

Chapter 9

Elena POV

"What's your name?" I asked the maid as she scurried about, arranging and rearranging things in my room. I stood awkwardly by the door, the presence of a stranger in my room made me uneasy even though she was so kind.

She smiled at me as she lifted the curtains and let the sunlight stream into the room. "My name is Poppy, Luna but everyone calls me Puppet. You can call me whichever one you prefer."

"Puppet?" I bit out.

She turned to me surprised, wondering why I suddenly sounded so angry. She nodded slowly, watching me. "Yes, puppet. That's what everyone calls me, I don't mind you calling me that too."

"Why would I call you a puppet?" I asked, surprised at the anger in my voice. I hadn't meant to lash out at her.

"I'm really fine with either, Luna." She said again, smiling hesitantly and continued wiping the mirror. For some reason, seeing that smile made me even angrier.

"Names aren't clothes that you can throw on and off whenever you want. Names are important. They could change your whole life in the blink of an eye." I snapped, regretting it instantly.

I wanted to stop, to shove the words back into my throat and pretend

nothing had happened but I couldn't. It seemed something had gotten a hold of my tongue and had forced me to say all the words that had been buried in my stomach.

I could see the maid looking at me in shock now, frozen in motion. Great, Elena, make yourself out to be a weirdo and ruin your only chance at finally changing your life. Just great.

I called out to Lara, in my mind. Maybe she could take over and get me out of this embarrassing situation, but she didn't respond. What did I expect? She was never there when I needed her. I should have known I would have to face this on my own too.

The sob that suddenly broke out of my throat took me by surprise and before I knew it, I was crying so hard I could barely breathe.

I started panicking, what was wrong with me? I couldn't stop crying no matter how hard I tried. The harder I wiped, the harder the tears poured out. I was sure the entire palace could hear me by now.

How pathetic. I'd handled beatings and abuse for years without letting it get to me, but it was a name that made me break down?

The maid stood there in shock for a moment before she rushed to me and pulled me into her arms. She drew circles around my back as she comforted me and I soon felt myself calming down. Mom used to rub my back like that too whenever I was stressed about something.

"I'm fine with whatever you call me Luna." She said once I had properly calmed down. She smiled shyly. "It's a long story but Puppet is a very

special name to me. If you don't mind it, I'm really okay with you calling me Puppet."

I watched her face for a long time but her expression didn't change. She wasn't lying. Relief flooded me but still I asked once more.

"Are you sure you're fine with it? It's not something you're saying just because I'm the Luna?"

She immediately held her hand to her heart and said solemnly. "I swear I'm fine with it Luna, if I'm lying, may the moon goddess deprive me from finding my mate."

I tried to stop her but she rushed through the oath before I could do anything. "You didn't have to swear an oath." I said weakly. Why was she so hasty? Didn't she know that she could get punished if even one word of what she said was wrong?"

But she smiled happily at me. "I had to do something to make you believe me Luna. That was the fastest thing I could think of."

Suddenly, she knelt in front of me and bowed her head down. I tried to make her get up but she refused, clinging tightly to the rug on the floor. I had to let her go and see what she wanted to do.

"I know you don't trust me yet Luna." She said. "But I swear to serve you with all my strength and loyalty. You won't ever have cause to doubt my loyalty to you." She lifted her head and gazed up at me humbly. "if you'll have me."