

- Luna Forsaken |

Chapter 6 A New Luna, A Public Funeral

Arya's POV

By the time I reached the courtyard, the cheering was too loud to be innocent.

Cheering.

Praise.

Their names getting chanted like the pack had been starving for someone new to worship.

Leah Rainhorn. Luna Rebecca Rainhorn.

The pack pressed in around them like this was rescue, not a takeover.

I stopped at the edge of it, hand still pressed to my belly, my cloak drawn tight, my face blank. The bond tugged toward him anyway, stupid, loyal, humiliating, like my body hadn't got the message that I'd been replaced.

Some people glanced at me and looked away too fast.

Others didn't bother.

They stared.

It wasn't pity. It was judgement, open and comfortable, like they'd been waiting for permission.

One woman I recognised, one I had personally brought into this pack when her old Alpha cast her out, looked at me like I'd dragged dirt into her life.. How quickly people forget kindness.

A man who used to thank me for giving him shelter spat near my feet and didn't even bother pretending.

My throat tightened.

I swallowed my pain and tears. They weren't worth it.

I kept walking.

Because if I reacted, they'd use it. They'd call it proof I wasn't fit, proof Leah was the answer. A few faces softened when I passed, wolves who remembered. Wolves who somehow chose to remain loyal to me

One young warrior's eyes widened like he wanted to apologise.

He didn't.

He just lowered his head, shame flickering across his face.

That almost hurt more.

I took my place near the steps leading into the packhouse, where I knew they'd pass. I stood straight. Calm. Silent.

Like I was standing at my own funeral and expected to be polite about it.

Leah approached first, beautiful, composed, dressed like she'd rehearsed this. Like she already knew she'd be standing beside James, close enough to touch him in public.

Beside her walked her mother, Luna Rebecca Rainhorn.

Older. Cold. A woman who wore power like perfume.

And the pack parted for her like she was law.

They drew close.

Leah's eyes flicked over me, quick and satisfied.

Rebecca didn't even pretend she didn't see me.

She slowed.

Then she looked at the pack members that had come to welcome them like she was inspecting livestock, and when her gaze landed on me, it sharpened.

Her mouth twisted.

"Gamma," she said, loud enough to cut through the cheers. "Is this... the rogue warming James's bed?"

The courtyard quieted fast. Not silent, breathing, shuffling, but everyone leaned in.

Not fully silent, breathing still existed, but the energy changed. Like everyone leaned in for blood.

My fingers curled into fists so tight my nails bit skin.

“Rogue warming his bed.”

That’s all she made me. Not Luna. Not mate. Not anything I’d bled for, just something disposable.

In my own home.

Rebecca stepped closer. Too close.

Her eyes went straight to my neck.

To my mark.

Her lips curled with disgust.

Then she reached out and touched my chin, fingers cold, invasive, like she was checking a bruise..

My stomach turned.

My vision flashed white.

I didn’t move.

Not yet.

Rebecca’s voice carried, crisp and vicious.

“Cover that,” she said, eyes on my mark. “Or this deal is off.”

She said it loudly. Deliberately.

For everyone.

And the crowd reacted exactly how she wanted.

Whispers. Gasps. Heads turning. Eyes narrowing.

Hatred started to spread across faces like fire catching dry wood.

I forced my breath out slowly and lifted my chin out of her grip.

“I don’t take orders from you,” I said, clear enough to be heard. “James should tell me himself.”

Rebecca’s eyes widened slightly, offended, as if a dog had spoken back.

“How dare you.”

Her hand rose.

Fast.

She wanted to slap me..

I didn’t think. My hand just moved.

I caught her wrist mid-air.

It wasn’t a loud sound, but the whole courtyard jolted like it was.

Rebecca stared at my hand on her wrist like it was poison.

Then her face flushed with fury.

“You, ” her voice shook with rage, “you put your hands on me?”

I didn’t let go.

I didn’t squeeze.

I just held her there, firm, controlled, because I refused to be struck like a servant in front of my people.

Rebecca’s lips trembled with outrage. She turned her head slightly toward Leah, voice dripping venom.

“This is what happens,” she hissed, “when you set your sights too low.”

Her eyes cut back to me.

“If you hadn’t been reckless enough,” she said to Leah, loud, cruel, “to get pregnant for a rogue turned Alpha, a no-pedigree rogue bitch wouldn’t dare disrespect you like this.”

The words landed and my brain just... stopped.

Pregnant. Leah.

My vision blurred so hard I had to blink fast.

For a second, everything in the courtyard blurred, faces, banners, even the ground beneath my feet.

My grip loosened.

Rebecca yanked her wrist back like she’d been contaminated.

I turned my eyes slowly to Leah.

Leah didn’t look guilty.

She looked... pleased.

Like she’d been waiting for this moment.

Like this was the reveal she wanted.

My mouth opened but no sound came out.

My heartbeat crashed in my ears.

I couldn’t breathe properly.

James had told me it was politics. That it was a transaction.

And now they were throwing a baby into it, something that meant nights and bodies and intimacy. Something I used to think belonged to me and him.

My hand flew to my belly again, protective, desperate, like I could shield my baby from the violence of that truth.

Rebecca leaned in, voice low enough to be intimate but loud enough to still humiliate.

“You will learn your place,” she said. “Or you will ruin everything for everyone.”

Then she straightened.

Leah’s smile never faltered.

They walked past me like I was air.

Like I was nothing.

And that was when I broke.

Not quietly. Not gracefully. Just, hot tears I couldn’t stop.

Hot, painful tears that spilled before I could stop them, because the shock was too big for pride to hold back.

I stood there, trembling, watching them climb the steps into my packhouse, my home, while my people cheered.

My people.

Cheering.

For the woman carrying my mate’s child.

My vision swam.

I turned away before I fell apart in the open.

Gamma Raymond caught my elbow gently.

“Luna,” he said quickly, voice strained. “Arya, please. It isn’t what you think.”

I stared at him with wet eyes, my chest heaving.

“Don’t,” I whispered. “Don’t insult me with that.”

He looked panicked. “James will explain. Just, just let him explain.”

My laugh broke into something ugly.

Explain what?

Explain how he betrayed me so deeply the whole pack was clapping for it?

I wrenched my arm free and walked.

I don't remember getting back. Just the noise behind me and the salt on my lips.

I only remember the sound of cheering behind me and the taste of salt on my lips.

By the time I got to my room, my hands were shaking so badly I fumbled the latch.

I shut the door.

And the second it clicked, I slid down it like my legs had finally given up.

My breath came in sharp, broken pieces.

My face was wet.

My chest felt torn open.

I pressed both hands to my belly like I could hold myself together there.

I remembered all the promises he made me and realised he never planned to keep any.

When the healer had said I might not be able to have children anymore after the hit I took during battle, he had promised we would get through it together, that we would adopt if the need arises.

Little did I know the promise was just for that moment, just until something young and better came along, something with a name and a promise of a more secure future.

The joke was on me..

James barged in still full of anger, until he saw my face.

And it was like something in him dropped. Like the bond yanked him to his knees.

"Arya, " He crossed the room in two strides and dropped to his knees in front of me, hands reaching. "No. No, it isn't what you think. Please, "

I shoved his hands away.

“Don’t touch me.”

His eyes were wildHis blue eyes bored into mine, pleading. They used to mesmerise me, but today they only made my heart ache “Listen to me. It’s not, ”

“She’s pregnant,” I choked out. “They said she’s pregnant, James. In front of everyone.”

His face went pale. “Arya, ”

“Don’t,” I snapped, voice breaking. “Don’t say my name like you didn’t do this.”

He grabbed my shoulders gently, desperate.

“I didn’t,” he said, too fast. “Arya, listen. I didn’t. I’m not...,”

I stared at him through tears, shaking my head.

“You expect me to believe that?” My voice was raw. “You expect me to believe Leah is carrying a child that isn’t yours, and her mother is using it like a leash around your throat?”

James’s jaw clenched. “It’s a lie. The baby isn't mine. I am only covering...”, ”

“Stop,” I said, voice breaking. “Just...stop.”

He looked like he was drowning. “Arya, please, please. I wouldn’t do that to you.”

“You already did,” I said, and it came out like a sob. “You let them walk into our home and call me nothing.”

James flinched like I’d slapped him.

He reached again, slower this time, as if he was afraid I’d shatter completely.

“Arya,” he said, voice trembling now, “I need you to hear me. I didn’t sleep with her. I’m not the father. I have never, ”

“Then why does she have a baby?” I screamed suddenly, my voice cracking into the room. “Why does the entire pack believe you’ve replaced me?”

James’s mouth opened.

No answer came fast enough.

And his silence did the rest. It let my mind run wild.

I wiped at my cheeks with shaking hands and forced myself upright.

“I’m done chasing you for honesty.,” I said, voice low, deadly with pain.

James’s eyes widened. “Arya, ”

I swallowed hard, hands moving instinctively to my belly again.

Then I looked him dead in the face and said the one thing he didn’t see coming.

“I’m pregnant,” I said. “Four weeks.”

James froze.

His entire body went still, like the words had struck him in the chest.

“What?” he whispered.

“I’m pregnant,” I repeated, voice shaking. “Four weeks.”

James stared at me like he’d forgotten how to breathe.

Shock drained the anger from his face, leaving him hollow.

His mouth parted.

No sound came.

Of course he would be shocked. Based on my medical history , this wasn’t supposed to be possible