

The Alpha God's Luna by Marissa Gilbert

Chapter 52

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Chapter 52. The East Has Arrived

A mixture of emotions coursed through Astrea. The Firstborn island was hardly a place she could call home after everything that was done to her, but she still grew up on it and knew pretty much everyone who lived there.

“What do you mean, destroyed?” Joran said through gritted teeth as Astrea’s eyes went back to the fire wolf on the horizon. Surely Fenrir wouldn’t – Some of them were just kids.

“It’s — b-burned to the ground,” Dominica stuttered. “Most of our best warriors were on missions. It was just me, a few guards, and the trainees. The battle was very short. In the end, they gave us a boat and took the kids on a different one.”

“What?” The Teacher clenched his phone so hard the expensive glass cracked, and he swore under his breath. “They burned down every building on the island,” Dominica went on. “We were lucky to survive. That wolf—”

“I’ll call you back later!” Joran snapped and hung up, turning back to face his Dragonfly. “Do you see what he did?’ His voice was filled with venom.

“Freed the kids you stole from their parents?” She raised a brow at him while crossing her arms over her chest. “They. Belong. To. Me.” He took a step with each claim, cornering her into a column. “Same as you.” The snake tattoo on her neck became tighter.

“Do you even realise that all people in your life right now are there only because this is what you do to them?” she growled, scratching at her throat. “You strangle us, suffocate us and keep us on a leash! Or in a silver pit! It depends on how lucky we are and your current mood!”

Joran pressed his lips tightly, both hands behind his back as he watched her struggle. So beautiful and so defiant.

“At least I have you,” he replied.

“Joran,” she scowled through the tears forming in her eyes, “ you don’t even have Bjorn!”

Something changed in his face. He barely showed it, but she knew she finally managed to hurt him back.

“Don’t come out until I say it’s safe,” Joran ordered. “You wish!” She snarled back, and the hold on her became tighter, causing her to fall to her knees in her fight for air “I mean it, Astrea! I didn’t protect you for so many years to lose everything now! Stay here where you are safe!”

The world around her began to fade into a blur, making the window she saw smaller and smaller with each passing second. Astrea scratched the marble floor with her elongated claws as her heart raced in a feeble attempt to fight the inevitable. Yet her body succumbed to the lack of air, a soft whimper leaving her lips before she collapsed to the ground and closed her eyes, her mind slipping into an unconscious state.

Joran sighed, knowing he had to urgently deal with his brother’s arrival. However, he couldn’t leave her like that, not on the ground, not after causing this state.

Everything was wrong, and he didn’t have time to fix it.

He carefully picked her up and walked to the settee next to the glass wall, carefully placing her there. Knowing her strength, she would be up soon, and he had to deal with everything before that.

Joran rushed to the Alpha Convocation office and found everyone already there, watching Fenrir marching through their city as if he owned it, proving all their modern defences to be useless against him.

The flames on his fur seemed to have a life of their own, moving and shifting with each step, painting the sky red. A display of power like no other.

Joran forgot when was the last time he saw his brother using that form. It had been ages.

Two helicopters flew close to him, their rotor blades melting before they could approach him, causing both to crash land. "Should we prepare the rockets?" Someone asked, with a note of hesitation in the voice. The hesitation they all felt now.

"Not in the city," Forrest commanded. "Maybe if we can lure – it outside."

"Do we know what it wants?" One of the Alphas wondered, and a heavy silence coated the room.

Joran knew. And so did Vidar. Forrest suspected, at the very least. He always knew more than he let others believe. "Do we know what it is?" One of the youngest Alphas voiced the question on everyone's minds.

"Could it be-" One of the oldest men looked at Joran. "One of the changed ones from the Avalanche Battle in the North?"

"You know the rumours. Everyone returned differently from there," someone added, and Vidar sent a warning glance to Joran. During that battle, Joran and Fenrir blessed thousands of warriors, giving them gifts and powers they shouldn't have possessed. Gods were not supposed to do that. Their actions could have had serious consequences according to the divine laws. There were reasons why gods did not bless everyone left and right.

Then again, Fenrir and Joran were never typical gods. "Why don't we ask him?" Forrest suggested all of a sudden, drawing everyone's attention to himself.

"Ask him?" Someone let out a nervous laugh. "Are you out of your mind?"

“I don’t see him attacking us,” Forrest commented, rubbing his chin and nodding at the screen. “Just look at him. He clearly can wipe the city away from the face of the earth if he wants, but instead, he only destroys vehicles that attack him, moving firmly but slowly. As if he gives people time to escape.”

“So, who is going to talk to him then? You?” An Alpha from the opposing party chuckled, making Forrest sneer.

“This is a task for those who want to represent the Southern Lycan republic as our High Chancellor, don’t you think? As far as I know, we already have two candidates for the role.”

Now, all eyes were on Joran and Vincent, causing them both to frown, knowing they got trapped but not sure yet what the game was. The move from Fenrir was too unexpected.

“I’ll do it,” Joran agreed hastily. No time could be wasted. Maybe he could talk some sense into Fenrir.

“I can do it myself,” Vidar insisted, unwilling to lose points.

“Why won’t you both do it?” Forrest suggested helpfully. “And I will go as well to mediate if necessary.”

The rest agreed with this decision eagerly, letting their most dangerous rivals risk their lives for the country while preparing the rest of the military in the background in case negotiations failed. The fire wolf was too close to the centre of Verum already.

“Your brother is nuts!” Vidar seethed as they walked outside, watching the panic unfold as people tried to flee. Fenrir took his time, although he had definitely already seen and recognised

them, but for some reason, he wanted to make a show of this.

Gods didn’t act that way for a reason. It could cost them. Meddling in the mortal realm could drain one’s divinity, and once the process started, it couldn’t be undone. Too many gods died because the repercussions of

their actions weakened them. However, it looked like Fenrir did not care about the price anymore. Something changed.

“And whose fault is that!” Joran rolled his eyes. “Have you thought of my deal?” The God of Vengeance asked flatly.

“I have.” Jor shrugged. “And now I want to hear if my brother has anything to offer me as well.”

That answer annoyed the other deity, and Joran felt better. It was annoying how confident Vidar was the whole time. Yes, he had his advantages, but they destroyed his beloved Asgard once and deserved respect for that alone.

“Really?” Vidar let out a dark chuckle after regaining composure. “He would never forgive you, and you know it. There is nothing you can do to earn his forgiveness. Even giving up Astrea wouldn’t help.”

“Then you have absolutely nothing to worry about, right?” the dragon retorted with a scoff.

Forrest caught up with them, and they had to stop talking.

“So, if things go wrong, can we count on you shifting into your flying form to deal with this for us?” the southerner whispered, adding, “The South needs you.”

“If I fight him here, there will be no South,” Joran informed him, furrowing his brows. People had no idea how devastating the consequences of a battle between the two brothers and Vidar could be.

They were lucky Fenrir simply entered the city and wasn’t actually attacking it. There was no time to evacuate anyone. If Fenrir really wanted to destroy Verum, it would take him minutes. If they engaged in a fight, it would be even more devastating, and the reunion of the Moonrise Kingdom would be postponed again.

“Just give him what he wants, then!” Forrest suggested, the muscles on his face tensing at the realisation there weren’t too many options. “And make him leave.”

Joran was about to reply when something gleamed high in the sky, making everyone snap their heads up. Golden wings flashed just for one second, and she was down on the ground the next, landing with a thud which shattered the ground and created a cloud of dust around her. A Valkyrie in golden armour stretched her wings as she proudly raised her chin. Things were becoming more and more serious.

A giant lycan in the third form walked from the shadows to join her, bigger than any royal they had ever seen and with no

visible signs of trouble to control himself. Followed by a white fox with red markings on its snowy fur right between its eyes. It was an unusual colour for the fox shifters, but the creature initially seemed the most harmless out of the three. Right until nine sharp elongated tails appeared behind his back, all ready to be used as weapons.

Finally, a young man in a brown leather jacket walked out with an axe relaxed against his shoulder, and his appearance made both deities uneasy.

“Who is this?” Forrest could feel that shift of power.

“My dear nephew,” Joran replied dryly, clenching his fists. Skoll’s arrival could definitely change today’s scenario, and he hadn’t even picked a side yet.

Fenrir didn’t let them wait long, and the giant wolf burst out in flames, a human walking out of the inferno in its stead, shocking the observers. Several news crews were already there, filming the events from different locations.

“Greetings!” Fenrir waved as he approached the three southerners, a confident smile playing on his lips. “I apologise we are late. Your invitation came months ago.”

“Invitation?” Forrest arched his brow questioningly while his colleagues were speechless at the audacity.

“Yes, Alpha Joran Nathair was very persistent, and we decided to give our collaboration with the South a chance. So, here we are to see what the Southern Lycan Republic is really about.” Fenrir’s little speech astonished pretty much everyone.

Vidar was the first one to speak.

“No,” he stated bluntly, not adding anything to it. “No?” Fenrir tilted his head. “Are you revoking the invitation?” “Of course not,” Forrest interjected. “Alpha Vincent has a sick sense of humour. Matters like this are for the Alpha Convocation to decide. And we will vote as soon as possible since you made it here. Of course, while that happens, you can consider yourselves our esteemed guests.”

“Very well,” Fenrir nodded respectfully, holding back a smirk. “I think we can give you three days to decide, and, in the meantime, we would like to ensure the children’s safety.”

“What children?” Joran asked through clenched teeth, knowing very well they were his firstborns.

“Ah, you know, on the way here, we got our location wrong and ended up on some island. It looked like a criminal organisation was running there, which abducted and enslaved children, making them believe they were there for a greater purpose.” Fenrir sighed heavily. “Like a cult. Of course, we couldn’t let it continue. After we – rescued them, it turned out that most were from the South. So, we would like them to reunite with their families. Most of them are teens and remember very well where they came from.”

“Well, we will certainly deal with this,” Joran stretched his arm to him. “Thanks for bringing them here.”

Fenrir shook his hand. Hard. And then pulled him closer without letting it go.

“I am glad we are on the same page with this. May I have your word that every child I brought will be reunited with their family and sent home?” A smirk curled onto the wolf’s lips.

He knew he had set his brother up for failure. The words given to the gods and by the gods were binding.

“I’ll see what I can do,” Joran tried to escape it. Losing his future firstborn warriors wasn’t in his plans. They were talking about a whole generation of trainees.

“I think you can do better than that.” Fenrir’s grin deepened as he pointed at the cameras by his eyes. What candidate for the highest position in the country wouldn’t agree to help the kids?

“I’ll do anything in my power to bring those kids back to their homes and loved ones,” Joran gave up, and his brother let go of his hand, satisfied with winning this round.

“Why don’t we go and talk in private?” Vidar understood the rules of the game.

“I like that you are all business,” Fenrir finally locked eyes with his nemesis, “but we are all tired after the long road. And also, there is someone I would like to see.”

“We can discuss it later,” Vidar insisted, anger rippling through each cell in this mortal body.

“No, we shall discuss it now because I want to see the ambassador you sent to the East. Astrea Sade. And I want to see her now.”

Joran knew he couldn’t say the words. He had to keep them apart for as long as possible.

He shot an angry gaze at Forrest, hoping he would take the lead.

“Oh, don’t look at me,” the southerner raised his arm defensively. “Astrea Sade is Alpha Nathair’s fiancée and – Alpha Lothgar’s mate. I am the last person to speak on her behalf.” Vidar was ready to explode. He didn’t care about this city. Not really. Fenrir could burn it for all he cared. He was about to announce that when Joran stopped him, standing in his way.

“Very well,” he said. “You can see her.”

“Today.” Fenrir pushed further. “I want to see and speak to her today.”

“Fine!” his brother exhaled and nodded. “I will escort you to her, but after you talk, we have to talk as well.”

“All of us!” Vidar interjected

“This would be my pleasure,” Fenrir scowled. “Lead the way.”

He gestured for his team to shift, and the next second, four humans followed him with their heads held high. The East had arrived

Joran was grim On the way to the penthouse, Joran was grim, and, ironically, they didn’t say a word to Fenrir. That was the hugest step back for him, and the last thing he wanted to see now would be Astrea running into his brother’s arms. Yet he was trapped by giving his word. Breaking it could make him powerless, and since Fenrir was here, they would see each other, anyway.

It changed nothing. Astrea belonged to him. It was his mark on her neck, and Fenrir couldn’t pressure him into removing it. And then there was Vidar...

The elevator door opened, and Joran walked out into the hall, strolling to where he left Astrea sleeping on the settee.

However, Astrea was not there The room, settee, however, was occupied.

Yep, Astrea is gone...