

The Lycan King's Treasured Luna 219

3

NARINE'S POV

The heavy thud of boots echoed through the narrow, rotten corridor rattling the very bones of this godforsaken place. A sharp shaft of light stabbed through the cracks of my dungeon, slicing across the filth-caked floor. The clatter of keys followed, then the groaning screech of rusted hinges. The cell door swung open with a whimper of protest.

I didn't bother turning my head.

It didn't matter who had come for me, they all blurred together now.

There were no windows here. No clocks and No way to tell day from night.

"Oi, you still ain't dead yet?" Tobias barked, his voice bounced off the stone walls like broken glass.

I heard the dull thud of a tray dropping beside me.

"You're one strong little b*tch, I'll give ya that," he muttered, almost admiringly, before spitting on the ground. "It's been three years, can you believe it? This f*ck*n' pit stinks worse than a rotting sewer. Last time I'm comin' down here, mark my words."

Three years.

The words slithered into my mind like a poisoned dagger, but I felt nothing.

Had it really been that long? Had time forgotten me the same way the world had?

Tobias shook his head and shuffled off until the sound was swallowed by the dark.

I was alone again.

I stared up at the cracked ceiling, tracing the spiderweb of fractures again and again with my weary, hollow gaze.

Every split, every jagged vein etched into the stone above me had been memorized long ago like a map only I could read.

I knew every dent, and patch where mold bloomed like blackened sores. I could replicate it on canvas from memory alone.

That's how long I had been rotting in this dungeon. Long enough for the ceiling to become more familiar than the faces of those I once loved. And now I know three years had passed by already.

It was almost laughable, the conditions now were better compared to when I first woke up here, naked and trembling on the frozen floor.

Cold bit into my skin that night like a living thing. My body curled instinctively into itself, a pathetic attempt to preserve some shred of warmth and dignity. Still. I had hope.

That was before they stripped it from me layer by layer, and shattered my soul, piece by agonizing piece.

Interrogation wasn't the word for it. Interrogation suggested questions and answers.

What they did was not for information. It was for the breaking.

I was beaten until the screams ripped free from my throat, even when my pride begged me to stay silent.

I had been prodded, and violated in every way imaginable. They dragged me again and again to the brink of death, only to wrench me back with cruel hands, there was no mercy. The longer I survived, the more creative they became.

Some days, the pain was so unbearable that my mind shut down and I would slip into blessed darkness. But every time I opened my eyes again, the nightmare continued. To their credit, they did try to get rid of me. Several times.

But my body, cursed thing that it is, betrayed them. My healing ability was relentless, knitting back together the damage faster than they could inflict it. They turned to silver in desperation, searing it into my flesh to poison the rapid repair. It worked, partially. It slowed the process and left map of scars etched into my skin.

Joe. I remembered him the most vividly.

He wasn't like the others. He was worse.

He treated me like a puzzle. He peeled my skin back like the husk of a fruit, probing for the 'monster' he swore lurked beneath. Layer by bloody layer.

He would let me shrivel, let dehydration blacken my lips, cracked my tongue and twist my stomach into knots, only to dangle a single drop of water in front of me.

"Shift," he would hiss, shoving the cup just out of reach. "Show me what you really are."

But I was too weak to even to summon the beast he so feared.

I had screamed for death, begged for it in hoarse, rasping sobs until my voice gave out but even death, it seemed, found me repulsive. It turned its back on me too, leaving me trapped in this decaying shell.

When they realized I was of no use to them and all that remained was a hollow, shivering thing, they simply... left me. Abandoned like a broken relic of the past, left to rot where no one would ever find me.

I could barely remember the world that existed beyond these four crumbling walls.

How the sunlight once kissed my skin, and the stars glittered across the night sky like scattered diamonds. The heat of summer soaking into my bones, the bite of winter's chill, the bloom of spring, and the fiery explosion of colors in autumn.

I ached for it so deeply that sometimes it felt worse than the physical pain.

But those memories were fading now. Turning brittle and gray, and crumbling like ash in my mind.

I could hardly move anymore. My limbs were stiff, and unresponsive, shriveled close to the bone.

My skin clung desperately to my frame and cracked like old parchment. I hadn't bathed, or brushed my teeth. And I sure as hell still hadn't been clothed.

To make things worse, as if they could somehow be, there wasn't even a toilet in this wretched place. For three years, I've been sleeping in my own filth, and marinating in piss and sh*t and sweat and blood.

My hair had long since turned into a tangled, matted mass that drags behind me, knotted past my waist like dead vines.

But starvation was the true demon here. The agony of it, the slow gnawing from the inside, the way your stomach turned on itself, eating you alive, It drove me to madness.

I had eaten my own sh*t to stave off the hallucinations of starvation and drank my own piss to keep from dying of thirst.

Each time I did, another piece of my humanity withered and died inside me. Until there was barely anything left that could call itself human.

I used to wonder if I was cursed. Now I knew I was. If even death would not touch me, then surely I was cursed. Nothing good had ever happened to me from the moment I first drew breath. And I hated, God, I hated everything about that.

I resented my mother for bringing me into this accursed life when she should have terminated me before i got the chance to develop. I resented my father for abandoning me without so much as a second glance. I hated everyone in this pack for turning their backs on me without attempting to give me the benefit of doubt.

If there's one thing endless solitude and suffering has taught me, it's that I am intangible and Insignificant. A speck in the grand scheme of things, easily forgotten. I was going to die here and no one would mourn me or even remembered I existed.

I turned my head, slowly to glance at what Tobias had tossed beside me.

Probably the usual scrap of moldy pizza and maybe a sip or two of stagnant water if he was feeling generous.

But then I saw it. It jolted through my half-dead nerves like a lightning strike. The cell door was ajar barely, but clearly unlocked. For a moment, I just stared, too stunned to even breathe. I blinked several times, wondering if my mind was finally playing its cruelest trick yet. But no, the truth stood stubbornly before me. Tobias, lazy, careless Tobias hadn't locked it. A strange, foreign sensation stirred deep within my hollowed-out chest. Hope. It tried to blossom, stretching its weak tendrils toward the light. But I crushed it hard. I could attempt to escape or die trying, at least. The probability of success was laughably small. Even if by some miracle I managed to slip past unnoticed, where would I even go in this state? I was barely skin stitched over brittle bones. I couldn't remember what my own face looked like, but I knew I was no sight to behold. I clenched my jaw, grinding down the thought like glass between my teeth. I was going to die. That was inevitable. But if I must die, then let it be under the sky, with the cold wind on my skin and the stars bearing silent witness, or under the sun rays caressing my body, not rotting away, nameless, in this wretched tomb. With a resolve so thin it could snap at any second, I forced my skeletal frame to move. My legs trembled violently, unable to bear even the smallest weight. But I didn't care. I pressed one skeletal hand against the cold bars, the bones creaked in response. I dragged myself forward using the bars. My breathing came in labored gasps, like a drowning man tasting the surface for the first time. One foot in front of the other, One heaving breath at a time. Until, finally, I crossed the threshold.