

# Luna Forsaken

## Chapter 3 Dagger Behind The Smile

Arya

By late morning, Marcel Rainhorn arrived with a convoy that didn't belong here. His security split out first, scanning the yard like they were mapping how to take it if they had to.

Then Marcel stepped out, calm as a man walking into a place he;d already decided was his.

Gloves on. Because of course.

His gaze swept the place once, bored already.

Then it landed on me.

He dismissed me in a single look like I didn't matter enough to register twice..

I stepped forward anyway. "Alpha Marcel Rainhorn. Welcome to... "

He cut right through it..

"Where is James Nightwind?"

Not your Alpha. Not your mate. Just James, like I was staff, a nobody..

My pulse jumped.

"Alpha James is inside preparing, "

"I'll speak to him directly."

And he just walked, like teh ground belonged to him.

I matched his pace." I'll escort you."

No," he said, not even looking at me." That is unnecessary."

It was clear he didn't care that I was keeping pace.

We reached the meeting room and I ushered him in.

I stayed in the room.

Marcel sat like a king who didn't need permission. James came in a moment later, straight back, calm face, that controlled confidence he wore when he wanted something.

Marcel didn't bother with greetings. He looked at me once, like I'd tracked mud onto his floor. Like I was intruding on something that didn't concern me.

The maids served the tea and snacks I had asked them to prepare for this meeting and withdrew.

I didn't move. I remained as Luna and part owner of the pack.

Then Marcel spoke, flat and cruel.

"She shouldn't be here either."

He gestured at me like I was furniture.

My spine went rigid. My mouth went dry.

I turned to James. One look. One word. That was all he needed to do. I was hoping he would defend me, put Marcel in his place. Tell him that I was Luna and must be part of the meeting. I expected James to give me face.

Instead, James gave me a small, polite smile.

"Please excuse us, Arya."

For a second, I genuinely thought I'd misheard him.

"James?" My voice came out thin. Wrong. "Say that again." I dared him.

He didn't meet my eyes.

His voice slid into my head through the link, low and urgent.

Not now, Arya. Please.

Please.

He begged me, while he pushed me out.

My throat tightened until it burned. I got up because I didn't trust my face if I stayed sitting.

I walked out because if I didn't, I was going to say something that would ruin everything, right there in front of him.

The door shut behind me.

And the worst part wasn't Marcel.

It was James, watching it happen and pushing me out anyway. Ria became on easy but i wanted to trust his intentions and I hoped it was indeed for the best.

I decided I wouldn't leave.

I refused to be in the dark on matters that had to do with a pack I sacrificed and bled for. So instead of leaving, I stayed.

I stayed close enough to hear.

Marcel's voice rolled through the door, smooth and satisfied. "I see you've built something good here."

James answered, controlled. "Thank you."

I pressed my palm to the wood of the door, steadying myself.

"So," Marcel said, "have you put everything in order?"

"Yes." James didn't hesitate. "The potential gold mines have been marked. The portion you requested has been preserved for your use."

My stomach dropped. I actually had to swallow because bile climbed up like, no, no way. Gold mines? A portion preserved for him? Our land. Our future. Sold off in neat sentences while I stood outside like a stranger. What about my opinion in the matter. I guess James had already decided on his own, it didn't matter.

"Very well," Marcel said. "The protection will be granted as promised. I'm aware several packs are mobilising against you. My warriors will stand by your side."

James's voice stayed even, but I heard the edge under it. "We appreciate it."

Marcel went on, slow and deliberate, like he enjoyed the sound of his own power.

“That is the purpose of the Union. To shield our own from random attack and genocide.”

I almost laughed. Not the funny kind, the kind that sounds like you’re about to lose your mind.

Shield. Sure.

Men like Marcel didn’t shield anyone. They just chose who got cut..

Then Marcel’s tone shifted. Sharper. Colder.

“What about my daughter’s place?”

My breath stopped.

Silence stretched. One heartbeat. Two. What did his daughter have to do with our pack joining the union. I felt a pit in my stomach but I refused to give in. I told myself that James knew what he was doing.

“In order for this alliance to go through,” Marcel continued, “I expect someone here to represent my interests.”

My fingers curled into my palm.

James spoke carefully, like he was trying not to step on a trap.

“I agreed,” James said carefully. “I just... need time. With Arya.”

Need time with me for what??

My skin went cold.

Marcel’s voice turned openly contemptuous.

“I hope you don’t intend to put my daughter in competition with your rogue.”

‘Rogue.’

He said it like it was a stain.

My hand went to my belly before I even thought about it. Like my body got there first.

Not my child. Not my home. Not like this.

James's voice came again, lower now. A plea. Not to Marcel. To the situation.

“Please. Arya and I built this pack together. We've been through everything together. Just give me time to bring her in slowly.”

Bring me in.

Slowly.

Like I was a child who couldn't handle the truth.

Or a problem he needed to manage.

Marcel's reply was a knife.

“Had my daughter not been so fixated on you, I'd never even consider this. If you fail to deliver, the deal is off. And don't think I'm sending her here to serve under some no-pedigree rogue bitch.”

My breath caught.

My eyes stung, not with tears, with pure shock.

I waited for James to snap. For him to say one word, One.

For him to defend my reputation and honour like he always did.

But he didn't.

And that silence hit harder than the insult.

He didn't protest, He didn't correct Marcel, he didn't show anger

Just silence.

And that silence did more damage than Marcel's insult.

Because it meant James heard and allowed it.

t.

Marcel's voice softened into a sneer.

"She'll be here in three days. My daughter better not have a hard time settling in as your Luna. So you better keep your bitch on a leash."

Something in me snapped so clean it felt quiet.

Then my body moved.

I shoved the door open so hard it slammed into the wall.

The sound cracked through the room.

Both men turned.

Marcel didn't flinch.

James did.

James looked like he'd been shot.

My voice shook, but it didn't break.

"Rogue bitch?" I repeated, staring straight at James. "And you said nothing?"

James's mouth opened.

No words came. He knew I'd heard everything. The insult and the plan to replace me with Marcel's daughter. I was heart broken that James could agree to this. And it hit me then. It wasn't about the pack's safety.

It was about him.

It was about what he wanted and I was the price he was willing to pay.

I stepped further in, heat roaring under my skin.

"What exactly is his daughter coming here to do?" I demanded. "What did you agree to, James?"

Marcel stood as if we were discussing the weather. He brushed at his sleeve, calm, smug, disgusting.

“I’ll leave you two to it,” he said, already turning away.

“Not so fast, Alpha.”

My words cut sharp enough to stop him mid-step.

He glanced back over his shoulder.

I walked closer, refusing to shrink.

“You came into my home, insulted me, and spoke about me like I’m not standing right here.” My chest heaved. “I may have once respected you. But now I see you clearly.”

Marcel’s half-smirk didn’t move.

“You’re greedy,” I said, voice shaking now. “You hide behind power because it’s the only thing that makes people tolerate you.” I said and chuckled to mock him. He didn’t need to see that I was breaking inside

“ This is my pack too. I earned my seat with sweat, blood and tears. I am not Luna because I am mated to the alpha. I am Luna because I earned it. And I say you are not welcome here.”

He didn’t answer.

He just turned and walked out with his men, unbothered, unmoved, as if I was noise that didn’t matter.

Fine.

Let him go.

Let him take my fury with him.

The moment the door closed behind him, I turned back to James.

He should’ve followed them out. He should’ve played the Alpha for show.

He didn’t.

He just stood there, caught. The air between us started to bleed. And I looked at him like I didn’t recognise him anymore.

