

Chapter 33 – The Encounter

“What happened in the past is the past. But, don’t be surprised if it comes back and haunts you.” – Nicolas Sparks

Kwame

Two more soldiers had passed. My mate, Lorelai, contacted me with the devastating news. That raises the death toll to twelve. A blend of frustration and sadness rolls through me like a tidal wave, drowning me as I lean against the bare wall near the dining hall doors. Zircon Moon is losing members with each attack, and the next attack could be our last if nothing is done.

Our best warriors were slaughtered and we’re grossly under-prepared. With each loss, the morale slowly depletes. The protection and strength we thought we had dwindled slowly. We were doing our best to combat this terror, but the enemy was getting stronger while we continuously fail.

Why were we failing? Only the Moon Goddess knows, or this was done by her hand?

Our goddess works in mysterious ways, for she is a mighty force that looks over us werewolves. However, she is not always peaceful and loving. She can be angry—vengeful, even.

There was nothing wrong with our leadership, I believed. Alpha Neron is a good Alpha and an outstanding leader, but occasionally he does things that do not better the pack. I have a strong dislike for Odessa. Do I hate her? No. Do I believe she is unfit to be Luna? Most definitely!

There is where I believe Neron's blinding weakness was. An Alpha is nothing without his true Luna. The Alpha and Luna were two pieces of the same puzzle but work together for the betterment of their lives and their pack. But the true Luna is gone, and this false Luna is not making things better for anyone.

When I look at Alpha Anthony and Luna Alesia, I couldn't help but admire their leadership and regality. They knew exactly how to help their enormous family and could make varied species live together in harmony. They were intelligent and selfless. By their energy, they were fierce fighters. It's no wonder rogues fear the Garnet Pack.

Yet, there was none of that in Zircon Moon. Neron and Odessa were two different people with different ideas. Their puzzle pieces couldn't fit together. Alpha Neron is my brother and a powerful warrior. He is fierce in battle and ruthless against his enemies. However, he severely lacks a proper Luna that is not only compassionate and empathetic but powerful in her own right.

I don't blame Odessa for why the pack is failing. I blame Neron's inability to face the truth and make wise choices, even if they hurt him or others.

There is always a reason the Moon Goddess pairs a Luna to an Alpha. I wondered often why the Moon Goddess paired Neron with Halima. What about Halima is needed for Neron and our pack? Why did she match those two together?

I wished I had the answer to that, but the true Luna died five years ago. It broke my heart to know that Zircon Moon would never get the leadership it needs, but we sure as hell don't deserve it. What we did to Halima guaranteed divine punishment. I wouldn't be surprised if our Moon Goddess was punishing our pack because of that.

However, now, I couldn't help but wonder about Beta Jacqueline. She has an intense dislike for not just Neron, but the rest of us. One would be a fool to miss the deadly glares she gives us. It is as if she knows something that we don't know or is alluding to something.

Walking back to the dining hall, I notice Beta Jacqueline and her mate walking towards the pack kitchen. My intuition told me to follow her, but I did not know why. Why did I feel the pull to follow the Beta?

“There is something in there that we need to see.” Moses, my wolf spoke.

“It wouldn't hurt to check. We might get some insight from Beta Jacqueline also.”

An innocent conversation shouldn't earn me a punch in the face, but she looked like she had one hell of a backswing.

I inhaled a breath and pushed the door open. I entered the kitchen in hopes to speak with the Beta when I am met with something else. Something that stopped me dead in my tracks.

Five women were there, including Beta Jacqueline and Beta Female Abigail. One woman smelled like a witch and another a strong wolf. But none of them caught my attention as the vision I saw before me.

It was a woman who stared at me with a mixture of disbelief and fear. Fear that I could hurt her. Fear that I ruined everything for her. Her scent is disguised, but her face is undeniable, now fuller and filled with life than sunken and near death.

I couldn't believe it! How could this be? She's...she's—!

“Halima?”

Kiya

Oh shit.

Shit, shit, shit!

FUCK!

I couldn't believe I was staring back at Gamma Kwame. I admit, he looks very handsome, especially with his long dreadlocks tied back in a ponytail. Time had nothing on this man, he hasn't aged a day! His dark eyes stare back at mine, brimming with unshed emotion.

I see shock.

Disbelief.

Relief.

Amazement.

"Kwame..." I whispered back, hopping out of my seat. I take several steps away from him, preparing for my eventual escape. Immediately, Jackie shoved me behind her, bearing her canines at the Gamma. I notice her nails lengthening and grey fur sprouting from her palms.

"Step the fuck back!" She growled, ready to strike. Sapphire came to my defense too, covering me from the left. "Come to take her back to your Alpha? I won't let you!"

"N-no!" Kwame stuttered, raising his hands in surrender. "I'm not here to cause trouble, I swear to the Moon Goddess."

"We don't trust you," Sapphire spoke, preparing for a potential fight. "We know all about what you and your pack did. We won't let you take our friend to her death!"

“Guys...” I breathed. “Please, don’t hurt him. Kwame helped me escape from the pack. He’s harmless.”

The girls bristled in their stances. I look over to Phoebe, her hard eyes scanning the man carefully. She was the only calm person out of the rest of us, walking toward Kwame.

“You don’t pose a threat.” She concluded. “You’ve come in peace. You have the desire to speak with our friend, do you? You hold a lot of burden on your shoulders, do you?”

That calmed Jackie and Sapphire down a tad. But they still didn’t move from their spots. Phoebe was the person we could trust with discovering the true intentions of a person. A handy skill as Hecate’s avatar. Brushing the wolves gently to my side, I walk up to Kwame.

Our height difference was noticeable since he was over six feet of muscle. My eyes dart down to the mark on his neck, right at the base where his neck and shoulder met. Two crescent moons overlapping at the ends. I smiled.

He finally found his mate.

“It’s been a long time, Kwame,” I quavered, my voice barely above a whisper. “It, um, must be quite a shock.”

“You’ve been alive all this time...”

“Yes.” I nodded. “I survived that jump and I’ve been living here with my pack ever since the old Alpha and Luna found me.” My eyes dart behind him to the door. “Please, if you still care about me, do not let your Alpha or Beta know that I’m alive. Kwame, please.”

His lips quivered and his eyes misted like he wanted to cry but couldn’t. “I won’t tell him. Your secret is safe with me, Halima.”

“It’s Kiya now.” I corrected him. “I abandoned that name a long time ago.”

He gave a sad look but nodded anyway. “Of course, Kiya. Is there anywhere we could talk in private?”

“Wouldn’t Alpha Neron know of your long absence?” Abigail spoke up, worried.

Kwame shook his head. “I tend to take long absences from meetings to take care of things. I’ll let him know that I’ll be long.” He looks at me. “This is more important.”

“There is a spare room on the first floor. We can talk there.”

Jackie and Abigail returned to the negotiation meeting, Sapphire and Phoebe returned to my room to watch Netflix, and Kwame and I were in the spare room. None of them trusted Kwame enough to be alone with me, but I reassured them I could take care of myself if things go awry. But I trusted Kwame. He and his family saved my life.

And I wanted to know what he had to say.