

The Lycan King's Treasured Luna 219

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SARGIS POV

I pinched the bridge of my nose, feeling the slow, throbbing pulse of an oncoming headache. It had been gnawing at me since the fifth pack visit today. I hadn't nurtured high hopes of finding her, no, reality had long ago dulled that childish optimism but despite myself, a hollow disappointment still chewed at my insides. I leaned my forehead against the cool glass window, letting the scenery blur into a smear of dusky orange skies, skeletal tree limbs clawing at the heavens, and the occasional twinkling light of distant cabins tucked away. The sun was retreating, and with it, my already dwindling hope. "How many more packs are left to visit, Lupercus?" I asked defeatedly. "Seven more, Your Royal Highness," he answered. "In fact, we're pulling up to the next one." I hummed noncommittally, forcing my heavy limbs into action as the car rolled to a gentle stop. Before Lupercus could even reach for the door handle, I shoved it open and stepped into the cool evening air. The moment my sneakers crunched against the gravel, I stilled. Something... felt different here. The air was thicker, almost buzzing against my skin, scented with damp earth and pine. A restless energy stirred within me, coiling low in my gut. "This way, Your Majesty," Lupercus uttered, nodding towards a winding trail that snaked through the dense trees. I followed silently, though I needed no guide when I could easily utilize my senses. Trees bent low as if bowing in reverence and birds flitted through the branches, calling out warnings to each other as we walked farther into the forest. The clearing opened up like a secret oasis. Scattered cabins, haphazardly built from old timber and patched roofs, dotted the space. In the center stood a slightly larger structure, worn but sturdy, the alpha's home, judging by the aura emanating from there. We moved along the dirt path, the curious eyes of a few lingering pack members followed us. Their confusion was palpable, to them, I was just another face hidden behind designer shades, a mask, and casual clothing. My aura was pulled so tightly inward that even their heightened senses failed to register what I truly was. Good. Werewolves in human form were woefully oblivious compared to Lycans. Enhanced senses, yes, but without their wolves at the surface, they were barely more aware than regular humans. Unlike us, who lived in perfect, agonizing balance with our beasts. At the alpha's door, Lupercus rapped his knuckles thrice, his stance was wide and ready should anything untoward occur. The door creaked open, and an older man peered out, thick blonde hair threaded heavily with gray, a coarse salt-and-pepper beard, and a body that spoke of past strength slowly being devoured by complacency. His sharp blue eyes widened the instant they landed on me, despite the layers I wore to conceal my identity. Recognition flared in his gaze. He swung the door wide open in an instant, stepping back to allow us entry. It wasn't surprising, in fact, it was expected. All the alphas in the kingdom knew me. They had to. Every six months, without fail, they reported directly to me, face-to-face. "Y-Your Highness," the man stammered. I barely spared him a glance, my patience was already hanging by a fraying thread. My attention shifted, trailing indifferently around the cramped, pathetic room. Family photos hung crookedly on the stained walls, some frames were cracked, and some images inside had faded with time. A rundown couch sagged in the center of the living room, littered with empty bottles of cheap alcohol and greasy wrappers. The heavy stink of stale beer, sweat, and rot hung in the air like a suffocating shroud. Pathetic. The once noble duty of leadership reduced to this mess. Disgraceful. "Your Highness, pardon the disarray," Joe babbled, wringing his meaty hands as he scrambled to explain. "I am Joe, alpha of the Snowwolf Pack. I wasn't expecting someone of your caliber to visit suddenly. Moreover, I didn't receive any royal decree informing—" I lifted a hand, cutting off his pitiful excuses. I simply didn't

have the energy for it tonight. "There's no need for any explanation," I dismissed coolly. "My presence here isn't something to worry about... unless," I let the word hang, heavy with warning, "you have some skeletons in your cupboard, Joe." I said his name slowly, deliberately, emphasizing each syllable with quiet menace. Joe paled. I peeled off my mask and sunglasses, letting him see my face see the predator lurking just beneath the civilized veneer. He stumbled backward a step, almost tripping over his own feet. "O-o-of course not, Supreme Alpha!" he stuttered, visibly trembling. "I was merely... caught off guard. Pardon my insolence." "Hmmm," I hummed, unconvinced, my gaze continuing to sweep the room with open disdain. How could any self-respecting alpha live like this? How could he allow his people to live like this? But that were matters for another day. "Tell me, Joe," I drawled, dragging his name out again just to watch him squirm, "how many unmated she-wolves do you have in your pack?" Joe wiped his sweaty palms down the front of his wrinkled shirt. "Supreme Alpha," he squealed, "we are merely a pack of two hundred and twenty. Eighty of them are married elders, twenty are children below the age of eighteen, thirty mated youngsters above eighteen, and twenty-five—" I sliced my hand through the air sharply. "It seems your ability to comprehend is subpar if you can't even decipher a simple question," I gritted. "Did I ask for an analysis?" Joe's mouth opened and closed like a fish gasping on land. "Go straight to the point," I finished coldly. "O-Of course, Supreme Alpha," he mumbled. "There are... about forty unmated she-wolves." "Where are they?" "S-Some are staying in the general packhouse, the building behind this one. Others are with their parents in private residences," he answered quickly. "Summon them all," I ordered, my voice brokering no room for argument. "Have them assemble at the clearing." "If I may, Supreme—" Joe began, but the words died on his tongue when I turned my full glare on him. "No," I growled. "You may not, Joe." I let my beast rise to the surface just enough that my eyes darkened into endless black pools. The room temperature seemed to drop instantly, the air itself shuddering with the weight of my suppressed power. Joe's knees visibly buckled, and he let out a pitiful gulp, every instinct he had screaming at him to submit. "Your word is law, Alpha Supreme," he croaked, bowing his head deeply. "P-Please, take a seat while I carry out your command." I gave the filthy couch another disgusted look and sneered. "I'd rather not," I said simply, curling my lip with contempt. Joe bobbed his head rapidly, desperate to please, before stumbling toward the door like a man fleeing the gallows. "Joe," I called out lazily, just as his hand touched the doorknob. He froze. "My presence here is confidential. Handle this discreetly and Wisely. Or there will be consequences." He nodded so fast it was a miracle his head didn't snap off. And with that, Joe fled the house, slamming the door shut behind him. I pinched the bridge of my nose, trying, and failing to massage away the pounding headache building behind my eyes. Normally, I prided myself on my composure. But tonight? Tonight, my frustration simmered just beneath my skin, threatening to spill over. I didn't have it in me to entertain any more shenanigans, not from Joe, or anyone else. "Lupercus," I called, turning to where he stood silently against the peeling wall like a quiet sentinel. "Your Highness," he answered instantly. "You can remain here," I told him, already moving toward the door. "I'll find a spot where I can silently observe." Without waiting for his response, I trusted him to understand. I slid my mask back over my face and adjusted my sunglasses, veiling my features once again. The scent of mildew and stale air clung to me like an unwelcome second skin as I stepped out into the night. I retraced my steps through the clearing silently. The night welcomed me and shadows swallowed me whole as I slipped into the treeline, into the deeper parts of the woods. It was almost too easy to disappear under the camouflage of darkness. Even if someone had been watching, they would've seen nothing but a whisper of movement. I scanned the surrounding forest carefully, letting instinct guide me until my gaze landed on a massive oak tree standing proudly in the center of the woods. It towered over the others, its thick branches sprawling like a natural throne in the sky. Perfect. Without hesitation, I leapt, catching the nearest branch easily. I climbed higher, my muscles coiling and flexing with each movement, until I found a spot near the top hidden by the thick canopy, yet offering a perfect vantage point overlooking the clearing. The wind whispered through the leaves, cool and steady, carrying the clean scent of damp earth and

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