

Chapter 43

Oracle?

She's an oracle? But how?

So many questions swirled around in my mind to the point where they started hurting. However, I tried to keep a reign on my feelings. All it took was a huge wave in my emotions, and Maxim would be snapped awake. And after what I had just learnt, I knew I needed a few more times alone with Toya.

I blinked a few times as I re-steadied my thoughts. "What? You're an oracle?" I finally asked, my voice dripping in disbelief.

She smiled again, this time apologetic for the evident shock I was going through.

"Well, I was," she elaborated. "As you might know, oracles aren't allowed to have mates. The only connection we were allowed to have was with the moon goddess."

"So... how...Lance?" I couldn't structure a proper sentence, but she seemed to have understood clearly.

"I know you must have a lot of questions, so I'll just answer them all at once," she said, and I nodded in agreement. "I was driven here to Armour Pack a few weeks before you were born. I was young then, and I had just started becoming one with my powers. People from all over came to see me, and I would help the best I could until something drove me away one day. I didn't live in a pack, but I wasn't a rogue. I lived alone in an old cottage because I felt more connected to my powers there. It was like that house was my power source. So, you can imagine my uncertainty when I had the urge to leave."

I nodded once. I guess I could understand to an extent. But I only wanted her to continue.

"It took me three weeks to finally leave my home, and when I did, I drifted north all the way to Armor Pack. I still remember how I felt when I was at the border, at this very river." She paused a bit as she gazed at the landform across the river.

I gasped at this.

What was it with this damn river? How is everyone connected here?

"You ended up here? So does that have anything to do with my parents?" Hurt surged in me as a quick thought surfaced. "Oh my gosh, did you... did you lure them here? The moon goddess doesn't know where they hid the moon shard, so did she use you to get it?"

Toya shook her head. "The opposite, actually. As I said, when I was on the other side of this river, I had a hundred feelings surging through my body. First, my wolf, who was only ever connected to the moon, went crazy, and as an oracle, I knew why."

"Lance," I concluded, and she nodded in confirmation.

"Yes. I knew that my mate was in this pack. I wanted to turn around and run back home. Oracles aren't supposed to have mates, remember? I would ask myself over and over. But that didn't mean that a mate wasn't created for us. The rule was there only because having a mate would mean we would be partially cut off from the moon. We were no longer grounded in our power but driven by the mate bond mostly."

"So, did you lose your power?"

She nodded. "Most of it. After much contemplation, I decided that I wouldn't leave because

it was at this very river that I got my message for your parents too."

"What was it?" I asked eagerly. I simply wanted to see if I could connect any dots to their deaths. Maybe then, I could also tell Logan the truth and give him closure. I think Camille somehow made him see that he shouldn't blame me for what happened to our parents, but he still needed closure.

We all do.

"I was sent here to warn your mother and father. As you may now know, they were the keepers of one of the moon shards, past down for generations of Alexis wolves. The dragons were raging an attack on them, and I needed to tell them urgently. So, I did. I found my way to the Alpha house and showed up at their steps like the intruder I was. Lest I remind you, my once reverent wolf was still going crazy because I was closer to my mate. Luckily, I saw your father first. After all, he was the Alpha, so he was the first to approach me.

"I was in wolf form, so he knew I was special. Oracles' coats are pure white, from the tip of our ears to the very base of our paws. Your father knew I wasn't a threat, so he allowed me to go in the backyard, get a few clothes and shift back to human form. I wanted to find my mate with everything in me, but as my final duty with all my oracle powers, I wanted to fulfil it first.

"So, your parents listened to what I had to say, and they weren't surprised because they knew I was sent there. Your mother was well into her third trimester and ready to pop you out any minute. The last thing they needed was a dragon attack."

"So, you guys knew about dragons all this time?" I asked in shock. And no one cared to tell me even knowing I was connected?

"Your parents and I did. Lance didn't. Still don't. I tried to tell him, but he wouldn't believe it until he saw it."

"So, he doesn't know you're an oracle?"

Toya scoffed. "Of course he does. That's sort of something hard to hide from your mate."

I was even more confused. "But doesn't he know that oracles can't lie?"

She shrugged. "He knew that when I accepted him, I'd be giving up mostly all of my power. So, I guess he thought the inability to lie was one of them, though it is barely a power. Logan is a lot like Lance in that aspect. They refuse to believe what they can't see. Or in Logan's case, what he thought he saw."

A million questions were in my mind yet again. Luckily, Toya continued.

"After I warned your parents of the attack, they told me that their pack wasn't the strongest, and a dragon attack would surely kill most, if not off the members. It was right there and then when Lance finally found me." A distant smile pulled on her lips at the memory. I smiled too.

Even though my time wasn't as beautiful as I imagined, I knew the feeling of having found your mate, even in the worst circumstances.

"Your parents allowed us time to get acquainted, and they were very welcoming to me. I was inducted only a day after Lance marked me, and that was two days after I arrived in the Armor Pack. It took a while to get Lance up to date with the situation at hand, but since he didn't believe it, it was just up to Elise, Seymour and me to come up with the right plan to

protect you and the pack. And so, I used the remaining of my power to make myself somewhat like a cloak to shield the pack from the power of the moon shard and thus, no dragons."

It all made sense now. This was why I never had dreams until I left Armor Pack and why the dragons found me so quickly. But the question I had was, how do the dragons know where to find the shard? If the moon goddess can't seek them out, how can the dragons?

"So, does this mean you know where the moon shard is? I know I'm connected to it, so I thought it's probably at the house somewhere stashed in something meaningful to both my parents and me. But what?"

Toya clicked her tongue against the roof of her tongue as she shook her head. "I do know where it is, but it's closer than you think-

"Toya, please. Enough with the parables. The minute I leave Armor Pack, my mate's pack will be bombarded with dragons again and again until they either kill me or take me away. If you know where it is, just tell me please so that I can give it to the moon goddess and get on with my life," I cried in desperation.

Just then, I felt my link with Maxim coming alive, which only meant he was awake. The second he found out I was gone, he reached out for me in our mind link, but I shut him out to end this conversation.

"That's just it, Melissa. Your parents... they learnt something about the moon shard that switched their entire view on it. When they died, they left it with you in hopes that you'd be able to learn that truth too and do what they couldn't. They sacrificed themselves for you and for everything right and good. I don't want to send you back to Primal Pack with it, Melissa, I don't. I don't want you to get attacked. But...but there's something in this that is bigger than all of us."

My heart slammed against my chest. "Toya, you're scaring me."

"I'm sorry, my love. But I promised your parents I'd prepare you for the truth when the time was right. That's why I was so upset when Lance decided to send you away without my knowledge. I was angrier at myself for not preparing you better."

"Why can't you just tell me?" I sobbed. I didn't even notice that I had been crying until I opened my mouth.

I saw tears glistening in Toya's eyes as well, which is something I have barely seen.

She hung her head. "The truth precedes me, Melissa. I was a pawn in a game much larger than we all noticed. Your parents found out at the nick of time, and because of the way they did, their lives were in danger. It was better to protect you and the moon shard with their deaths than die and leave you and the shard in danger. But I could have no part in it.

"I wasn't lying when I said I was here that day when they disappeared. I didn't help, but I needed to ensure you were safe. I wish I could just tell you everything, but there are things that I know that I cannot tell you, Melissa. Before I was a Luna, I was an oracle, after all. And even though I gave up my powers, I still live under oath to the moon, and I will surely die if I break it. But I trust that you will figure it all out. You will make all our wrongs right. I believe in you."

I tried to contain my sobs when I realised that this was yet another dead end.

"Toya, please. You have to give me something. Who do I even trust from here?"

"Yourself and your mate," she said as she gripped my cheeks in her hands and wiped my tears away. "There is so much you need to uncover, and if you're not careful, you will get lost like the rest of us. The one you trust the most for all your werewolf life will-" She stopped instantly as she suddenly began heaving out loud coughs and immediately plummeted to the ground.

My eyes widened as I held her up with all my strength. "Toya!" I screamed as her eyes rolled back.

Quickly and out of breath, she mumbled something under her breath that sounded Latin, and I recognised the word 'repent' in what she said from a few books I've read in the past.

I rested her against some rocks and sat beside her as she caught her breath. There was only one thing I could decipher from this all.

She said before she was Luna, she was an oracle, and there was an oath she could not break, or she would surely die. She tried to tell me something just now, and it almost killed her. After learning the 'truth', my parents died to protect the moon shard, and they hid it specifically for a reason. All this pointed to one common factor, and I didn't want to believe it.

There's something odd about everything. I feel that I don't know everything I'm supposed to know, and I'm not only talking about the moon shard. There is something strangely wrong with all of this, and I'm going to find out what.

But the only thing I could think about was this: if I can't even trust the moon goddess, who the hell can I trust?



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