

The Lycan King's Treasured Luna

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The first thing life taught me was this, it owed me nothing and it never would.

You don't realize how quietly a heart can break until you're standing inside your own silence, wishing for someone, anyone to hear you. But in my world, the only thing that listened back was the echo of everything I'd lost before I even had the chance to hold it.

I've always felt like I never belonged, not in this pack, and definitely not in the family I was placed with.

The day I took my first breath, my mother took her last. My father, unable to survive the vacuum her death left behind, followed her soon after leaving me orphaned before I could even form a memory or so I was told. I know them only through a few faded photographs and not once have I ever felt their absence as love lost.

Alpha Joe, our pack leader, handed me off like an unwanted gift to Ama and Vargos. For a while, a sweet cruel while, they treated me like their own. Until I was seven and Ama's belly began to swell with new life.

Then the world shifted. Suddenly, the arms that once cradled me grew cold. The eyes that once sought me out in a crowd turned past me like I was nothing more than air.

They were so obsessed with their new baby, they forgot I needed food, warmth, and love too. I learned to fend for myself, scrounging leftovers from the fridge, and burning my small hands trying to cook meals that tasted as bad as it looked.

When the baby came, they stripped my room bare to make way for his nursery and dumped my things into the storage room like I was no more important than old Christmas decorations.

The storage room had no windows. The summers baked me alive, and the winters froze me to the bone. I slept on a pile of my own clothes because they never bothered to give me a blanket.

At first, I hated Levon for stealing them away. But with time, the hatred rotted into something sadder. You can't lose what was never really yours. And as he grew, I became less of a sister and daughter and more of a servant.

And now...

Today was my eighteenth birthday.

Normally, birthdays meant nothing to me. But today was different. Tonight, under the moonlight, my dormant wolf gene would awaken and I'll finally be a full-fledged werewolf.

Even better, once I shifted, I could leave Ama's house, move into the packhouse, find work in the neighboring human town, and start saving enough to finally leave Khragnir and see the world.

A small, secret smile tugged at my lips. I've been waiting for this moment my whole life.

"Narine!" Ama's shrill voice sliced through the storage room walls. "It's five in the d*mn morning! Get your useless self moving!"

I closed my eyes and breathed deep. Hold it in, Narine. Just a few more hours.

I rose stiffly from my pile of clothes and made my outside. There she was, leaning over the railing like a queen surveying her dirty little peasant.

"I'm sorry, Mother," I whispered. It didn't matter if I was wrong or right. Apology was the only language she spoke.

Ama sneered. "Sorry? You should be. Living off our kindness all these years. The least you could do is pick up more slack. It's the weekend."

More slack? What more could I possibly do that wasn't already dumped on my shoulders?

I swallowed the bitter rage clawing up my throat.

"I'm sorry, Mother. I'll start on the chores right away."

Nothing I did would ever be enough. To Ama, I was a burden.

I clenched my fists until my knuckles shook. Deep breaths, Narine. Just a few more hours.

"Get lost." Ama dismissed stalking down the staircase like a peacock with her ginger hair bouncing with every movement. Ama was a pretty woman no doubt with her heart shaped face and striking blue eyes, it was so sad her beauty was tainted by her rotten character.

As soon as she cleared the stairs, I hurried past. Levon's room was down the hall. I knocked lightly, knowing better than to wake him too harshly. If he threw a tantrum, Ama and Vargos would make sure I paid for it.

After a pause, the door swung open. Levon stood there with his ginger hair sticking up in wild tufts.

"It's too f*ck*ng early, What do you want?" he growled.

"I'm sorry, Levon. I'm here to get your laundry."

He groaned and disappeared into the room. He reappeared shoving two overflowing baskets into my arms and he slammed the door in my face. I gritted my teeth. It had only been six days since I last did his laundry, and somehow he'd managed to dirty a month's worth of clothes.

I let out a puff of air blowing my bangs away from my face and turned to leave. I heard the door open again and I felt something thick hit me right at the back of my head and an unsolicited grunt left me. The door shut again.

I grabbed the duvet he threw from the floor and lugged the baskets down the stairs. Ama was now conveniently sipping her daily dose of morning coffee while reading one of her highly priced fashion magazine in the living room.

"The washing machine's broken."

I froze. "What?"

"It broke yesterday," she murmured breezily. "Peter from the packhouse can fix it... later. In the meantime, take the laundry down to the river bend and wash it by hand."

I stared at her, numb. She was serious. Of course she was. Ama didn't joke. Not when it came to making my life a living hell. I said nothing, biting the inside of my cheek hard enough to taste blood. Without a word, I dumped the baskets by the stairwell and stalked to the laundry room for soap.

"Oh, and grab your father's and I laundry too," she added smugly. I curse inwardly and made my way back to the kitchen to grab two large trash bags that could fit the piles of clothes.

As I turned, I somehow managed to trip on myself, I quickly grabbed the edge of the wooden counter to break my fall. I sighed in relief but that was shortlived as I heard a crash near me. I looked over and realized I had accidentally pushed a plate on the counter.

"It better not be what I think it is," I heard Ama's voice right above my head.

When did she even get there?

Ama came round the counter and gasped. I quickly pulled myself up, before I could stand fully, her palm collided with my face, knocking me backwards into the fridge. I felt pain bloom on my cheeks and my head ricocheted off the fridge so hard I saw stars for a moment.

Tears spilled from my eyes from the shock and pain.

"You stupid little b*tch!" she screamed. "That was a vintage plate!"

"I'm sorry," I whispered.

"That's all you ever say. Sorry! Sorry! Sorry! Sorry doesn't fix your stupidity! useless girl! You're nothing but a migraine!"

I stayed silent, letting the insults rain down until she finally stormed off. I wiped my tears with shaky hands, gathered the broken pieces, and cleaned up the mess.

Then, without another word, I heaved the heavy bags onto my back and stumbled outside, down the long path toward the riverbend, less chance of anyone seeing me like this.