

Untouchable (The Moonlight Avatar Series Collection)

Chapter 15 The Friend

“Courage isn’t having the strength to go on – it’s going on when you don’t have strength.” – Napoleon Bonaparte.

Nikolai

I never thought I’d hear about the Zircon Moon Pack again. Unfortunately, there was a dark history between Jonathan **and me** with a fractured alliance between our packs. Our friendship shattered and we went about our ways. We’ve never been the same since. The last I spoke to Jonathan Prince **was** to give my **condolences** for the loss of his mate and daughter eight years ago.

Now, he reentered my life through a broken and abused pup. Never in my life would I’ve expected Jonathan to **stoop** so low as to torture one of his **own**, and **a** girl at that. How far had this man fallen?

I’m in my office at my desk, gazing out the window in deep thought as Lyra took her seat next to me. It had **been** a day since Halima arrived on my territory and to my surprise, she had agreed to stay. There was no chance in hell I was sending her back to Zircon Moon, especially with the **news** my mate revealed about her history. I was tempted to give the ol’ bastard a call to give him a piece of my mind, but a hand on my shoulder from **Lyra** convinced me **not** to.

It was better to **not** let **them** know that Halima is still alive. They would surely force us to give her back and thus, take her to her execution. Casting

the Mark of the Betrayer on her was unjust, it only serves to prologue her suffering until her death.

Losing your Luna and your daughter at the same time I'm sure was devastating. I'd surely **fallen** apart if I lost Lyra and Lyria, my daughter in such a horrific way. However, subjecting a pubescent girl to almost a decade of slavery and mistreatment for it cannot and would not bring back their lives.

Then **again**, pain and anger could make people do unspeakable things completely out of their character.

"There is nothing we can do about Zircon Moon." I say to Lyra. "I don't know how long it has been since Halima abandoned her **pack**, but what I do **know** is I rather keep her here, safe and alive. You say she's a white wolf?"

"Yes, that is what she told me."

Simply put, white wolves are avatars of our precious Moon Goddess. They hold a lot of power and are destined for greatness. "Teresa says it's too dangerous for her to shift, given her current state. Only when she's healthy enough, can she shift again."

"It is a crime to abuse a child, but Jonathan has allowed the abuse to persist. Selene's avatar should be protected, not broken." I sighed, pinching the bridge of my nose. "I don't think I would ever understand how he could **raise** his hand **to** protect **his** pack and use that **same** hand to strike an innocent **pup**."

"A wolf without his mate is not a pretty sight, an Alpha even more so," Lyra **explained**, taking my hand **into** hers. A wolf who **loses** their mate doesn't **differ** from a feral wolf. They lose their sanity. Many commit suicide after the loss. Some lucky ones were granted a second chance mate, but those who don't grow mad over time. A mate **was** not just their destined **lover**, but the other half of their soul. Mates complete one another.

And to rub salt in the wound, he lost his daughter. I sympathize with my former friend. That pain **does** not go away. However, that's no excuse to hurt someone else.

That pain **was** an endless cycle where no one wins. Everyone perishes at some point.

Taking Lyra's hand to my lips, I gave the supple skin on the back a soft kiss. "Yes, that is true. I hope one day **he** could see the errors of his actions." Leaning my **head** back, I focus on more pressing matters. "So, have you picked the colors for Anthony's ceremony?"

"Yes! We both finally agreed on blue and silver after much debate." My beloved chuckled, her smile was contagious. "Lyria **tried** to convince him to go darker, but he insisted on having colors that best represent our Moon Goddess."

"Ah, how thoughtful." I smiled. It was time for Lyra and me to step down from our roles as Alpha and Luna. Since Anthony is our oldest child, the Alpha title will pass to him as opposed to his younger sister Lyria. But regardless, Lyria still had much command because of her Alpha blood. Now that Anthony had found his mate, it made the process that much rewarding. "Has Halima's room been **set** up?"

"Cleo notified me that it was ready for whenever she's released from the pack hospital."

"Excellent."

Several hard knocks sounded through my office. "**Enter.**" My Beta, Alan Seals solid like a marbled statue, lips at a thin **line** on his ebony face, walked through the threshold,

"Alpha. Luna." He bowed to **the** waist. "Alpha Amari from the Cerulean Moon wishes to discuss negotiations regarding the unoccupied land between our territories. He is due to **arrive** on our territory next week."

“Very well. We will prepare for his arrival before then. Anything else?”

“Yes.” Alan **crossed** his arms. “Word has gotten around **that** we have a newcomer. And she’s a rogue?”

“Yes.” Lyra nodded. “She’s very...fragile. Normally, I’d ask if **you** could send Jacqueline over to cheer her up and get her acclimated, but I’m not sure it’s wise to do it now.”

“Oh...” Beta Alan’s stoic demeanor broke, running his **hand** through his coiffed black hair as his smile **feigned** nervousness. “She’s on her way there now.”

Halima

I couldn’t believe **that** I have **a** goddamn tube down my **nose**.

After failing to hold down the small breakfast the hospital was kind enough to give **me**, Dr. **Nava** suggested a feeding tube. I’ve lost too much weight, so this was the alternative.

The insertion of the feeding tube was uncomfortable. I coughed several times as the tube slid down from nose to my throat and finally my stomach. It was violating, but it had to be done. Desperate times called for desperate measures.

During rounds, the doctors and **nurses** checked up on me, from changing my IVs to drawing more blood to helping **me** get to and from the **bathroom**. Despite being in a foreign place, I felt safe. Everyone here was doing their best to take **care** of me, although I still feel that I don’t deserve it. I feel like a burden on the medical staff.

Right now, I was reading from a stack of **magazines** the nurses were so kind to give me. I've seen the women in Zircon Moon read these, but I never had the chance to. The magazines were about the latest fashions, healthy food recipes, expensive perfume, and **jewelry**. The human women who modeled in the expensive clothing were tall, had beautiful **hair**, baby faces, and unblemished **skin**. Humans were picky about who they premiere as their best models to attract the attention of the consumers.

I look down at myself, trying to pinch a tiny flab of fat only to be met with bone and tight **skin**. The women **were** skinny, for sure, but they had a healthy amount of fat on them. Their bones weren't showing like how **mine** is. They look like actual women while I was a skeleton with a flesh suit.

I wondered if I'd ever be beautiful like them.

While reading, an unfamiliar scent hit my nose. Orange blossoms? I look up from my magazine to see a girl, **not** much older than me, leaning against my **door** with her arms **crossed**. She **wore** a black tank top with tight blue denim shorts. She was about a shade darker than me with black kinky hair tied in two large puffs. Her eyes were emerald green and her full lips were glossy. She gave me a knowing smile.

She's pretty!

"I wouldn't read that trash if I were you." The mysterious girl **commented**. "Humans are so superficial. Everything is air-brushed. Besides, there's no one darker-complected in any pages of those. Imagine what kind of message they are sending to young girls who look like us."

I didn't reply, but she took that **as an** invitation to grab a seat next to me. "You're the newcomer I heard about, right?"

I nodded slowly, eyeing the girl suspiciously while setting my magazines on my lap.

“Well, I’m Jacqueline Seals, you know, like the sea animal? But call me Jackie! Daughter of Beta **Alan** Seals, twin to Dwayne Seals, who is currently having **his** ass handled by the Deltas.” **She** offered her hand, but when I stared at it, she retracted. “Not much of a talker, huh? Well, **that’s** fine! I’ll do the talking for us!”

Good, because I forgot how to talk. Her extrovert personality was intimidating.

“I’m sure our Alpha and Luna have told you about how Garnet Moon is full of warriors and blah blah blah. But!” I jumped at her loud voice. “We may look tough and scary, but we’re friendly! Most of us, anyway. You’ll notice some humans around because they are mates to a lot of our wolves. We have a lot of investments and businesses **around** California, so we never run out of money. Are we rich? To human standards. My **family** runs a business selling natural hair and skin products down in San José. See?”

She suddenly propped her bare leg up on my bed, showing off her silky–smooth brown skin. “I just shaved! See how my skin just glistens under these drabby fluorescent lights? Touch it!”

I stared wide–**eyed** at the girl, then to her glistening leg. “U–Uh, I rather not...”

“Ah, so she speaks!” Jackie cackled **as** if it was the funniest thing she’s ever heard. “That trick gets them speaking every time! If a weird girl told me to touch her leg because she just shaved, I’d say something too. Or would I?”

“This girl talks too much.” Artemis spoke, drawing my attention away. “Her wolf is excited. I can hear her yipping and jumping.”

“She seems nice.” Her scent is lovely.” I replied, my lips forming a small smile. “I had no one this excited to talk to me before.”

“I know that look in your eyes! You’re talking to your wolf, right?” I blinked in shock, nodding to answer her. “I wonder what she’s like. My wolf, Rosaline,

can be nice most of the time. But believe me, I'm sure when the Moon Goddess **was** making her it went like this." She acted as if she had saltshakers in her hands. "A bit of sugar, some spice, and a dash of everything nice, like the Powerpuff Girls. But, let us not forget the most important ingredient! A heaping handful of BITCH!"

"Jacqueline." We looked at Luna Lyra standing at my door, now wearing a **floral** blue **dress**. She **was** frowning, giving Jackie **a** silent warning as a deep sin escaped her mellow pink lips. "Watch your language around our guest. **She** just got here yesterday, and we don't want to scare her."

"Who says I'm scaring her?" Jackie looked at me, offering me the biggest puppy dog eyes she could muster. with her bottom lip pursed and quivering. "Am I scaring you?"

"N-Not really?"

See!

"Did you use that leg trick again?"

"Works every time!" Jackie's smirk gave way **to** her oozing confidence and mischievousness. I couldn't help but stare in awe at her beauty **and strength**. She was not afraid to be herself and judging **by** the slight indentation of muscles in her arms, she **was** one hell of a fighter too.