

The Alpha God's Luna by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 18

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ASGARD

"They want me to attend?" Fenrir couldn't believe what he was hearing.

"Yes," Tyr chuckled, motioning to the servants to remove the garments they wouldn't be using tonight.

It was rare for Fenrir to be invited to big events and, although he was concerned, he couldn't contain the excitement that was building inside him against his will.

For the first time ever, the stars aligned for him. The invitation came right when he needed it. The young wolf wanted to be present at the feast because there was someone he wanted to see.

He had seen her a few times during the past weeks, but the starry maiden was always surrounded by other people and, on top of that, awarded him with such a glare every time she noticed him that he avoided approaching her to let her cool off after their first encounter.

He liked it, though. He liked the way her cheeks flushed each time their eyes locked. He loved getting any kind of reaction from her because, after observing her for a while from a distance, he could tell that no other man aroused such emotions in her.

Fenrir craved her attention, and he was going to get it tonight.

"Rir, you are not going to cause trouble, are you?" Tyr asked him, and he froze for a second.

"When have I ever caused trouble?" He wondered, adjusting his golden pauldrons, and received a reproachful gaze from his mentor. Which wasn't fair because he wasn't the troublemaker. His father – yes, his brother – definitely, his sister – probably, but Fenrir's life goal prevented him from having fun. All he wanted was for the ruler of Asgard to allow his siblings to live with him here and for that, he was ready to lay low as long as it took.

"I will pay my respects to the guests, eat, and leave," he promised and noticed Tyr sighing, a flicker of sadness in his eyes.

"I'm sorry," the god of war and justice could never pretend he didn't see how his pupil was treated. "Just a bit longer-" He stopped talking because this was something he had promised Fenrir many times, but there had been no changes for centuries. "Just a little longer" wasn't cutting it anymore.

"Never mind," Fenrir nudged his shoulder in a friendly manner, "let's drink mead and have fun tonight while we can."

"After you!" Tyr grinned, happy to enjoy this rare opportunity together.

The lights blinded him when he entered the feasting hall in the Asgardian palace. The white columns with the carvings of Asgard's rich history were gleaming brighter than usual today. The best golden thread tapestries were on display and Fenrir noted that there were more beautifully crafted statues of gods and goddesses here today than usual.

The golden hall didn't inspire awe in Fenrir anymore. It was a place that demanded reverence and respect, a place where he had to kneel and not say a word until he was spoken to.

He knew very well that he was the strongest warrior in the room, yet in some sense, he was the weakest. He couldn't embrace the same lifestyle as everyone else.

One day it would be worth it, though. When Jor and Hel could join him in this hall to eat, drink, and dance together. When he would be able to see his sister and not hide his brother. He was working towards that day, and it would take a lot for it to happen.

"Astraea, I think my dragonflies love you," Freyja's giggle and the sound of her name made him snap his head in its direction.

He hadn't seen the little goddess of stars for days, and finally, she was here right before his eyes. She was seated at the main table, of course. He hadn't expected anything less. The men and women around her looked mesmerised by her presence, while Freyja laughed at something she said with the warmest glint in her eyes. At the same time, Vidar, that silent prick, stood right

behind Astraea with his hands clasped behind his back and his eyes not leaving her slender frame.

A growl escaped Fenrir against his will, and everyone grew still, acknowledging his arrival.

Hostile... Their looks were so hostile, but he focused on the All-Father, and bowed only to Odin, feigning as much respect in the gesture as possible.

"There he is!" The ruler of Asgard chuckled and gestured for him to come closer. The brother and sister from the other realm sat beside him, both Helios and Selene looking at him with interest.

"Is this the wolf you were talking about?" the Moon Goddess asked.

"Yes, and trust me when I tell you he is the biggest one you'll ever see," Odin boasted, his golden eye patch glinting.

"That's unlikely," Selene smiled gently. "Wolves are my creatures. They obey the Moon Cycle, and their souls are connected to me. I think I have seen everything there is to see in this kind."

"But our Fenrir is different," someone huffed a laugh, a sound that was more derisive than amused. To which the young wolf only lifted his head higher, not giving any other reaction and getting a quick glance of approval from Tyr, who had already left him to join the main deities at their table.

He was on his own now.

"Now you've piqued my interest," Selene's smile was gentle, her pale blue hair glowing slightly. "What is the difference from my wolves? I thought you said he could shift the same way."

"Shift, yes, but I never said it was the same way!" Odin smirked at his guest. "It's a shame you are missing my brother. You would have liked him. He has this... desire to experiment and, well, let's say his children are something else!"

More laughter erupted, and for the first time, Fenrir allowed himself to glance at Astraea. Her luscious lips didn't curl; in fact, she looked around with disapproval in her gaze, which lifted Fenrir's spirits almost instantly.

“Would you like to see our Fenrir shift?” Frigg, Odin’s wife, asked the young star goddess, and something told him the latter wasn’t pleased with it.

“No,” she shook her head firmly. “As my mother mentioned, wolf shifting is not new to us. Let’s allow Fenrir to have a peaceful night.”

“But he would love to!” Vidar interjected, his scornful gaze meeting Fenrir’s. “It’s his honour to entertain the esteemed guests. Isn’t it?”

All eyes were on the young wolf again. For the first time, he couldn’t stand it. He couldn’t take the insult and swallow it. Something was different today, and he couldn’t explain it.

His lips curled into a provocative smile, “If the starry maiden wishes me to entertain her, it would indeed be my honour and pleasure to do so. I would gladly indulge her every desire all night long.”

Astraea’s lips parted at the audacity of his remark, but she quickly pressed them back together, pretending to ignore the insolent remark.

“How dare you?” Vidar scowled, ready to start a fight, but a simple touch of Freyja’s hand on his arm calmed him.

“Please,” the goddess of fertility offered a dazzling smile, “Let’s not ruin our guests’ impression of us. We were doing so well, until now.”

Vidar turned his attention back to Astraea, who was busy playing with one of the glowing dragonflies instead, and Fenrir wanted to smack his head against the wall. Why was he cast in an unflattering light around her, when he usually sat quietly in the corner at every celebration?

“Excuse my brother,” Heimdall, another son of Odin, spoke. “He doesn’t know how to behave. Or have fun.”

Fenrir took the chance to escape and bowed to Odin, wishing to leave to get some mead when he was stopped.

“But our wolf is indeed like no one else,” Heimdall didn’t want to let it go. “How about a little demonstration?”

Fenrir glared at him, knowing that it wasn’t actually a request. The other deities observed him with rabid interest, as if their lives depended on it.

“Sure,” he agreed dryly, knowing that whatever it was, he wouldn’t like it.

“Allow me to demonstrate how strong our friend here is!” Heimdall continued.

They were family, but he still referred to him as a friend.

They weren’t friends. Not even close.

Heim produced what looked like a thick golden chain out of thin air and Fenrir wanted to snarl at him, knowing where this was going.

“This again?” He arched his brow at Odin’s son and noticed how quiet everyone around them became.

“I call her Dromi!” Heimdall taunted, wriggling his brows. “It’s twice as strong as the last one. I bet you cannot break this one.”

Fenrir frowned. He hated how eagerly they wanted to see him chained by this new creation. The last time they offered the same entertainment, he didn’t think of it much when he agreed, but when he saw how carefully they’d wrapped the chain to bind him and how disappointed they looked when he broke it, doubt crept into his mind.

His eyes met with Astraea’s again, but she didn’t say a word.

“Come on! One time for the guests!” Heimdall insisted and Odin gave a curt nod, meaning it was in his best interest not to refuse.

“Fine,” he agreed, but first called a girl with a tray with mead in golden goblets and emptied two in almost one go.

Heimdall was already wrapping the chain around his feet, and Fenrir felt the magic in it trying to subdue him. It was unpleasant, as if a substantial furry spider crawled over his skin, trying to get inside.

He couldn’t wield magic himself, but his tolerance was a different question. The young wolf offered his hands with a sneer on his face, knowing that it would never hold him.

In the worst-case scenario, the bead bracelet was still on him.

However, he wanted to test something first. Slowly and patiently, he looked into the eyes of each Asgardian present, noting every visible hint of emotions.

Some were good at hiding their feelings or were simply not involved in this. But some, like Freyja, couldn't handle it. She may have been one of the most powerful deities, but she turned away the moment he stared at her, pretending to say something to Astraea instead.

The little goddess of stars did not react, the corners of her lips tilted downward slightly. Fenrir wanted to believe that his ordeal was the reason for it.

He also tried to look at Tyr, but his mentor was busy talking to Helios, who wasn't too impressed by "the show."

"So?" Heimdall asked eagerly. "Can you break it?"

His smile seemed friendly, but it never reached his eyes, making Fenrir wary. What was the point of all this? To laugh at him? To put him in his place? To prove that he would never truly belong here?

He decided to give them a little show and feigned struggling with the chain he could easily break, observing everyone around him.

"Come on!" Someone drunk cheered him on, while others looked tense. Odin drank from his cup, his jaw tight the whole time, not taking his healthy eye from him.

It was time to be done with the farce.

A growl emerged from Fenrir's chest, echoing through the high ivory walls of the hall. Flexing his muscles as if it required some effort, he glanced at Astraea, who rolled her eyes discreetly, almost making him lose his serious expression and smirk.

He freed his feet first, and only then did the gods started cheering him on as if they meant it. He was their source of entertainment tonight, after all, so he slowly walked around, demonstrating his chained wrists, the magical metal still trying to subdue him.

He stopped before the star goddess and noticed how tight her lips were pressed together. Fenrir wanted to believe this was because she didn't like how he was treated, but he knew better than to hope.

However, he didn't find it in himself to move any further, so he raised his hands and pulled the chain apart, breaking it into several pieces that fell to his feet.

The gods cheered him on as if they were friends; someone brought him another goblet of divine mead. In this chaos, only Astraea did not display any emotions. She didn't flinch or blink, staying like a statue and staring at him while he refused to leave his spot.

The world around them spun and moved, but the two of them remained the same.

Fenrir bowed and stretched his hand to her.

"Astraea, the goddess of stars, the lady of justice, will you do me the honour of a dance?" he asked in the most confident tone.

All sounds died down and Fenrir knew he was overstepping.

"Know your place, mutt!" Vidar gritted his teeth, ready to charge at him, but Freyja touched his arm again.

"Don't forget we have guests," she purred with a sweet smile. "This is for Astraea to decide."

"Like she'd ever agree to dance with a dog!" Someone said, not bothering to lower his voice.

Fenrir grew tired of standing with his head bowed and hand held out, waiting for acceptance. He was about to retract it and laugh it off, saying it was a joke, when a delicate palm touched his skin, sending all kinds of emotions rippling through his body.

Astraea circled the table and was now so close to him that he was caught completely off guard.

"Don't tell me you've changed your mind, Fenrir," she said and he loved the sound of his name on her lips.

She was wearing a beautiful shimmering white gown, almost translucent and flowing like the Milky Way when she moved. The gauzy material was light and

airy, hugging her curves perfectly and trailing behind her in a mesmerising cascade of shimmering fabric.

Fenrir found himself in an awkward position because he had never actually danced with another goddess, quickly realising that he had set himself up for failure. Women who usually graced him with their company were of lower ranks, thus his dancing skills were lacking.

The music played divine sounds surrounding them as he noticed her lips curling.

“Don’t tell me you didn’t expect this,” she tilted her head, enjoying herself already.

“I didn’t,” he admitted, and she giggled discreetly.

“Well, now the joke is on you,” Astraea let out a laugh and that sound made him forget about everything.

His free hand found her waist, pulling her closer as he towered over her. Astraea sighed, biting her lip, but didn’t try to distance herself from him, although it was what he expected. His powerful steps were matched with her graceful ones as they started to move together in perfect harmony.

He led her around the hall. The rhythm of their movements swelled with each passing moment, filling the hall with palpable tension as everyone watched the unlikely couple.

Some were in awe, some intrigued and some furious.

Fenrir did not care. He enjoyed the closeness to Astraea and their dance. He enjoyed it when their eyes found each other after a twirl or a spin. He enjoyed her scent and when her silky hair touched his exposed skin.

The final chords of the melody sounded and he managed to pull her close again, both breathing heavily but not because they were tired.

“Thank you, my goddess,” he murmured so that only she could hear him.

Astraea looked at him and the whole universe was locked in her gaze, stirring something inside him. Something new.

“They shouldn’t have done it,” she whispered, stunning him as his lips parted in shock. The world had faded away, leaving them alone and drawing them closer.

“Astraea, can I ask you to join me for a moment,” Selene’s voice brought them out of their daze.

“Of course, Mother,” she forced herself to take her hands off of his chest, making the world seem cold and empty again. “Excuse me,” she apologised, her voice barely a whisper as her cheeks gained that delicious pink tint again.

“No worries,” Fenrir smiled at her, bowing respectfully. “I will find you again.”

He could swear her breathing hitched, but she hid this fact and rushed to join her mother and uncle beside Odin.

A smug smile spread over Fenrir’s face. This night had turned out to be not so bad after all.

“What the hell are you doing?” Tyr grabbed his arm and practically dragged him out of the feasting hall. The wolf did not resist, chuckling as they went.

“What? This is what feasts are for, are they not?” he clapped his mentor’s back with his hand.

“Fenrir!” Tyr hissed, shoving him into a dark corner behind one of the biggest columns. “What were you thinking?”

“I danced with a beautiful woman right now. I think it’s pretty clear what I was thinking.”

“Is this a joke to you?” His mentor ran his hand over his face. “Why did you have to pick her out of everyone?”

“Because I like her,” Fenrir answered honestly. “Why else? And what is the problem here exactly?”

“The problem?” Tyr scowled at him. “The problem, Fenrir, is that you don’t understand why our guests are here and why we accept them with open arms.”

“Of course, I don’t. No one, including you, have bothered explaining anything to me!” Fenrir retorted.

“More than half of their pantheon is dead. They need help, and so do we,” Tyr sighed. “Everyone came to the conclusion that we should join forces.”

“So?” Fenrir quivered his brow up. “Astraea and I will gladly join forces.”

“And that is exactly the problem!” Tyr grunted. “Astraea was brought here to marry another. They are about to be betrothed to one another.”

That news didn’t sit right with Fenrir.

“Who?” he growled, feeling like he knew the answer already.

“It doesn’t matter!” the god of war insisted, trying to contain the wolf’s anger.

“Who?” Fenrir’s growth shook the walls around them, and his mentor decided to give up.

“You don’t want to know,” Tyr confessed.