

Fated out Chapter 56

56 Shadows of doubt...

Miriam (Nanny)

It's been three days since Lyla left the house.

I sat at the coffee shop, staring at my phone, with a deep frown etched on my face. The Café was unusually quiet for a Saturday afternoon, making my thoughts louder.

At first, I had been so angry, so pissed at the girl, blaming myself for spoiling her and always letting her have her way and I had promised myself that I wouldn't reach out, that when she was done with her tantrums, she would find her way home.

But I was wrong.

I had mustered the courage to call Xander the second day after she left home after going to school and was told that she hadn't shown up since the previous day. I found his number in one of Lyla's contact books and had called his line the entire day.

The more I called and it went unanswered, the more unease crept up my spine. Something wasn't right. Xander was the only friend Lyla had. I was sure of that and since they were dating, she was most likely to end up in his house.

Xander finally took my call on the third day and I had clearly heard Lyla's voice in the

background. She had shouted something to me, calling out my name but I had been so fixated on Xander that I didn't hear the words.

When I asked Xander what the problem was and why she was shouting, he brushed it off, laughing and saying they were just playing. Even when I had insisted on speaking with Lyla, his tone had grown cold and he claimed, Lyla didn't want to talk and had ended the call before I could protest.

I didn't know where they lived. There was no address in any of Lyla's books and I couldn't involve the human police. They didn't take things like this seriously. Something was wrong, I could feel

Today, I found myself staring at my phone again, Alpha Logan's number displayed on the screen. My fingers hovering over the call button. I've thought about calling him several times but the risk was too great.

With the way the Lycan Leader was still looking for Lyla, despite the many months that had passed since she left the pack, going as far as sending Panther trackers, he might have been monitoring her father's calls. One wrong move could put Lyla in even greater

danger. **www.N(e)Velw~~o~~r.m.CoM**

My thumb hovered over the dial button, my heart racing but at the last second, I turned the phone off and set it aside. No, calling Logan wasn't the answer.

As I sat there still lost in thoughts, my mind wandered to the strange marking I had noticed on her back a few months ago. Those three stars line up perfectly on her spine – a mark I was most certain had not been there before.

I had cared for Lyla since she was a pup, dressed her, tended to her every need and not once

50 Shadows of doubt....

have I seen that mark.

At first, I had tried to dismiss it as a simple birthmark, but it kept gnawing at my mind. My years of experience with the spiritual had taught me that nothing was truly ordinary. Every sign, every mole, every freckle, every mark could mean something.

I was sure those three stars on her spine meant something and it could also determine Lyla's @ww.n~~o~~v~~e~~l@Worm.cO@

fate.

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I cursed under my breath, rising from my c That boy Xander from the first day I met him, gave me an odd feeling, the aura he had carried with him was darker even in all the years spent as a worshipper of the Moon Goddess I've never seen someone with such, aura.

I had tried to ignore it, to brush it off as me being a super protective carer. But after meeting his father, Mr Dupree, the unease had crept back, more intense than before. His aura was much darker than his son.

I regretted ever letting Lyla tutor Xander. What had started as a simple arrangement had spiralled into something else and had changed my Lyla totally from the little sweet girl, she used to be into something else.

How could I have been so blind? Lyla had struggled with many issues growing up, constantly battling the scars of abandonment at an age where the love and support of a parent to a child was paramount. She had always craved love, attention anything that made her feel like she

mattered.

I knew all too well that she would do anything to be with someone who showed her even the slightest kindness or affection. Xander must have known that.

I couldn't sit idly by any longer. I needed answers, even if they were only fragments of the truth. Maybe, it was time I took up my role in Lyla's life. I've been weighed by guilt from the past, so much that it has stopped me from doing all the things I loved to do.

I was done.

I gathered my things and closed my office before walking up to the front counter where Sarah, one of the café's baristas was wiping down the espresso machine.

"I'm heading out, Sarah, I informed with a smile. "But I don't know how long I'll be, if I'm not back. by evening, go ahead and close up for the day, okay?"

Sarah looked up, obviously surprised. "Is everything okay, Mrs Grayson? Is it Lyla? Is she alright? I've been meaning to ask why she hasn't come in for a few days now but I didn't want to pry"

"Lyla is fine!" I said with a tight smile. "And everything is fine, just some personal business I need to take care of. I'm sorry for leaving you by yourself."

"It's fine!" she shook her head, flashing me a dimpled smile. "Matt will be here soon to start his shift, there'll be more than enough hands. Besides, today seems like a slow day."

"I

"I thought so too. See you later, I waved at her already moving to the door.

When I came out of the cafe, I exhaled deeply, my mind was already racing just thinking of my next move. There was only one place. I could go to for the kind of answers I needed. It was

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56 Shadows of doubt...

place I hadn't visited in years.

It was the place that taught me everything I know and shaped me into the person I became and just when I was to attain leadership, I ruined it all... although, I wouldn't consider the outcome as a mistake, because it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

I arrived at th

the Golden Gates Pack south of Blue Ridge. It's been 20 years since I left and as soon as I stepped onto the familiar ground, a wave of Nostalgia hit me. The air smelt different – different from the human world, different from Blue Ridge.

I didn't have time for that. The walk to the Moon Temple was a long one, but I didn't mind. It gave me time to clear my head, to prepare myself for what I might learn. The temple was nestled deep in the woods, away from the bustle of the rest of the Pack.

That was where I had grown up and dedicated my life until 20 years ago.

I made my way through the winding paths, the trees growing denser around me, filling me with a strange sense of dread and hope. By the time I reached the temple gates, the sun was beginning. to dip below the horizon, casting long shadows across the forest floor.

The stone structure stood tall and imposing, its ancient walls covered in moss and ivy. I hesitated only for a moment before pushing open the heavy wooden doors.

I walked through the compound, ignoring the young apprentice girls staring at me with curiosity. Although they've never seen me, it's always easy to spot a fellow worshipper. I had made my mark visible to avoid being stopped.

I walked through the compound, straight to the praying hall. Inside, the praying hall was dimly lit by candles, the air was heavy with the scent of incense. Shelves lined the wall, filled with an eclectic array of crystals, herbs and ancient-looking tomes.

My footsteps echoed through the empty space as I made my way toward the inner sanctum, where I knew I would find her.

I found the old woman kneeling before an altar, her back straight despite her age, her hands clasped in silent prayer. My eyes moistened with tears as the image of me, kneeling next to her by this time every evening 20 years ago came to my mind.

It was after our evening prayer on that faithful day that I had shattered her heart. I wondered if she had forgiven me.

I waited respectfully until she finished her devotions. Just as she finished, I stepped forward, trying to keep my voice steady.

"Mother!" I called quietly, bowing my head slightly in greeting. (w)w@.(n)o~~v~~eLWor~~m~~.cOm

Priestess Liora or Mother as we fondly called her, turned, her sharp eyes, though dimmed with age, were gleaming in the candlelight as she stared at me her mouth wide open.

"Mi..." she stuttered, rising from her praying position as she wobbled towards me, not before taking one of the candlesticks.

56 Shadows of doubt...

pointing the candlelight at my face.

"Miriam?" she stuttered with a shaky voice. "My child, is that really you?"