

THE ALPHA'S SECRET LUNA

Chapter 1: Prologue

Prologue

Sophia's last clear memory was of falling asleep with a smile on her face, a worn novel about ancient history and civilizations resting on her chest. The book told tales of a time when the Moon Goddess walked among her people, guiding them, protecting them, her influence woven into every aspect of their lives. It was a stark difference to the life they lived now. Sophia wondered if what was written in the novel was even true.

But the books were her only companions, the one thing to help her escape boredom. Victoria, her mother, insisted that Sophia remain inside, hidden away from the dangers of the outside world. "It's for your safety, my dear," Victoria would say, her voice laced with concern.

She had always listened to her mother. She stayed indoors, obeyed every rule. So how did she get here?

Her head throbbed, a dull, persistent ache that radiated from her temples. Her limbs felt heavy, unresponsive. She tried to move, but her wrists and ankles were bound tightly to a cold, hard surface. Panic surged through her, a suffocating wave of terror. What was happening?

Her eyes fluttered open, and she found herself in a cave, the air thick with the smell of damp earth and something else, something acrid and metallic that made her stomach churn. Flickering torchlight cast dancing shadows on the rough stone walls, revealing strange symbols etched into the rock.

A woman stood over her, her face obscured by the shadows, her voice a low, guttural chant that sent shivers down Sophia's spine. The words were foreign, ancient, imbued with a dark power that resonated deep within her bones.

Sophia didn't need to be told what kind of magic this was. She knew already—dark magic. It was forbidden. Why was she here? What was going on?

The woman, whose name Sophia would later learn was Morwen, held a gleaming knife in her hand, its blade reflecting the light from the flames. With deliberate, ritualistic movements, Morwen began to tear at Sophia's flesh, making precise cuts on her arms and legs.

Pain exploded through Sophia's body, a searing agony that stole her breath and brought tears to her eyes. She screamed, a raw, primal sound that echoed through the cavern. She thrashed against her bonds, desperate to escape the torment, but her struggles were futile.

"Stop! Stop, please!" she cried, her voice hoarse with fear and pain. "Help me! Please, someone help me! Mum!"

She shouted until her throat was raw, but Morwen ignored her, dancing to her chants as she continued her task. Sophia wasn't giving up yet. Maybe someone would pass by and help her. Maybe her mother would notice and come for her. Yes, Victoria was an overprotective mother. She wouldn't let anyone touch her daughter.

Finally, she heard footsteps, heavy and purposeful, approaching them. Relief flooded through her, a wave of hope that washed away some of the pain. Someone had heard her cries, someone was coming to save her.

Victoria appeared, her face illuminated by the flickering flames. Sophia breathed a sigh of relief at seeing her mother. She was safe. She could go home now.

"Mum..."

"Is it done yet?" Victoria asked, her voice impatient, her gaze fixed on Morwen.

Sophia turned to her mother, her heart pounding in her chest. She didn't understand. This wasn't the mother she knew, the one who had always protected her.

"Mum?" she whispered, her voice trembling. "What's going on?"

Victoria ignored her, her attention focused solely on Morwen. "Be quick about it," she urged. "My ears are already bleeding from her incessant cries."

Sophia's confusion turned to horror as she realized the truth. Victoria wasn't here to save her. She was in league with Morwen.

'No... it can't be. She wouldn't do this to me. Not my mother.' She thought to herself.

"Mum! Mum, please! I'm sorry, okay? I'll try to do better. Please just let me go," Sophia cried out, her voice cracking with desperation.

Victoria finally turned to her, her lips curling into a cruel snarl. "You're useless, you know that, right?" she spat. "You've never been able to do anything right. You're weak, pathetic. I should have been the one to receive the gift of visions. I could have done so much better if that power was mine."

Sophia's world crumbled around her. She couldn't believe this was her mother speaking. The same woman who had sung her songs at night to put her to sleep, the same woman who had made sure Sophia was safe from harm. Sure, Victoria had her flaws, but parenting wasn't easy. Sophia knew she just had to try harder, to be better. Victoria would help her if she did better.

"I can try harder!" Sophia sobbed, tears streaming down her face. "I can do better! Just tell me what you want, and I'll do it!"

Victoria laughed, a cold, heartless sound that echoed through the cavern. "It's too late for that, Sophia. Your time is over. It's my time now."

Morwen, her face flushed with exertion, turned to Sophia, a cruel smile twisting her lips. "I love the bond between you and your mother," she hissed. "It makes the transfer so much easier."

She raised the knife again, preparing to resume her work, but then, she gasped, her eyes widening in shock, and she stumbled backward, clutching at her chest. Blood gurgled in her throat, and she collapsed to the ground.

Victoria swore, her face contorted with rage. "What's happening?" she demanded. "What did you do?"

Morwen, her voice weak and raspy, managed to choke out a few words. "Something...interfered...the power...it rejected me..."

Victoria, her eyes blazing with fury, turned to her men. "Take her away!" she snarled, gesturing towards Sophia. "Get her out of here! And make sure she doesn't escape."

Sophia, weak and disoriented, barely registered what was happening. She felt herself being lifted from the table, her body protesting with every movement. One of Victoria's guards, a hulking brute with a cruel face, dragged her roughly through the cave.

It was their mistake, their fatal error. They underestimated her, assumed she was too weak to resist. As the guard dragged her deeper into the cavern, she discreetly took the small knife he had in his pocket. With a surge of adrenaline, she twisted her body, kicking out with her legs. Her heel connected with the guard's knee, sending both of them stumbling backward.

Before he could recover, Sophia lunged forward, fueled by adrenaline. She didn't hesitate, didn't think about the consequences. She plunged the knife into the guard's throat, her hand shaking as she did so.

The guard gurgled, his eyes widening in surprise, and then collapsed to the ground, his body twitching. Sophia stared at the guard who lay unmoving. She had killed someone. She had taken a life.

But she couldn't afford to dwell on it. She knew that if she stayed any longer, she wouldn't live to see the next day. She grabbed the knife, her only weapon, and began retracing her steps, following the faint gust of wind that seemed to whisper through the cave.

She reached the entrance, a narrow opening that led out into the darkness, but just as she was about to escape, she heard voices behind her. Urgent, angry voices.

"She's escaped!" someone shouted.

Victoria's voice, cold and commanding, echoed through the cave. "Find her! If I don't get her back, I'll have your heads!"

Sophia didn't hesitate. She took the opportunity to run into the darkness. She fled through the forest, her bare feet pounding against the earth, her lungs burning with every breath. She shifted, letting her wolf take over as she ran. She could hear the guards gaining on her, their heavy footsteps echoing through the trees.

Then, a voice, seemingly from nowhere, whispered in her mind: "Go north, child. Go north."

She tried to ignore the voice, dismissing it as a figment of her imagination, a product of her fear and exhaustion. But as she ran, she realized she was being surrounded, the guards closing in from every direction.

Without thinking twice, she moved North. Finally, she reached a clearing. Before her lay a cliff. She skidded to a halt, her paws scrabbling for hold on

the loose earth. She looked back. The guards were upon her, their eyes glowing with predatory hunger, their teeth bared in anticipation.

She was trapped.

She glanced below the cliff. If she fell, she wasn't sure she would survive. But the alternative... She had to think of another way. Maybe she could trick the guards. They were experts, and she was but a clumsy female, but she could try.

She tried to create a feint, darting towards another direction as the guards leapt towards her, but she tripped, her clumsy feet betraying her once again. She tumbled over the cliff, her white fur gleaming in the moonlight as she fell.

Her heart beat erratically in her chest. The only thought in her head was that she was going to die. She tried to escape from death but was about to die. Soon, she collided with the ground below. Her head crashed against the rocks, her body wracked with pain, each impact sending shards of agony through her. Darkness closed in, threatening to engulf her.

But she couldn't give up. She had to survive.

With a groan, she pushed herself to her feet, her body trembling with exhaustion, every muscle screaming in protest. She stumbled forward, her vision blurred, her senses dulled. She had to keep on moving. They would come for her.

She wandered aimlessly through the forest, her body numb, her mind blank. The snow began to fall, soft flakes swirling around her, blanketing the world in a layer of white, blurring the already indistinct landscape. She had no idea how long she walked. She only knew she had to survive. She had come this far. She could not give up now. Finally, she came across a building. Her vision was blurry, but she could make out the statue at the entrance, the form of a beautiful woman carved in stone. Maybe, if she were in her right senses, she would have stopped to admire the statue, but instead, she stumbled into the building.

She did not take note of the fruits that lay at the steps, offerings to the goddess within. Nor did she notice the flowers and how beautiful they were, their delicate petals dusted with snow. Her head throbbed, a relentless, pounding ache. Blood poured into her eyes, stinging her already compromised vision. Her body also throbbed from the pain of the fall. She stumbled inside, collapsing onto the cold stone floor, surrendering to the darkness that beckoned.