

His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 6

Terra

"No running in the hallway!" I called as my three rambunctious boys came barreling out of the exam room, amber eyes shining with mischief. They continued thundering down the clinic's narrow hall, dodging nurses and patients. I shot an apologetic look to the elderly couple exiting the room after them.

"Luke! Levi! Landon! Freeze, now!" My "mom voice" finally got their attention. They skidded to a stop, lowering their heads guiltily.

I fixed them with my best stern glare. "What have I told you about running wild in the clinic?"

"Sorry, Mom," Levi mumbled, scuffing his shoe. His brothers echoed apologies, unleashing their most pathetic puppy dog eyes. My resolve instantly crumbled.

With a sigh, I knelt and held out my arms. "C'mere munchkins." They tumbled into my embrace, tangling me in a mass of gangly limbs. Despite the chaos my spirited wolf cubs created, I cherished these noisy group hugs. Their boundless energy and affection filled my days with light.

"Let's head to daycare now, okay?" I said, smoothing down their unruly chestnut locks. They grumbled but allowed me to herd them down the hall. My little tornadoes would be Miss Lucy's handful for the next few hours.

After dropping off the rambunctious trio, I hurried to my small office to review the morning's stacked caseload. Five years after opening my own pediatric practice, the chaotic days still felt like a whirlwind, barely controlled chaos.

Collins poked his head in, holding two steaming mugs. "Thought you could use a pick-me-up," he said, offering me coffee.

I inhaled the rich aroma gratefully. "Have I told you lately that you're my hero?"

He chuckled, leaning against my desk. "Only every day since we met. But I never get tired of hearing it." His playful smile softened. "Seriously though, Terra, what you manage to handle is incredible. I'm so proud of you."

My heart swelled. Without Collins's steadfast support, I never could have juggled the demands of single motherhood and medical school. His encouragement gave me courage when the path seemed impossible. And now our two flourishing practices shared the expansive clinic we had built from the ground up together.

“Well, I certainly didn’t get here alone,” I said, grasping his hand. “Thank you for always being my rock, Collin.”

He lifted my hand to his lips for a gallant kiss. “Anytime. Now, ready to save more lives today, Super Doctor?”

Refueled by caffeine and his uplifting presence, I dove into the busy day ahead. Children with ear infections, rashes, fevers and more paraded through. No matter how exhausted I felt, seeing their precious smiles healed me. My unique supernatural instincts allowed me to connect on a deep level with young patients. Their boundless energy and innocence never failed to lift my spirits. This work was my true calling.

Between appointments, my phone buzzed with a message from Hale, the born werewolf who helped supply medications for my unique cases. He had become an invaluable insider to the local supernatural community.

Heard some wolf pack drama went down nearby. Might get an influx of patients. Let me know if you need any special supplies!

I quickly typed a thanks. Word had spread about my discretion treating paranormal youngsters. I was happy to provide a safe place for them to turn, remembering all too well what it was like having nowhere to go for care. If more cases came my way, we would manage somehow.

Later, as I reviewed files during my sparse lunch break, Collins wandered in with a takeout bag.

“Come on, time for a picnic,” he announced, tugging my hand. I started to protest until the aroma of juicy bacon cheeseburgers hit me. My stomach growled traitorously.

Collins just laughed. “That’s what I thought. Hospital cafeteria salad can wait.”

We escaped out the back door into the small courtyard bathed in golden autumn sunshine. The fresh air and nearby babbling fountain instantly revived me. Collins and I sat beneath a colorful maple, munching burgers and chatting lightly about our busy mornings. No one else was around, allowing me to relax and simply enjoy his calming company. Too often our hectic schedules kept us ships passing in the night. I cherished these quiet stolen moments together.

As we finished eating, Collins gave me a searching look. “So, any exciting Halloween plans with the boys coming up?”

I groaned dramatically. “Oh, it’s nonstop Ghostbusters and werewolf debates at home lately. Last night’s bedtime story argument got so heated I thought we’d never get them to sleep.”

Collins laughed. "They definitely have strong opinions. But they're lucky to have you keeping up with their endless energy." His expression softened. "You're an amazing mom, you know."

My chest swelled with gratitude. "Well, I certainly don't feel amazing when they're bouncing off the walls whining for more candy at 8pm. But thank you." I shook my head ruefully. "Parenting three supernaturally-charged little boys is definitely a new adventure every day."

"One you're conquering brilliantly." Collins pulled me in for a quick hug before standing and offering his hands to help me up. "Shall we get back to saving lives now, Super Doc?"

I let him pull me up, keeping his hands clasped in mine for a moment. "Only if you promise to take more breaks with me when things get chaotic."

His warm brown eyes crinkled at the corners. "You got it."

We reluctantly headed back inside to the packed afternoon ahead. Thankfully my eager nursing team kept things running smoothly even during the busiest rushes. I honestly didn't know how I'd manage without their competence and compassion. Especially Rose, my unflappable lead nurse who handled everything thrown her way with zen-like calm.

Late afternoon brought a surprise visit that stopped me short – Hale escorting in a very pregnant she-wolf whose drawn face and exhausted posture screamed of physical and emotional burdens. My heart went out to her immediately.

"Dr. Terra, this is Luna Ava from the local Shadow Creek pack," Hale explained quietly. "She needs a safe place for her delivery."

I grasped Ava's hands, giving what I hoped was a reassuring smile. "Of course. Let's get you settled in our best room for a full checkup."

Ava sagged with relief, blinking back tears. "Thank you. After everything that's happened, I wasn't sure..." She trailed off, chest heaving with the effort not to completely break down.

I squeezed her hands. "It's alright, you're safe now. Just focus on your breath." I shot Hale a questioning look.

"Ava recently lost her mate," he explained solemnly. "The pack was unwilling to support her through the remainder of her pregnancy and birth as a lone she-wolf. But she has nowhere else to go."

Rage flashed through me on Ava's behalf. I knew all too well how cruelly traditional pack politics could treat those considered outcasts. A pregnant, unmated Luna would be shown no mercy.

"Don't worry about any of that now," I soothed Ava, gently leading her down the hall to an exam room. "We're going to take excellent care of you and this little one. That's all that matters."

After confirming her vitals were stable, I settled Ava in a comfortable private room I kept ready for supernatural cases like hers. Her shoulders noticeably unburdened once the door closed, sealing her off from the outside world and its harsh judgements.

"Just rest here. You're under my protection now, sister wolf," I said. "No one can hurt you."

Fresh tears spilled down Ava's cheeks. "May the Goddess bless you," she whispered.

I squeezed her shoulder before slipping out, emotions churning. Her story hit too close to my own past. I couldn't save myself from such cruelty back then, but I could damn well ensure this she-wolf had support when she needed it most.

Over the next few days, my staff and I took turns closely monitoring Ava's care. She had some complications that required my supernatural expertise, but I kept her spirits up throughout the challenges.

Helping her deliver a healthy baby girl was one of my proudest moments yet. Her triumphant first cuddles with little Ember felt like hope renewed. No matter what she had endured, the future could still be filled with joy.

I held onto that thought as an unwelcome ghost from my past returned a week later, threatening the peaceful life I had finally built.

It began as just another hectic Monday morning in the clinic – scheduling appointments, reviewing lab results, chatting with my staff. Then the entrance bell chimed, signaling new arrivals to the front desk. I thought nothing of it until raised voices echoed down the hall.

"What do you mean you can't just let us see the doctor now? This is urgent pack please!"

I froze. Even after six years, I would know that commanding tone anywhere. Nathan. Here? Impossible.

Why is he?

Before the panic strangling me could fully register, heavy footsteps rapidly approached my office door. Too late to run or hide.

Is he coming in?

I hurriedly composed my features, trying to still my racing heart.

The footsteps halted right outside. Then a gentle knock, so achingly familiar.

“Terra? I know you’re in there.” Nathan’s voice, so long unheard, now just beyond the flimsy wooden door. “I need your help.”

No. I squeezed my eyes shut, willing him to vanish, to return to the past where he belonged. But his presence remained firm and undeniable as ever.

After all what he did? What did he need me for m

With no choice but to face whatever fresh chaos he brought, I straightened my shoulders and pulled open the door.

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Nathan

“More wine, darling?” Jade parted, refilling my glass to the brim before i red liquid, avoid ing her expectant gaze.

respond I took a long swallow of the bit

Around us, the bustling pack solstice celebration faded into background noise. Ever the dutiful Alpha pair, Jade and I h this lavish anual gathering at our estate on the new moo n. An excuse for unserious political talk and overindulgent fea

Jade certainly embraced the bacchanal vibes, Hitting around in a skimpy dress, encoura ging overconsumption.

I can’t get what’s wrong with her? Even with our mate bond she doesn’t live me.

Meanwhile I put in obligatory appearances for the pack sake licfore retreating outside fo r fresh air, seeking respite from suffocating cronols and perfumed air clouding my senses.

After six years mated, maintaining even a thin veneer of marital contentment felt exhaus ting.

Where once I had admired Jade's vivacious beauty and outgoing nature, now her constant demands for attention grated

helves Taw.

She pouted over my lack of affection, able to comprehend how our once fiery bond had cooled to lifeless embers.

But perhaps she understood better than I realized. Lately my Bela, Derek, had been giving me loaded, pitying looks when he thought I wasn't paying attention. And Jade often disappeared at gatherings, returning with mussed hair and clothes

I knew the signs. Seen it play out with other mated Alpha pairs over the years, Passion fading to habit then to thinly veiled resentment. Seeking excitement outside the relationship, but acknowledging the rot at the core of my own marriage remained more than I could bear.

So I carried on playing the role of adoring mate in public, while privately longing for solitude. With my Lather ailing, the pack needed to see Jade and I as a unified front leading them into the future. Outward stability mattered more than inner

peace.

Perhaps in another life, Jade could have been the right match it fate had not twisted us together too soon. Despite our intoxicating mate bond, we proved sadly misaligned under the surface.

While I took ruling the pack seriously, Jade cared only for the luxurious privileges and attention her role granted. She had not even wanted children, showing no maternal instincts.

A sharp peal of her laughter drew my somber gaze back to the present. Jade was whispering closely with Dmitri, a visiting Alpha renowned for his roving eye.

His hand rested possessively on her lower back. She practically melted under his attention, more alive than I had seen her

ages

I should have felt outraged at their blatant disrespect. Instead their intimacy barely registered. Let Dmitri entertain her if he could. Their tryst left the hollowness in my chest untouched.

Dawn was a smudge on the horizon before the last drunken guests finally staggered home, I wanted only to collapse into bed as Jade chattered about the party's highlights. But

she had other desires, tearing open my shirt and kissing aggressively. Ever after spending her time with the bastard Alpha, she still come to me Like some whore.

I gently pushed her away. "Not tonight, Jade. I'm too spent.

Jade's pretty features contorted in annoyance. "You're always too spent lately, she hissed. "If I didn't know better, I'd think

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Chapter 7

you no longer found me attractive

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I forced a soothing tone. "You know that's not true. We're just tired from hosting, Sleep, and we'll reconnect tomorrow"

With a dramatic huff, Jade rolled away from me. I lay rigidly awake as her breaths slowed, too wired from the evening's tense interactions to find rest.

How much longer could I carry on like this- an empty vessel playing a part, detached from my own life? But what other

choice did I have?

Tradition bound my steps irrevocably to the mate chosen by the bond, Jade and I

other down.

shackled together, dragging each.

Morning brought no relief. I sat numbly through breakfast, Jade's anger crystallizing into an icy remove. She declined joining me to visit my ailing father, claiming other plans. Likely rendezvousing again with Dmitri. I barely reacted anymore.

The fresh air outside revived me as I hiked through the forest to my parents cottage. Mother embraced me warmly before returning to Father's bedside. He had been declining the past few months, his usual hearty vigor diminished. Now he rarely stirred from bed, skin waxy and pallid. My visits gave him small bursts of energy, but never for long-

I clasped his frail hand as I settled into the bedside chair. "How are you feeling today, Dad"

Father's eyes blinked open slowly, a hint of his old smile crossing his face. "Well enough for the moment. But this blasted sickness continues resisting all magical and modern remedies. I fear my spirit is losing its will to fight."

Panic gripped my heart, but I kept my tone light. No giving up yet, Dad. We'll find a way to get you well again."

He patted my hand weakly. "Son, you must prepare yourself. Mytime grows short."

"Don't say that!" My composure slipped. "You're the strongest wolf I know. Just hang on a little longer and-"

"Hush now. It's alright." Father's eyes shone with love and acceptance. "My only regret is not seeing the pack secured under your stable leadership and guidance before I go. But you will rise to lead magnificently. Of that I have no doubt."

I nodded numbly, unable to form words around the painful lump in my throat. The wise, solid presence I had relied on to guide me through challenges big and small would leave a gaping void when he was gone. The future without him looked. impossibly bleak.

After tea with Mother, I pressed a fervent goodbye kiss to Father's forehead, wishing hopelessly I could transfer some of my vitality into his weakened body. But such magic was not meant for me. Helpless to alter the inevitable, I retreated home heavy of heart.

The estate felt cloying and oppressive in my despondency. I had no desire to cross paths with Jade after last night's frigid exchange

Sparing only enough time to grab supplies, I escaped into my wolf form and ran for miles through the shadowy forest trails. Out here surrounded by wildness, I could pretend the burdens of leadership and a disintegrating marriage didn't exist.

I paused to lap up cool water from a burbling stream, chest heaving. As I raised my dripping muzzle, a hauntingly familiar scent hit me full force the rich earthiness of Ancient oak trees. The clearing.

My paws carried me forward before my mind could resist. Soon enough, there it was the sheltered circle of towering oaks where Terra and I played as children.

Where we later escaped together from the pressures of pack politics and coming of age, to simply be ourselves.

I shifted back to human form, each step through the waist-high grass snaring me in memories. Terra's bright laughter echoing around the verdant hollow. Her small hand

clutched in mine. Moonlight glinting off her ginger waves as we lay gazing up at the stars, content in each other's quiet company.

The tall grass where we once frolicked now lay flattened in the center, holding the imprint of two bodies entwined...

I jerked away from the aching recollections. Being here was a mistake. Terra was my past, and nothing could change that now. I turned to leave the ghosts of simpler times behind once more.

A glint of silver caught my eye near the clearing's edge a delicate bracelet tangled amid the foliage. I gently extracted it, breath catching. A gift I had given Terra, once. Emeralds set in intricate floral shapes matched her eyes perfectly.

She had loved it, rarely removing the piece. Yet here it lay, abandoned and forgotten, much like the girl herself. I curled my fist around the delicate links, irrationally afraid they would disintegrate in my grasp.

Seeing this small part of her again brought everything rushing back our shared youth, her sweet nature and luminous spirit, the unbreakable bond I had thought we shared. No one had ever known me so wholly. Losing her left a void no amount of time could fill.

Perhaps in staying true to tradition and duty, I had sacrificed the only thing that gave my life meaning. The only soul who might have made this role bearable.

A crushing wave of regret forced me to my knees in the crushed grass. By choosing Jade over the unbreakable love Terra and, I shared. I had destroyed us both. I had no one to blame but myself.

I remained there long after the moon rose high overhead, clutching the delicate bracelet, mourning all I had so carelessly tossed away. If only fate could be altered. But the past could not be undone. Terra was gone from me forever now. All I could do was move forward and endure.

I fastened the small silver circlet around my wrist, vowing to keep Terra's memory close to my heart, even if we could never again be close in life. With a final grief-stricken howl to the impassive moon, I turned again from the remnants of joy long Just

Over the days following my torturous visit to our special place, I withdrew further into myself, taking no comfort in Jade's presence. Her demanding outbursts bare penetrated my gloom. My focus stayed singular—finding a way to cure my before his spirit left this world. I could not, would not lose him too.

father

But our traditional medicine of the healers continued failing to reverse his wasting decline. Even renowned healers from allied packs could not diagnose what ailed him.

As the harsh winter took hold, Father worsened, rarely rousing even when I read to him from his favorite worn books.

His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 8

Nathan

One bleak evening, after a futile session trying to coax him to eat, I emerged red-rimmed and bleak only to find Jade waiting, flawlessly groomed as always. Her tapping foot signaled bad news brew

Sure enough, she fixed me with a glare. "Going to explain where you've been all day? Not that you would even notice my absence."

I sighed deeply, much too exhausted for another fight. "The healer was here for hours again. Father is...not improving. I need to be there for him now."

Jade rolled her eyes. "Always dramatic excuses. You know I need you here representing the pack, not wasting time at your father's sickbed."

Her callousness ignited my simmering temper. "He's your pack Alpha still, however convenient you find it to forget," I hissed through clenched teeth. "Show some respect"

"Or you'll what?" Jade challenged, stepping closer. Sickly sweet perfume cloyed the air between us. "Face it, Nathan. You need me to play doting mate, keep this pack behind you. Where would you be otherwise?"

The ugly truth in her words doused my anger as swiftly as it flared. I had no rejoinder. However twisted, I did need her by my side to maintain stability. Jade knew my hopeless position and shamelessly exploited it.

Without answering, I turned and retreated to my locked office, her taunting laughter chasing me down the corridor, Collapsing into the leather chair. I massaged my throbbing temples futilely. No good options awaited me. Perhaps it was best to simply accept my fate.

Sunlight streamed into the quiet cottage bedroom, casting Father's face in a deceptively healthy glow. But I knew the tranquil scene was an illusion.

Beneath the blankets, his body wasted away more each day, no magical or modern remedies able to halt the mysterious decline.

I clasped his bony hand, wishing desperately I could transfer some of my own vitality into his weakening form. But such power remained beyond my grasp.

“How are you feeling today, Dad?” I asked, keeping my tone light despite the dread congealing inside me. Losing him seemed unthinkable.

Father’s chest rose with the effort of speech. “Well enough...for now. But we both know...my time grows short.”

“Don’t say that, I protested, though we both knew it was true. “Elder Vera will keep searching for better treatments, Just hang on a little longer.”

He gave my hand a feeble pat, eyes crinkling with bittersweet fondness. “You always were...an optimist, son. But there are some battles...not meant to be won.” His voice rasped into silence, exhaustion claiming him again.

I bent my head as hot tears pricked my eyes, struggling to contain the emotions churning within me—grief, rage, helpless frustration Father had been my anchor through every crisis. Without his wisdom to guide me, the future seemed impossibly bleak.

The gentle touch of Elder Vera’s wrinkled hand on my shoulder pulled me back. The white-haired she-wolf had helped raise me since my mother passed years ago. Now she cared for Father tirelessly, her healing magic and compassion the only comfort easing his restless nights.

“Come sit with me awhile, dear,” Vera murmured. With an encouraging pat, she led me from the room to spare Father the disturbance.

I sank into a plush chair by the fireplace, weariness sinking into my bones. Vera pressed a steaming mug into my hands. before settling across from me.

“Drink up now. It’s laryngitis leaf and chamomile, for your nerves

Despite everything, her fussy attention brought a hint of smile to my face. Some things never changed, thank the goddess. I sipped the fragrant tea as Vera regarded me critically, her keen gaze missing nothing.

“You’re taking on too much, child, she remarked, though her tone held more compassion than rebuke. “Between your father’s illness and ruling alone, it’s no wonder your spirit is weary”

I sighed, staring into the dancing flames. “You’re right. But what choice do I have? The pack relies on my strength. I must put their needs first.”

Vera clicked her tongue. “No need to be the fearless hero all the time. Share your burdens. That’s what your mate is for.”

I tensed at the mention of Jade, keeping my eyes carefully lowered. After Father, Vera was the last person I wanted knowing just how fractured my marriage had become. She had never approved of my choice in Luna, making no secret of her distaste for Jade. Learning the full truth would only deepen her disappointment in me.

Jade is quite busy now with her own duties,” I hedged. Besides, Father shouldn’t see me faltering. It would only distress him further

Vera studied me for a long moment, sage eyes seeing past my feeble excuses. But she simply patted my hand reassuringly, “Very well, dear. Just remember—even the strongest warriors need rest.

I left an hour later after Vera ensured Father was comfortable, the weight of all my unspoken troubles sitting heavy in my chest. She was right that I faced more strain than I could bear alone much longer. But opening up remained unthinkable.

Jade had made it abundantly clear she considered my preoccupation with Father’s illness an annoyance distracting me from attending to her. The deep companionship I once thought we shared was little more than illusion. Now the yawning gulf between us felt unbridgeable.

But I had no time to dwell on personal unhappiness. Urgent Alpha duties kept me cloistered in tedious meetings until late in the evening.

My shoulders knotted tighter each time another self-important advisor droned on about matters barely disguising their own thirst for power. I understood now why Father preferred the quiet solitude of his cottage whenever possible.

After the last tedious formality concluded, I wanted only to collapse into bed and forget the day’s troubles for a few precious hours.

But stepping into the silent master suite, I found the expansive space empty. Jade was nowhere to be seen, the fine bed linens smooth and undisturbed. So she had found an excuse not to come home yet again

Bone-deep exhaustion kept me from mustering much reaction. I simply changed and crawled into the too-large bed alone, yearning for the comforting presence fate in its cruelty denied me. She was so close, my true mate, yet worlds apart now. Our time had passed, our paths permanently diverged. Only in dreams could I still find solace in Terra’s loving arms.

I woke late the next morning to an empty estate, Jade clearly not having bothered to return at all last night. Bitter resignation replaced the jealousy that might once have ignited me. Let her keep her secrets and entanglements.

Our pretenses could not conceal the lifeless bond between us. I focused only on maintaining the outward fiction of 'devotion, for the pack's sake..

After a quick breakfast I raced up the forested mountain paths to Father's cottage, anxious to see if the night brought any

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improvement. My heart sank at the weary sorrow in Elder Vera's eyes when she greeted me. One glance told me Father now hovered at the precipice between here and the next realm.

Still he fought to offer me a frail smile, eyes lightin he rasped fondly. "My greatest...legacy.

up as I clasped his bony hand between both of mine. "There's...my boy."

Emotion clogged my throat, preventing any response. I could only nod, trying to convey with my grip all the love and gratitude brimming inside me, knowing our time left was cruelly brief.

Father's labored breaths grew progressively more ragged as we sat in silence. Against my prayers, our goodbye loomed.

I promise to find you the Best healer to treat you. Wherever she is.

His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 9

When evening brought no change. I reluctantly departed after Vera promised to alert me immediately if needed

My doubts about ruling alone without Father's wisdom threatened to overwhelm me as I hiked down the dim trail, but I forced them roughly aside. Self-pity helped nothing. I needed to be strong now for the pack's sake.

Nearing the estate's sprawling grounds. I hesitated at the crossroads before turning toward the Alpha's private residence on the far grounds rather than the main house.

The with space had always felt more mausoleum than home to me, empty and echoing. Now the cold marble walls would only magnify my desolation exponentially.

But stepping through the cozy residence's carved oaken door brought no relief Jade's cloying floral perfume permeated the front rooms. She had dearly stopped here earlier.
Y

Yet never bothered coming to see me or Father I slammed my fist against the wall, barely noticing the throbbing pain. Her callous disregard should not still have power to sting me, but it cut deeply nonetheless.

For long hours I paced restlessly as darkness fell outside, struede churning within me. The wise course was divorcing myself fully from emotions where Jade was concerned. Our marriage mattered only for show. But even spent sparks can flare to life unexpectedly, given fuel. And betrayal by a mate ignited primal fury few could overcome.

mantel clock chiming midnight jolted me from my brooding stupor Hours had slipped by somehow, and still no word from Vera on Father's condition. Surely no news was hopeful news! But dread twisted my gut. I needed to see for myself

Pausing only to grab a lantern, I slipped into the moonlit forest, following the winding uphill trail. But I had barely reached. the halfway point when hurried footsteps approaching stopped me short. For a panicked moment I feared Jade discovering I was gone, even though I scored myself for the concern.

The tall figure hurrying around the bend was no delicate Laina, however. Derek's imposing silhouette miqved swiftly under the pale light. I tensed. No mere social call would bring my Beta out so late. His grave expression confirmed something ill brewed.

"Alpha Derek panted, skidding to a halt before me. "Forgive the intrusion. But there is something sensitive, you must

know"

My hands clenched at my sides, bracing for the blow to fall. "What happened?

Derek's jaw worked, clearly conflicted. But finally he squared his shoulders. "It is Jade, Alpha. She did not journey to the Oracle's commune today as claimed. She met with the visiting Shadow Mountain envoy. Dmitr"

Red rage instantly flooded my vision. Jade sneaking off was hardly new. But openly consorting with a known rake from a rival pack while neglecting her duties Unforgivable

"Where?" I but out.

Derek's eyes were full of regret. "The Silver Forest cottage. I followed her myself, uncertain of her intent. They are still

there

The gilded line palace where I had once, foolishly, hoped to build a happy life with my new bride. Now nothing but a den of lies. My boiling fury propelled me into motion before conscious thought could intervene.

"Post guards around the perimeter, I ordered Derek brusquely over my shoulder. "No one leaves until I get there"

I shafted mid-stride, paws tearing through the underbrush far swifter than feet. Within minutes the gabled rooftop of the

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Chapter 9

ornate cottage rose into view through the trees, candles flickering invitingly in the windows.

Deceitful inance hiding tawdry secrets. Snarling, I shifted back outside the unlocked front door, too incensed to announce myself civilly.

I stormed through to the sitting room first, finding it empty. Lacy undergarments draped across the was no friendly visit. A thump and giggling emanating down the hall pulled me toward the bedroom with every step.

+80%

made it clear this

te, rage building

I threw open the door with enough force to make it ricochet off the paneled wall. The intertwined couple on the bed leapt apart, but there was no disguising what I had interrupted. I fixed Jade with an icy stare as she fumbled to pull a sheet over her bare skin, watching the color drain from her face.

"N-Nathan! I can explain-" she stammered. As if anything could explain her wanton betrayal.

"Explain?" I repeated cuttingly. "I believe this scene speaks for itself. Although by all means, entertain me with how you will somehow justify your deceit."

Jade's mouth opened and closed wordlessly like a landed trout. Her mussed hair and smudged rouge painted a damning picture of debauchery.

Meanwhile the cretin who had coaxed her astray attempted slinking from the tangled bedding, no doubt hoping I would overlook his part while eviscerating my wayward mate. Idiot.

In one swift motion I seized Dmitri by the throat and slammed him back against the oak headboard, baring my teeth as he gasped for breath.

"Give me one reason not to tear your traitorous heart out right now," I snarled into his scarlet face. His panicked wheezing hardly soothed my murderous intent.

Jade found her voice again, now edged by desperation. "Nathan, stop! Can't we discuss this rationally?"

I laughed harshly without releasing my grip on her whimpering lover. "Discuss? I believe we are far past pleasant conversation."

"Please!" she tried again. "Dmitri offered me things missing from our union. Surely you understand a wolf must follow their True desires."

Understand? Her deluded belief in my complacency only enflamed me further. With a guttural snarl I flung Dmitri aside to crumple gasping against the wall. Let him watch what came of poaching another's mate.

Jade's eyes widened with animal fear as I stalked closer. The traitorous wretch scrabbled back against the headboard, sheet clutched to her heaving chest, as if flimsy fabric could shield her now.

"Nathan, think of the pack, she pleaded desperately. "This scandal..."

"You dare lecture me of the pack?" I thundered. "You lost any right to that concern when you spread your legs for an outsider!"

Jade flinched. Mustering the last of her composure, she rose on trembling legs, chin lifted in cool defiance. "What happens between mates is no concern of yours now, Alpha. I renounce our bond. It decays from neglect. My path lies with Dmitri."

Her haughty words snapped the last thread of reason holding back my fury. She thought to abandon me and her sacred vows so lightly? Before she could blink I seized her slender throat in an iron grip, squeezing just shy of crushing her delicate windpipe as she clawed at my hand. Behind me Dmitri shouted garbled protests.

You miserable serpent, I hissed, her bulging eyes now leveled with mine. "You believe you can simply slither off into the arms of another without consequences?"

Jade choked out desperate pleas for mercy. But the girl who once professed to love me was gone. This groveling stranger meant nothing. With a guttural shout I flung her aside to land in a sobbing heap of silk and tangled limbs beside her dazed lover. Let them comfort each other, if they could find any scrap of courage between them.

I towered over the quivering wretches, hands clenched and shaking with the urge to tear. But I would not sully myself further by touching these traitors. The pack had lost one. I had been deemed savage and unhinged when it needed strong guidance.

both limb from limb. But no.

It could not afford to. With effort I leashed my wild fury, focusing on each harsh breath until the haze of violence receded. Jade and her sniveling whelp were unworthy of even my rage. But they would both learn the steep price that came with crossing me.

When I could trust my voice not to shake with temper, I pinned them beneath a frigid stare. "Get out. You are henceforth exiled on pain of death."

"Nathan, be reasonable!" Jade tried one final time, tears tracking through her smudged face powder.

"It is Alpha to you, faithless wretch," I snarled. "You are dead to this pack. Now flee before I change my mind about letting you leave breathing."

Sputtering apologies and useless promises, the disgraced pair scrambled to dress and gather a few belongings before fleeing into the night like whipped curs. I watched their retreat with grim satisfaction. Let the frigid forest claim them.

Only once the enviable silence settled around the opulent cottage did I sag back against the wall, the furious energy sustaining me draining away. Despite the bitter vindication at having the truth revealed at last, agony clawed raw and hollow in my chest. However strained, a mate bond broken could never cease haunting you.

I braced for the fresh burden of donning the strong Alpha mask yet again after this visceral betrayal. But before resuming that tiresome role, I needed time to grieve what was lost between us. To mourn the steady erosion of trust, compassion, and joy until naught remained between two souls once so entwined.

Slumping onto the steps outside, I dropped my head into my hands and wept, giving voice to the grief and yearning I had for so long choked down. All my bitter tears could not wash away the memories we had made together in this place. But perhaps they could cleanse my spirit enough to someday find peace, and maybe even love, once again. The moon's light would guide me if I let it. For now, I simply had to endure the darkness.

A twig snapping nearby startled me from my sorrow. I hastily dashed the dampness from my face, steeling myself for the intruder. But no threat emerged from the laurel bushes bordering the cottage yard. Only Derek's broad familiar silhouette filled the entryway, eyeing me with grave concern.

"The traitors have fled," he informed me gruffly. "Shall we pursue?"

I shook my head wearily. "Let them run. Whether fate or the harsh weather reaps them, they are no longer our concern."

Derek appraised me silently for a long moment before nodding. "A wide choice, Alpha. There has been enough ugliness tonight. He hesitated, then added gently, "What she did...it was a poor reflection on her alone. No one who knows your heart is swayed."

I managed the ghost of a smile at his gruff sincerity. In the blizzard of chaos stirred up tonight, Derek proved yet again the sturdy mast holding me steady against the storms. Perhaps with him at my side, I could still lead our pack justly. And someday emerge whole again on the other side of this pain.

My dear friend grasped my shoulder firmly, bolstering me with his silent solidarity.

I don't need her anymore, and her betrayal and rejection doesn't cut deep. It's just I feel hurt for choosing The goddess Mate over my lifetime friend and love. My Terra.

His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 10

Nathan

"How is he today?" I asked softly, resting a hand on Elder Vera's slumped shoulder.

She shook her head wearily, face etched deep with lines of worry and grief. "1 spirit dims further each time he wakes.

er continues burning unchecked. His

I swallowed thickly, nodding. After months battling this mysterious wasting sickness, Father had finally taken a sharp turn last night, his stubborn vitality flagging. Now we raced against time to save him before the traditional remedies proved useless.

But desperation made my next request no less distasteful. "Vera, please give us the room. I must speak privately with my father.

Her expression clouded with concern. But she patted my hand in acquiescence before slipping away to grant us privacy. Father's rheumy eyes blinked open at her departure, wandering until they settled unsteadily on me. I settled gingerly on the bedside chair and clasped his limp hand in both of mine.

“Father, I’m sorry to disturb your rest,” I began gently. “But there’s something we must discuss.”

With effort, he shifted slightly against the pillows, searching my face intently. “What is it, my son?” His once-booming voice now barely stirred the air, leached away by illness. But I could still detect the courage and wisdom etched into every fading syllable.

I took a deep breath, praying he would not take offense to what I proposed. ‘I fear your condition is beyond the healers power now. But there may be other remedies we have not explored. In the human world.’

Father’s eyes flashed, a hint of his old fire reigniting. “You suggest...consorting with those unbalanced creatures, devoid of magic or pack bonds?” He shook his head firmly, or attempted to. I will not abandon tradition...at the end.”

Panic clawed up my throat. He had always stubbornly rejected what he termed “human nonsense like modern medicine. But watching him waste away left little choice now.

“They have sciences we do not, I pressed urgently. “Methods that may restore your health when ours fail. We have to try. Father!

I expected more resistance, or at least a stern warning not to disgrace my lineage. But Father only sighed, a lifetime of vigilance seeming to slough off his weakened frame

“You were always the curious one, eager to understand the difference... The ghost of a smile crossed his face before fading again. “Perhaps an open mind bears wisdom at times. Very well, my son. We shall try things your way, just this once.”

Profound relief slackened my rigid shoulders. Bless the moon goddess, he would not block this path that might offer salvation. I squeezed his frail hand gently

“Thank you, Father. I swear I will find their best healers and bring them here. You’ll be on your feet in no time!”

He indulged my optimistic bravado with a wan smile. We both knew time was not on our side. But forged opportunities remained, however slim. And for now, fragile hope shone brighter than grim reality’s shadows.

I bid Father farewell with a fervent promise to return swiftly. Then went in search of Derek, finding him directing construction of Father’s ceremonial memorial site a woefully premature task. He took one look at my expression and ordered the other workers away.

“What did he say?” Derek demanded before I could speak, tone betraying his expectation of refusal even now,

A fierce grin broke across my face. "He agreed, my friend. We're to find a human healer capable of treating him"

Derek started, stunned. He approved using...modern methods? Never thought I'd see the day" He shook his head in wonder. But urgency soon darkened his features once more.

"We've no time to lose then. I'll dispatch couriers and researchers immediately to identify candidates." He clasped my shoulder. "Take heart, Alpha. We'll find someone to save him."

I clapped his hand gratefully. Derek never faltered, even when hope dwindled to a mere the charge, we would scour the land as needed until a cure was secured. Failure was inconceivable.

flicker. With him leading

While Derek's team sought out skilled human doctors, I spent every possible moment at Father's bedside, reading to him or simply sitting in silent company. The windows' cheerful sunlight seemed cruelly indifferent to our suffering. But I maintained an upbeat front regardless.

On the fifth day, Derek burst into the sickroom with barely a knock, eyes alight. "Alpha! We have words from several prospective healers."

Pulse quickening. I followed him out to the hall where we could confer freely. He waved a thick sheaf of notes. "Most declined assisting, skeptical they could help without full medical details. But seven expressed potential willingness, pending an examination."

My knees nearly buckled in relief. Only seven receptive prospects, yet it felt like an embarrassment of riches after vainly combing every arcane magical remedy. I clapped Derek's broad back. "Seven options is progress! Well done. What do we know of them so far?"

We pored over the abbreviated bios Derek's team had compiled. Three candidates immediately stood out thanks to their prestigious credentials and experience with rare illnesses. The others had less renown but still solid qualifications.

It was a place to begin, at least. Better odds than we'd had mere days ago. Cautious optimism took root as I grasped Derek's arm. "Send word we will pay their travel costs and generously compensate for their time. I want to meet the three most promising ones here within a fortnight"

Derek's grin mirrored my renewed hope. "Consider it done!"

The next weeks crawled by in agonizing monotony as we awaited the doctors' arrival. Father drifted in and out of mercifully painless sleep, his breathing increasingly labored. I sat vigil late into each night, fearing every faint wheeze or pause lasting too long signaled the end. But always he rallied just enough to greet the new day, my prayers sustained a while longer.

At last, after days of anxious anticipation, Derek informed me the first prospective healer had just arrived by private air and awaited my study. I practically sprinted down the corridor, skidding to a stop just shy of the carved mahogany doors to collect myself. This was our first true chance at salvation. I must make a steady, serious impression

Squaring my shoulders, I stepped inside. The brown-haired man in a pristine white coat rose politely from the leather armchair, extending his hand. "Doctor Elias Rhodes, at your service. I understand you have a rather unique medical case?"

We shook briefly. His grip was pleasantly firm. "Thank you for coming, Doctor. Please have a seat

Over the next hour, I carefully described Father's symptoms, only alluding generally to the supernatural elements at play. Dr. Rhodes listened attentively, asking intelligent questions now and then. Cautious optimism rose in me as we conversed. Perhaps this man held the answers we so desperately sought.

Afterwards, I escorted him to Father's room. Propped up weakly on pillows, his cheeks looked especially hollow under the sunlight filtering through curtained windows. But he still met my gaze steadily as I made introductions.

Dr. Rhodes's competent and considerate bedside manner quickly won over even Father's inherent skepticism. "Modern medicine...has come far it seems... Father noted approvingly after the examination. The first spark of hope in weeks glimmered in his sunken eyes.

In his study. Dr. Rhodes spread open a thick folder, pointing out intriguing charts and test results. Based on all your father's symptoms, I have several theories on a treatment plan," he explained. "With your permission, I'd like to begin targeted interventions right away."

At last, a concrete path forward rather than blind fumbling in the dark! After months of bleak helplessness, this doctor's bold confidence felt like a fresh breeze dispersing storm clouds. I authorized him immediately to commence whatever treatments he saw fit. Failure was not an option.

The next two weeks brought a cascade of exotic tests, machines, fluids, and other baffling therapies. Dr. Rhodes coordinated the efforts with quiet efficiency, adjusting his theories based on Father's varied reactions. I tried not to hover anxiously, occupying myself with pack affairs while leaving the healing work to the expert.

But each evening I watched Father closely for any signs of improvement. At first his strength seemed bolstered by the doctor's attention and influx of nutrients. He sat up unaided again, able to take short walks around the room. Talk of recovery grew cautiously optimistic.

Until the tide turned unexpectedly yet again. No matter what solutions Dr. Rhodes devised, Father's fevers raged on as his body wasted away further. The doctor's confidence visibly dimmed as remedies continued failing.

On an unseasonably mild evening nearly a month since his arrival, I finally worked up the nerve to pose the question haunting me. "How long before we know if your treatments are if they will work?"

Dr. Rhodes removed his spectacles with a weary sigh, the gesture saying enough. "You've allowed me extensive time and license, which I appreciate, he began diplomatically. "But if we haven't seen meaningful improvement yet..."

He didn't need to finish. The miserable truth sat like a stone in my gut. Father's remaining time was mercilessly short. Dr. Rhodes had given his all, but a cure lay beyond his abilities. Or perhaps no cure existed, magical or scientific. We had only granted a few extra weeks together before the inevitable end. Time I now deeply cherish.

I thanked the doctor sincerely for his tireless efforts before seeing him off the next morning. Then braced myself to gently explain to Father that the end was near, and we should now simply savor what days remained.

But even the stoic leader, he accepted the news with tranquil resignation. "Do not despair, my son. My spirit was ready...only the flesh lingered. But our weeks together were a gift. Now you must look ahead....for the pack's sake."

I clutched his frail hand, unable to imagine going on alone. But also knowing he was right. With Father's guidance, I had been molded into a strong Alpha. His lessons must give me courage to reign justly after he is gone. Ancestors willing. I would prove worthy of his legacy.

The next two visiting doctors met similar disappointment. Try as they might with increasingly creative measures, none could stave off Father's steady decline.

As the weeks dragged on, preserving his fragile life became my singular obsession. I scarcely left his bedside except when Derek forced me to attend to critical pack matters.

By the time the seventh and final prospective healer arrived, my hopes had dwindled to the last guttering candle's flame.

But this doctor's impressive resume kept me from dismissing the effort entirely. Perhaps she might recognize something all the others overlooked. Every moment we had together mattered

My study doors opened to reveal a petite woman with ginger waves not unlike Terra's. But Dr. Amara's eyes were piercingly sharp compared to Terra's soft dreamy green. She radiated confidence and keen intelligence.

"A pleasure to meet you, Alpha. I understand your father's case has proven quite the inscrutable enigma. Her clipped tone echoed her no-nonsense demeanor.

I smiled tiredly. "You could say that. Our healers are baffled, unfortunately. But your insights are most welcome."

We discussed Father's symptoms thoroughly, but when I moved to escort her to his room, she held up a slim hand. "Let me review my notes for a moment first. I prefer seeing patients with fresh eyes"

Her rigorous methods inspired hope this doctor might succeed where others failed. I did my best to temper irrational expectations, prepared for likely disappointment. But some deep instinct pushed me to keep faith a little longer.

After an hour sequestered in my study. Dr. Amara finally indicated readiness to attempt diagnosing Father. I led her to his chamber, watching anxiously as she conducted her examination. Father regarded her quizzically but allowed her thorough prodding and explorations without objection.

Finally she stepped back, nodding thoughtfully to herself. "A very curious case indeed. But I may have some ideas. Allow me tonight to consult my resources, and I shall inform you tomorrow if I feel I may be of assistance."

Mystified but optimistic, I thanked the doctor and bid her good evening after Derek showed her to prepared guest quarters. For the first time in ages, restful sleep found me that night. The stars seemed aligned once more.

The next morning I awaited Dr. Amara's arrival with barely contained impatience. When at last she entered my study, I searched her inscrutable face for signs of success or defeat. Her expression gave away nothing.

Setting aside what appeared to be a thick folder, she folded her hands neatly atop the desk, "Based on close examination of your father's symptoms, I believe I recognize certain patterns that will allow me to formulate an effective treatment plan

It was the most wonderful, unbelievable sentence I had heard in recent memory. I stared, scarcely daring to hope. "You you, believe you can help him?" I stammered.

"I did know the symptoms but there's my friend who is a specialist in this field. But she is really busy and doesn't have time. She's all booked up for the till the end of the year. So I'll be better if you go to her." She suggested.

"Okay, can you send her location?" I suddenly asked, not wanting to spend a minute here.

I smiled just to have a little patience, dad. I'll get you treated.