckled at their exuberance, taking the two-year-old from its mother.

“I'm glad you're taking them today,” the mother she-wolf said as she handed off her young pup.

“Oh?”

“Luna is a ripe mood. She's annoyed the visiting alpha isn't paying her any attention,” the she-wolf explained. “And Alpha has been

drinking heavier than usual.”

Phoebe frowned. It wasn't unusual for Luna Kristie's mood to fluctuate, especially if she was frustrated. But the thought she was trying to catch Jason's eye made Phoebe uncomfortable.

"That b***h better stay away from our Mate," Mani growled, stirring deep within her mind.

"Mani!"

Her wolf offered no apology. Phoebe's thoughts turned to their Alpha as she herded the pups away from the packhouse. He'd always had a

drinking problem, but he usually kept it under control, at least when there were visitors. But as of late, it seemed he was getting worse.

"It's because he's at odds with his wolf," Mani explained, as if it should be obvious. "This is what happens when you reject your fated Mate."

Is it?"

"It would have been different if he marked and mated his chosen Luna before rejecting us," Mani took a rare moment to explain. "His wolf

didn't want to reject us so it put them at odds with each other."

Phoebe pondered her wolf's explanation. It wasn't often Mani offered information about things she deemed obvious, especially when it

came to mate bonds. It seemed meeting their second chance mate opened her wolf up. She had a lot of questions, but for now she had to

focus on the pups.

"Um...Miss Phoebe."

"Yes Kyle?" Phoebe looked at the oldest of the pups at thirteen.

"There are two wolves following us."

Phoebe gave him a questioning look before glancing over her shoulder to see Cameron and Noah had closed the distance again. She had

forgotten about her guards. Knowing how curious pups were, she assumed it wouldn't take them long to notice the pair so she had come

up with an excuse she hoped they wouldn't mind.

“Those are Cam and Noah. They are two of Alpha Jason's warriors.”

The pups' eyes widened, glancing shyly at their escorts.

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“Alpha Jason is joining patrols today and, since we're going north, these two are going to patrol the northern border.”

“So, we're showing them the way?”

“That's right.”

The pups nodded at that and Phoebe was relieved they accepted her excuse. Jason's caution made her wary of rumors starting. Now

accepting of the warriors, the pups happily pointed out traps along the trail and cautioned them to avoid certain areas. Like the others,

Noah had been briefed about the traps prior to patrols, but he found it disturbing how common they were, not to mention how readily the

pups accepted them as if they were as natural trees.

Little over three miles into the woods, they reached the secluded swimming hole. As promised, it was a picturesque pond with a rocky

outcropping reaching over it, creating a small waterfall and a perfect launching point for cannonball contests. As soon as the pups reached

the edge of the trees and spotted their goal they let out excited whoops!

Racing ahead, the boys quickly shed their clothes and left them in haphazard piles with their towels and shoes before leaping into the cool,

clear water. The girls followed a step behind, leaving their clothes in more organized piles and entered the water with slightly more caution.

Cameron and Noah chuckled at the pups' carefree exuberance as the boys climbed the rocks before leaping off and cannonballing into the

pool below. It had been a while but the warriors remembered their own carefree, younger days. The girls squealed as a splash battle ensued.

"I suppose it's always like this, eh Luna?" Noah asked.

When she didn't answer, he turned to see her with the two-year-old now in a waterproof diaper while she herself wore only a bikini. Phoebe

cooed to the excited pup as she stepped toward the pond, noticing the warrior's shocked expression.

"Something the matter?"

"N-no." Noah flushed as he hurriedly looked away.

Shooting him a curious glance, she stepped into the water. She waded in as far as her waist before pausing and bouncing the two-year-old

in the water as he giggled and splashed. Phoebe laughed lightly.

"Damn, Alpha sure is lucky," Noah sent Cameron a glance.

"Why am I lucky?" Jason's voice suddenly intruded.

Noah paled, realizing he hadn't limited his mental connection to just Cameron. Beside him, Cameron palmed his forehead at his partner's

carelessness. They were out in the woods with their Luna; of course, their Alpha would be monitoring their connection in case of trouble.

"Noah, what's going on?" Jason demanded when he didn't answer.

"Ah...nothing, Alpha. We just arrived at the pond and the pups are having a good time."

"Good. How's Phoebe?"

Noah hesitated, "She's good. Luna is enjoying the water too."

Cameron smacked his shoulder with a grimace. He shook his head, but his warning was already too late.

"What do you mean she's enjoying the water?"

Noah hesitated, realizing his mistake.

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"...Well, Luna is swimming...in a bikini."

Cameron groaned, mentally paying his respects to his partner's grave.

"She's what!"

"Jace, what's wrong?" Luke hissed as Jason hesitated on the trail. Luke waited for their escorts to move ahead before shaking Jason's

shoulder. "Are you okay?"

Jason tried to keep Lobo from taking over. Unable to speak, Jason mindlinked his Beta, "Fine, except my warriors are ogling their Luna in a

bikini."

Luke chuckled, shaking his head, "Take it easy, Jace."

"That's easy for you to say," Jason growled.

"Calm down. We aren't alone out here," Luke reminded. "Let's just finish this patrol quickly."

Jason took a deep breath, catching the faint smell of Phoebe from his clothes when he last embraced her. Lobo backed off soothed by the

scent. He supposed it was due to his own frustration about how the day had gone.

After seeing Phoebe off, Jason went to the training facility to meet up with Rimrock's warriors and plan patrol routes for him and his own

warriors. Both the Beta and Alpha were late, late enough Jason was ready to either call it a day or organize the patrols himself. It was also

very clear Michael dragged Graham from bed and forced several cups of coffee in him to make him somewhat lucid.

Jason wasn't sure if he intimidated the Rimrock warriors or if they were genuinely interested in impressing their alpha, but most tried to join

Graham and their beta on patrol. For his part, Graham seemed oblivious to his warriors' efforts and enthusiasm. In fact, he seemed on edge,

looking over his shoulder and sniffing the air constantly.

Jason and Luke let the Rimrock Alpha and Beta lead their warriors and assign patrols. One of their own, Chaz, would be left behind to help

coordinate since they wouldn't be able to mindlink the other pack. They didn't speak until the end, when it became obvious they were

neglecting a large swath of territory to the west.

"What about here?" Jason pointed to the area on the map.

"That's rough territory," Michael explained, "it's not easy to navigate and difficult terrain to cross."

"All the more reason to patrol regularly," Jason insisted. "Rogues prefer rough territory with places to hide and avoid attention."

Michael hesitated. Jason's arguments were not without merit. It was important for pack members to patrol the pack's borders and keep

their scent marks fresh and strong. Scent markings could ward off rogue intrusion, especially if they were fresh. Pack territory was also how a

pack grew their notoriety and prestige.

In the end, Michael acquiesced to Jason, assigning a handful of warriors to attend him and Luke as they explored the western border. Jason

didn't mind the rough terrain and Phoebe already warned them about the traps. It seemed they were better prepared to traverse the terrain

than Rimrock's warriors, who struggled to keep from stepping in their own traps. It was truly a minefield.

In the midst of this, Jason wondered how it was Phoebe knew trap locations with such accuracy. Then Noah's thoughts slipped through. The

idea Phoebe and the children were enjoying themselves at the pond didn't bother him and the image of Phoebe in a bikini was tantalizing.

But not in front of his own warriors! Not while he was dealing with such frustrations.

"Take it easy, Jace," Luke repeated. "Look, we'll follow the border north and gradually work our way toward her. How about that?"

Jason sighed and Lobo perked up. As wary as he was of Rimrock's Alpha, the thought of his Luna in his arms again, especially in a bikini,

was not an image he could fight. As inattentive as their escorts were it wouldn't be that difficult to send them home.

"Alpha! Rogues!"