

Talking to the Moon |

Lumen's Demand

Waking up after a lycan wolf takes control of your body is a lot more brutal than I ever imagined.

My head is pounding, and every muscle in my body feels like it's been put through a meat grinder. The light streaming in through the window is blinding, making my headache even worse.

"You're awake," a voice echoes from the corner of the room.

"Quit yelling," I mumble, pulling the pillow over my head.

"I'm not yelling," the voice insists. I groan, but that doesn't stop the voice. "What happened to you last night? You shifted without actually shifting."

"Jameson, you're not making any sense," another voice chides him. It's Liam and Jameson in the room with me.

"Whatever." The bed dips as Jameson moves closer. "Little Om—Olivia. Can I get you anything?"

"Just leave me alone." I groan again, wishing the ground would just open up and swallow me.

"We will, but first you need to answer our question. How did your wolf take over like you weren't even there? I tried to mind-link with you, but you were completely gone," Liam probes.

I toss the pillow aside and sit up so quickly that it feels like my brain is bouncing around inside my skull. "Damn..." I clutch my head and try to shield my eyes from the light. "It's a lycan thing, for protection."

The twins fall silent for a moment before I hear them leave, closing the door behind them.

I'm left alone for a few hours, feeling lonelier than I have in years without Leo's presence in the back of my mind. The mate bond is gone. I feel hollow.

By the time there's a knock on my door, my headache has subsided, but my body still feels like it's been run over by a truck.

I open the door to find Jameson holding a tray of food. He gives me a sly smile and meets my gaze. "Thought you might be hungry."

"I'm not." I start to close the door, but Jameson's foot stops it.

"Just let me leave it on the desk. You can eat it later if you want," he suggests.

I nod and open the door wide enough for him to come in and set the tray on my side table. He leaves with one last look, and I slam the door shut behind him.

My old room is cluttered with Leo's belongings.

My sadness quickly turns to anger. I can't stand to look at his things anymore, so I open the window and start tossing them out, starting with his clothes and ending with his phone, which I snap in half before hurling it onto the lawn.

Unfortunately, it doesn't make me feel any better. Maybe a bath will help.

I sink into the tub, filled with every bath bomb, Epsom salt, and oil I could find. It's hard to relax when I'm not tired, but at least my head isn't throbbing anymore.

There's nothing to distract me from my feelings. I stare at a crack in the tile above the faucet when a single tear slips from my eye. It's quickly followed by a flood of tears that I can't stop.

The moonlight filters through the window, and I realize I've spent the entire day in bed, wallowing in self-pity and despair.

Once again, I'm almost good enough, almost the one. "Why can't I ever get it right?"

"You did get it right; they didn't," Lumen whispers from the back of my mind.

"That's funny, because from where I'm standing, it's all my fault. My poor judgment and—"

"Screw 'em," Lumen interrupts.

"How? I have nowhere to go, and even if I did, I don't have the strength to run."

Lumen growls. *"It's simple. Screw 'em. Show them your strength, your intelligence, your beauty. Make them regret what they left behind. Screw them!~"~*

I let out one last sob before rinsing off and stepping out of the bath. I slip into a short dress and fix my hair and makeup. The Winter Ball may be over, but the festival is just beginning. Tonight is the Yule Bash, a much less formal event.

With newfound determination, I head over to the event building, the music growing louder with each step. I take a deep breath and square my shoulders before pulling open the door.

The room has been transformed into a modern winter wonderland, with snowflakes reflecting the strobe lights, icicles hanging from the ceiling, and fake ice covering the corners, seats, and tables.

The twins are in their usual spot, watching the dancers with bored expressions. I barely give them a glance as I scan the room for a good time.

I spot a tall, muscular man holding a drink, chatting with a petite brunette. He doesn't seem too interested in their conversation, his eyes constantly wandering over her head.

"He's perfect," Lumen exclaims, and I have to agree. I approach the man, and his eyes immediately lock onto me. He watches my every move, my hips swaying with each step, until his gaze finally lands on my lips.

I stop just a foot away and lick my lips suggestively. "Hey, stranger."

His mouth slowly curves into a grin, and his eyes sparkle. "Hello," he greets me in a husky voice, his eyes already darkening with desire.

He completely ignores the brunette as he turns to face me.

"Dance with me," I command, pulling him onto the dance floor and leaving a frustrated brunette in our wake. She glares at me with her arms crossed, but I couldn't care less.

The stranger grabs my hips and pulls me close. I rest my hands on his chiseled chest and look up at him through my lashes.

We start to sway to the music, and I wrap my arms around his neck, bringing our faces closer. "What's your name, sweetheart?" he asks, gripping my ass and pressing his arousal against my stomach.

"You can call me whatever you want," I whisper in his ear, nibbling on his earlobe. He groans, and I can feel his arousal twitch against his thin dress pants.

Our lips collide in a kiss that's all about demand, his tongue pleading for entry. I let him in after a little playful resistance, and for the first time since I woke up this morning, I forget about my problems.

“Fancy leaving this place?” I suggest, but he doesn’t respond.

Instead, he guides me towards the exit, his strides long and quick, almost too fast for me to match. Noticing my struggle, he hoists me over his shoulder and carries me outside.

My hands roam his body as he strides across the lawn towards the guesthouse he's staying in. He must be an alpha, because only alphas get their own house when they visit.

“Just wait till I get you in my bed,” he promises, his voice a low growl.

“Olivia?” Jason appears before us, his face a mask of confusion that quickly morphs into anger. “Put her down,” he orders the alpha.

“Not happening, Alpha Jason. She’s mine,” the alpha retorts.

“She’s mated to my brother. Unless you want to break our treaty, I suggest you do as I say, Alpha Mason,” Jason snaps back.

Rolling my eyes, I slip out of Alpha Mason’s arms, earning a scowl from both men. “Alpha Jason, have you talked to your brother today?” I ask, keeping my distance.

“No, but he’s on his way here now.” He moves towards me, but I raise a hand to stop him. Jason has mind-linked Leo, and I know it’s only a matter of minutes before this whole situation blows up.

I turn to Alpha Mason. “I’m sorry you got dragged into this misunderstanding. Maybe we can continue this another time.” I try to steer Alpha Mason away from the impending drama.

“Sounds good, sweetheart. Which pack are you from?”

“I don’t have a pack.” It’s the truth; I don’t belong anywhere.

Leo arrives, panting, with Amelia trailing behind him. “Alpha Mason, I think it’s time for you to return to the party,” Jason orders. Alpha Mason kisses my hand before disappearing into the night.

“Thank Goddess you’re home.” Leo pulls me into a tight hug. I push him away forcefully, growling.

Who does he think he is? Touching me, talking to me as if he didn’t betray me in the worst possible way, as if he didn’t break his promise.

I can feel Lumen rising to the surface, my eyes darkening with anger, but I manage to keep her from taking over completely.

“Punch him, punch him where it hurts!” Her voice echoes in my head. ~“Right in the family jewels!”~

Leo looks hurt from my shove, grabbing his hair and pulling. “Olivia, I’m sorry.”

I laugh, the sound harsh and mocking. “Did it hurt?” He doesn’t answer. “Did it hurt?” I shove him again and he stumbles backward.

Jason steadies him and exchanges a glance with Amelia. They’re having a conversation the rest of us aren’t privy to. It seems I’ve lost Jason too, but what did I expect? They always leave.

“Did it hurt when you felt my pain? When the mate mark burnt off? When my heart was stabbed by your betrayal? Did it hurt when you broke the mate bond and then my heart? Was it worth it?”