Barren Luna 431

Chapter 431

Arya's POV

I woke up in bed, moonlight coming through the window. For a moment, I panicked when I felt arms around me. 'It's fine. He's our mate. We're safe,' my wolf assured

me.

I had forgotten that I asked Henry to stay. I didn't even know when I had fallen asleep or even when Henry got into bed with me. My back rested on his chest, his breath warm on my neck. I thanked the Moon Goddess for Henry. Without him, I didn't know how I would have gotten through the grief of losing Geoffrey.

Henry moved a little, shifting his arm around my waist. "Hey. You're awake."

I nodded, giving him a small, tired smile. “Yeah," I admitted, surprised to realize it was true. "I think...I think I really slept this time."

"That's good. You need it. It's still the middle of the night. You should go back to sleep," Henry said.

"I'm wide awake now. Let's go to the living room. Maybe we can have some chat?” "Alright," Henry said.

In the living room, I turned on a small lamp and walked over to the liquor cabinet. I grabbed a bottle and held it up. "Do you drink?" I asked.

Henry said, "Actually, I'm pretty good at mixing drinks. I guess Luna Talia never mentioned that about me."

I cocked an eyebrow, surprised. “No, she didn't. I'm not sure I believe you." I set the

bottle down in front of him. "Surprise me."

"Challenge accepted," Henry said with a smirk.

"Oh, and for the record, I had a high tolerance," I said.

"That's surprising."

"Why do you say that?"

"I didn't see you as the type."

"I win all the drinking contests at Bloodmoon," I boasted. "I even beat Alpha Nolan during the last one."

Henry laughed and said, "I would have liked to have seen that." Henry grabbed some juice from the fridge and picked out a few bottles of liquor. He started mixing and then handed me a glass. "Try this."

I took a sip and looked at him in surprise. "Wow, that's actually good," I said and then downed the whole drink. Okay, you are officially in charge of drinks from now on."

Henry made me another, then sat down next to me. We sat together, tried out more drinks, and swapped stories. Henry talked about his biggest drink fails, and I told him about the time I accidentally set a tablecloth on fire at a party. It was great just to laugh together.

Eventually, Henry took the glass from my hand when I almost fell into the couch after getting snacks from the kitchen. "That's enough for tonight," he said.

I pouted, half-joking. "Who made you the boss of me?"

Henry looked at me straight in the eyes. "I'm your mate. I'll always look after you, even when you don't want me to."

Henry's words left my heart racing. I saw it in his eyes. He meant every word. "Prove it," I said.

Henry reached for me, but this time I leaned in first and kissed him. At first, the kiss was gentle and searching, slow and careful. Soon, all the feelings I'd been holding back came rushing forward. I poured my gratitude, pain and hope into that kiss. He pulled me into his arms. The kiss deepened, and I let myself get lost in him.

I broke away just enough to say, "Take me to bed."

Henry didn't hesitate. He lifted me off the couch like I weighed nothing. He carried me back to the bedroom. Henry set me on the bed, and I pulled him down with me.

My hands slid under his shirt, my nails scraping his skin as I pulled it off and tossed it aside. His chest was firm under my palms, his muscles tense. I leaned in and kissed his throat.

"Arya, are you sure about this?" Henry asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Then, tell me what you want."

I hesitated, my cheeks flushing. "I...I don't know."

He pulled back slightly, his expression softening as he studied my face. "You don't have to know. Just tell me if something feels wrong or if you need me to stop."

I nodded. He leaned down again, pressing a slow, deep kiss to my lips before pulling away just enough to meet my gaze.

He pulled my shirt over my head, unclasped my bra, and took it off. His fingers traced my waist, his touch sending shivers down my spine.

"You're so beautiful," he murmured.

I blushed. Henry leaned down and kissed my collarbone, his teeth grazing my skin as he moved lower. He kissed the curve of my breasts, and then closed his mouth over one nipple.

I gasped as pleasure shot through me. He sucked gently at first, and then harder when I moaned. His tongue circled my nipple while his hand cupped my other breast. His thumb brushed over it in slow, steady strokes.

“Henry,” I breathed, my voice barely audible.

He pulled back slightly, his eyes dark with hunger as he looked down at me. "You like that?"

"Oh my goddess, yes," I moaned.

He moved lower, kissing down my stomach. His fingers found my core easily, and gasped sharply as he slid two fingers inside me without warning. Pleasure exploded through me until was gasping for ale my legs shaking.

“You're ready,” Henry said approvingly. He pulled away, his eyes dark with hunger

as he looked at me. He unbuckled his belt, pushed his jeans and boxers down in one motion, and his cock sprang free.

I'd never seen anything so big. I wondered how it would fit.

"It'll fit,” Henry chuckled as if he heard my thoughts, and I blushed. He grabbed my legs, pulling them up and over his shoulders before pressing the head of his cock against my entrance.

A scream tore out of my throat as pain and pleasure crashed together. My body stretched around him so tightly until I was certain he would break me apart with his sheer size alone. But Henry just stilled kimsel letting me adjust to him.

When the pain faded, I lifted my hips slightly, and Henry started moving again. He pulled out almost all the way before sliding back in until I was gasping for air. The feeling was nothing I had experienced before.

"You're perfect," Henry muttered as pleasure crashed over me in waves. Finally, my body convulsed around him, and Henry followed close behind, roaring out my name before his fangs sank into my neck, binding us together forever.

Chapter 432

Talia's POV

Papers rustled in the council room while Nolan scribbled notes. Sunlight spilled across the floor, turning the tiles gold. I tried to focus on pack business, but my thoughts kept drifting to Arya.

Yesterday, Arya refused to see anyone. She locked herself in her house after her brother died. I convinced Henry to sneak in through her window to check on her. When the rain started, I left, hoping he could help her.

'Please let Henry help her,' I thought.

'He's her mate. Of course he did,' my wolf said.

A knock sounded at the door, then it swung open. Arya walked in with Henry behind her. I barely recognized her. People said she was a wreck, but now she looked different. She held her head high, eyes clear and bright, moving like a weight had finally lifted.

"Good afternoon, Arya. Henry." I set my papers aside and smiled at Arya. "It's good to see you looking like yourself again." I nodded to Henry. "Thank you for being there for her."

Arya gave a small, shy smile. “Hi, Luna. Thank you."

Henry nodded. "Good afternoon."

Arya stepped closer to me and tucked her hair behind her ear. I spotted the fresh mark on her neck. My eyes widened.

"Is that...? You two are marked mates now?!" I exclaimed. My voice was loud enough for Nolan to look up.

My wolf chuckled, 'It seems Henry did more than be there for her last night.'

Arya nodded and said, "Yes. Henry and I are official mates."

Nolan closed his book. "Congratulations, I knew you would make the right decision," he said. “If he gives you any trouble, you let me know."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Henry questioned. "I take being a mate very seriously. I've been waiting years to find her, and I plan to show her every day how grateful I am for her."

"Good," Nolan said. Then, he turned to Arya. "Are you going back to Shadowclaw with Henry?" His voice was kind but worried. "Whatever you choose, we're behind you. We want what's best for you, Arya."

Arya took a deep breath and squeezed Henry's hand. She looked at Nolan, then at me, her face serious. "Before I decide anything," she said, "I want to thank you both for putting up with me. I know it wasn't easy. I need to explain what happened with Geoffrey. I want to talk to everyone. Please, let me address the pack."

I nodded right away. "Of course. You deserve to tell your side of the situation.” I reached out through the pack link.

"All ranked members of Bloodmoon report to the council room

immediately," I commanded, my

voice ringing clear in every minnet

While we waited, Nolan quietly set aside the rest of his reports and arranged the chairs so everyone could have a place. Henry stood beside Arya, offering silent support as she composed herself.

"It's great that you decided to explain the case, Arya," I said.

"I know it is the right thing to do," Arya said.

Footsteps echoed in the hallway as the high-ranking wolves arrived. Della came in first, then the elders and advisors, all looking curious and concemed. The room was filled with familiar faces. As everyone sat, the greetings faded and all eyes turned fo Arya. Della hurried over and hugged Arya.

"Don't worry," she said, nodding at Henry. "Walden's out of the infirmary. He'll join us soon." People looked relieved. Walden's injury had worried everyone.

Once everyone was seated, I rose from my chair and faced the group. "Thank you all for gathering on short notice," I said. "Interim Chief Warrior Arya has requested the floor." I gestured for Arya to step forward, giving her the attention of the entire council.

Arya let go of Henry's hand and faced the others. She stepped into the center of the room and stood tall.

"As some of you may not know, I'm Alpha Geoffrey's younger sister. He confessed to me in the dungeon that he had worked with rogues to attack Chief Warrior Walden. I apologize on his behalf for what he had done," she said, glancing at him. "None of this should have happened."

She took a shaky breath. "When Geoffrey realized he had no way out, he asked me to kill him and I did it."

There were sharp gasps. The room murmured, but Arya pressed on. "I'm sorry for the pain this caused the pack. I'm ready to leave with Alpha Henry. I'll step down as Deputy Chief Warrior and accept any punishment Alpha Nolan and Luna Talia think is fair."

No one spoke. Della watched Arya. Waldon shifted in his chair but stayed silent. Everyone seemed to wait for someone else to speak.

Nolan finally addressed the group. "Arya, just because you are Alpha Geoffrey's sister does not mean are tainted by his decisions. His actions were his own. You acted as was said "No one here will place blame on you for what happened." He looked around

d of you," he acts new

the room, inviting others to speak.

"No one questions the difficult decision you had to make," Della added.

"We trust your judgment," one of the Elders chimed in. "However, the Alpha Queen will have the final say."

All eyes turned to me.

"You're not a criminal, Arya. We know that," I said firmly. "But as Deputy Chief Warrior, you still bear responsibility. You must still face the punishment for that."

The room fell silent. Eyes widened, and mouths dropped open in shock.

Chapter 433

Talia's POV

"I'll accept any punishment, Luna," Arya said softly, looking me in the eye. "Whatever you and Alpha Nolan think is fair, I'll take it."

Before I could answer, Henry stepped up and put his hand on Arya's shoulder. "If someone needs to take the blame, let it be me," he said. "Geoffrey attacked Arya and forced her to defend herself. That isn't something she should be punished for."

"Luna, please don't punish Arya," Walden jumped in. "I don't blame her for what Alpha Geoffrey did. Please do not punish her."

With Walden in favor of sparing Arya, everyone seemed to agree. He'd always been respected, and his support mattered. Some elders traded looks and whispered to each other.

"Walden was the one who nearly lost his life because of Geoffrey," Marco pointed out. "If Walden doesn't blame her, I'm not sure who's left to. She never betrayed Bloodmoon. Arya could have warned Geoffrey, but she didn't."

"If you punish Arya, you'll have to punish all of us," Della said, half-joking as she tried to lighten the mood. Others nodded and agreed out loud.

"That isn't off the table," Nolan added, causing Della to clear her throat nervously.

One of the older warriors near the back spoke up. "Arya has been part of the pack since she was a young girl, Luna. Whatever her brother turned into, that's his doing, not hers. She's never given this pack a day of trouble."

I smiled at how fast they rushed to defend her. "You're all so eager to protect her, but none of you even know what the punishment is." I wanted them to know I noticed their loyalty, even if they were jumping the gun.

Della grinned. "What is it then? Cleaning the training grounds? Scrubbing the whole packhouse? I hope you bought enough soap, Luna."

"Stop," Arya muttered. "I don't want to have to clean the training grounds again."

"I thought you would accept whatever punishment I gave you," I teased.

Arya gave a nervous laugh, her shoulders dropping a bit. "I'll do whatever you command," she said, but I could see she was worried. Even Henry looked like he would fight me himself to protect Arya.

'As he should,' my wolf said. 'It took him long enough to show that he cares about her.'

Nolan and I looked at each other. He nodded for me to go ahead.

"After talking with Alpha Nolan, we've made our decision about Arya's punishment," I said, pausing for a moment. Everyone stared at me, waiting. Della folded her arms like she was ready to argue with whatever came next.

"Arya, your punishment is to become the leader of the Doomfur pack."

Arya just stared at me, shocked. She even took a step back, like she couldn't believe it. For a second, I don't think she understood the words at all. Henry looked stunned then grinned in amazement. Della's mouth dropped open in surprise, and the elders looked at each other, trying to make sense of what I'd said. Slowly, the news sank in for everyone.

"Say that again," Arya managed.

"You are the new leader and the Luna of Doomfur," I told her.

"And Alpha Henry," I continued, "you'll help her run the pack. You two will have to work together. The choice to lead Doomfur and Shadowclaw together or separately is up to you."

Walden burst out laughing. "Promoting her is your punishment? From Deputy Chief Warrior to Luna of a big pack in one day? That's a first!"

"Punish me next to be an Alpha, Luna. I'll take it," a warrior blurted out, and the mood in the room changed in an instant.

Everyone clapped and cheered. Della was the first to hug Arya, whispering something that made Arya's face light up. Others congratulated her and Henry, saying they believed in them Walden reached over from his chair and gripped her wrist and whatever he said to her she had to blink hard afterward to keep from crying.

"But... I'm Geoffrey's sister," Arya said. "How can I lead Doomfur after what happened? They'll know that it was me that...they'll know what I've done. What if I mess up as he did? What if I lose myself and let the power get to my head?"

"Becoming a Luna or Alpha doesn't change you like that," I laughed.

"Geoffrey never once asked himself that," Nolan said. "Not before he took Doomfur, and not after."

I stepped closer and placed a hand on her shoulder. "The fact that you're asking those questions is exactly why you should lead. You're nothing like Geoffrey. You've always tried to do the right thing even when it was hard. I trust you to lead them well in the future."

“We won't lie to you. Doomfur was a difficult pack to handle, as we all know, so this won't be easy. Your promotion could certainly be seen as a punishment," Nolan explained with a chuckle.

"This... this is really a lot to take in," Arya said.

Henry squeezed her hand. “You're not alone. I'll be with you the whole way. You're the leader Doomfur needs, and I'm here for you."

"So, this is your punishment, Deputy Chief Warrior Arya. Do you accept it?" I asked firmly.

Arya hesitated for only a moment before nodding. "I accept. Thank you for trusting me. I promise I won't let you down. I'll do my best to lead Doomfur.”

I nodded, proud of her. "Get some rest. You'll both leave for Doomfur tomorrow."

Chapter 434

Talia's POV

Nolan and Della stood with me as we waited to say goodbye to Arya and Henry. We watched from the yard while they packed up the vehicles. Walden didn't come. He sent a message an hour earlier saying he wasn't feeling well, so we left him alone. He was happy for Arya, but it still hurt to watch her leave. Anyone could see he'd started to think of Arya as a daughter.

"Walden wanted to be here," I told Arya. "You know that."

"I know. How is he recovering?" Arya asked.

"He's not 100% yet, but he is getting there," I replied.

"Tell him not to overdo it. He trained his warriors well. They'll be able to maintain until he fully recovers," Arya said.

"Listen to me before you go. Doomfur won't welcome you with open arms. Some of them will still be loyal to your brother, and the rest will be waiting to see whether you're anything like him," I warned. "It's going to be hard, and it's going to stay hard for a while. So support each other. Both of you, every day, even on the days when you'd rather not."

"We will," Henry promised.

"And if something comes up that you can't handle on your own, you contact me. I don't care what hour it is or how small it seems. Don't sit on a problem out of pride."

"What counts as too big to handle?" Henry asked.

"If you're asking yourself whether it counts, it counts."

"I'll link you the moment anything goes wrong," Arya swore. "I promise."

I nodded to Della then, and she stepped forward with the box.

Arya looked at the box, confused at first. She opened it, and her whole face changed.

"How...how did you find this?" Arya asked as she lifted the dagger out and turned it over.

"We found it in Geoffrey's cell. We saw that your name was engraved in it and figured it was important," I explained.

"He made this for me. I wasn't sure if I actually wanted it," Arya said, her fingers tightening around the hilt for a moment. She looked down at the blade, tracing her name with her thumb. "It reminds me of everything that went wrong between us and all the things I wish had ended differently. Part of me wants to throw it away, but another part wants to remember the brother he was before everything changed." "Geoffrey made that for you, and just because you had to use it doesn't mean you should throw it away," I suggested. "You don't have to make a decision on it now, but I think it would be a waste to throw away the last gift your brother gave you."

After a long moment, Arya put the dagger back in the box and took it from me. "Thank you," she managed to say at last.

More warriors exited the pack house to load the vehicles.

"What is all this?" Henry questioned.

"Herbs, weapons, food, blankets. From the reports, Doomfur was lacking in

resources," Nolan answered. "There's a full escort going with you. They'll make sure you're over the border before returning."

"That's more than we asked for," Henry said.

“I couldn't let the new leaders of Doomfur come home empty-handed,” I said.

"We'll pay it back once the pack's on its feet,” Henry said.

"You'll do no such thing,” Nolan told him. “Think of this as a congratulatory gift."

"I won't disappoint you again," Arya told me. "I'll make something out of that pack. I promise."

"You already have my trust. You had it before any of this happened. Just go and do your best."

"I will, and next time I see you, I want to meet those twins. Both of them. Don't you dare have them without telling me."

"You'll be the third to know."

"Third?"

"Della first and then Leslie's second. She'd never forgive me otherwise Her temper is worse than Della's,

and ld like to not be on the bad side of a woman whose baby has been kicking her for months."

Arya laughed, just like I hoped she would. They climbed into the vehicles. Henry waved, and Arya

glanced back once from the gaten et

Then they escort following

were gone heading up the

read with the

behind.

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I stood there until the dust settled and the road was empty again.

My shoulders finally relaxed. I hadn't realized how tense I'd been until it all eased at

once.

"They'll be all right," Nolan assured me.

"I know they will. That's not what worries me." I watched the empty road a moment longer. "It's what's waiting for them when they get there."

"Well," Della announced, "I'm going to say the thing everyone's thinking. I've missed Clara's cookies."

"That's what you're thinking about?!" I said. “You just had breakfast.”

"That was two hours ago. I have needs."

Nolan chuckled. “Go enjoy,” he said. “I am going to check on the warriors and then get some work done."

We headed back to my private sitting area Clara came in with tea and a plate of the cookies Della had been craving. The sweet, spicy smell filled the air. I took a bite. It was soft, buttery, with a hint of vanilla and cinnamon. The tea was hot and strong, warming me up with each sip. For almost an hour, things

were quiet Nobody got hurt nobody, fought, and there was nothing to decide. Della put her feet up on the

table, and I didn't stop her.

Clara came in with the pot to refill us and said, “Luna, you do know what day it is."

I looked at her blankly.

"Your checkup," she reminded me. "The prenatal appointment. It's this afternoon,

and I wrote it down for you two weeks ago because I knew this would happen."

"I'd have remembered."

"Luna, you would not have."

Della was already on her feet when she said, "Let's go check. I want to see how much the twins have grown."

Chapter 435

Talia's POV

"How are you feeling, Luna?" the doctor asked as she entered the room. "Have you been sticking to the nutrition plan?"

"Yes, and it's making me fat," I complained.

"You are growing two lives. You need the extra nutrients," the doctor said and noticed my slight stomach bulge. “You have put on more weight than I expected."

"I thought the same because they're only three months along," I told her, "and I can already feel them moving. Is that early? It feels early. Nolan doesn't believe me; he thinks I'm imagining it, but I know what I'm feeling in there. It's not wind, and it's not nerves. It's both of them."

The doctor stayed quiet. She moved her hands over my belly, and then went over the same spot again, but slower this time. Finally, she took her hands away.

“Luna, is Alpha Nolan nearby?" she asked.

"He's in the corridor. Why?"

"I'd like him to hear the results with you. Would you come through to my office when you're dressed?"

I dressed with my hands shaking, and it took me twice as long as it should have. As

I left the room, Nolan and Della approached me. Neither of them liked the look on my face.

"What's wrong?" Nolan asked. "Are the twins okay?"

"I don't know. She told me to bring you to her office,” I replied.

Nolan and Della followed me to her office down the corridor. She had three chairs prepared for us.

"Please close the door and have a seat," she instructed.

Della closed the door and stood by it instead of sitting.

“Just tell me,” I begged as I sat down. "Whatever it is. Is something wrong with them?"

"The twins are healthy," the doctor answered. "I want you to hear that first. Both of them are strong. There is nothing wrong with either pup."

"Then what?"

"They're growing too fast." She folded her hands. "At three months, they should be about the size of my thumb. Yours are two or three times that. They're developing quickly. If this keeps up, you'll deliver them in three months, not seven."

"Three months," Nolan repeated. "You're certain of that?"

"As certain as I can be from one examination. I'd like to see her again in a week to measure the rate properly."

"Do you know why this is happening?"

"I've seen this in books. It only shows up in ancient, strong family lines, and only when there are twins. They call it Twin Bloodline Resonance. The twins take in energy faster before they're born, so they grow much faster." She glanced at us. "With your bloodline, and the Moonfire, it makes sense this happened to you."

"So they'll be born early, and they'll be strong," Della broke in, sounding relieved. "That's good news, then. That's the best news anyone's had in this pack all week." "No," the doctor said.

"What do you mean no? You said they were healthy," Nolan retorted.

"They can't grow this fast by themselves," she explained. "All that extra growth needs a ton of energy and it's coming straight from you and your wolf. Your body isn't built for this kind of strain. By the time the babies are ready, they'll have used up everything your wolf has to give. There won't be anything left for you."

I heard her, but the words didn't mean anything.

"What.....what are you trying to say?" I asked.

"You will die delivering them, Luna. That's what I'm telling you. If nothing changes,

the birth will kill you," the doctor replied.

Nolan's face was pale and his eyes wide with fear. "No," he said.

"I'm sorry, Alpha, but..."

"No," Nolan said more firmly, cutting the doctor off. "There has to be a way to stop this. Slow it down, hold it back, something. Tell me what it is."

"I don't have one."

"Then find one. Send for someone. There must be a healer somewhere in this territory who has seen this before."

"Alpha, I've been a healer for thirty years, and I've never seen anything like this," the doctor said. "There aren't any real treatments. People tried different remedies, but nothing worked. can't save all three wish! knew how."

"Are you telling me to choose between my pups or my mate?" Nolan demanded. "Yes, Alpha, or you're going to lose all three," the doctor said gravely.

I stared at the doctor in shock as I took it in. Before I could ask, my wolf said, 'The doctor is right. They have been pulling faster from me, but I thought it was normal.'

"Leslie," Della said suddenly.

We both looked at her.

"Leslie made an antidote for a poison nobody in this territory had ever cured," Della said as she wiped her face roughly. “If anyone could figure this out, it'll be Leslie."

Della was right, but I didn't want to contact Leslie. Leslie was pregnant, tired, managing her own pack, and looking after my brother while he recovered. She was already stretched thin. The last thing she

needed was me bringing her more

trouble.

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"I know what you're thinking, Talia, but Leslie would want to know, and she'll want to help," Nolan said.

That settled it.

We walked into the corridor. I stopped at the window and put my hand on my belly. One of them moved, strong enough that I felt it through my palm. An hour ago, that had been the best thing in my life.

"Talia," Nolan urged. "Contact Leslie. The sooner, the better."

"We don't have another choice," Nolan said. "You don't have another choice. I refuse to give up on our family, Talia. I'll contact Leslie myself if you won't."

"She'd never forgive either of us if we kept this from her," Della added.

I nodded and closed my eyes, reaching for Leslie through the mind link. Even with

all that distance between us, I could still connect with her.

'Hi, Leslie?'

Chapter 436

Talia's POV

'Talia!' Leslie's voice came through so brightly it made my eyes sting. 'Finally. Have you missed me?'

I couldn't help but laugh. 'Desperately,' I said. 'How are you? How's my niece?'

'Enormous. Loud. She's found my ribs, and she's decided she lives there now,' Leslie complained. 'I haven't slept properly in three weeks, and your brother has taken to sleeping in the chair because I keep kicking him.'

'He's sleeping in a chair? By choice?'

'He says it's safer that way.'

'That's the baby's fault, not yours.'

'That's exactly what I keep telling him,' Leslie laughed, her voice softening. 'How are your twins? Is everything okay?'

'They're healthy.' I made myself keep my voice level. 'Both of them are perfectly healthy. But I've got a problem, Leslie.'

She went quiet right away. 'That's why you called.'

'Yeah.'

'Then quit stalling and tell me what happened,' Leslie said.

I stared at the wall and tried to find the right words.

'Have you ever heard of Twin Bloodline Resonance?'

The silence dragged on so long I wondered if Leslie had closed the mind link.

'Why are you asking me that?' Leslie asked. Her whole tone had changed.

'Do you know what it is?' I asked again.

'Talia, why are you asking me that question?'

'My doctor examined me this afternoon, and told me that the twins have it,' I explained.

There was a sharp intake of breath before she said, 'Tell me exactly what the doctor said.'

'She told me they're growing two or three times faster than normal. She thinks they'll be born in three months, not seven,' I said. I put my hand on my belly. 'She said when they're born, they'll take everything from my wolf, and I won't survive.'

Leslie stayed silent.

'Please say something. Is there anything you can do?'

'I'm thinking,' Leslie said, and then she sighed. 'Talia, I have to ask you something, and I need you not to be angry with me for asking it.'

'Go ahead.'

'Have you thought about ending the pregnancy?' Leslie asked.

'What? No.'

'You haven't even considered it.'

'I don't need to consider it,' I told her. 'They're mine. They're moving, Leslie. I felt one of them an hour ago. I'm not giving up my babies to save myself and I never will. So, don't ask me again.'

She sighed. I could tell she expected this.

'I knew you'd say that. I knew it before I even asked,' Leslie said, and then she

paused. 'I've read about this condition. There aren't many cases on record, maybe a dozen in two hundred years, and every one of them was a Luna from a strong bloodline carrying twins.'

'And?'

'And they all died. Every Luna I could find. They carried their twins to term, delivered them, and died in the process.'

Hope drained out of me, replaced by cold dread. If anyone could fix this, it should have been Leslie. Was I really going to die just to bring my children into the world?

'All of them? Are you certain?' I asked.

'I treated one of them myself,' Leslie said, her voice rough. 'Before I came to Silverfang.'

'What happened to her?'

'I tried everything. I read every book I

could find. sat with her for two months. watched her die with her sons in her arms,' Leslie said. 'I'm not going to lie about your chances, Tara You're amazing, and you've beaten the odds before, but I don't think you can beat this.'

'So, that's it? I just need to accept that I'm going to die?'

'I'm sorry.'

'Don't be sorry yet,' I said, 'You didn't have the antidote for the mad rogue toxin either, until you made one. Everyone told you it was impossible, but you did it anyway. Maybe this time will be different.'

'Maybe.'

'It will be. You'll find a way.'

'You sound awfully sure for someone who was just told she's dying.'

'One of us has to be.'

'Talia.' She paused, her voice firmer. 'Come to Silverfang. Don't argue or tell me you'll handle it from there. want you here so Lean cheek on you every day. I want my whole library and all my healers. If there's anything to find, I'll find it faster if you're here with me.'

'I'll come.'

'Today. Not next week.'

'Today,' I promised. 'Thank you, Leslie.'

'Don't thank me yet.'

The link closed. I stood there for a moment, my hand on my belly.

I turned around. Nolan and Della both stared at me, worry written all over their faces.

"What did she say?" Nolan asked, his voice tense.

I smiled and lied to my mate for the first time since we met. If Nolan knew how bad

this was, he would never forgive himself if something happened to me.

'He will be angry with you for lying to him,' my wolf warned.

'I'd rather he be angry than worry himself to death when we haven't tried all options yet,' I argued.

"She's seen this before," I told them. "There was a Luna a few years back who had

the same thing. Leslie treated her herself. She knows what she's up against, Nolan. She's not guessing."

Della looked relieved and asked, "Can she fix it?"

"Of course. She wants me at Silverfang so she can do things right."

Nolan's face softened with relief. The weight he had been carrying finally seemed to

lift all at once. He crossed the corridor and pulled me into a tight hug, one hand gently cradling the back of my head.

"Thank Goddess," he whispered into my hair. "I knew it."

I held him close and stared at the

wall over his shoulder. My heart ached for lying to him, but I couldn't tell him the truth. It would break him. Deep down, I was afraid he would try to make me give up the twins to save me.

"Della." He kept his arms around me. "Get the cars ready and let the border patrol

know we're leaving in the morning. Pack everything we'll need for the trip."

Chapter 437

Talia's POV

The next morning, Walden was already waiting for us. He looked a little better and less pale, though he was still careful with his arm. As soon as he spotted us, he

walked over.

"Della told me you're going all the way to Silverfang. Is that true?" Walden asked, concern clear in his voice.

"Yes, it is. As you can see, we're leaving this morning," I said, trying to sound calm.

“Luna, that road takes almost a whole day even if the weather's good. You're three months pregnant with twins. Are you sure this is a good idea?" Walden pressed, his worry obvious.

"The twins are fine. The doctor checked them yesterday, and if you want, she'll tell you herself." I gave his arm a reassuring squeeze. "There's important business at Silverfang that I can't handle from here, and Solon's still not well enough to travel, so it has to be me. That's all there is to it."

Walden didn't look convinced, but he let it go. "Then I'll make sure Bloodmoon stays safe until you're back."

"That's exactly what I was hoping you'd do. Don't let anything or anyone cross that border while I'm gone," I said firmly.

"Of course, Luna."

"One more thing, Walden. While we're gone, start training someone to take over as Deputy Chief Warrior. You've been doing the job and yours since Arya left, and you're still recovering. I don't want you landing back in the hospital," Nolan said.

"I've got two in mind already," Walden agreed.

"Great. I look forward to meeting whoever you pick," Nolan said.

A few minutes later, Della and Marco showed up with the last of our bags, and I

didn't expect that they'd brought Clara and Annie with them.

Annie ran over and threw her arms around my waist, holding on tight.

"You're leaving," she said, her eyes rimmed red. "Why are you always leaving?"

"I'll be gone only for a little while," I promised.

"Della says it's a long way."

"It is a long way, but I'll come back. And by the time I do, I expect you to have grown even more," I told her as I smoothed her hair. "You're getting taller every day. It is almost unbelievable how fast you grow."

"I can't help it."

"That's no excuse," I teased.

"Luna," Clara said quietly, stepping forward. "You had your checkup yesterday, and now you're leaving the territory right after. Was there something wrong at the appointment?"

Walden's attention snapped to me.

"If there's a problem with the twins," Walden said slowly, "then you shouldn't be traveling at all."

Everyone was staring at me now.

"There's nothing wrong with the twins," I told them. "They're both healthy and growing. If you don't believe me, ask the doctor. She'll tell you the same thing." I forced myself to smile. "Thisis just work. That's all it is."

Yesterday, I'd asked the doctor not to share anything about what she'd found. Lying to them felt wrong, but the alternative was worse. If th pack found out I was dying, it would ruin the already fragile morale. They'd already been through so much lately.

Annie looked relieved. "Then come back soon."

"As soon as I can. And when I do, you can help me pick names."

"For both of them?"

I nodded, and Annie smiled. "I'll start writing some names now. I'll have a whole list ready by the time you get back."

Clara studied me for a moment, then stepped forward and pressed a warm cloth bag into my hands.

"I made sandwiches for the road," she said. "There's enough in there for both of you,

and something sweet at the bottom. Don't let the Alpha eat it all."

“Thank you,” I said. “Clara, please keep an eye on Annie while I'm gone.”

"Of course, Luna. You don't even have to ask."

Marco put the rest of our bags into the trunk of our car. Della went behind him, checking each bag, and rearranging everything. I could tell from her silence that she was worried.

"I checked twice already, Della," Marco said.

"Checking again never hurts," Della replied and then she hugged me for a long time without saying a word. She only let go when Nolan made a noise, and even then, she gave my shoulder a squeeze that said, “Come back safe, okay?"

"I will," I told her.

Nolan helped me into the car and climbed in beside me.

The car felt warm, and the quiet engine mixed with Nolan's calm breathing made me relax. I stared

out the window as we left. A rede

waved until we turned, Clara

ve

watched with her arms crossed, and

Delta

but

ooked like she might cry Wouldn't let herself. For a second, I

let myself believe everything was fine and nothing was waiting to go wrong.

"Put your head on me and rest," Nolan said.

"I'm not tired," I said.

"It's a long drive, and you don't have to do anything right now, so just get comfortable," Nolan said.

I tried to stay awake. I remember the gate going by, then the fields, and Nolan's hand slowly running up and down my arm. After that, everything faded.

When I woke up, I was lying in a bed I recognized, in the room that had been mine before I became Luna. The same crack in the ceiling I used to trace as a kid was still there.

Leslie sat on one side of me, her hand on my wrist, looking tired but focused. Solon stood nearby, looking healthier than I remembered.

"You're finally awake," Leslie said softly. "How do you feel?"

Chapter 438

Talia's POV

I'm just a bit tired," I said, managing a weak smile while I pushed myself up in bed. My legs were tangled in the blanket, and I still felt foggy, but at least sitting up helped.

"How did I get here?" I asked, scanning the room in confusion.

“Nolan, of course. He carried you to your room like the gentleman he is,” Leslie said. "He was very concerned that you were sleeping so heavily that you didn't even respond to being moved."

I gave a shaky laugh. "Guess I really needed to catch up on sleep." Then, I hugged Leslie and then pulled Solon into the group hug. "I missed you guys so much."

"We missed you too," Leslie said.

Solon hugged me back. When we let go, I finally took a good look at him. He seemed so much better. He looked stronger, healthier, more like himself. His skin had color again, and he looked relaxed.

Solon noticed me staring and asked, "What? Were you expecting me to still be bedridden?"

"No, but I'm surprised at how much better you look," I said. "You really seem healthier than before."

"Leslie took care of me. Without her, I'd probably still be stuck in bed," Solon said.

Leslie laughed and brushed her hair back. "You make it sound like I did everything. You're the one who kept training and actually took your medicine. Most of the time, anyway."

Seeing Solon healthy was a huge relief. It made things feel a bit more normal. Knowing he was getting better meant I had one less thing to worry about.

I looked around and noticed Nolan wasn't there. "Where's Nolan?" I asked.

"He's at the library with Della and Marco, trying to find every book in Silverfang about Twin Bloodline Resonance," Leslie explained. "The second he saw me, he started grilling me about cures."

"That sounds like him," I chuckled.

Leslie shot me a look. "You didn't tell him everything, did you?"

"No, I didn't tell him everything. I just... I couldn't do it," I said.

"You can't keep him in the dark like that," Leslie said.

"I was scared of how he'd react if he knew there is never a solution," I said. Protecting Nolan came naturally to me. I didn't want to add to his worries when we couldn't do anything. I wanted to look out for him, the way he had always looked out for me.

"I figured. When he started asking questions, I just told him I couldn't remember which book had the records. I had to lie, or he would've had me reciting every old legend right there in the hall."

Solon laughed, folding his arms. "Nolan never lets things go, especially when it comes to you."

"He won't give up until he's checked every last book," I said. "He probably already has a list. You know how he gets when he's on a mission."

Leslie laughed, and even Solon

grinned. Leslie continued, "He wants every book about Twin Bloodline Resonance sent to the

the office net

matter how many think he's

planning to read them all himself if he has to."

"If you think this is bad, you should've seen him when he first found out I was pregnant," I said. "With all those books, he'll be lost in the library for weeks."

"This will keep him busy while you figure out how to tell him the truth," Leslie said. "There are hundreds of records and histories in there. He'll try to memorize them all."

"But, seriously, Talia, you need to tell him what is going on. He's not going to like that everyone knew what was going on but him. Remember how you felt," Solon said.

My smile faded. "I just didn't want to tell him there isn't an answer yet. He always tries to fix things, and I'm scared he won't handle it if he can't."

"And what if I can't save you? What if it's you or the twins? Are you going to keep avoiding it?" Leslie asked.

"You should be honest, Talia," Solon said. "Nolan would never leave you. You have to trust him."

I knew Solon meant well. The idea of losing my twins to save myself was terrifying. And the thought that Nolan would choose me over the twins was even more so.

'Why do you always expect the worst?' my wolf grumbled. 'Trust the Moon Goddess and trust our mate.'

"We still have three months, Solon," I said. "That's enough time to figure something out. I have to hope for the best. If tell him now, he just. worry more, and can't handle that right now."

"But if things are getting out of control, I'm not going to lie," Leslie said. "I didn't lie for him, and I won't do it for you."

I sighed. "I know. I'm not asking you to lie for me. I just need to keep this to myself for now."

Leslie glanced at my belly and

sighed. "Fine, let's just hope for the

best. If your twins keep growing this fast, maybe we'll have our babies the same time That would be wild, she said, trying to lighten the mood.

"We can share stories and complain together. Maybe our babies will be best friends,

or maybe they'll be rivals," I said.

Leslie smiled. "At least we'll have each other. I wouldn't want to do this with anyone

else."

I squeezed her hand, thankful for her kindness. "Same here. All I want is for both of

us to have healthy babies."

I let myself picture a future where everything turned out okay. Nolan found the solution, Leslie and I had healthy babies, and our family was together.

For now, hope was all I had.

Chapter 439

Nolan's POV

"Marco, get another team of guards in here. We're going to need the help," I said. Soon, a dozen more guards joined us.

"That's all I could obtain without putting the pack's security at risk," Marco explained.

"This is good enough, Marco," I said. "Alright, everyone, grab a section. Start looking for anything about bloodlines or rare conditions."

We all went our separate ways and began searching. I pulled down book after book, flipping through them, but didn't find anything helpful. After three hours, we were still empty-handed. My frustration kept growing. Every time I picked up another thick book and found nothing, I got a little more annoyed.

"Anything?" I called out.

Della shook her head from across the aisle. "No, nothing."

'You're becoming emotional,' my wolf said flatly.

"We have spent over three hours and found nothing," I retorted.

'This is a large library. We've only gone through a third of this place,' my wolf argued. 'Don't let your emotions get the best of you.'

I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself. Losing control wouldn't help. I looked at Della. She was putting back the books she had already searched. Della noticed me staring and walked over.

"You look like you're about to burst a blood vessel," she said.

"You would too even if you were in my shoes," I said.

"Stressing isn't going to help. We knew this wasn't going to be easy," Della said. “There just aren't many records about pregnancies in general and especially Twin Bloodline Resonance. I think it may be more rare than we originally thought." "We keep looking," I said.

“Of course. I am not giving up either,” Della said as she went back to her stack of books.

Time dragged on. It was now nighttime. With each hour, the uncertainty in my chest grew, but I pushed it down and kept searching. I had promised Talia and myself I would help figure this out. I was going to let her down.

Just after midnight, I heard Della shout, "I found something!" Her voice echoed through the quiet library. I looked over and saw her with arms full of thick books and a huge smile on her face.

"These six books are all I could find that might help," Della said.

I felt a wave of relief. "Good. You did well, Della."

I waved everyone over. "Alright, everyone, that's enough for tonight. Now, get some sleep. You've earned it."

The guards and researchers nodded. Some rubbed their eyes; others gave tired smiles. They started heading out, wishing me good luck.

Della handed me the books. “I hope one of these has what you're looking for."

"I'm sure it will. Thank you," I said, giving her a grateful nod.

Once everyone left, I walked back to my room with the books tucked under my arms. My eyes ached, and I needed sleep.

'Check on our mate first,' my wolf urged.

I washed up quickly. My mind raced with questions. Before settling in, I peeked into Talia's room. She was asleep, curled under her blankets, breathing softly.

'We should be with our mate instead of reading those books,' my wolf grumbled.

'We will after we find out what we need to know,' I told him as I shut Talia's door gently.

I returned to my room and saw the six books stacked by my chair. I took the top one and opened it. The cover was cracked and old, and the print was faded, but the words were still, readable leafed through the pages, hoping to find something about Twin Bloodline Resonanée.

One passage caught my eye: "The stronger the Luna, the more likely her offspring are to bear the mark of this rare condition. Such children are destined for greatness their, strength a blessing from the Moon Goddess. But the cost is high; often, the Luna's own vitality is the price paid for their birth."

I read the words again. A gift from the Moon Goddess? Was this a cruel joke? It felt more like a curse. Why did a mother have to put her life on the line just so her child could live? I felt a wave of anger at everything, even the Moon Goddess.

'The Moon Goddess always has a reason for what she does. Getting angry about it will not help,' my wolf urged.

'How are you not upset?' I asked.

'Because we have allies that will not fail us. Trust Leslie,' he said. 'She knows what she is doing.'

But I couldn't let it go. Leslie's

reaction earlier still lingered in my

mind. When I told her I was grateful

that she could treat Talia's condition, she looked genuinely surprised

almost as if Talia had given me the

wrong messages. Had I

mothe

misunderstood something? Was

there something Talia hadn't told

me?

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My wolf chided me gently. 'You are overthinking this. Leslie has always done what

was best for Talia. She will not fail our mate.'

I leaned back in my chair, rubbing my eyes. I felt at a loss. This was one of the

limited times that I felt completely useless.

Leslie was all we had. Even if I had doubts, I had to trust her. There wasn't anyone else.

I went back to Talia's room, changed out of my clothes, and slipped into bed next to her. I held her close.

Tomorrow, I'd track down Leslie and demand some answers. But tonight, I let myself finally relax, hoping that one of those six books would tell me how to save Talia and our twins.

Chapter 440

Nolan's POV

I woke up that morning with Talia gently stroking my cheek. Her hand felt warm and gentle. She was smiling at me when I opened my eyes.

"Morning," I murmured.

"Good morning," she replied, her thumb stroking my cheek. "How did you sleep?"

I reached up and covered her hand with mine. “I slept great with you in my arms."

Talia chuckled and nudged me teasingly, showing she was in a good mood. "I'm fine, by the way. You don't have to ask."

I smirked and said, "And you should know by now that I am going to ask anyway. How are you feeling?"

Talia rolled her eyes and then said, "I'm really okay. I am more worried about you."

"Hmm? Why?"

"Leslie told me you were up all night searching the library. You barely got any sleep," Talia said.

“Yes, Leslie said she needed help remembering the treatment,” I explained. “We only found six books that mentioned the Twin Bloodline Resonance."

"You checked the whole library?"

I nodded. "Most of it. Della, Marco, and some guards helped. We split up and checked every section we could."

"You love me that much, huh?"

"Of course I do. I'd tear the whole library apart if it meant keeping you safe."

Talia laughed, but I could hear something shaky underneath.

"Are you okay?" I asked.

"Yes, yes, I'm fine. You know you don't have to ask so much," Talia said.

I took a second to really look at her. Her hair curled at the ends. Her face caught the light just right, making it look like she was glowing. Talia looked worn out, but her eyes were still lively.

"What are you staring at? Is something on my face?" Talia asked.

“No, just wondering how I'm so lucky to have you,” I replied, and Talia blushed.

With everything going on and all my worries about the twins, these calm moments meant everything. I wanted to say something to make her really laugh, but the words wouldn't come. Instead, I kissed her hand and pulled her back into my arms.

We stayed like that for a few minutes. Then she kissed my forehead and got up. "Come on. Let's face the day together."

I squeezed her hand as my smile faded. "Of course I do." I paused. "Promise you'll never leave me, no matter what. Even if we lose the twins."

Her smile dropped, and for a second, I saw fear in her eyes. “No way,” she said, her voice steady. "I'm not going anywhere, and we're not giving up.”

I hoped she was right, but I still felt nervous. I nodded and managed a small smile. "Yeah, okay."

We got ready in silence. After

brushing my teeth, I splashed cold water on my face, hoping it would wake me up Talia.dressed, slowly and checked herself in the mirror. When I was dressed, I went back to my room to get the books.

"Those are the books?" Talia asked as she met me outside.

"Yes, I've only started reading the first one," I said.

We walked together to the Alpha's office. The halls were quiet except for the sounds of people starting their morning routines. Solon was already at his desk reviewing a document. Leslie sat in the corner reading.

"Good morning, you two," Solon greeted. "I expected you both to sleep in, especially you, Nolan."

I put the six books on the desk. "This is everything we found about Twin Bloodline Resonance," I told Leslie.

“Okay, we're getting straight to it. I'll get us some coffee and breakfast brought to the office," Solon said.

"Good morning to you too," Leslie said as she looked up from her book. Then her eyes widened as she finally processed what I said and noticed the books. "You found all these last night?"

I nodded. "We searched until after midnight."

Solon stood up, curiosity on his face. He walked over, picked up a book, and flipped through it. "You searched the whole library?"

“Pretty much,” I said. “We missed a few sections, but this is a good place to start."

Talia walked over, picked up a book, and started reading. "I can't believe you were up all night doing this,” she said, looking at me with surprise and worry.

I shrugged. “I couldn't just sit around doing nothing. I had to try."

Leslie took off her glasses and rubbed her eyes, then put them back on and opened

the first book. "Let's see if any of these jog my memory. It's been a long time since I read about this."

I watched closely as she started reading. She flipped through pages quickly at first, then slowed down. Solon and Talia sat next to her with their own books. They turned the pages quietly. The office was silent except for the sound of paper and a few sighs.

"Are you finding anything?" I asked.

"Let me read all of these before I answer," Leslie said.

Time passed. Leslie finished one book and started another, searching for anything helpful. Sometimes she stopped, frowned at a page, and went back to read it again.

I could see her getting more frustrated.

The longer Leslie reread the books, the more anxious I became. Why couldn't she remember the treatment? Did the books not help?

"What's wrong?" I asked. “Talk to me."

"I need to recheck everything," Leslie replied.

After Leslie read all six books twice, she went back and skimmed through them again, looking for anything that might help. My wolf was restless inside me.

'She's wasting time,' he growled.

'What do you mean?' I asked.

'She already knows the answer to the question. She's just afraid to tell us,' my wolf explained.

I finally couldn't stay quiet. “Leslie, you really don't know how to treat this, do you?"