

20: Luna

"She is finally going on a date! Whoops." Imogen twirled around the empty café with a broom, fully aware that Miranda wouldn't be here to reprimand her.

"I know, right." I munched on the popcorn we bought down the street while watching Selene uncomfortably adjust her shirt.

I lent her one of my loose jeans to make it easy for her to open the button, so her baby bump wouldn't be disturbed. I coiled her hair into those beautiful curls, and for a minute, I fell in love with those tresses. She doesn't know the gift the Moon Goddess blessed her with.

The shirt was baggy enough to hide her pregnancy from prying eyes. She hadn't changed even a bit, though she is about to reach six months. I can't believe how time has passed, but I'm glad I finally told Crew I got her. He couldn't believe it and didn't spend a second, just as I had predicted before he came here.

We have already planned how he is going to approach her, which is going to be tomorrow morning. If he scares her away, then all my hard work will go in vain, and I won't have that. I've wasted enough time here, and I love the friendship

20: Luna

we have between us. I don't want anything to wreck it, but I have the feeling that it will be ruined.

Conflicting emotions swirl within me as I grapple with the idea of Selene going on a date with Jake. On one hand, I should be happy for her, as Jake appears to be a genuinely nice guy with the potential to become her boyfriend.

However, a tinge of unease gnaws at me because it means she won't have her claws on Crew, my trusted mate. There won't be anything between them even though there is a baby. It should stay at that, right?

In theory, I should be relieved that Selene won't harbor any thoughts about Crew. After all, I trust my mate, and there's no reason for doubt. Yet, the unsettling feeling persists. The idea of her spending time with Jake doesn't sit well with me, and the mere thought of her getting comfortable with Crew sends a wave of discomfort through me.

It's a complicated mess of emotions, and my brain feels like a tangled web, unable to think straight. That is my head right now. A bad mess.

Perhaps my disquiet stems from the exhaustion and restlessness that has settled in, a result of being unable to run as I'm accustomed to. The inability to release the pent-up energy leaves me

20: Luna

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feeling mentally mushed, contributing to this bewildering mix of emotions.

As Selene steps into this new chapter with Jake, I find myself wrestling with conflicting sentiments, caught between the desire for her happiness and the discomfort of navigating unexpected

[Ads-free >](#)

emotional terrain. But then again, we are going back to the pack. Without human Jake.

"Ugh, I wish I said no." Selene plopped down on one of the chairs sulkily, though she has been jumping throughout the evening while trying to find the perfect place for her crib in that tiny room.

I know we are going to be back at the pack before she gives birth, which is why I helped her purchase that expensive crib that could fill up the entire room Miranda gave her. She doesn't know that, though. I'm still thinking if I would like to see her in the pack or here because things are going to change.

And Imogen? Won't I be able to see her again? I'm going to miss that sweet soul and will make sure to watch over her in case that creep Jodie wants to take advantage of her since Selene isn't around for him to toy with. I don't trust him one bit, neither does Miranda, but his father is the mayor around here.

"Well, we are glad you said yes." I gave her a grin which she huffed at.

"Chin up, he is here." Imogen shot from her seat like she was injected then went to Selene's side and whispered something in her ear, making her blush. I heard what she said with my werewolf hearing, though.

"I don't know, but something about him tells me he has a large groin. Wouldn't that be fantastic?"

Selene swatted Imogen's arm. "You are such a p*****t. Stop hanging around with Sawyer."

Imogen only grinned innocently then waved at Jake, came to my side, and practically hauled me

20: Luna

to the counter while Selene and Jake slowly walked out of the café. I smiled when she blushed at something he said. The girl has never experienced first love. Hell, I'm sure she's never been on a date.

We were having a serious conversation with Imogen when she stopped talking and just stared at me. Why is she making me so uncomfortable when I have met Crew's stare with one of my own? Is it because she has never looked so serious since I met her?

"Luna," Imogen began after her long silence, c*****g her head to the side, "I really like you. I do. But there's this persistent feeling, a nagging suspicion that you're up to something. It's not just about what you told Miranda bringing you here; there's an underlying sense of mystery that I can't quite put my finger on. There's something off about you, and it's been lingering in the back of my mind, refusing to be dismissed.

Your presence here is like a puzzle with missing pieces, leaving me intrigued but wary. It's not that I doubt your intentions completely, but there's an elusive quality to your actions that keeps me on edge. Maybe it's the way you carry yourself, the subtle shifts in your expressions, or the unspoken secrets that seem to dance in your eyes.

I find myself torn between the genuine connection

20: Luna

I feel with you and this persistent sense of caution. It's as if the universe is dropping hints, urging me to tread carefully. I want to believe in the sincerity of our connection, but there's a part of me that remains vigilant, unable to ignore the subtle signals that whisper of hidden motives.

Perhaps it's my intuition playing tricks on me, or maybe it's a culmination of experiences that have made me more cautious. Regardless, I can't deny the internal struggle, the push and pull of emotions that accompany this realization. So, as much as I want to embrace what we have, I find myself grappling with this unshakable feeling that there's more to you than meets the eye."

I do my best not to shift uncomfortably beneath those vigilant eyes, but she is making it hard. The intensity in her gaze is enough to unnerve anyone, and I can't help but acknowledge that she possesses the ability to strike fear into anyone she chooses. It's evident she's being possessive over Selene, and while I appreciate the genuine love she has shown my mate's baby mama, the intensity of her watchful eyes does leave an impression.

"You're not wrong, but it has nothing to do with you, Imogen. I value our friendship, and my feelings toward you and Selene are akin to that of sisters, trust me. All that I'm keeping from you isn't something that concerns you directly, and my

20: Luna

decision to keep it a secret is solely to ensure your safety." I gently force a smile onto my face, wanting to convey reassurance despite the weight of the unspoken truths between us.

"As the bonds of our friendship run deep, there are aspects of my life that I've chosen to shield from you, not out of distrust but as a protective measure. I want to spare you from the complexities that might arise, safeguarding the purity of our friendship. In time, when the circumstances permit, I promise to share the hidden chapters of my life, but for now, please understand that my intentions are rooted in the profound care and love I hold for you and Selene." I took both her hands in mine to show the sincerity I don't have.

Imogen let out a breath. "I'm glad you didn't like about that. Thank you, Luna. We love you too."

A few minutes later, she left as her shift was over, while I stayed back until Selene came back and locked the door. I was mind-linking Edie to hear about her mates when a thud from the backdoor jolted me from my seat. Quickly, I stepped into the kitchen and yanked open the door outside.

I peered out, but there was nothing and no one, just darkness. So, I made a move to go back inside when I saw a movement behind the large bin. I frowned. Who could be lurking around the

20: Luna

+10 Points

bin and making noise this late?

The piercing cry for help from Selene echoed through the air, and it felt as if something deep within me had been violently torn apart. The urgency and desperation in her voice propelled me into immediate action, overriding any rational thought. In that critical moment, instinct took over, and without a second's hesitation, I opened the door to let Crew inside.

He arrived just at the right time.

The tumultuous emotions surged within me, a cocktail of fear, concern, and an unyielding determination to ensure Selene's safety. As Crew entered, his eyes mirrored the same apprehension that gripped my own soul, reflecting a shared commitment to protect Selene at all costs.

Little did I know that this impulsive act would set in motion a chain of events that would challenge our bonds, unravel mysteries, and ultimately redefine the course of our intertwined destinies. It held something deeper than we both know of.

Selene's cry was the catalyst that thrust us into a realm where loyalty, sacrifice, and untold secrets would shape the narrative of our lives in ways we never could have foreseen.