

Chapter 77

I was frozen behind the rock, unmoving and shaking as the two creatures glared at each other, chests heaving up and down in a stance ready to pounce.

Helios was angry. He was downright pissed. Yet amid it all, I could tell that he was extremely hurt.

The moon goddess, on the other hand, tried to remain stoic. She was dead set on her decision not to give back the sun dragon his crystal, only because she loved him too much and feared she would give in to having a child with him someday. It was still all too much for me. Even if she feared that the child would have evil in him, wouldn't Helios' goodness somehow outshine it? And I mean, she wasn't evil either. Why does she think this would be an issue?

It was evidently premeditated. All the guilt and regret from her past, which was millennia ago, had all been bottled up until this exact moment.

Helios said something again, but I couldn't hear. Then, the moon goddess' face fell in real, raw emotions, and I cursed myself for not listening carefully. Then, he stepped out of the way, not before giving her a knowing, longing look as if telling her to do the same. Even amid his anger, Helios still wanted to ensure his love was safe.

So, the moon goddess nodded once, and the creatures attacked.

Upon impact, the entire place shook, and I watched it all unfold before me. At first, the Lycan had the upper hand and held the dragon down in the sand. But almost two seconds later, they were flipped and went splashing into the ocean.

One would think that the water would've weakened the dragon, but it didn't. He clawed at the Lycan, trying to hold him down, but the main objective was never to fight. I noticed how the dragon tried to get away from the Lycan as if trying to head for the moon.

Then I realised that Helios only brought the dragon to look for the crystal, and the moon goddess brought up the Lycan to protect it.

I nibbled on my nails as the Lycan tackled the dragon again, and tiny droplets of water splashed against my face.

I glanced at where Helios and the moon goddess stood. Helios was calm and concentrated, but the moon goddess seemed nervous.

Another loud splash caught my attention again as the dragons squealed and wiggled as the Lycan held him under the water. My heart raced. I have never been this anxious in my life.

But somehow, the dragon managed to break free, where it soared in the sky with a piercing streak. I screamed as he heaved out a long, heated breath of fire against the Lycan, so long and painful that I almost cried.

The moon goddess moved to help or stop, but Helios held onto her. One, to keep her from harm's way, and two, to let it be done.

After a few seconds, the Lycan lay on the sand, twitching in pain from what the dragon had done. My heart broke for it, and so did the moon goddess from the evident cries coming from her.

It made me wonder. Was this how she felt when a werewolf died or got hurt? What really was the burden of being the moon goddess? Does she find it painful when a soul returns home, or does she welcome and bosom it?

Helios was evidently in pain from seeing her like this. The way his fingers curled under her arm showed it all. But his face held determination. He needed his crystal back, and that was what he was going to get.

The moon goddess wrung her body from his grasp as the dragon neared the moon. He somehow knew that she'd hide it with her jewel. It really was an evident hiding place.

But she was also determined. She was determined that she wouldn't let him have it. So, she wrung her

hands from his grip and swerved around in the direction of the moon. She did the same things she did earlier to steal and hide the crystal, and it soared across the ocean towards her.

Helios seemed pleased, seeing that she was accepting defeat. But was she? Was she really?

She held it in her hands, and the dragon and Helios watched expectantly as she examined it, looking longing and regretful.

"Well?" he asked, holding his hand out. "I'm sorry it had to come to this Amaris, but-what are you doing?" His voice was suddenly sharp as he watched in horror as the moon goddess held the crystal close to her, mumbling something under her breath.

Then, it was broken into five pieces. Helios' shouts of horror got lost in the background as each piece floated around them before flying in five separate locations. One north, one south, one east, one west and the last to me.

Helios fell to his knees, evidently weakened by her act, perhaps from heartbreak or from losing so much of his power.

I stared at the moon shard in my own hand, wondering why it came to me. Then I noticed that one of them was trusted with my family, so I received it instead of sending it back to earth.

"Why, Amaris? Why?" Helios whispered as he gasped and held his chest. I clutched the shard to my heart, wanting nothing but to hand it back to him so it could be his again in colour and in truth.

I didn't see her tears because her back was facing me. But I heard it in her voice when she spoke. "Because I love you, Helios. I love you too much."

She walked away, tearing up in a mess of tears.

"So why did you take my power if you love me!" he screamed after her retreating form. "I will never forgive you for this, Amaris!" he added, and her steps faltered. "Never!"

And then there was darkness.

I was suddenly again plunged into darkness as I was pulled from wherever I was. I opened my eyes to see where I was, but I was shocked to notice that I was in my old room at Armor Pack, in my bed, dressed in blue pyjamas that I hadn't seen in years.

I was confused. Why here? Why bring me here? What's next in this mess of revelations of what really happened to the moon shard.

I couldn't even call it that anymore. It wasn't a moon shard. It was a decoy moon shard indeed. The moon goddess changed its colour and broke it into five pieces. It gave us power. It certainly did. But it did more to the dragons.

No wonder they were attacked by them. No wonder I could make them leave that night of the barbecue. It was theirs all along, and now, I felt like a filthy thief.

I shuffled from my bed towards the mirror. My hair and eyes were still the same, so I knew I was still dreaming. I oddly preferred my natural brown eyes over the blue ones, now knowing that it was never mine, to begin with.

I swept my hand through my dark hair, loving how perfect it looked, just fully black. No blue. Nothing. Just me.

The handle on my door jiggled, and I grew tense as I waited for the intruder to reveal themselves. Then, two persons walked in-two persons I had evidently seen before, but I couldn't tell where.

The woman was tall with long legs and hair that curled under her bottom in long waves. Her eyes were bright and green with tiny flecks of brown, and her heart-shaped face held a small, familiar smile.

The man was even taller with broad shoulders, eyes, and hair like mine. He reminded me of my brother in every way, especially with his brown eyes. Except his expression was soft as if he was always smiling.

They smiled at me, walking hand in hand as they crossed the room and pulled me into their embrace. At

first, I was stunned. Who are these people, and why were they hugging me?

But there was something familiar about their touch-about their love until it hit me.

"Mom, dad?" I couldn't believe it. I didn't think it was true, so I pulled back to look at them. They smiled at me as my mom traced the outline of my face with her finger.

"I'm so sorry, my baby girl," she mumbled. "We had no idea this would put you through so much trouble."

"I..." I couldn't speak. For the first time in my entire existence, I was able to talk to them. Sure, the two-year-old me knew them, but I didn't remember anything about them.

"We only wanted to protect you, but we caused you so much pain."

"I don't understand." They didn't let go of me, and I loved it. I loved being in their arms-just this once.

"We thought it would've been better to show you than tell you," my dad said, causing my gaze to drift to him.

"What do you mean?"

"The shards. You came here looking for them."

"I did but-"

"We were here all along, waiting for you to see it all. That's the truth, Melissa. That's the sad, cruel truth."

My head was spinning. "But how? How did you two know? How did Toya know?"

"There was always something about it," my dad said, looking keen in thought as he spoke. "Our family has protected it for generations. When I found your mom, it all became clear to me. There was something evidently wrong with the story."

"But then we had Logan, and suddenly moon shards were the last thing on our minds. It was no priority anymore." My mom took over the story, and I listened intently. "And it remained like that for years until Toya found us."

"When did you learn that the dragons weren't a threat?"

"Around the time we got pregnant with you," my mom replied. "We sought them out, even without Toya knowing. We searched for the truth."

"And how did you find it?"

With the shard, of course. Just as it was able to show you the truth, the dragon helped us see it too. When we tried to give it back, when we tried to give the shard back to the sun dragon, we did something bad-really bad."

"What did you do?"

They shared a look as my mother gulped. "It doesn't matter what we did. But it threw us off our duty. We wanted to play saviour when we were just mere humans. So, to protect you and the shard, we hid it."

"This is it. This is what I came here for."

"Hide it where?"

They smiled down at me. "It had been with you all this time, and you didn't even know."

"Was it my hair? My eyes?"

"No, my dear," my dad said. "In your heart."

I gasped as my hands involuntarily flew to my chest. "My heart?"

"Yes. We hid it in your heart."

The shining always came from my chest. Of course!

"But, why my heart?"

"Because the moon goddess would never kill her own creation for it."

"So she knew where it had been all along?" I gasped.

"Of course. She only wanted you to figure it out."

My dad hummed with a look on his face. "I think her intentions have changed over the years, though. In our day, she wanted to keep them away from Helios. But now, I think she might want to give—"

"Oh please." My mother rolled her eyes as she waved him off. It was refreshing, seeing them acting so natural. So human. "She was willing to kill us for the damn thing, Seymour. Her intentions are the same." She shook her head, evidently torn between two beliefs. "The things we do for love. But she was selfish. Robbing the sun dragon of his power because of her own fears."

"Ah, my love. You have said the same thing for two decades. When will you give it up?" My dad wore a teasing smile as he spoke, and I oddly found myself smiling too.

It was good to know that even here—wherever here was—they had each other and still acted like a . . . normal couple.

"Oh, hush." She hit his chest. "Our daughter needs us."

"How do I get it out?" I asked. I really just wanted to get it back to Helios, along with all his others. But first, I had to talk to Amaris.

She wasn't perfect, and I got that. But as a werewolf, I couldn't go to Helios without talking to her.

"Oh my dear sweetheart," my dad smiled down at me. "You have no idea of the power you have. But the only person who can get it back is Helios. That's the reason we hid it there in the first place."

Made sense. A lot, actually.

"Where are you guys? I had a dream that you were chained to the river with a dragon where you died. Are you guys trapped?"

They smiled even brighter at me. "Don't worry about us, Melissa. We have passed on, and we are happy and at peace."

They both took a chance to kiss my forehead.

"We watch over you and Logan every day, as well as your mates."

"And our grandbaby is on the way." My dad's eyes sparkled, and I couldn't help but laugh. I felt my cheeks moisten with tears, but I didn't try to stop them.

"Thank you." I hugged them so tightly. They really had no idea what they did for me.

"We love you, Melissa. And we will always be here."

"I love you too." My words slammed against emptiness as I slipped from their embrace.

I cried.

I had never really thought about what I would have done or said if I had met my parents. But this? This was perfect.

I had expected to be taken to a new place—to another story. But as I blinked, the first thing I saw was my mate's bright and relieved smile.

I was back. And now I knew what I had to do.