

The Alpha God's Luna by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 42

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ASGARD

"Who are you?" Fenrir snarled as the realisation hit him hard.

There was only one woman for him, and now someone violated his b*ody by pretending to be her. A sinking feeling settled in the pit of his stomach. He felt so dirty and... used.

"Who sent you?" He demanded loudly, fire rising inside him. That fire burned away the pain in his exhausted b*ody and dulled down the shame. The flames wanted to punish those who dared to deceive him in the most horrible way, whispering words of destruction in his ears.

"It's time for me to go, my love." The woman who looked identical to Astraea now tried to crawl away from him. Her foot got trapped in the grip of Gleipnir, stalling her and allowing Fenrir to grasp and pull her closer.

"Who. The F*ck. Are. You?!" He growled, his fury causing the cave walls to stagger.

"I am— Astr—" He was about to snap her neck when three valkyries descended from the sky in the blink of an eye, pointing their sharp swords at him.

"Release her!" One of them ordered him, and Fenrir contemplated snapping the fake Astraea's neck just to spite them. They deserved it. They deserved so much more than that.

"No one dares to put her face on!" He raised his voice again, and one sword pierced his skin enough for blood to trickle down his c*hest. It was meant to intimidate him but had the opposite effect, simply making him angry.

"Enough!" Kara was the last one to appear, her golden wings blinding him temporarily as she landed, creating a cloud of dust around her. "Take your swords away!"

Her sisters didn't rush to obey the order at first, but meeting her withering glare, they quickly changed their minds.

"Now you, Fenrir," the Valkyrie said calmly. "Release the girl."

"Why should I?" He chuckled darkly, and she shuddered slightly, seeing him in such a state. "I am a criminal, remember? If I kill her, at least I would feel like I committed some sort of crime for the abundance of punishment I am getting."

"She simply follows orders like the rest of us," Kara informed him, and although he hoped she would shed some light on what was happening, she did no such thing.

And yet... he knew she was right. It was unlikely that the woman came here on her own, considering how heavily he was guarded. He hated her for what she did to him, and yet... he knew very well that not everyone in Asgard was a god. Hence, not everyone in Asgard had a choice. The stars were shimmering in the sky above his head, and he looked at them, remembering that the real Astraea was there somewhere. What would she think of him now?

Disgusted, he pushed the woman away, and she quickly crawled to hide behind the Valkyries in a rush, trembling like a leaf in the strong wind.

"If this repeats, the next one will die instantly, and her blood will be on your hands!" He warned the women, and Kara nodded curtly. She was the last one to leave, and before she did, she turned to have a look at him one more time. It looked like she wanted to say something but did not find the right words.

Tyr kept his word, and Vidar did not visit him anymore. Day after day was passing, and Fenrir refused to eat or drink because trusting anyone around him was impossible now.

Neither his brother nor his father came to free him, and hope was fading away each day. When it started raining, no one cared that he was bound under the open sky. His body, which usually radiated heat, was now trembling from the cold. He had a hard time remembering what day it was, and it seemed that the sky wouldn't stop crying along with his heart and soul.

Fenrir was now sure that being a god was a curse. However miserable and drained he was, this wouldn't kill him. He would endure an eternity of suffering

and despair within the confines of this cave. Forgotten by the Asgardians, he couldn't forget what they had done to him.

His mind was slipping away, and only one thing kept him going.

The desire for the clouds to disappear and to see the stars again. The closest he could get to her in his stone cage

He didn't even know if she would want him now. He wasn't the man she fell in love with anymore. What would she tell if she knew? Would she ever want him again?

Or maybe she knew already? After all, what was the purpose of such atrocities if not to use them against him? Maybe Astraea already hated him like the rest of the gods.

Maybe they were done, and she was preparing for a wedding with her mate...

He drifted in and out of consciousness, trying to stay alert but too weak to do so. Gleipnir was slowly s*ucking the life out of him.

"Fenrir!" Warm hands cupped his face, and for a moment, he leaned into them, a familiar scent enveloping him. Gods knew he needed that warmth after such a long time alone in the darkness. "What did they do to you?"

Her voice was so sweet that he wanted to soak in that sound until... the memories rushed back, and his whole b*ody shivered with fear.

"Get away from me!" He shook the hands off him.

Astraea's eyes widened as she looked at him, tears stinging her eyes. She was more beautiful than ever today in a flowing white dress with silver vines entwining around her slender frame. She had a white cloak on to cover her glowing hair, and a gleaming star necklace adorned her neck.

Fenrir closed his eyes, muttering, "It's not her. It's not her. It can't be her."

It pained her to see him like this. She hadn't seen him for months, and he looked at her as if she was a stranger now.

"Fenrir, please!" She begged him, brushing her palm over his cheek. "It's me. I came to free you. Tell me what to do."

“Lies,” he mumbled quietly under his breath. “Not real—”

“How do I take this off?” Astraea tried to remove the chain, noticing how deep it went into his skin, leaving red lines. Tears rolled up in her eyes as she searched for a flaw or a loophole but found nothing.

“Go away,” Fenrir stuttered. “Not- her-”

“It’s me!” Astraea insisted, taking his face into her hands again. She simply couldn’t take no for an answer. Not like that. “Fenrir, I love you! I came for you! It’s me! I swear it’s me! I am yours, and you are mine, remember? Those words bound us forever. Stronger than any chain!”

He finally looked at her, allowing himself to doubt that she was an illusion for the first time. Then his eyes lowered to her hands on the chains, and he saw his bead bracelet still on her wrist.

“It’s you—” he breathed out, his heart clenching painfully.

She nodded and continued to check the chains, searching for a way to free him.

“We will go far away,” she promised him, trying to hold back a sob that threatened to escape her. “To a place where no one will find us! We’ll go to the human realm if we have to!”

“Will you— drop everything for me?” He was watching her in disbelief.

“Of course I will,” Astraea wiped the tears off her cheeks. “I came back here just for you. I am not leaving without you! Not if I can help it!”

“Did you— marry him?”

“No, Fenrir, I didn’t. Damn it, you have scars all over you. What have they done?”

“You didn’t marry him!” A smile curled his lips despite the situation they were in. At this moment in time, nothing mattered to him more than Astraea being there for him and avoiding the marriage everyone else tried to force on her. “My mother took me back to our realm at first and only agreed to let me return here when I promised to go through with the marriage and mating bond. So, I

had to pretend,” she explained hastily, “but I was searching for you. Fenrir, no one was saying a word until that one valkyrie—”

She didn’t get to finish her words when a sharp blade poked out of her abdomen.

Shock coursed through Fenrir’s veins, rendering him momentarily numb as their eyes met in the understanding of what happened. He tried to scream, but no sound came out. His b*ody jerked against the restraints in an attempt to intervene and save her, but Gleipnir held him well.

Astraea grasped his shoulder for support as the sword disappeared again. Blood gushed over both of them as she leaned into him, and he held her with his free hand.

“Pretend?” Vidar gritted his teeth, glaring at the red stain growing over the once-white dress of his fated mate. A woman who dared to be in love with another.

He couldn’t let them humiliate him like that. There and now, Vidar knew what kind of God he was. She made him that.

The God of Vengeance.

“You think you can humiliate Asgard like that?” he shouted as Valkyries started to appear, trying to separate him from Astraea and Fenrir. “You think you can humiliate me?!”

“You are prohibited from entering this cave!” Kara bared her sword, ready to fight the deity who was much stronger than her. “Leave!”

The air in the cave thickened as a portal opened, and Tyr ran out of it, shocked by the scene unfolding before his eyes.

“Vidar!” He shouted, charging towards him and taking the sword away from Odin’s son.

Another portal opened just a few seconds later, and Freyja walked out of it together with Selene. The Moon Goddess searched for her daughter and gasped in disbelief when she finally found her, colour draining from her beautiful face.

Fenrir did not care if they all killed each other. Life was slipping away from the woman he loved, and he couldn't help her. All he cared about was slipping away before his eyes.

His knees buckled, and he lowered her to the ground. For some reason, the chains loosened enough to allow him that.

"No!" His voice was hoarse as he watched Astraea trying to say something, too. "No, my love. You cannot leave me. Not like this. Not ever. Please—"

For the first time in his adult life, tears burned his eyes, rolling down his cheeks.

Astraea's gentle fingers brushed them away as she tried to smile at him.

Vidar pierced her with a divine weapon. Life was draining away from her, and yet she was the one who tried to console him.

"If we ever were to be married—" she whispered so that he was the only one who could hear her, "I'd want it to be in the Glowing Garden. This is where I fell in love with you, Fenrir—"

"Then this is where I will always be waiting for you. Do you hear me, Astraea? I'll wait for you in the Glowing Garden." He k*issed her forehead, unable to stop the tears when he felt her hand slipping down his cheek. He caught it and k*issed it too, k*issed her palm and every finger. As if it could help him to hold her here for longer...

He tried to take her in – the hair, the face, the way she looked at him, the way her lips curved, yet at the same time, he knew too well none of this would ever be nearly enough if she wouldn't be with him.

She was watching him with glassy eyes when he leaned down to claim her lips one last time. The bittersweet feeling only brought him more pain.

"I am not losing you—" All the hurt was slowly turning into something else. Something dark and hollow.

"Don't give up—" Astraea's lips barely moved when she squeezed his palm as strongly as she could. "Fight— Be free—"

“What have you done?” Selene screamed at the two gods, looking at the bloodied sword in Tyr’s hand. “How could you? Why?!”

“It was an accident!” Vidar replied dryly, and the Moon Goddess created a sphere of energy on her hand, ready to erase them both from existence. “No one was supposed to be here. We thought it was an intruder! We realised that it was Astraea when it was too late.”

Fenrir heard the lie, but he couldn’t bring himself to react. Not with dying Astraea in his arms.

However, Vidar didn’t stay calm for long, grasping his heart just a few moments later and falling to the ground. “What is this?” His face was contorted with pain.

“The mate bond!” Selene replied coldly. “When she is in pain, you feel it, remember?”

Vidar groaned on the ground, but he wasn’t the main concern for anyone now.

“What did you think that I would give my daughter away without precautions? You two are connected by a thread woven by Fates themselves.”

“Let’s calm down,” Freyja touched Selene’s shoulder. “We can fix this.”

“My daughter is dying!” The goddess pushed her friend away. “Stabbed by a divine weapon! How do you imagine fixing that? It’s impossible!”

“It is possible,” Freyja replied confidently but slightly quieter than usual. “I saw Astraea in the future. More than once.”

Selene wasn’t listening, her attention on her daughter in the arms of that... animal.

“I can’t imagine what kind of power is needed to save her,” she mumbled, biting her lips. “She is the only one who potentially has that kind of divine power, but now it is disappearing before our eyes. She can’t save herself because her power had never reached its prime. There is no deity who can—”

“We can save her but—” Freyja stumbled on her words. “But not her divine power. Just her soul.”

Selene looked at the other woman in horror, but Freyja went on.

“I am sorry. I cannot think of anything better, but the gift I gave her protects her soul and connects her to the human realm—”

“No!” Selene protested, “It’s the same as losing her if not worse!”

“Is it, though? The Asgardian goddess took her hand and squeezed it lightly. “This is a way to keep her. She can live a thousand lives with that dragonfly mark. You can give her one of your wolves to protect her and—”

“How long will something like this last?” Selene knitted her brows together.

“Hopefully, long enough for us to find a solution on how to bring her back,” Freyja turned to look at the starry goddess still in Fenrir’s embrace. “After all, we all need Astraea—”

“You will not touch her again!” Fenrir growled as they neared them.

“It’s not for you to decide!” Vidar spoke, words laced with venom. “She is my—”

Just then, Fenrir felt tingling on his fingertips and noticed Astraea’s skin glowing. Little glimmering specs were forming on her skin and floating into the air.

“No,” he whispered, clenching her tighter. “Don’t go!”

Tiny particles of brilliance slipped through his fingers until she turned into a cascade of shimmering stardust that danced, flying into the sky and leaving him alone.

He thought he was alone for so long. Gods, he had no idea what real loneliness was until this moment. His body and soul were aching. Everything around turned into a blur.

Fenrir woke up when it was dark, and only a few glittering specs on his hands were a reminder of what had happened here today.

That and the bracelet in his hand. The bracelet that still had her blood on it.

Fenrir looked at it, sensing something he didn’t expect. A new bead.

One of the empty ones was glowing as if it had a star concealed inside.

Astraea's power.

Anguish consumed him. They destroyed him. Killed her. And now they all were probably feasting together in the Golden Halls. He couldn't bear the thought of any of them getting away with their sins. He wanted to take just as much from them as they have taken from him.

Not thinking twice, Fenrir crushed the glowing bead between his fingers along with the rest of them, summoning all the powers he had been carefully collecting over centuries.

One after one, his bones were breaking as he chose to shift into the form that was now closer to his heart. They wanted a monster? He would give them the worst monster they had ever seen.

Gleipnir tried to sustain him, but the bigger he got, the thinner the chain became. And when hell flames kindled all over his fur, the binding fell to his feet.

The exit of the cave was too small for him, so he broke it, finally getting the freedom he wanted so much just a day ago. Now he wanted other things. Things he wouldn't get.

"Brother!" Joran greeted him at the foot of the mountain, with his father walking out of the darkness. "We've been waiting for you!"

"I am so sorry for what happened to you, son," Loki was about to touch his firefur, but withdrew his hand at the last moment. "We tried to get to you so many times. Luckily, you got out. Now—the time has come to start Ragnarok."

SOLACE

Astrea took her time on the way to her Teacher, and he also waited patiently for her to arrive.

She stopped just a few feet away from him, expecting an instruction on what to do next.

Joran quickly closed the distance between them, placing his hands on her shoulders. "Dragonfly," he smiled, and for a moment, she thought it was genuine. "I couldn't kill him," she admitted bluntly and he clenched his lips. It

wasn't that he expected her to, but this wasn't the first words he wanted to hear from her after so long.

"That's okay. We talked about this before. You know what it means."

She nodded because, of course, she knew. She did not fulfil her end of the deal, and now she had to stay with him for as long as he wished.

Astrea lowered her eyes, trying to hide her disappointment and anger. That man played her as if she was a child. "Don't get sad," Joran chuckled. "It wouldn't be so bad. We are going home now."

He leaned down and planted a chaste k*iss on her forehead, taking her hand and leading her away to his car. "The city—" She wanted to tell him the lie she prepared, but he gestured for her to stop. "Retract!" Joran ordered the warriors and then informed her cheerfully, "Nikki will be happy to see you. She misses you everyday."

Astrea tried to smile, but it was so hard to fake it.

"We are leaving?" she asked.

"I don't know about you, but I don't find deserts amusing. That's not my kind of thing." They were already in the car when his phone rang, and he answered.

"Forrest," Jor greeted his colleague from the Southern Lycan Republic. Then after about a minute of listening, he added, "Fine. Sure. We'll pop by. Prepare my wings."

The car drove off, and Astrea couldn't help looking at all that sand in the window with a sense of longing she had never experienced before.

"What was that about?" she asked apathetically.

"Something came up in the Republic," her Teacher confessed.

"So, are you going there?"

"No, Astrea, we are going there. From now on, you will stay by my side at all times." Joran broke the news, and her heart sank.

That was new.

