

The Luna He Left Behind

Chapter 3

Sienna's Point of View

Everything around me fades into a muffled hum, almost like I am underwater. The only thing that I can see is her. The only thing that I can feel is the weight in my chest. Her hands are resting on her very pregnant stomach, her face glowing when she smiles up at him. My mate. My Asher. He came back... but not for me. I struggle to breathe, my breath catching in my chest. Instinctively my arms tighten protectively around Aiden's small body, and he shifts slightly against me, confused by my sudden reaction. "Mama?" He asks softly, his little hand touching my cheek, pulling me out of my daze. I blink rapidly, and swallow hard. I feel tears starting to sting my eyes. I can't fall apart, not here. Not with everyone watching. Not with my son in my arms. I quickly turn back around, not bothering to say a word to anyone. I push through the crowd with purpose, clutching Aiden tightly to my chest. "Sienna? Si! Hey, wait! Wait!" Ava's voice calls out after me and I hear footsteps crunching quickly on gravel as she rushes after me. "Si!" She calls out again, but I still don't stop. My vision blurs from the tears threatening to spill over. I bite down hard on the inside of my cheek to keep them at bay. Ava catches up just outside the edge of the packhouse lawn, her hand wrapping around my forearm gently but firmly. "Sienna, stop. Please, talk to me." She pleads quietly. I stop walking, but I don't look at her. Ava steps around me and the minute she sees my face, her expression shifts from concern to anger. "Oh, Si..." She whispers softly before pulling me into her arms. "I'm going to kill him." She says after a few seconds. I let out a broken laugh that sounds more like a sob. "He didn't even look at me, Ava. Not once." "Come here." She leads me to a bench under the trees and sits down next to me. She takes my hand and squeezes it softly. "Just breathe, Si." I nod my head slowly. I try to control my breathing while at the same time I am also still trying to keep my tears at bay. "I thought..." My voice cracks and I take a deep breath before trying to speak again. "I thought this would be the day he came back to us. I thought that he would see me, that he would see Aiden, and everything would be okay." Ava brushes a tear from my cheek with her thumb. "Don't let him or this destroy you. Do you hear me? You are strong and brave. You are not that naive little girl that he left behind anymore." "Are you sad, Mommy? Aiden whispers quietly and I glance down at him I see him glancing between me and Ava with wide, confused eyes and my heart breaks all over again. I give him a small smile and kiss the top of his head. "No, baby. Mama is just... surprised, that is all." "Was that my daddy?" He asks, a hopeful glint in his eye and I close my eyes for a few seconds, asking the Moon Goddess to forgive me before I open my eyes and give him another small smile as I shake my head. "No, baby. Unfortunately not. That was just someone that mommy used to know." I say, wiping some hair off of his forehead. Aiden frowns. "Why is seeing him making you sad?" Before I can say anything Ava crouches in front of us. "You don't have to worry your little head about that man, baby. Why don't we go home, huh? Or maybe we can go get some ice cream, and sit outside?" She asks, and Aiden immediately nods his head excitedly. "Yes! Please!" He yells and she chuckles at him, ruffling his hair before she stands. "Great! Now come on, let's go." I once again tighten my grip on Aiden as we walk away making our way to the ice cream shop. After getting some ice cream, we decide to head over to the playground. Aiden runs ahead of us towards the playground, his entire face covered in melted chocolate. A small smile tugs at the corners of my lips despite everything. At least he is okay. At least he didn't understand what just happened, what I just lost. Again. Ava walks next to me in silence, but her eyes keep flicking over to me every now and again. She doesn't say or ask anything, so I know that she is waiting. I know she wants me to open up about what just happened, but I don't know if I can

say the words out loud without breaking again. We reach a bench near the sandbox, and I sit down slowly. "Aiden! Come here please." I call out, after pulling out a packet of wetwipes. I quickly clean the chocolate off of his face and hands before he rushes away again. For a few minutes Ava and I just watch Aiden climb the jungle gym with ease. "I smelled him..." I whisper softly and Ava's head snaps towards me. "Wait... What? Are you sure?" She asks and I scoff, giving her a look. She shakes her head. "Sorry... I just... wasn't expecting that." "Yeah... Me neither..." I say bitterly before glancing at her. "When he stepped out of that car... the second the door opened, I smelled it. That pull, the warmth. My wolf started howling." I press a hand against my chest, hoping it would somehow dull the ache. "I was so happy... I mean she heard me... The Moon Goddess actually mated me with him. The only man I have ever loved. Even after all these years... after everything. It is still him. It has always been him." I say quietly, swallowing hard as the lump forms in my throat again. Ava quietly stares in front of her for a few seconds, her eyes narrowing as if she is mentally vaporizing Asher on the spot. "So let me get this straight. He is your mate. He finally comes back here after all these years, after leaving you pregnant and alone, and not only does he not acknowledge the bond between you, he shows up with a pregnant woman on his arm?" I don't answer her. I just let the silence speak for itself. "I am going to kill him." She mutters again, as she stands and begins pacing in front of me. "And no, not like in a joking way, I mean like actually kill him. Mate bond or not, that man doesn't deserve you, Si." I press my lips together, blinking fast. "I used to dream about this day. About him coming back home and seeing Aiden and realizing what he had missed. I thought that maybe..." My voice cracks again and I clear my throat. "I thought that maybe if he saw us..." I trail off and shake my head as I let out a bitter laugh. "God Ava, I just feel so stupid." I whisper and she immediately shakes her head and stops pacing. She crouches down in front of me and grabs my hands. "Look at me Sienna." She waits until my eyes meet hers before she continues. "Don't you dare say that. You are not stupid. You were in love. You were left alone with a baby and you raised him into the most incredible little boy all by yourself." I glance towards the playground where Aiden is giggling on the swings. His laugh rings through the air and soothes the ache inside of my chest just a little. "I just don't understand, Ava. How can the Moon Goddess bind me to someone who clearly doesn't love me anymore? Who moved on. Who has another family now..." Ava sighs, and folds her arms in front of her chest as she sits back down next to me. "I don't know, Si. I wish I had the answers you are looking for. But I do know this, he might be your mate, but you get to decide what you do with that bond." I turn towards her slowly, but before I can ask her what she means she continues to speak. "You don't have to accept it. You have already built yourself a life without him for you and Aiden. Aiden is your heart, and I will support whatever choice you make, whether you want to tell Asher, confront him, or just keep walking." "He didn't even see me, Ava. He looked straight past me like I was a stranger." "Then he is blind. And if he's too dumb to recognize his mate, that is on him. Not you." She says and I give her a watery smile. "Thank you, Ava. For always being here for me." "Always. You and Aiden are my family, Si. And no matter what happens next, we are going to figure it out together. I promise." She says, playfully bumping her shoulder against mine. Aiden runs over to us a few minutes later, breathless and bright-eyed, and throws himself into my lap. "Mama, I climbed all the way to the top! Did you see me?" He exclaims proudly and I nod my head quickly as I smile at him and kiss his forehead. "I saw, baby. You were amazing." And in that moment, with Ava beside me and Aiden in my arms, I realize something. Even if Asher never chooses us... I already have everything that I need, right here.