

## Chapter 79

Hello my lovely readers! This book is almost over. :( Only two more chapters and the epilogue to go! I'll miss this story so much. Enjoy!

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If there's one thing I've learned, it's that the moon goddess does not like to be summoned. I have been trying for twelve hours straight, and nothing. I decided that I wouldn't go back to the moon. Inducing another dream in such a short period would probably cause long term damage to my brain, and quite frankly, I didn't want to make another trip to the realm of the sun and the moon. My mate didn't want me to either.

"Melissa, come to bed. It's three in the morning," Maxim mumbled as he held my waist from behind. I sighed, shaking my head.

"I need to get this thing out of my heart. I need to get rid of moon drama. Don't you smell the air? Fiona's baby is coming any day now."

He nodded, his brows pulling together before meeting my eyes again. "You're right, but you still have to sleep, sweetheart. I know you just woke up from three days of sleeping, but-"

"I know," I chuckled, turning in his arms to meet his gaze. "You're right. Let's go to bed."

Maxim leaned down to kiss me. I grinned against his lips as the fatigue I've been trying to resist finally swallowed me whole. Before I knew it, my legs went weak, and I fell in Maxim's arms, drifting in the world of the subconscious.

It was odd that the minute I fell asleep, I no longer felt sleepy, and suddenly I was in the hallway of the Alpha house, dark and cold, with only the moon as a source of light.

"Maxim?" I called my voice bouncing from the walls. I shivered, wrapping my arms around myself as I strolled down the hallway. "Maxim?" Still nothing.

I squinted my eyes as I saw a figure behind the door that led to the balcony. My strides slowed.

"Hello? Who's there?" I pushed against the door, and the cold air bit even more. My teeth snapped against each other.

"Hello, Melissa." I knew that voice anywhere.

"Amaris? I mean, moon goddess?" I squinted my eyes as her shining stopped, still quivering.

She chuckled. "You look well," she teased, her lips curled in a half-smile.

I glared at her. "Why is it so freaking cold?"

"Because you asked me here, on earth." She glanced around, her blue eyes twinkling. "Wow. It had been too long since I last came here. Sorry about the cold. The atmosphere here has to adapt so it can sustain me."

"S-s-so, you came all this way just because I asked you to? I mean, it was worth a shot, but I have to admit that I was pretty doubtful that it would actually work."

"Of course it worked." She smiled, trailing her hand through my hair. "You're special to me, Melissa."

Images of my dreams resurfaced, and I flinched away from her, recovering from my awe.

"It was you!" I pointed an accusing finger at her but quickly wrapped my arms around my body again to shield the cold. "You did all of it!"

Her smile and gaze fell. "Yes."

"And-and you allowed your wolves to believe that the dragons are bad, and the sun dragon is the

She met my eyes again; this time, they shimmered, almost looking sparkly. "What if I told you that I don't know why I allowed the werewolves to believe that? What if I told you that I, the most powerful being of the werewolves, is a coward?"

"Then I'd agree with you," I stated boldly. I knew that she could kill me with the flicker of her wrist, but I had to be honest. "Helios loved you. Hell, I wouldn't be surprised if he still loves you because I saw how he looked at you. I saw that even with a broken heart, you were still his world."

She laughed, but there was no humour behind it. "I created the werewolves to be creatures of love. You mate for life unless they really put up a fight with the mate bond. I did that. Now, one of my own creations has to be telling me about love."

A single tear finally escaped and rolled down her cheek, and with a sigh, I wiped it away and grabbed her hands, even though my now loose arms allowed the cold to come.

"Look, I know I have no right to be saying this, but you need to do the right thing. Helios doesn't deserve to-

"I know," she said, dropping her gaze. "I know what I have to do, Melissa. I've been trying for the past twenty-one earth years."

"Why is that so oddly specific?" I asked.

"Because, my sweet, little wolf, I finally saw the error of my ways when I . . . when I allowed your parents to die only because they learned the truth. I thought if I am so scared of having a child of my own, only because I believe he will ruin mankind, killing my own creation doesn't make me less of a monster I feared to create." She dried her eyes. "You having your gift wasn't random, Melissa. From the moment your parents hid the shard in your heart, I knew you'd be the one to help me right my wrongs. I'm so sorry, Melissa. It's okay to hate me for what I did to your parents."

I wanted to cry, shout, scream and slap her. I wanted to do so much, yet, I stood calm. I couldn't evoke the anger I wanted to feel. I couldn't find the will to let hate take over my heart. So, instead of doing all of that, I retook her hand.

"Tell me what happened. With my parents, I mean."

She paused for a while as if gathering her thoughts. I had so many questions to ask, but I had a feeling all my questions would be answered by my simple request.

"Your father . . . he was so much like you. Your brother is more like your mother. Your father barely wanted anything to do with the shard, yet he felt obligated to do his part. When he found your mom, it became easier. I was still obsessed with keeping the shards away from Helios at that time. I was blinded by fear and obsession with having my way, and I used my oracles to do my earthly dirty work."

"Toya."

"Yes. I sent Toya to your parents when I knew the dragons would strike again. Instead of doing what I wanted, things took a drastic turn, and your parents learned the truth."

"So you killed them?" I didn't intend my voice to sound judgemental, but it did.

"It wasn't my intent, or at least I didn't think it was. They . . . they tried to form a revolution against me. They wanted to overthrow me and allow Helios to be the superior being for both werewolves and dragons."

"Wow," I mumbled. "I didn't even know that was possible."

"It's not," she said. "Hence why I shouldn't have been so angry but-" She buried her face in her hands. "For the first time ever, mortals challenged me. And I knew they had all right to. I knew what I did was awfully wrong, and I didn't just betray the love of my life. I betrayed the wolves and the dragons, too, sending you all on this wild game of chasing and protecting something that's not even ours. Your

parents were hurt, and they were trying to do the right thing. But instead of doing the right thing, I . . . I cursed them."

"Oh my gosh!" I gasped, jumping away from her with my hands over my mouth. My eyes stung as tears brewed in my eyes.

"I decided since they want a dragon to lead them, they'd lose their wolf and shift into something of a dragon. It was awful-so awful that they didn't want to live anymore. They didn't want the curse to affect you or Logan, so they asked Toya to do something that only oracles could do painlessly."

"Death?" I asked, my heart slamming against my chest. That explained why they were chained with the dragon in my nightmares. It wasn't a figurative image. The chains represented the curse, and perhaps the dragon symbolised what the curse was about. My dreams were only trying to show me the truth all along. If only I hadn't taken it so literally.

"In a form, yes. It's more like sending them to the world of the dead, except their souls didn't come home to me."

"Damn right they didn't. Why would they want to?"

"I know," she sighed. "I know. I don't know where they are, but I know they're happy."

Perhaps it's wherever humans go when they die. It only made sense why they were in my old house here on earth. Perhaps they're in the humans afterlife. They were happy there. And I wouldn't want them to return to the moon if they didn't want to. I, for one, wouldn't want anything to do with the moon goddess after what she did. Still, my father had the heart to forgive her. My mother was a work in progress.

I guess Logan and I really are like our parents. I, like my dad, am forgiving because even now, I was already forgiving Amaris. But Logan, like my mom, was a harder shell to crack.

"They're happy, but that is messed up. When Logan and I die, we won't see them again."

"You can. I have invited them to come home whenever they want to if they want to." She shuffled a bit. "Melissa, I want you to know that I vowed never to do something like that again. My wolves are my treasures. When your parents died because of what I did, I knew I couldn't live like this anymore. I knew I had to do the right thing."

I stayed silent for a while, trying not to focus on my numb fingers and toes. "I just want to know this one thing: If you knew where the moon shard was all along, and if you had the intention of returning them to Helios, why did you lie to me in the first place? Why not just come right out and say it? I almost didn't trust you like three times throughout this entire thing."

She shuffled and chewed on her lip, gazing at the moon ahead of us. "I . . . I thought that if you knew the truth, you wouldn't help me, and you'd keep the shard in your heart until you die."

I scoffed. "As if. From the day I learned about this, I've tried to rid my life of it. I am my father's child. I want no part in this, yet I feel it's my obligation to do the right thing. So, I'll say this, when we get all the shards back to Helios, I want a fresh start. No dreams, no pulling me out of this world-literally, no more blue hair and eyes and no more drama. I just want a normal, average life with my mate and my friends."

Her face remained stoic as if she was hurt by my request. But soon, as I knew she would, she nodded.

"Okay, fair enough. I must admit, Melissa, I will miss you. But you're fair, and I respect that." Her lips twitched a bit. "I guess I'll miss talking to you. I've talked to four mortals in my life apart from my oracles, but you're the only one who speaks as if we're friends and not so much like I'm your superior."

I shrugged. "I guess skinning the truth from your life showed me that I might be mortal, but we share very human feelings. You make mistakes too, unforgivable actions and most of all, you have a heart. We're not so different after all. Well, except the immortal part and all."

I laughed, and she followed. It really was odd-laughing with the moon goddess as if she couldn't end

"I'll miss you indeed. And I really, really, really am so sorry for what I did to your parents and all I made you endure. I'm actually . . ."

"Actually what?"

"It's stupid because I know he'll never have me again. But I actually want children now. Because I'm not fit to be the moon goddess anymore. I'll have a daughter, and she'll lead the wolves. But that's only if Helios ever forgive me."

Her vulnerability made me forget that she was the moon goddess for a second. I wanted to reassure her that he would forgive her. I really did. But I couldn't speak for him, and if someone stole my source of power for centuries because of their own fears and beliefs, I doubt my forgiving nature would be so generous.

"There's only one way to find out, isn't it? And it's by taking the first step. You said you wanted my help, and I'm assuming Helios is the only one who could retrieve the shard from my heart, no?"

It only made sense. Why else would she have stopped me the first time I went to the moon? I was drawn to Helios' side of the island, but she didn't want me to go to him. At least not yet. I'm guessing she needed me a bit longer, and if Helios got the shard, then I wouldn't be able to help with anything else.

"Yes, he's the only one who can. Your parents were smart. Their mistrust in me was well placed; hence they made it possible so that the only person who could take the shard was the rightful owner."

I hummed. "I didn't understand at first, but now I know that you want me to do something else, don't you? If it was only for the shard, you would've allowed me to go to Helios a long time ago."

She nodded. "You're right, Melissa. I want you to be the one who retrieves all the other missing shards."

I snapped my head towards her. "Me? Why? Don't you have oracles to do that? Or dragons whose job is to do just that?"

"I can't trust anyone else, especially when the truth about them is revealed. People will revolt, Melissa. They'll try and use it as a leverage for power, and don't get me started if it falls into the hands of a cruel Alpha."

"Okay, okay, I get it." I sighed. "One week. I'm only giving you one week to show me where the others are."

She beamed. "Lovely. And you should know you're the only one who can bring them to the moon, too. With your gift of dreaming."

"You know you didn't have to put me through endless weeks of trauma, pain and confusion, right? We could've had this talk from day one, and I would've gladly done what you say."

She raised a knowing brow. "Would you? I knew I didn't have to lie, but you've come a long way. You have gotten stronger and more resilient. Sometimes it's not so much of the task, Melissa, but the journey. I learned that the hard way."

I guess she was right. If from the beginning she would've brought me to her, I would've freaked. The nightmares got me accustomed to the unknown, they made me braver, and they opened the door to the possibility that my mind could've never had phantom, like powers.

My visit to the moon got me accustomed to the entire craziness of it all, and I guess losing my mind was only collateral damage, as were the dragon attacks.

In all, these past months have made me stronger. Lukas marking me, getting sick, and the dragon attacks were barely anything to do with the moon goddess. But things that she influenced, plus everything else, really made me more resilient, stronger and open.

Then and only then would I really be able to do this task.

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"Okay," I nodded. "What do I need to do?" I asked, and she grinned.

"I thought you'd never ask."



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## Chapter 80

It took a whole week, but it was finally done.

I retrieved every last shard from across the world, and relief wasn't anything close to what I felt. Maxim, most of all, was ecstatic about the entire thing. He hated that the moon goddess asked me to do this, but he knew better than trying to talk me out of it.

This would finally be our freedom. The moon goddess would keep her promise and release me from powers, dreaming and realm jumping. Then, and only then, will I be able to live a peaceful, everyday life with him and my friends. So, he had to oblige.

There was a huge uproar in the werewolf community, though, as the truth came to life. It wasn't easy convincing the wolves to give up the shards that they thought were rightfully ours, and it didn't help that Louie was with me either. They believed I joined forces with the dragons. I almost lost my life to an Alpha because of that very issue.

That's when I learned that I could show them what I saw in my three days of dreaming. The shard saved my life when Alpha Toplin of The Ocean Pack grabbed my throat. I was immediately able to show him the truth, and I didn't even know I could do that. All I knew, I entered his mind and gave him a quick synopsis of the truth.

Of course, he was heartbroken and regretful and begged me not to tell my mate, knowing it could cause war between our packs. Harming another Alpha's mate is a considerable offence. But I had to tell Maxim and beg him not to do anything. Since that day, he has accompanied me on every trip across the world.

The initial reason he stayed home was that I asked him to. He can be very . . . protective when we are out, and I thought he'd slow me down. But I couldn't convince him to stay away after what Alpha Toplin did.

Still, after knowing what I could do, it became much easier to convince the other two wolves to give up the shard. All I did was show them the truth, and they happily obliged. However, the buzz about the truth has gotten around, and wolves worldwide have been sceptical about trusting the moon goddess again. Their concern is justified, but I only hope it will soon pass.

The final shard was actually in the hands of a dragon. I have heard that some years ago, the dragons managed to retrieve one of the shards. And if it weren't for Louie being with me, I would have never convinced that dragon to give me the shard. After all, it's their life's purpose to protect them. So, asking for it would've obviously caused some issues.

Nonetheless, I now held all five shards—well, four shards and one in my heart, and I was getting prepped to visit the realm of the sun and the moon one last time.

Lukas and Maxim upped back security by over three hundred men after I got home. With news of the moon shards out in the werewolf world, there is no doubt that some ruthless, power-hungry Alpha would probably be on their way trying to steal the shards for manipulative power. Or some rogue trying to steal them to buy their way into a pack or form one of their own.

Hence, why I didn't hesitate to get ready for my final trip to the moon. I needed to leave earth with them ASAP and get my life on.

I wasn't worried about the border patrol, though. My mate had an outstanding patrol, and my brother sent some wolves from his pack to help. Also, some Alphas across the county had sent men to help, though we had to keep a keen eye on them to ensure they weren't spies. We still appreciated the help and support, not to mention the understanding. I must say, I am proud of the werewolf species.

We have been at war with dragons for years, and now knowing the truth, the werewolves really stood up and did the right thing. They supported the idea of returning the shards. Of course, there must be a few wolves who would protest the entire thing or want the moon goddess to keep the shards for herself. But they wouldn't dare show themselves when more than half of the werewolf population supported the movement of doing the right thing.

Louie and Toya assured me that everyone would know once the sun dragon retrieves his shards. So, there will be no unexpected attack after I return to earth. I was counting on it.

As much as I hate the entire drama and the trouble with powers and dreams, it felt good to be the one who would fix it all for both species. Maybe, just maybe, this could mean peace.

"Are you sure you're ready?" Louie asked as she lit the candles around my bed. It's like I could feel all the eyes of the wolves at the border watching me as the moon reached its apex.

I nodded. The last thing I wanted was to lose the easy ride to the moon. According to Amaris and Louie, it's the easiest and least troubling way to travel between realms when the moon is at its apex.

Maxim squeezed my hand and placed a kiss on my knuckles.

"Be careful, please. We don't know if the sun dragon is angry or vengeful. Please."

"Be careful," I finished for him. "I will be. I promise."

He leaned down to kiss me, and I let my eyes flutter close, and my mind drifted as I basked in the feeling of having his lips on mine.

As I opened my eyes again, I was no longer on earth. I clung to a small bag to my chest. I peered inside, seeing the bright, blue glimmer of the four shards inside. I sighed in relief, glad that I didn't jump realms and left them.

"Amaris?" I called as I peered around the island. "Helios?"

"Hello, Melissa."

"Shit!" I screamed, swerving around at a male's voice. I stumbled back a bit, digging my heels in the cool sand.

Helios.

I recognised him from my dream, but he looked so... different. His beard had grown out, his eyes were dark and gloomy, and he looked... drained. His once fiery hair was dull, and even his smile seemed strained.

"H-h-helios?" I asked, scared that he'd attack me. Maxim's voice suddenly echoed in my brain, and I stepped back again.

This time, I hit against something soft and firm-like a female body. Helios's gaze drifted from me to who was behind me, and suddenly the dullness in his eyes disappeared. That's when I knew for sure that Amaris had joined us.

He took a step closer, suddenly not seeing me anymore as he gazed at her with so much longing.

"Oh my gosh," the moon goddess whispered. "What have I done to you?"

I stepped aside so I could look at both of them. From what I've learned, this was the first time they saw each other in years. But I knew Helios must've been aware of what had been happening on earth, hence why he knew to expect my arrival here.

But the look on Amaris's face told me that she didn't expect him to be on her side of the island.

"Surprised to see me, my love?" Helios asked with a shaky laugh, though his eyes didn't display humour. "The years without my crystal took its toll on me."

Amaris fell to her knees, throwing her hands over her mouth as sobs asked her body.

"I'm so, so sorry, Helios. I was a coward. I was scared of myself and became the monster I feared to create. Helios, I knew it would hurt you but... but I didn't know it would be this bad. I was just trying to do the right thing for humanity."

Helios simply watched her as she sobbed against the sand. I couldn't tell what he was thinking, but I knew there was no anger behind his dull eyes.

I stood awkwardly to the side, hugging the bag closer to my chest as I watched them. I had no idea what to do, but I knew I had to give them a moment.

Slowly, he moved closer to her and stopped before her. His knees trembled as he did so, and I tried my best not to feel bad for him.

"I once told you that I'd never forgive you for what you did, Amaris," Helios said, lifting her head to meet her gaze. "And I tried to keep that promise. I really did. I tried to hate you so bad, Amaris. But do you know what hurt the most when I lost my shards?"

"What?" she hiccupped.

"The fact that I didn't have you. Every time I was so cold, alone and feeling the power drain from my body year after year, all I could think about was that I didn't have you to... to love."

"But-but I ruined you," she said, wiping her eyes.

"You did," he mumbled, "but I was ruined from the day I knew I loved you. I knew you'd be the death of me, Amaris. Yet, I loved you... I yearned for you. So, who's really to blame but me?"

"I don't understand. Why don't you hate me?"

Helios smiled as he cupped her cheek. I gasped as the colour returned to his eyes. When I saw him, they were grey. But now, they were back to his bright, golden colour. They just changed right before us. Amaris gasped too, jumping up with her mouth hanging wide.

"You see, Amaris? It's not my crystals that gave me life; it's being with you."

They stood together. Amaris's feet shook as Helios held her. I trembled, too, because I felt like he'd snap her neck any second. But I was wrong. Because as he held her, his hair slowly regained its colour too.

That's when I realised something that I had always known but never truly believed until now: the greatest source of power in the entire universe is love.

Pure and undeniable love.



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