

Talking to the Moon |

A Volunteer

I wake up alone, the sheets beside me cold. They got what they wanted and left, just like I asked. But a part of me had hoped they would stay until morning.

I need to deal with the rogue issue and leave before I get too attached. I already have Lumen's heartbreak to worry about when we leave. I don't need more complications.

I get dressed and head to breakfast. This time, I find the twins in the kitchen, trying their best to cook under Mary's watchful eye. They're both disasters in the kitchen, creating more mess than actual food, but they're trying.

Today's menu is pancakes. But instead of fluffy, golden circles of deliciousness, the serving trays are filled with oddly shaped, pale dough disks that are still somewhat raw.

Liam has batter in his hair, and Jameson is covered in flour and eggs. Mary is sitting in the corner with Clara, laughing so hard she's filming them. "I'm sending this to everyone, even August over at the Still Lake Pack."

"Don't you dare," Jameson warns.

"Too late." Mary continues to laugh, almost falling off her stool. "Ah! Luna, here to rescue these hopeless men, are you?"

"Nah, I think I'll just watch." I sit down on a stool beside them. "And it's Olivia."

Clara nudges me with her elbow and raises an eyebrow. I shake my head and refocus on the comedy unfolding in the kitchen.

"Luna? I like hearing that name. It suits you, don't you think?" Liam winks.

"Liam?" I smell something burning behind him. "Do you smell something?"

"Shit!" Liam tries to save his burnt pancake but ends up tossing it in the trash with his many other failed attempts.

I pick at the edges of a pancake and eat the parts that are edible. "Have your warriors returned from the rogue camp yet?"

Liam and Jameson exchange a look before Jameson answers. "They arrived this morning. We'll have a meeting in the office after breakfast."

“Okay, I’ll be there.”

I head to the dining room and help serve the pups that can’t serve themselves.

Ever since I returned to the pack, the pups have been drawn to me. But since they found out that I was supposed to be the twins’ mate and their luna, their attention has only increased.

The pack is unhappy with the twins for rejecting me, and even the pups share that sentiment.

A little pup named Christopher tugs on my pant leg, trying to get my attention. “Luna?”

“Please call me Olivia,” I urge, not wanting the pack to get used to me.

“Lun— Olivia.” Christopher motions for me to come closer so he can whisper in my ear. “Are you really the alphas’ mate?”

“Chris, it’s complicated.”

“Why? Either you are or you aren’t,” he states confidently. “Mom says that you are, but the alphas hurt you.” This must be Katherine’s pup. Her bluntness has rubbed off on him.

“I...”

“You must be special if the Moon Goddess gave you to them. They are usually in ‘a mood’ like my mom calls it,” he continues.

“I guess they are a handful. Maybe I can change that.”

Christopher smiles at me and gives me a hug before running off to join his friends for breakfast. I seem to be getting deeper and deeper into this luna role that I haven’t even considered accepting yet.

On one hand, being the luna of a pack this size would allow me to do a lot of good, not just for the pack but also for werewolves all over. My role as a lycan could reach so many more wolves as luna.

On the other hand, I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to forgive the twins or regain the love I used to have for them.

But there are still so many unanswered questions. Can I live a life where I don’t love my mates? Do they even want to mate me and make me their luna? Can I leave all of this behind and break Lumen in the process?

I guess I won't know until I have defeated the rogue leader and finally have to make the choice. Stay or go?

I walk into the twins' office without knocking and find them, Greyson, and the warriors discussing their assignment. They all glance at me briefly and then continue while I sit down beside Greyson.

The twins scowl but don't say anything.

Alicia, the head warrior, debriefs us on their findings. "The rogue leader is big and old, about Alpha Darren's age. We saw very few women and children, but there were at least 150 rogue fighters.

"Most of them didn't look well trained, and some are even malnourished. The winter season is hitting them hard, and they may be fewer in the spring."

"Which is why they will attack sooner rather than later," I add.

Alicia scowls. "Maybe, but regardless, they won't be much of a threat to us. If they attack, we won't lose much."

"An animal backed into a corner always poses a threat, and any loss is too much to lose," I argue, but Alicia shakes her head in disagreement.

"We might lose some defenseless omegas, but any trained wolf can take them out," she retorts.

I can't believe that she is okay with the loss of a wolf just because she considers them beneath her. Anger begins to rise inside me, and Lumen is growling from the anger.

I start to speak, but right when I open my mouth, the twins speak for me.

"Alicia!" Liam slams his hand on the desk.

Jameson interrupts his brother. "We will not lose any wolf. If we do, you can kiss your position in this pack goodbye."

"Get your sorry ass to the training field and debrief the rest. We will come up with a plan and let you know what we want to do. Leave," Liam orders Alicia.

She huffs and storms out, like a puppy that didn't get its favorite toy. Greyson whistles in surprise. "Wow, she's a bit tightly wound."

"If that's what you want to call it," I quip, earning a snort from the twins. I raise an eyebrow, waiting for them to explain.

“She’s not a fan of the changes we’ve made and she’s not shy about showing it.

“Honestly, no matter how she does during the rogue attack, she’s getting replaced afterward,” Jameson confesses, leaning over the map spread out on the desk.

“We can’t put up with her defiance anymore. Now, the camp is right here.” Liam points to the spot we found south of the mountain on the map.

“They’ve got the mountain to the north and a river to the west. That leaves the east side for an attack.”

I shake my head. “They’ll be expecting that. That’s why I think we should come from the south of the camp. We’ll circle around them and catch them off guard.”

“That’s a long trip. The warriors will be exhausted,” Liam counters, furrowing his brow as he studies the map.

“We can’t leave the pack unprotected, and that plan would require all the warrior wolves. What if... Never mind.” Greyson is pacing the floor, trying to come up with a plan.

“From the west, from the river. That’s the best. Half the warriors can wait on the east, while the other half approach from the south and west,” Jameson proposes, but then shakes his head. “No, forget I said anything.”

The three men start bickering about the right strategy, and I tune them out to study the map more closely. “*You know how to solve this,*” Lumen insists.

“*I know, but they won’t like it,*” I respond in my head.

There’s a narrow pass that goes from the west side of the mountain all the way to the camp in the south. The problem is, the entrance is underwater in the river, and there’s only room for four or five wolves to pass through.

“*It’s the only way, and you know it.*” Lumen scolds me for my hesitation.

I mutter under my breath, knowing she heard me. I’m going to volunteer for the mission.

I’m the only lycan left since Leo was sent home and Jason went with him. Amelia left with them, and I can’t say I was sorry to see them go, except maybe Jason.

The three men are still arguing, paying no attention to me or the others in the room when I speak up. “The river pass. I’ll take the river pass.”

They stop arguing, and all three of them slowly turn to look at me. “What?”

“I and four of your best warriors will take the river pass and launch a surprise attack at night.

“I’ll take out the leader while the rest create chaos by setting fires and taking out rogues in their sleep. We’ll slip away under the cover of the chaos and darkness.”

The men start to protest, but I raise my hand to signal that I’m done. “It will work. I just need some volunteers.”