

Chapter 74

I gulped as my confused mate closed the distance between us, curling his arms around my waist in keen curiosity and concern. I knew he was trying to read my face. I knew he was trying his best to decipher whatever I was thinking or what Felicity and I were talking about, but I couldn't tell him. Not yet. Not while I didn't have a solid plan to try and convince him that this was the right thing to do.

But now it was too late. He knew I was thinking about something, and I couldn't lie, or he'd know.

"Maxim . . ." I paused, unsure of how to continue.

Felicity shifted behind me, evidently wanting to leave as Maxim's features softened, and he pulled me in his arms tighter.

"Hey," he mumbled. "You can talk to me. Please talk to me."

He was worried now. I could feel the shift in his emotions.

I chewed on the inside of my cheek until it bruised. "Well, I was just aware that the issue with the moon shard is still . . . real, you know? And I haven't had any other idea of how to end it once and for all."

He nodded, seeming thoughtful. "Uh-huh. So, what do you have in mind?"

Here it comes. "I um . . . I was going to try and see where it is and learn the story behind it all."

"How?"

I gulped, dropping his intense gaze. "I wanted to dream-"

"No." That was just it. No cursing, no voice raising, and not even a twitch in his demeanour. It was just no.

"But-"

"Melissa, I just got you back. You're tired. You need to take a break from the pain and the chaos and just live." He slid his arms up and down my arm in a gesture to comfort me, as I didn't even notice I was crying until he swiped fallen tears from my eyes.

Felicity respectfully excused herself, leaving me all alone in this mess.

"But don't you get it, Maxim?" I mumbled desperately. "I cannot rest or feel like everything won't turn into chaos until I end this once and for all. So please try to understand."

"I do understand, baby," he cooed. "I understand that-"

"Do you? Do you really know what it feels like to know that my parents died for this? That they died because they knew something about the dragons that the moon goddess didn't want them to know, and they thought the only way to protect me was to sacrifice themselves to hide the moon shard? Because I don't think you do."

I didn't want to sound harsh or mean. But I knew it came out that way.

He swallowed. "Maybe I don't. But I do know that it isn't a threat to you anymore, Melissa. Felicity and her dragon friend made us see that. And if your parents had to die because they learnt the truth, why would I ever consider allowing you to do the same? I can't lose you, Melissa. Don't you get that?"

"That's just it, Maxim. You can't 'allow' me to do anything. I am a grown woman, and I can do whatever the hell I want. Now, I will respect what you say and your viewpoints. I understand that it's scary, Maxim. I do. But I will do this whether you support me or not. So you should know where you want to be when I do. I love you, and hurting you is the last thing I want to do. And I know if I get hurt, you will too. This is why I want to be more prepared this time. The last time I was testing the waters. But I don't HAVE to lose my mind, and I don't HAVE to fall into eternal sleep. Those are just possibilities."

"But-"

"And I know what you're going to say. The dragons aren't trying to hurt me. But I still need to do this,

Maxim. For my own peace of mind. If I don't, then I won't be able to start healing.

He was silent for a while, staring at me in full blown horror. I sighed. I wanted to wipe his worry away, though I knew I couldn't. So, I kissed him. I wrapped my arms around his neck and pulled him flush against my body. His arms went around my waist on instinct, and I sighed into the kiss as he wholly let me in.

"I love you for worrying about me so much," I whispered against him, nibbling on his lower lip. "But this is something I have to do, Maxim. I simply have to."

"And if you don't?" His eyes were closed as he slid his hands past my shirt and up my back. The cold air bit my bare skin, and I shivered under his icy fingertips and the nibble of the breeze.

"Then I won't ever be able to move on. I won't be able to find utter peace with you and our pack." It felt nice saying 'our pack'. All my life being a Luna wasn't far fetched since I knew I'd be mated to a high ranking wolf. But to actually have a pack that looked up to me-it was surreal yet exhilarating.

"And there's no other way?"

"Not that we've thought of. And quite frankly, if the moon goddess has no clue where it is, how the hell can I find it any other way?"

Maxim hated the idea. I could tell. I could feel it in his energy, and I could see it in his face. He still didn't open his eyes, but the pain was evident even without meeting his stormy orbs.

I frowned and cupped his cheek. "Hey, look at me." His eyes fluttered open at my tiny request. "We can do this, okay? I felt like I didn't have anyone the last time because we all were mourning Lukas. Perhaps that's why it didn't go well. I was too emotionally unstable. But now, you'll be right at my side."

"Holding your hand."

"So I have no choice but to come back to you." To see him smiling was a relief and evoked a simper of my own as I kissed him again.

Finally, I got him on my side. And indeed, it was better to know that he would be there with me than to do it alone.

The next day, I told everyone else. Felicity seemed shocked that Maxim actually agreed, and I could tell that she was upset. However, the decision was hardly made. I just need to know if they'd support me or not. Leo was the only one who didn't protest. I wasn't surprised. He always had an easy-going, nonchalant thing about him that only ever changed when Fiona was involved.

Louie didn't agree, but she didn't disagree either. But Fiona-she was the hardest to crack. With all her hormones all over the place, she bawled like a cat in heat, saying that I was risking too much. But what is life without risks? What is life without sacrifice?

It took days to actually convince everyone to try and not stop me and even more days to actually prepare. Louie and Toya helped when they could. With Louie's 'vibration gift' with the universe, she was able to help me train somewhat. She taught me how to channel my thoughts into a dream without actually falling asleep. It wasn't easy. And I couldn't count the amount of time Maxim had to kiss me back to consciousness. But that was the thing that got them all on the same page once and for all. The simple fact that all I needed was an anchor.

Each time I drifted too far, Maxim seemed to be the only one to pull me back. And after days and days of trying, I think we all finally got it.

It was now two days before Felicity's induction which meant two days before the full moon. Just like me, she'd go through her heat on the night of the full moon, so the induction would be kept in the morning.

As we prepared for both events, the house was always busy. Louie was in and out of the forest constantly, trying to find the right calming herbs for me. Felicity and Lukas were always busy trying to prepare, and Maxim and I . . . We spent every last second together as if it was our last.

The hidden truth behind it was that we knew that even with all the preparation, there was a slight, tiny chance that this could go badly-that he'd actually lose me. So, the excessive love making, spending time

together, and words of sentiment and adoration were like a premeditated goodbye. And I had to keep him happy and positive. I had to make him believe that this would work.

There were a few times over the weeks when he tried to rebuild the idea, but he knew I'd do it with or without him, so he tried to stay on my good side.

At last, the evening came, and I had just gotten off the phone with Toya. She told me to remain calm for the umpteenth time, and she told me everything I needed to do to remain anchored to Maxim- how far I should and shouldn't go.

Louie worked nonstop to prepare the perfect ambience for this. It was like we were performing a ritual. She made me some tea that oddly did a lot to calm my brain, and she had to give Fiona and Felicity some too.

Only Louie and Maxim were allowed in the room. The others waited downstairs because the slightest disruption could be chaotic. At first, they protested to the arrangement, wanting to be as close as possible to me. But after hearing the risks, they basically dashed from the room.

Maxim laid me in our bed, gently resting my head against the pillow as Louie lit a few scented candles on the nightstand-especially made by her and for me. They did the rest in calming me, and having my mate with me was even better.

He smiled down at me, trying to be strong though I could feel the terror in his eyes. I reached up and cupped his face in my palm, lightly caressing his cheek with my thumb.

"I'll be back, okay?" I whispered.

He breathed out a sigh before reaching down to kiss me. He laced his fingers in mine and rested our intertwined hands on my chest as he pulled away.

"And I'll be here . . . waiting. So, come back to me."

"As long as you don't let go."

"Never."

That much reassured me. Yes, I was terrified too. I was terrified about what I'd find. I was scared that I might not be as strong as I thought I was. It was all too much, yet, I knew I had to do it.

But having Maxim hold onto me and reassure me that he'd never let go . . . that did it. That was all I needed.

"I love you," I whispered as I caught a teardrop that managed to slide down the side of my face.

Maxim pressed his lips to my forehead. "I love you too. With everything in me."

"Okay, guys, it's time," Louie announced, seeming just as anxious. I glanced through the window, seeing that the sun had gone, yet there was still darkness outside. Louie was sure that the perfect time to do this was at twilight. There was a unique balance and unity in vibration at this time of the day, which Louie said would allow my 'journey' to be smooth and easily transitioned.

And she was right. Because as soon as I focused my mind on where I wanted to go, within seconds, the image of my mate's face became blurry as I slipped peacefully away in the realm of unconsciousness.



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Chapter 75

So excited for this chapter and the others that follow guys! A lot happens so please stay tuned and enjoy! :):)

I had no clue where I was, but I wasn't worried. I expected to land in an unusual place. After all, I didn't know where the moon shard was, and I was looking for it.

Around me was pure black. There wasn't a feature in place, but I could hear the light rush of water in the distance. Then, I realised that I had my eyes closed, even though I thought I had opened them. No wonder I didn't see anything.

As I opened my eyes, I instantly knew where I was. It was the place this all began. It was the place I always questioned growing up.

The trees seemed extra tall, and the leaves almost seemed like they bowed in my direction as I walked. My feet sank deep into the moist, soft and prickled against my toes in the most soothing way. It was then that I noticed that I had been barefooted all this time, and the clothes I wore weren't mine.

I wore a long, white dress that swayed in the breeze, much like the one I wore when the moon goddess brought me to her. The air tasted and smelled fresh, and it was as if the birds and insects chirped in harmony. It felt extra peaceful. It was extra calm. And though I feared that it would turn around and end badly like my nightmares, this time, I knew it wouldn't.

As I approached the river, my reflection became crystal clear, and I gasped at what-or who I saw. It was me, but my hair was entirely black-no blue streak-and my eyes were . . . brown. I trailed my finger over the bottom of my eyes as I gaped in shock. I have never seen myself with brown eyes before. Yet it looked . . . good. It suited me as if this was the real me. As if this was how it was supposed to be all along.

My eyes caught something shimmering in the water. As I peered closer, it glowed a bright light-much like the one I emitted at the barbecue that night and much like the colour of my eyes.

I sank my feet into the water, appreciating its cool touch against my skin as I moved towards the light. Since the water touched me around my knees, my dress floated at the surface. With each swoosh sound that my feet made, I drew closer to the object until . . . as I bent down to reach for it, it slipped away and floated down the wakes of the water.

Huffing, I followed behind it, even though the water got deeper and deeper. Soon. It was at my chin, and the shiny object floated even farther down the river. But I wasn't giving up. I wasn't going to let it get away.

So, I went after it, and when I did, I was submerged from head to toe. However, what was weird was that I could still breathe and see clearly as if I wasn't in water at all.

But most importantly, the object sat right in front of me, glowing in all its beautiful glory. It was marvellous, and I've never seen anything like it. I knew this was it. I knew it was the moon shard.

I grabbed for it, but it slipped from my fingers just as I was about to reach for it. Then I felt like I was falling.

I squeezed my eyes shut as I fell, thinking that I'd be condemned to eternal sleep, where I just fell and fell. That's what it felt like. But then I wasn't falling anymore, and I found myself on a hard, warm surface, though I didn't feel the impact of the drop.

Everything was dark once again, but now I knew to open my eyes. As I did, the first thing that I found familiar was the proximity of the moon and the ocean I've gotten so accustomed to anytime I visited the moon goddess. But now, instead of being in the sand, I was on the top of the mountain, where I could see both sides of the island. I gasped as I peered in the direction of the sun. I only ever got a glimpse of it once, but I've never truly seen it so large, so bright. It was marvellous.

But unlike the cool, blue ocean on the moon's side of the island, there was lava. I could see where the sea

and the lava met and separated, and this side of the island was much different than the moon's side. Instead of white sand, there were hard, dark igneous rocks on the sun's side. But the odd thing was-it was absolutely beautiful and pure. It left me in complete awe. I had no clue that lava could be so majestic, and it completely complimented the sun.

I stood on my feet as I searched my surroundings. The moon shard brought me here-on the top of the island of the sun and the moon. But why?

"My dear Amaris. Why won't you listen to me?"

I gasped at the sound of a male's voice out of nowhere, and I swerved around in shock. My breath, heart and everything stopped when I saw what was in front of me.

There stood the moon goddess. She was as beautiful as I remembered, with her ocean blue eyes and long, white hair. But in front of her stood a man-a man who I had never seen before, but I knew who he was.

He was tall-so tall that he towered over the moon goddess at least by seven inches. He had fiery hair and golden eyes. Yet, even with the contrast in appearance-the moon goddess more like ice and him like fire, they seemed . . . suited. As if they matched utterly perfectly together. And by the looks of it-by the way, the sun dragon looked at her, spoke to her and called her name (that I didn't even know she had), I could see something between them. Something strong.

It didn't seem like they were aware of my presence as the sun dragon continued.

"You had not even considered. You just said-"

"No, Helios. I will not. We won't know what this . . . this thing will be like!"

"You make wonderful werewolves, my love. And I make creatures with unique abilities to-"

"Burn cities to the ground?"

I winced at the sharpness in her tone, yet the sun dragon-Helios, didn't even flinch. In fact, he smiled.

"Ah, but yes. They can. Yet, they are loving, healing creatures that will never do such a thing. You are far too afraid of my creation when werewolves can do even worse. A single wolf can massacre an entire town of humans, and so can a dragon."

"That is barely the point, Helios. Yes, we got lucky with Werewolves and dragons, but making a creature of both the sun and moon? That is far too powerful-far too risky. No, Helios. The answer is no."

The moon goddess seemed stern, but I was simply shocked out of my skin. A new creature? How, when!?

I was utterly confused. The sun dragon and the moon goddess are . . . lovers? I mean, it would make sense. Just as much sense as mortal enemies. But how? When?

And then, I noticed.

This wasn't happening in real-time, or else one or both of them would've seen me by now. I also noticed that the ocean looked far less empty than when I was here, but I only thought it was because I was on the mountain.

This happened in the past-something that I am witnessing right in front of me.

My heart slammed against my chest, and I stood still and unmoving as if a tiny flinch would stop it all.

The moon goddess, seeming stern on her decision, stepped away. But the sun dragon caught her by the wrists and swept her to his chest, where he snaked his arm around her waist. She was evidently affected by the gesture as her eyes suddenly got brighter and softer, and how she melted into him.

"With your moon jewel and my sun crystal, we can do-"

"Oh, don't you get it, my love?" the moon goddess said as she interrupted his talk. "I'm . . . scared."

I gasped aloud but threw my hand over my mouth quickly, scared that they would hear even though I knew this wasn't happening right now. Firstly, to hear the moon goddess say that she was scared . . . this

woman who we cried to in our scariest moments back on earth. It only showed that sometimes we were far too inconsiderate when it came to her. We cursed her when we lost people we loved. We expect her to give us all our heart's desire that we don't even realise that she is just as capable of mundane feelings as all of us.

And secondly, did he say moon jewel and sun crystal? Like the same one Louie mentioned? Was the moon jewel what we all knew as the moon rock?

Helios' eyes softened then saddened. I could see that whatever he wanted to make meant a lot to him.

"I just want a family with you, Amaris. Something to call ours instead of separately. We'll still own and love our separate creations, but together . . . we can make something spectacular. We won't send him to earth. We'll have him here being our-

"Child," she whispered through a short breath. Helios nodded eagerly, seeming as if he wanted nothing more than to have a family with her.

It made my heart ache. They live every day seeing their creations make families every day, but they don't really have one of their own.

"We can make love under the stars." His voice dropped an octave as he pulled her closer.

Oh.

Was this my cue to leave or . . .?

"We'll channel the power from our stones to make it work, my love. Have you ever thought about it? An offspring? Our offspring?"

Instead of swooning and shouting yes like I expected, she shook her head and stumbled from his grasp.

"No . . . Yes, I have, Helios. I have for centuries!" She was sobbing now, and I couldn't bear it. I wanted to hug her-to tell her there was nothing to be afraid of. "But don't you remember how I was? I wasn't always . . . good. I was. . ."

"You were never evil, Amaris." I gasped again as the sun dragon held her in his arms once more. His face and voice were stern as if this was something he had told her over and over in hopes that she'd believe it. But, the moon goddess was . . . evil?"

"I was." She cried even harder. "Making the werewolf species and finding you here brought me to the light. I was evil, Helios-creating mischief with the other planets and toying with nature only because I could. And-and some of that evil seep into my werewolves. Why do you think their first instinct when they think they are in danger is to kill?"

Wow. I never thought about it that way.

"Why do you think some lose their way and become evil, awful rogues? Why do you think werewolves are more prone to developing moody, closed-off personalities? Ruthless, even? That evil"- She hiccupped-"My evil seeped into them. I . . . I murdered the last moon goddess eight thousand years ago, Helios. Hence why I felt compelled to take her place."

I choked on air. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. The moon goddess wasn't the original moon goddess? My mind was spinning, and my feet went weak. I had to sit on the ground to stop my head from going under, and I didn't want to leave just yet.

"That was an accident." He tried to console her, but she cried even more. "You didn't mean to do that."

"But I did." She cried harder.

"She was nothing like you, though, my love. You make a far better moon goddess."

"I agree," mumbled. Even though I had no clue about this other moon goddess long before werewolves were created, our moon goddess is pretty awesome-despite her strange ways.

Amaris shook her head. "It doesn't matter. I have evil seeping through me still, Helios. And I'm scared that if we create something so powerful-by combining the power of the moon jewel and the sun crystal, he'll

be evil. He'll kill us both and overthrow us. He'll cause chaos on earth with both our species. He'd be able to make creatures like we had, And who knows what they'll be?"

I got it now. It's not that she didn't want to have a family with him. She really did. I could see it.

But she was scared that their child would be evil. That he'd be so powerful with both their powers that he'd ruin the world.

Still, I didn't understand how this was related to the moon shard or jewel or whatever it was called, and whatever this sun crystal is. But I had a feeling I'd soon know.

The sun dragon looked torn to pieces-hating to see the woman he loved in so many shambles. He kissed her tears away gently as he rested his forehead against hers. I could tell that he was broken up about this too, but he accepted defeat.

"If only you could see yourself through my eyes, my love. If only."

Fresh tears fell down her cheeks as she returned his hug. For a minute, they simply just stayed like that in silence. No one spoke; no one moved. But the moon goddess was the first to do so.

She looked up at him, heartbroken and guilty as she said, "You wanted a son, didn't you?"

Helios' smile was strained as he answered. "I'd never force you to do something you didn't want to, Amaris."

"Yes, but when you want something, you go after it, no matter what. You are very passionate about what you want." The way she said it and the thick tension that sat between them afterwards showed me that there was something that I was missing.

All of a sudden, Helios' face was void of all emotions-all but regret and guilt. I had no idea what happened between them, but it was evident that the moon goddess wasn't the only one with a history she regrets.

"I've changed," came his simple reply.

She scoffed. "You were never bad, Helios. You were just. . . passionate about what you desire."

"Too passionate."

"But look what it caused?" She gripped his chin and forced her gaze to hers. "We're together, and we're happy. I'm sorry I brought it up. I wasn't trying to find company in my guilt. I just . . . I can see how bad you want this, and I don't want you to do anything-"

"I would never try to use your power against you again, Amaris. I was untrusting all those millennia ago. But now, I know you, and I trust you. I will never try to take your power again, you know that, don't you?"

She nodded. "I do."

Except, there was something in the way she said it-as if she didn't believe him-as if she thought that he'd take her power (which I'm sure is the moon jewel) and use it to make a family.

However, he kissed her frown away, and slowly but surely, things . . . evolved.

I put at least fifty feet between us and tried to block out the sounds, wondering why whatever force that brought me here forced me to stay through this part. I already know that the sun dragon and the moon goddess were lovers-madly in love too, it seemed for centuries.

I already knew that the moon goddess wasn't always like this-that she had a bad season. I also know that the sun dragon-at one point-had tried to take away her powers from mistrust, which seemed to spark the union between the two.

But even now, I didn't know anything about the jewel and crystal and the real reason they were sent to earth in the first place. Because from the sound that I tried to block out, the moon goddess and sun dragon were anything but enemies. At least not yet, I presume. Perhaps that's why I hadn't been sent back

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to earth yet. The story is yet to end.
Perhaps it had only just begun.



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