

Tattooed 361

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"I don't really know." We started walking upstairs. Going to the front door, I stood in front of it. "From this point of view, everything looks nice. A flower in the vase over there. Picture on the wall over here. Almost welcoming. The most direct route to the stairs, everything is still looking presentable. Fully furnished rooms. Less dust in those rooms like they actively worked on cleaning that area." Alec followed me. "Then you get to the grand staircase. Under this dust, the wood is polished and preserved. The carpet on the stairs is in good condition. Nothing is torn or even worn down. Reaching the landing, there is a nice flower. Again, welcoming. This was designed to make a woman feel at ease."

"I can see that." Alec agreed.

"Then you get to this office room. Judging by this couch, this is where they initially attacked. See how they nailed the legs to the floor? So it wouldn't move around on them. It was like they brought them up here. to interview them or something. Maybe even gave them a water or tea that was laced with a drug."

"Then taken to the basement."

"Yeah. This was more of a side business than anything. Vin might have lost so many clients when Cash died. He could want to get Penny as a major fuck you to them. A 'I still can do this without Cash' kind of thing. Maybe Vin wants to sell Penny to get started up again. Those clients probably lost all confidence in him since everyone is gone and he is building up his reputation."

"That is an interesting theory." Alec nodded but he was looking up at the ceiling."

"What are you looking at?" I asked.

"There was a window at the top of the house. It was circular with a flower in stained glass. It isn't in this room."

“You think there is an attic?” I started helping him. “Most times, there is a ladder that is in the closet.” I said as I started opening the doors. The second try, I found it. It wasn’t big at all, typical from what you would have seen when this was built. However, there was a rectangle cut out on the ceiling.

“Find it?” Alec came up behind me.

“I did.” I said as I stepped aside. Alec grabbed the little string and pulled down. Dust and who knows what else fell down on his head but so did a ladder. “That is a tiny hole.”

“I don’t think I will fit.” Alec tried to take a step on the ladder but the bottom step broke in half.

“Lift me up.” I said.

“Hell no.” Alec looked at me like I was stupid.

“What? We need to look in there.”

“You could fall through the floor!” Alec pointed to the broken ladder. step.

“It’s a good thing you are good at catching me.” Patting his arm, I moved around him. I knew he wasn’t happy but instead of fight me and losing, he just put his hands on either sides of my hips and made. sure I was okay.

Taking one step at a time. They all cracked as I went. My feelings. were still turned off but I could bet that Alec was s hitting bullets at this point. Finally, I reached the top.

“Do you have a flashlight?” I asked. “On your phone?”

“Yeah.” Alec reached down and pulled out his phone from his pocket.

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At first glance, it was a basic attic. Lose installation was laying across the entire floor but so were many cardboard boxes. No eyes. greeted me so that made me feel better. I did not want to come face to face with a bat.

"I'm going in." I told Alec.

"Do you have to?" Alec groaned but it fell on deaf ears. He knew I was going to do this regardless.

"Yes."

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As soon as my feet hit the floor, it was like a heaviness that filled the air. The more I moved the flashlight around, the more uneasy I started to feel. Exposed wires lined the walls, marking on the wood ceiling were more like witch craft than kid drawings. Boxes were shoved in the corner. There was only a few in total but they were rather large. Thankfully, they weren't taped so opening them was easy enough. Spiders had made them their home. It wasn't that I was afraid of spiders but they were just something I rather not come into contact with. "S HIT!" I yelled as a particularly large one came crawling out. Running down the box, he went under another one. "Are you okay?" I heard Alec yell up. "Yeah. I'm good." I yelled back as I started looking through the box. It was filled from each side with nothing but paperwork. Not wanting to stay up here longer, I decided to just push the box to the opening and toss it down to Alec. Sitting the phone upside down so the flashlight was pointing upward, I started pushing the box with everything I had. Not wanting to hurt the baby and lift the box, this seemed easier. Plus, all the dust made it easier to just slide it. "What are you doing?" Alec asked. "You ready to catch?" I asked as I came up on the hole. "Catch what?" I heard Alec ask that but it was too late. The box was already tipping and there was no stopping it. "HOLY F UCK KRISTEN!" I heard him shout just after a loud thud. The sound of papers flying around told me that I didn't want to look.

"SORRY!" I didn't have to hide my humor up here. "Sure you are." He grumbled. Going to the next box, it was filled with some antique looking children's toys as well as baby clothes. Not sure it was anything worth anything but I could look at it more in the daylight. There might be a

name or something on these items that would tell me more about who owned this house. "Ready for the next box? It isn't heavy but delicate." "Yeah." Alec didn't sound like he believed me but I didn't heard any commotion down there. Not even bothering to look at what was inside of these boxes, I just scooted them over to the opening and dropped them down to Alec. He caught them all still. After snapping some pictures of the drawings on the walls, I looked down at Alec. He was looking rather annoyed with his hands on his hips. "I'm done." "Good, let's go." Alec held up his hands. Slowly, I made my way down the ladder and into his arms. "Were you worried about me?" I teased when I was finally on the ground. "No. Just worried about what I was going to tell Colt when his sister fell through the floor." Alec joked. My jaw hit the floor, making him laugh as he started carrying the boxes down the stairs. "Rude." "Come on, you can tell Colt all you found out." Alec yelled at me. "Do you need help with the boxes?" I asked as I caught up to him. "They are too heavy for you to lift right now. I'll have a warrior help me." I knew he was talking about our pregnancy but still it stung a little. "Fine." "And Kristen?" Alec turned so quickly that I almost bumped into him. "What?" "Turn your fucking emotions back on." He growled. It sent a wave of pleasure between my legs. Making me squeeze my thighs together as I turned it back on. "Good girl." He whispered and then turned to walk out the front door.

"What did you find?" Colt asked as he watched Alec place the box into the gator. "Let's take these boxes to your office and I will go through them and tell you everything." I wanted to sit down for a little bit. "Feeling okay?" Colt asked. "Yeah, just tired." "Alright. You girls can go sit down and once the boxes are put in here, we will head out." Colt kissed Penny on the forehead before walking after Alec. Kara POV What the fuck kind of situation am I in? This is crazy! Not what I envisioned at all. To say I was stressed was an understatement. There hasn't been any food to enter my mouth in weeks. I had dropped three sizes, my hair was looking rather ragged and my eyes were sunken. Sitting on my bed, I was fresh out of tears. I just wanted to be loved. Was that so much to ask? Growing up, I always thought I would be entire world revolved around him. That is where my life turned upside down and kept on going. My mind flashed back to that morning. Every nerve ending in my body was flaring as I tried to keep calm. All the feelings were going through me. Mostly excitement as I thought I was finding my mate that day. My makeup was done so perfectly. I had put on a beautiful sundress and even curled my hair. Exactly what a luna should look like.

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As soon as I saw him, we made eye contact and.... nothing. No bond. snapped into place. It was like everything collapsed around me and it was just Colt and I. except I wasn't happy, the exact opposite. actually. I was completely heartbroken. The man I loved with every fiber of my being was looking at me with pity in his eyes. Not at broken heart like me but pity! All I got was 'I'm sorry' from him. He didn't try to hug me or even touch me. It was all I could do but run back to my room. The worst part, I went to my bathroom to find a tissue. Since my eyes were so watery, I didn't see my curling iron. I had turned it off but it was so hot from earlier that it hadn't even had time to cool off. Burning my hand was just the tip of the bad day. After the birthday party, some friends took me out to a bar. Not Colt's bar but another one in town. It was suppose to be more recreational fun. A few people I had met there told me they went there often. Since every time I looked at Colt and Penny, I wanted to die, it felt like a good decision. I had just put a smile on my face went I accidentally bumped into a guy on the dance floor. By

this time, whatever the girls had given me was taking affect. When our eyes met, the bond snapped into place. He didn't even hesitate to grab my waist and pull me against him. He kissed me hard. This is how I envisioned it with Colt. In my drugged mind, this was Colt.

Each touch left a wave of pleasure and electricity that was so consuming that I could barely breathe. Next thing I know, we were in a back room and I was naked. My teeth were deep in his neck before he marked me back. Then, the world went black again. It wasn't until I woke up the next morning that I was able to look at me was scared shitless but the other part of me wasn't. He was gentle with me. Never once did he hurt me or do anything I didn't okay. Even that morning, he was sweet and gentle. He kissed my forehead and dropped me off about a mile from my pack. We decided that we couldn't be seen together. Because of his pack, he didn't want to bring me there

but he couldn't exactly abandon his pack and move in with me. Gunther told me he needed time to figure things out. However, he had this little cabin in the woods that we have been meeting up at. Every time I am there, he is wonderful. Little kisses to hot raw sex. He would confide in me how he wanted to get out and be with me. He wanted to provide me with a good life but then I would hear what horrible things he had done the day before. Now he wants me to sneak into Colt's office? To top things off, Penny's dad is now blackmailing me basically. He said he was going to help me but I wasn't sure I fully trusted him. Still, if I could find a way to protect Gunther, I would do anything for a chance at happiness. Drying my eyes, I grabbed a pink wig and put it on. This was a short bob style and I did my make up really dramatic so it didn't look like me. Most of the warriors were out again and I just watched Alpha Alec leave with Penny and Luna Kristen. This would give me a window to do this. There was a letter I had wrote. I was still debating on giving it to them or not but I wanted so bad to just let Colt fix my problems but that wasn't going to happen. Still, I didn't want my pack to suffer. Especially when I know there is an imminent threat on it. Now, I wasn't sure if it was just Penny they wanted or if they wanted to attack the whole pack. I wasn't even sure who 'they' were. Putting the letter in my pocket, I crept out from my room and started talking to Colt's office. Now, I will forever know it as Colt's office. As much as possible, my brain has accepted that Penny didn't steal him from me. It wasn't her fault but I still didn't like her. No one was around as I got on my knees and started working on the door. I have never been good at this. Truthfully, my anxiety is so high right now that I think I might just pass out or pee myself. "What are you doing?" I heard someone ask from behind me.

will be a long few days for us! Hopefully your weekend is going better than mine!

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"W-what?" I jumped so bad that my hand smacked into the door handle. Dropping everything in them, including the letter. Thankfully, the letter fell on top of everything. "I'm sorry, dear. Did I startle you?" Placing my hand over the letter, I looked behind me. Cassie was standing there, looking at me worriedly. "Yeah, a little." I answered honestly. I was trying to see if Alpha Colt was in but I guess not. Grabbing the tools and the letter, I was able to shove them in my pocket as Cassie turned her back to have a seat on

the floor. "Yes, they are out right now." Cassie got comfortable and smiled at me. "I don't remember seeing you here before." "Oh, I'm trying out a new hair color. I. um... need to..."

"I'm a little sad. This packhouse has been wonderful but I am moving into my own house today and Penny isn't here to help me. You know, I remember when I was your age. Full of life. Young and I had so many dreams to what my life was going to look like. My father, Alpha Ivan would spoil me rotten!" Cassie's eyes glazed over like she had transported back in time. "I saw your mark and I remembered when I hoped to be marked by my mate." S hit! Shifting my shirt, I moved so I was sitting more comfortably. Cassie didn't look like she was going anywhere so as she kept talking, I slipped the note under the door and kept on listening. There wasn't anyway I was getting into this office now. I'll have to try again another. time. "Study hard, sweet girl. One day you will be luna and smart lunas get the best mates!" Cassie laughed. "That is what my dad used to tell me. Apparently, I didn't study hard enough. Though, all those years in ummy on mo. IRHUM TUM LU Omoet tuin u yuuru. I'm not proud of it but it was my own little revenge. I may not be the best looker now but back then.... back then I was se xy. The more I flirted, the more they couldn't resist me. Now, it only went so far

because Rip would feel the betrayal and come down to kill whoever it was but I didn't care. They all needed to die." "That would take so much strength." I whispered in awe. "Not really. Honestly, when you only see dirt, it was the only way for me to entertain myself. It kept me feeling like a person and now a blow up doll. Sure, I got punished for it but just knowing I pissed him off was worth it." Cassie smiled at me. There wasn't an ounce of regret on her face. "Can't say I blame you." I had to chuckle a little at that. "What would the guards tell you?" "What do you mean?" Cassie asked. "If you sweet talked them, would they just give in or why didn't Rip just command them to not talk to you?" "Oh, well, he did. He did command them to not talk to me but they were men. Men that thought women were beneath them. If I couldn't get them talk, I would just put on a show. I wasn't allowed clothes. and after a year or so, you stop caring. They just couldn't resist and disobeyed his command. I think that is what made him more mad. He would come down b itching that he had to drive all the way back in the woods or fly back on his plane." "Where did he go?" I asked. "My father had a vacation home that was a state over. I'm not sure what is of it now but Rip would always say he had business to tend to there." "Why didn't Zac ever get you out of there?" I asked. I heard everyone give her a better life?

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"One man against a whole army? I doubt he would have made it very far. Besides, he had to keep our Penelope safe. Rip never stopped looking for her. Even with Darin betraying him every chance he got. Should focus more on his own son and not my daughter." Cassie obviously still held some resentment. "How did Darin betray him?" "Darin would force his friends to do things for him. More than once. hear they would argue about it in the cell. They thought no one wou filled or at least no one that could repeat it. Darin's head was really filled with dust." "Things like what?" "Not really sure. I think they had a side business going but I never heard enough details. Rip would come in b itching about having to handle his son and with I would just behave to make his life easier."

“You seem to really love Zac, though.” I said, simply. “I do. I would do anything for him. He kept our daughter safe all these years at his own personal sacrifice. I think he lost so much of his humanity because of it. The Zac you see today is not the man he was twenty years ago.” “I could imagine so.” “She is now the Alpha and is carrying my grandchild. Though, I would still lay down my life for Zac. If I had to break into the worlds largest prison to save him, I would.” Cassie vowed. “Even if that meant you would die?” “Exactly. When you are in love, you will die for that person. Marking 25 BONUS THE DONU TO VELJ physical but your head doesn’t ignore the evil that men can possess. After while, you are faced with a choice. You can either decide love is blind, adapt to their way of thinking and turn your emotions off or

you fight against the bond. No love is easy but knowing you have someone beside you that is willing to die for you, you hold onto that.” That struck deep in me. Did I believe Gunther was a good man? Is he worth saving? Thinking back to all the times we have shared, he treated me decent. He was rough around the edges but growing up in a life like that, I can’t be surprised. He said he wanted out and hasn’t shown me otherwise. “What is going inside your head, child?” Looking up, Cassie was looking at me with knowing eyes. “I’m just trying to find my path in this world.... for my happily ever after.” I said briefly. Last thing I needed was to say too much and tell her something I shouldn’t. “Just follow your heart.” Cassie smile warmly at me as she went to stand up. “Here! Let me help.” I said as I instantly jumped up. Grabbing her hand, I helped her stand. “Thank you. I’ve healed but there is still a lingering pain every now and then.” “Of course. I need to get going but thank you for talking to me.” I was starting to have this feeling that I needed to not be here anymore. “Come find me anytime. I enjoyed having someone to talk to!” Cassie waved bye to me as she turned and walked away. Without waiting, I took off in the opposite direction. Penny POV 213 I was never so happy to be back at the packhouse. The whole Victorian house was just creepy. Even though I didn’t go inside, the whole thing just had a bad vibe to it. Almost like a heaviness that kept me from breathing freely. “Oh, Penelope!” Cassie’s greeting brought me out of my thoughts. We were walking into the packhouse as she was walking out. “Hello, how is your day?” I asked, trying to be polite. “Actually, very well, thank you. Are you busy today or can you meet me for a late lunch?” Cassie

looked at me hopeful. “Sure. I can do that. I have a meeting to go to right now but then I will meet you in the garden?” I offered.

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“That would be lovely. I will organize it all.” Cassie had this massive smile on her face that made me feel a certain type of way. As she ran back inside, Colt put his hand on my lower back. “That was nice of you to agree to meet with her.” We continued to walk inside. “Truthfully, I haven’t even tried to get to know her yet.” “Why not?” Kris asked as we came up to our office. “I could say it is because I am too busy but honestly, I have been avoiding her. Avoiding the whole situation.” Colt opened the door for us and closed it as we walked in. Taking a seat on the couch, Kris sat beside me and Colt sat at his desk. “Why are you avoiding her? Haven’t you always wondered what your parents were like?” Kris pushed.

"I mean, I have but I assumed they were dead. My mother lived her life. in a cell and my dad lived on the streets. Doing things I probably don't I want to know about. What would we talk about?" "Tell her about your project and why they are important to you. Talk to her about our mom and how your live in her house or the drawings. you have hung up." "I don't know... I guess that is a good suggestion." "Listen, all I am saying is that I didn't have a mother. Our's died and I would give anything to have her back. You have a chance to get to know her. She might not be what you pictured but I think you would be surprised with how much you have in common with her." Kris put her hand on my knee. "I'll try." I said after a moment. "Alec is going to burn that house down after he documents it all. We can get started without him." Colt said, interrupting Kris. I wasn't sure if he did that on purpose but I was thankful, regardless. "Okay. So overall, I got the vibe that they would lure girls in from the front door and up to the office

space. I would put money that they drugged the girls and either attacked them there or just moved them to the basement. As for the basement, I am thinking they put the girls into the holding cell before transferring them to the rooms. Now, the digs on the mattress. I sat on one and Alec helped me. From the position of them, the girl would be sitting up. Leaning against the wall. It felt like it was more of a viewing on how to shoot someone up. Like he was teaching people how to do drugs and control the women." Kris looked at Colt. "Really?" Colt leaned back and looked at Kristen. It was then I felt like I was more of a bystander than actually part of this conversation. "The dips on the mattress only get there by prolonged exposure. Someone had to be sitting on the edge of it for hours to days. The girls were sitting up. Now, they could have very well been assaulted but it felt more like someone learning to do injections." "Interesting." Colt touched the tips of his fingers together as he looked at his twin. "I think they had a business of getting girls and then selling them to people who sell them to buyers. They do the risky part. Find girls and trap them. Then they allow others to sell them for a cut and in return teach them how to manage their girls. They have a business partner out there who is in charge of finding buyers and they inquire the girls. Might be on looks or by availability. Maybe both but that is what I think." "What about how this might affect Penny?" Colt asked. "Well, now that is where this gets a little tricky. I'm just throwing how an idea here...."

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"What if...." Kris gave him a look before looking at me. "This is just a theory." She told me before turning back to Colt. "What if Vin is trying to take over for Cash and continuing the business. Now, he would have lost his reputation and assuming his buyers do not want anything to do with him, he needs to prove he can run the business. What a better way to prove to them that he has what it takes by getting and selling the alpha of the pack? The daughter who inherited it all. The girl who stole it from Darin." My mouth hung open and my eyes closed as she kept talking. This was too much. My hand moved to cover my belly as Kris fell silent. Opening my eyes and looking at Colt, he was just staring at his sister. An unspoken language between them that had never bothered me until this very moment.. Knock! Knock! The office door rattled but since Colt locked it, they couldn't get him. Colt got up and opened it for Jacob. "I'm sorry, I'm running behind. Alec needed some help with the boxes. I have them. outside if you

wish to bring them in here?" "Yes, please." Kris answered for us. "Alright." Jacob walked out and Colt got up to follow him. "Are you okay? It is just a theory." Kris put her hand on my knee. "When has your theories ever been wrong?" I gave her a sad smile. It took everything in me to hold back the tears that wanted to show themselves. "There is a first time for everything." Kris tried to pull me in for a hug but I gently leaned away.

"Thank you but I don't really want to be touched right now. I am nonumy myoen up un UVIIL MUTIL "I understand that. All too well." Kris whispered as the guys came back with the boxes. I watched as the three of them got down on the floor and started shifting through the boxes. I asked for this, didn't I? I asked to be part of the discussions when it came to me. Kristen knew she was the target from day one. She was kidnapped twice and kept a straight face. I wanted to be like her but.... this was

too much. If Kris was right, which she is rarely wrong, I am their target because they are going to make a show of me. I guess finding that house was going to be a point for us. If Sherry would have been more forthcoming to begin with, we could have known this earlier. "Love, are you okay?" Colt asked in the mind-link. My whole body jumped. I didn't realize I dazed off but as I looked over at them, Colt was still looking at papers. It was like he was trying to not bring attention to me, giving me time to gather myself. "No... yes... I don't know." "We don't have proof what Ice said was even true." "When is she ever wrong?" I asked. "I'll keep you safe." Colt promised. "Like Alec was able to keep Kristen safe?" I knew as soon as the words were out that it was the wrong thing to say. Colt jumped up, his black eyes looked at me angrily. "Whoa, what is going on here?" Kris jumped up and stood between us. Jacob grabbed Colt's arms and pulled him back. "That's your mate, dude." "What did you just say?" Colt asked angrily at me. BONUS "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said it." I whispered, unable to stop the tears at this point. "What did you say?" Kris turned and looked at me. "Colt said he would keep me safe and...." "And what?" Kris pushed. "I said he was going to keep me safe like Alec kept you safe." Kris looked taken aback for a second. She didn't yell and didn't even look angry. "Colt, why don't we go for a walk." Grabbing his arm, she pulled him out of the office and shut the door.

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"With all due respect, that was a low blow, Luna." Jacob looked at me. "I know. I didn't mean it as soon as it was out of my mouth but tell me I'm wrong Jacob. Tell me that Alec didn't do absolutely everything he should have and she still got kidnapped? Tell me that with all the protection and limitations he put on her, how she still got taken? I'm not Kristen, Jacob. I'm not a fighter. I don't know how to throw a punch. I-1 make phone calls and organize parties. I build centers to help the development of children mentally and academically. Kristen was able to fight back. What will I even be able to do? I don't stand a chance fighting back. Kristen got kidnapped twice and wasn't pregnant. I am. I'm pregnant and I can't fight." "Shhh, come here." Jacob walked towards me with his arms open wide. I didn't realize I was rambling with tears running down my face. All my fears and concerns were brought to the surface. "I'm sorry." "Luna, not everyone is meant to know all this stuff. Why do you think we keep this secret? We all grew

up knowing all the danger that was around us. You didn't. There is nothing wrong with you not wanting to be apart of it."

"I need to be. Our kids will need to be taught and what if something happens to Colt? I will have to take over until they are old enough, which means knowing all this." "You have only been Luna for a short time." Jacob stepped back but kept his hands on my arms. He leaned down and looked at me as I cleaned away the tears. "No one and I mean no one is immune to the hardship. Fuck, look at me and Sherry. You saw me lose my shit over her. You saw the bruises Colt and Alec sported on their stomachs. UNUS unwiranger. 100 outwardly has an exterior like... well ice. She learned that but on the inside, she was not okay. Ice cries in the shower or when she thinks we can't hear but she does. Do you know how many times I have sat outside her bedroom door, listening to her cry or just making sure that she didn't do something stupid?"

Some people do handle it better than others but no one is immune. I can guarantee that Ice was scared the entire time she was kidnapped." "Colt seems to be taken everything in strides, like it's nothing." It felt good to get that off my chest. Tell someone about it. "Luna, you don't see him at training. He has pushed our men harder than we ever have before. He has increased security and really got the new warriors straightened out. I think Colt is trying to keep you calm." "What do you mean?" "I mean, you are pregnant and getting stressed out isn't going to help anything. Plus, he knows this isn't something you grew up around so it's much more scary to you than it is for us. Plus, there hasn't actually been a threat made on your life. Other than Zac sending girls and Tanya running her mouth, we don't actually KNOW anything. So far, all this is just speculation. Why are you working yourself up over something that we don't even know is a real threat?" "I'm trying to stay strong but it's hard." "Luna, I truly do get that. I am all for you breaking down and working through your emotions. However, you got to find a way to stay strong. Not only for your babies but to keep Colt sane. Your luna legacy doesn't have to be about fighting or war. It can be about education and helping those. You can be known as the sweet luna, the kind luna that everyone came to if needed. You also need to be strong. For those who are hurting. You need to be level headed and be able to Sabres need you to stay strong down you're to and not need do priy sharine but don't forget to keep your head and Kugati "

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"I know you are right, I'm just not sure how to go about it." "I can't tell you that. Only you can find it and you have to look deep within yourself." Jacob let me go and took a few steps back. "I think I am going to go meet Cassie for brunch now." I said after a moment. "Good. Enjoy some food and relax a little. It is going to be a nice day today." Jacob walked me over to the door and opened it. Kris and Colt were nowhere to be found. "Thank you, Jacob." I said before he closed the door. "Of course, Luna." He said before he closed it and I started walking to the garden. Different people were walking around. Some said hello and others were running like they were late for something. Hoping my face didn't give away the fact that I just cried, I walked up to Cassie. She was sitting with her back turned towards me and drinking what smelled like lemonade.

"Hello." I said as I walked around her. "Penelope! I am so glad you came." Cassie smiled warmly at me. "Please, call me Penny." I said as I took my own lemonade and took a sip. "Of course." Cassie smiled at me as fruits got brought out with different sandwich options. A cold noodle pasta and yogurt finished it off. "Can I get anyone anything else?" The server was someone that got brought over from the other pack and I hadn't learned her name yet. BONUS "I'm good, thank you. This looks delicious." I said as I smiled at her.

"I'm good as well, thank you." Cassie said. The girl bowed and walked away. "Thank you for coming. We haven't had the chance to actually sit down and talk." "Things have really been crazy lately. Isn't today your move in day?" I asked, suddenly remembering. "It is. I am planning on doing that after this. I was hoping we would have been able to talk more before I moved but I'm just thankful to be here." "Of course. That was my intention but I will admit I have been struggling with it." Grabbing some fruit, I put them on my plate and took a sandwich. Cassie followed me. "Can you tell me what's bothering you?" Cassie asked. "I don't honestly know. My entire life I assumed you and Zac were dead. Of course I always dreamed of meeting you and knowing who you were but I knew that was just a fantasy. Now that you are actually here, I am finding myself feeling more angry. Mentally, I know I had a way better life than if you would have kept me. My head knows that. My heart can't wrap accept that never once did Zac try to reach out to me or you. I want to be selfish and say you could have paid a guard or something to send me something but I know that isn't realistic either." "If I could go back in time, I would have just taken you and ran with Zac. Honestly, I thought about it over and over again. Everyday I laid in that cell, my mind went to what ifs and eventually I had to forgive myself or I would have drove myself crazy. Seeing you... healthy and alive... I don't regret giving you up. Especially when I lived almost twenty years in a cell. If we ran and we got caught, you would have begging for you to forgive me but I am forgiven myself. I'm not trying to be a mother figure to you but I would like the chance to get to know you."

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"I'll try. Honestly, I am so caught up with some other things that I'm not sure I have it in me to get emotionally invested in something." Cassie nodded her head as she took a bite of strawberry. "What do you have going on?" "I want my legacy of Luna to be about helping the kids that just need someone to believe in them. I am academically very intelligent but as a kid, I got into trouble. It wasn't until Kris noticed me and gave me chance did I prove myself. I just needed her to believe in me. So, I build different programs to help kids. Regardless of age or problem, I want everyone to have a safe place to grow. Plus, we are building all these houses and navigating adding all these members to our pack. Then I have my luna ceremony I haven't really touched and the Halloween party. When Colt and I mated, things were just getting started with Kris and Darin so I'm still trying to learn how to be a luna." I didn't want to tell her anything about Vin. Like Jacob said, there hasn't actually been a threat on my life. "I love that. You know, when I was growing up, my dad had started something similar. Midnight Moon was once a happy place. Kids ran around, had pack BBQs and even held fighting competitions to encourage friendships. Dad had noticed smaller kids getting bullied and wanted a place for them to be able to train without being around the more athletic kids. He used to say that some people just need the extra help. Even if they weren't warriors, average people could still stay healthy." "Oh, really?" I asked, intrigued.

“He was very proud of it. Dad was a very proud man. Colt reminds me of him.” Cassie was looking up at the sky. “Probably more loving behind closed doors but very protective.”

“Colt is very protective.” I agreed simply before putting some yogurt into my mouth. “Have you guys had any fights?” Cassie asked before looking at me. “Just petty stuff really.” “Well, whatever it is, just remember that he probably has your best interest in heart. Dad would always

do things I hated but looking back, he did them out of love.” “Like what?” I asked, more curious to learn more about him. or late “Oh, little things like needing a body guard or eating all my green beans. When I got older, it was things like not going to parties. night events. ‘Nothing good ever happens after midnight.’ That is what dad would tell me. I used to get so mad at him and sneak out the window!” Cassie laughed. I couldn’t help but smile at her. “Did you get caught?” “Every single time. It didn’t stop me though. However, it did get me a bad reputation. People assumed I was doing illegal things or whatever. They said I was making the alpha look bad. If he can’t contain his daughter, how can he control a pack?” “Did you get punished?” I pushed. “Not in the physical sense. He would yell and say he is disappointed in me or he would make me do some manual labor. However, I was popular and my friends would come help me. Dad never did figure out how I managed to finish so quickly.” “Was he strict?” “Very much so. He would let loose every now and then but it was rare to get a smile out of him. People would tell me that he was friendlier before he was alpha. Still, he read books to me and would watch. move up. “He sounds like he loved you.” I concluded. “He did. Still, he would often forget I had feelings and couldn’t just turn them off like he could.” “What do you mean?” I asked. Cassie got a sad look on her face. “Dad wanted me to learn to fight and do some drills with the warriors. He would get mad if I cried or showed any weakness. He felt like I should have been able to take it in stride.”