

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 221: The Departure[1,286 words]

Chapter 221: The Departure

Zahliver's POV

Death.

It has a distinct scent to it. Heavy, bitter, and metallic. It seeps silently into the air like a thick fog and settles deep in the lungs until you can no longer tell whether you are actually breathing fresh air or slowly drowning. Sometimes, it does not take your physical heart or your mind away right away it leaves just enough of you behind so that the searing pain can linger, pulsing through the body like a cruel and steady rhythm.

I have never feared death. Not really. At least, not when it came to my own fate. For so long, I have danced closely with it, outrun its grasp, and challenged its finality. But nothing in all my years prepared me for how it feels to imagine someone I truly love someone I desperately love being taken away by it. I never realized how completely unbearable that thought could be until I finally met her.

Vivian.

Just the mere thought of death brushing its cold fingers against her soft skin makes my entire chest cave inward.

That is simply what death does. It does not just steal a life away. It fundamentally changes people. It reveals their truest, rawest form. It reshapes them into something they never knew they could become something darker, sometimes stronger, and very often broken.

I have lived through a thousand deaths already, and I know deep down that there will be more waiting for me in the shadows. But death never shows up the same way twice. It never knocks politely on the door. It just barges right in, stealing precious breath, valuable time, and deep love. It reminds you, over and over again, that nothing in this world is permanent. It proves that what you cling to with all your might can be torn away in a single heartbeat and left to rot in the cold arms of nothingness.

And yet, here I am. Still standing tall. After every single loss, every terrible fall, and every close brush with the jagged edge, I always rise again. Maybe I should feel deeply grateful for the strange loopholes that let me crawl back from the grave. But some things... some things in this universe are simply not meant to return.

Some things should probably stay dead and buried.

"I will be back," I told her just before leaving, my voice low and steady as I gazed deeply into Vivian's warm brown eyes. They held that familiar warmth once again that soul-deep fire that always managed to melt the bitter ice inside my chest. It burned purely for me.

The way she squinted slightly, lifting her chin with a fierce kind of stubbornness, made my heart skip a beat. "You better. Or I will come find you myself."

The way she said it with zero hesitation and no fear at all made my chest tighten painfully. She was not joking around. Not even a single bit. My beautiful, utterly reckless mate. That wild glint shining in her eyes made me want to laugh and groan out loud all at once. Amusement tangled heavily with dread right in the pit of my stomach.

She had no idea how dangerous that promise truly was. Or maybe she did know. And she simply did not care.

But that was just Vivian. She never did anything halfway. Especially not when it came to protecting me or holding onto us. If I did not come back to her, I knew without a doubt that she would move the heavens and tear apart the earth itself just trying to get to me.

That alone was more than enough reason for me to finish this grim task quickly.

I needed to return to her side. I needed to come home. Not just to the physical place, but to her arms. I wanted to feel her curled up against my side once more, hear her bright laughter, and spoil her until she completely forgot what it felt like to suffer. Just being near her made everything else in this miserable world bearable. Everything else became entirely secondary.

I bent down slowly and pressed a firm kiss to her forehead, closing my eyes tightly as I did so. If I gave myself even a single second more if I allowed myself to brush my lips against hers I knew I would not leave. I knew it in my bones.

And I had to go.

Not just for myself. Not just for my long-lost brother. But for her. I could not let this dark shadow hover over her head any longer. She did not deserve that kind of burden. She deserved true peace.

So I forced my body to pull back, completely ignoring the loud roar of angry protest echoing from the beast trapped inside my mind. He hated this. He hated being apart from our mate, especially so soon after we had finally gotten her back. But we both understood clearly that it had to be done.

I turned away to leave.

But just before I shifted my focus fully away, I looked back at her one last time.

She was not dressed like the royalty she was. No fancy gowns, no glamor. Her dark hair was tousled and messy, falling softly over her shoulders. She stood there completely barefoot, wearing an oversized sweater that hung far too big for her small frame, nervously clutching the soft hem of it in her hands without even realizing she was doing it.

She looked so human. So wonderfully real.

And her eyes good gods, those beautiful eyes they were locked directly on mine. Wide, wide open and filled with worry. Filled with everything I felt I did not deserve to have, but somehow still held: raw fear, unconditional love, deep pride, and absolute trust.

She believed in me.

Her mate.

And that powerful belief that was what would carry me safely through whatever dark storm lay ahead of us.

She believed in me.

In that single, fleeting moment, with her gaze locked onto mine, all the heavy shadows that had ever curled beneath my confidence vanished instantly like smoke in the wind. Any hesitation, any tiny flicker of doubt was simply gone. Her faith in me was absolute. And because she knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I would succeed... I would.

"I love you!" I shouted loudly, not because I had to shout for her to hear me, but because I wanted the whole world to know. She would have heard my voice clearly even if I had merely whispered it through our mental bond. But I needed the rushing wind, the open sky, and the entire island to hear just what she meant to me.

Her face brightened instantly, lighting up my chest with something wild and steady all at the exact same time.

"I love you too! Come back in one piece!" she yelled back just as loudly, and just as fiercely.

I did not let myself linger a single second longer. I carved the image of her glowing eyes filled with hope and fierce strength deep into my memory and turned my back on the house. I would come back to her. I would always find my way back to her. Leaving her behind for a moment was not giving up anything at all. It was choosing everything that mattered. I closed the active link between us, sealing it up tight. She would not have to feel the chaos or the deadly danger that lay ahead of us tonight. Not if I could possibly help it.

Within minutes, I met up with the others waiting in the dark, ready for war.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 222: The Armor of War[1,267 words]

Chapter 222: The Armor of War

Zahliver's POV

Lexero, Albericus, Fern all of them were already there, geared up and ready for battle. Venom lingered further off to the side, his presence both separate and deeply woven into the whole group. Each of them wore their history like armor, different from one another, but completely bound by the exact same purpose.

Lexero stood tall, gold lines painted beneath his eyes, black and gold rimmed, looking fierce and wild. His hair was pulled up the way he always wore it before stepping into a fight. The man never lost his taste for flair, his golden armbands gleaming brightly in the dim light of the camp. A golden collar framed his neck and shoulders, half protective and half symbolic, and he walked completely barefoot like the true beast he was. Baggy jeans barely concealed the coiled, deadly tension of the lion waiting beneath his skin. He gave me a sharp, eager nod before striding toward a unit of soldiers waiting patiently for him.

Albericus was a far cry from the laid-back version of himself that I usually saw every day. His dark curls were tied back securely, his body armored in a tactical vest and pants designed to shift right along with him a practical, if slightly reluctant, gift from Aurora. He looked up the moment I arrived, his jaw clenched tight with fierce purpose. No words were needed between the two of us. He was ready.

Fern was off to the side, seated cross-legged on the ground, completely cloaked in silence and calm. With his eyes closed, he was centering his mind in that eerie, focused way of his. No one dared to disturb him. His blade, polished and gleaming in the light, rested right before him like a silent promise. Fern was not like the rest of us he did not crave the wild rush of the shift. He fought using the raw strength of his wolf while remaining entirely in human form, channeling his primal instinct with deliberate, cold control. His dark cloak shrouded the hidden weapons I knew he carried, acting as a quiet storm waiting to be unleashed.

I glanced over toward Venom.

Venom was simply... Venom. Always the total anomaly of the group. Clad head to toe in a white t-shirt, dress pants, and even white Converse sneakers on his feet, he looked completely out of place and yet exactly where he needed to be. Our eyes met across the space. He gave a single nod, and I returned the gesture. He already knew his role by heart. He knew precisely when he would be needed on the field. Without another word, he turned on his heel and vanished into the shadows.

I moved quietly through the bustling camp, walking past warriors sharpening their blades and double-checking their weapons. Some men spoke in low whispers to one another, while others remained completely silent. I headed straight toward the back of the dark cave where my own personal preparation waited for me.

A tall glass case stood before me, completely unmoved and untouched since the last time I had placed my heavy hand against its surface. I paused for a long moment, letting myself absorb the sight of it once again.

What lay inside the glass was not just ordinary battle gear. It was a dark piece of my past ruthless, blood-soaked, and irrevocably mine. It was born straight out of the most wretched Chapters of my long life. It had seen the absolute worst of me. The fiercest parts. The most merciless. It had been right there when my hands were painted bright red in war after war across the centuries. It was truly my second skin.

Blood. Death. Fear. Hatred.

And beneath it all, a twisted kind of beauty.

And pure evil.

It had clung to every single bit of that suffering... long before any of it had ever clung to me.

The wild beast trapped inside my mind stirred not with a frantic yearning this time, but with a cold, calm familiarity. It recognized every single piece, every fold, every stitched line of what I was about to wear. But instead of aching for the violent past, it looked on with quiet acceptance. This would be the very last time I ever donned this heavy armor. After today ended, my entire life would belong fully to my mate, and the brutal wars of my past could finally stay buried right where they belonged.

I unlocked the old glass case and stood before the mirror. My hands moved automatically, well-practiced from countless times before, but my eyes lingered on my own reflection much longer than they should have.

Staring back at me was a man forged entirely in shadow midnight black hair, piercing blue eyes, and a face carved with harsh strength and the kind of dangerous beauty that warned anyone to stay away. The ancient armor clung to my form like a second skin, as dark and unforgiving as the heavy history it carried.

The dark black plating rippled smoothly across my frame, flexible enough to move easily with my strikes, yet strong enough to repel almost any blade known to man. A thin layer of woven shadow covered my legs and thighs, reinforced by protective panels that safely guarded my groin and upper legs. The sleek, gliding material hugged every muscle contour, stopping right at the base of my throat. My broad chest was encased in sculpted

black armor, layered carefully from collar down to the abdomen, and fastened securely at the back by twin silver chains that gleamed like cold moonlight.

The armor extended all the way down to my feet armored tops with tough leather soles beneath. Nothing extra was added. No unnecessary decorations of any kind. Just pure function and quiet, absolute dominance.

However, it was not the sleek design or the brutal beauty that made other warriors wary of this armor it was what the dark metal actually held inside its weave.

Etched into the black surface were moving stories, not crafted by human hands, but written entirely in blood. Every single time I ended a life in the past, the armor remembered. It did not ask for my permission. It carved the horrific moment permanently into itself. And when other fighters stood too close to me... it showed them the truth. They could actually see the kills played out. The screams of the dying. The terrified faces. Sometimes, foolish enemies even watched their own gruesome fate unfold before it had a single chance to happen.

It was a living testament of my dark history cursed, enchanted, and immortal.

Two heavy silver bands circled my wrists, deeply etched with ancient patterns of raw power. I flexed my fingers slowly and exhaled a long breath into the quiet room. I strapped my twin swords securely onto my sides ancient, battle-worn weapons that reached far beyond the puny limits of modern technology. They were not mere tools for killing. They were my history made manifest. When true immortals and gods fought, it was never with drones or tech. It was fought with flesh, pure will, and sharp steel.

I turned my attention to the very last piece still resting quietly inside the glass case the one that always drew the most absolute silence whenever I wore it out into the world. Every legendary symbol of power had its distinct mark. Batman had his bat emblem. The Flash wore a lightning bolt. The Joker had his painted smile. Even the devil wore his curved horns.

And me? I had this.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 223: The Silver King[1,220 words]

Chapter 223: The Silver King

Zahliver's POV

I lifted the heavy mask with both hands, the weight of it settling over my palms like an old memory. A pulse of raw energy stirred deep within my chest as I stared at the dark

metal. Something inside me tried to remember more than I wanted to recall, but I forced the thoughts back down into the dark. Not now.

With a steady breath, I fastened the mask over the lower half of my face. It locked securely into place behind my head with a sharp metallic snap. Then I raised my eyes to the large mirror once again.

The face that stared back now belonged to a monster of ancient legend.

The mask was sculpted carefully in the shape of a lycan snout, with silver-edged teeth curling menacingly around the jawline, giving the illusion of something halfway between a man and a beast. It was built for the battlefield, designed so that when I shifted my lower face, it would still fit part flesh, part lethal armor.

I opened my mouth slightly, and my true canines slid easily past the mask's metal teeth longer, sharper, and far deadlier. It was not just meant for basic protection. It was my true identity. It was a clear warning to all enemies. It was a dark crown.

A crown not worn on the top of the head, but fastened across the face of a silver king.

And true kings... never bowed to anyone.

The exact moment my eyes completed the painful shift, I felt the familiar change take hold. That familiar sting of ancient power licked hungrily just beneath the surface of my skin. The bright blue of my eyes bled swiftly into pitch black, consuming the natural color entirely until nothing human remained inside. The man known as Zahriver Azrala was completely gone.

In his place stood the one they feared.

The one they only whispered about in old, forgotten tongues and desperate warnings.

The Lupus Deus.

Pure power rolled through my frame like a second skin ancient, terrifying, and completely merciless. I loosened my grip just a little bit on the dark chaos coiled deep inside my mind. It responded instantly. My fingernails lengthened into curved black claws, and my skin pricked as a smooth, heavy sheen of dark fur bloomed across my muscular arms. It was not coarse or wild no. It shimmered like polished onyx, melding seamlessly with the dark armor beneath it.

My body swelled in size, my muscles stretching and thickening until I stood nearly double my normal height. Not just larger. More than that. My terrifying reflection in the obsidian mirror grinned back at me feral, razor-sharp, and utterly inhuman.

The beast locked within was wide awake and starving.

I stepped out of the hidden chamber, the heavy stone doors creaking loudly behind me. Just as I expected, long rows of elite soldiers flanked the cold corridor, their formation rigid and disciplined, their expressions flickering wildly between stark fear and deep reverence. I did not have to say a single word out loud. As I walked past them, the crushing power pulsing outward from my body dragged them down to their knees, one after another, their heads bowed low in absolute submission.

They remembered the old days.

There was a time when my very presence was enough to send entire packs running for the hills in terror. My shadow alone, clad in death-forged armor, meant only one undeniable thing.

Blood would soon be spilled.

Up ahead in the main hall, I found the other leaders waiting patiently each one grim and steady, bearing the heavy memory of what the crowned shadow king was truly capable of achieving. They did not flinch as I approached.

Lexero let out a low whistle, shaking his dark mane with a kind of resigned awe.

"You really know how to look terrifying when you want to," he muttered, his voice dry but laced with clear respect.

I did not answer him with words I just gave a sharp nod. There was no point in denying what I truly was.

Fern my trusted brother in arms, but still a fierce wolf at heart dropped quickly to one knee by sheer instinct, then rose swiftly to his feet with a solemn nod of his own. Albericus joined me closely at my right side, his presence grounding yet just as deadly. One single look from him, and the air crackled with excitement, tension, and something much darker that surged through the gathered soldiers like a shared heartbeat.

I stepped forward to the edge of the stone platform, letting my voice carry across the wide field. But I did not just speak to the men standing directly in front of me I reached outward with my mind, extending the mental link to every single soldier stationed across the entire territory. My words would reach them all at once.

"Today, you stand at the edge of something far greater than yourselves," I spoke, the dark magic vibrating in the air. "You will either fall as brave heroes or rise as immortal legends but you cannot be both. What we do here today will be remembered long after your names fade from history. You fight for your Alpha. You fight for your beloved family. And for that ultimate loyalty, I honor you."

I let a single heartbeat pass, my glowing gaze sweeping slowly across the massive ranks.

"You have bled, trained, and broken your bodies for this very moment. I know you all have something precious to lose. And I swear to you right now, if any of you fall in battle, your loved ones will be protected with my life. You have my solemn vow."

The men stood noticeably taller, their chests swelling with pride.

"Today, you are not mere pawns in a game. You are not disposable tools. You are my personal army. My elite soldiers. My killing force."

The last words came out with a twisted smile laced with dark amusement, but none of them shied away from the look. If anything, their predatory blood began to stir fiercely. I could feel it rising: the humming energy beneath their skin, the violent thirst waking up deep in their bones.

"You have prepared for this war with courage," I said, letting my tone darken further with ancient power. "And in return, I give you strength beyond mortal measure. The savagery of pure vengeance. The bloodlust of the damned. And the dark embrace of the shadows I command."

Without a moment of hesitation, I reached inward deep into that endless well of blackness inside my soul and extended it outward. My mind found each soldier's mental thread, their silver lining, and I let my dark magic graze across it like a sharp blade.

One by one, their bodies violently responded.

Their limbs lengthened. Claws erupted from their fingertips. Their forms expanded until they were twice the size they had been moments before. Low growls echoed across the camp. Fierce howls tore upward into the night sky. Their eyes flashed molten silver every single one of them.

And they stayed that way.

It was a terrifying sight.

And utterly beautiful.

The Lupus Deus effect.

Addictive. All-consuming. Unstoppable.

They were no longer just regular soldiers anymore.

They were entirely mine.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 224: The Rift[1,078 words]

Chapter 224: The Rift

Zahliver's POV

I came close once far too close to telling Vivian what it truly meant when a wolf had silver eyes just like mine. Luckily, she never pushed the dangerous question again.

Good. Because the underlying truth was completely twisted.

My incredible strength? It came straight from death itself. Every single wolf who perished under my strict command in battle added power to my soul. A cruel bargain built directly into my very existence.

Unfair to them. Extremely convenient for me.

I let out a dry, dark chuckle as I watched the pack of wolves around me, buzzing with excitement, completely unaware of what true power actually costs a man. There is only one way someone like me gets this strong, this fast blood. And plenty of it.

My inner beast stirred beneath my skin, licking its fangs with a restless, violent hunger. It had been far too long since our last real fight. And if this was going to be the final war, we would make sure it was a glorious, brutal mess.

Albericus coughed softly beside me, dragging me back from the dangerous edge of my own dark thoughts. His eyes met mine, lined with deep exhaustion and edged with silent regret. He pitied the ordinary wolves, maybe even feared what would happen to them. But he did not say it out loud. He did not need to.

The others were watching me closely, too. A quiet reminder that we were not quite at war yet. I needed to keep my primal instincts leashed tightly for now.

"Venom says the moment you give the word, we will have a thirty-six second window to jump straight to their location," Fern reported steadily. "And from there, we have eight minutes to breach the heavy door and get all the soldiers through."

"Is he ready?" I asked, already knowing the massive risk that came with teleporting this many living bodies at once.

Teleportation was exceptionally rare for a good reason it was entirely unpredictable and deadly if done wrong. It was never meant for mass military use.

"Venom has got strange connections, but he never says where he found this guy," Lexero muttered, nodding toward the shady, twitchy figure waiting a short distance away. "The snake is keeping that little secret close to his chest."

We all caught the muttered curses as the strange man shuffled nervously toward us, clearly talking entirely to himself.

"Fucking snake. Out of all the ways to repay him, this is what he wants? It is Viper's damn fault. I swear, if I survive this stupid mission, I am wringing her neck for getting me involved with her brother..."

He fell entirely silent when he realized just how close he was standing to us now. His nervous gaze flicked up to my masked face, then quickly down again. We towered over him like massive mountains.

"I will try to keep the portal open for as long as I possibly can," he said, his voice dry and strained with panic. "But thirty-six seconds is all I can guarantee with this many wolves pouring through."

"That will be enough," I replied, my voice dipped in something darker something not fully human anymore.

"Just give us a clear warning," I added.

He swallowed hard, nodding rapidly. "Okay. On the count of three, have your men move straight to that marked spot," he pointed ahead into the clearing. "And do not stop running. No matter what happens. Just run."

He leaned away from me slightly, and I did not bother to hide my amusement at his fear.

I did not repeat the command out loud. My veteran soldiers were already braced, muscles tensed and eyes sharp. But I knew that when that glowing portal ripped open, I would be the first one through it. I had far more at stake than any of them.

I had a very old score to settle.

"Ready?" the blue-haired man asked, slowly rolling up his sleeves to expose two tattoos inked onto his forearms both of them shaped like clock faces.

At first glance, they seemed identical. But one clock was ticking steadily forward. The other was ticking backward. Past and future. I did not bother to ask which one we were stepping into.

"Just count," I said roughly, bending slightly at the knees. My entire body was already coiled like a spring.

"One."

My black claws itched against my palms.

"Two."

My inner beast surged forward, fully ready.

"Three!"

The cold air cracked with a violent purple spark. I launched myself forward, blurring past the other men before they even lifted off the ground. I did not hesitate, and I did not glance around.

I just ran straight into the blinding tear in space.

And for a split second, I felt completely weightless.

Like a forgotten god caught dangerously between worlds.

The strange sensation of being lifted entirely from the ground always unsettled me. That fleeting moment of disconnection no weight beneath my boots, no firm earth to root me down whispered of raw vulnerability. I hated it.

Still, I forced myself to ignore the discomfort clawing through my chest. My vision flickered, swallowed instantly in sudden blindness, but I did not dare slow down my pace. I kept moving forward even when I could no longer tell where up ended or down began. All I had left was raw motion and primal instinct.

Then, just as abruptly as it had started, the motion stopped.

Sight returned in a flash. Gravity reasserted itself with a vengeance. My heavy boots hit solid ground, and I landed in a silent, predatory sprint through damp earth and towering dark trees. The familiar scent of pine, sweat, and bitter anticipation clung to the air like a thick fog. A few yards ahead, I glimpsed a thrumming mass of bodies my entire army. Forty thousand and eight hundred strong. All present. All waiting.

My inner beast stirred angrily in my mind, more than ready for blood. He prowled in restless circles, his jaws snapping at the empty air, his tongue thick with hunger. He could already taste the oncoming carnage. The war. The glorious chaos. His deep snarls echoed through my skull like a second heartbeat louder and much darker.

I did not have to check behind me to know my closest commanders were right there in formation. I could feel them linked directly to me in thought, stride, and iron resolve.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 225: The Threshold[1,413 words]

Chapter 225: The Threshold

Zahliver's POV

Albericus, Lexero, and Fern emerged right beside me, each one emanating their own unique form of quiet fury.

"Did not think we recruited quite this many," Fern muttered under his breath, looking genuinely awestruck for half a heartbeat. But even as his dark eyes scanned the restless horde, I knew his mind was already racing ahead with battle formations, weak enemy points, and tactical projections. War always played out like a complex strategy game to him if not for the very real risk of death hanging over all our heads.

Albericus gestured toward the thick stretch of ancient forest lying directly ahead, his voice low but firm. "Venom said the hidden door is just past that ridge of trees. Everything is in place. All we need is your final command, Alpha. What is the call?"

His tone was steady, but I caught the searching look in his gaze. Was he checking to see if there was any hesitation hidden inside me? Any flicker of doubt? He would find none.

I looked where he had pointed, my eyes narrowing down to slits. Just past the dark tree line, beyond the movement and anticipation of the pack, I spotted it the gate to everything that would follow this night.

I turned back to face my commanders, the words already forming deep in my chest like hot fire.

"Get your men ready," I ordered coldly. "This is not going to be a simple battle it is going to be a bloodbath. And the victory is ours."

Fern chuckled darkly, already slipping smoothly into the chaos-hungry version of himself. "You heard the Alpha! Gather up, you wide-eyed pups today you truly become wolves."

Lexero grunted, his humor muted but still present beneath the heavy tension in the air. "Well, shit. Guess we are really doing this thing."

He would fight like a raging storm when the time came, but Lexero always needed that initial push like a heavy lion basking lazily in the sun before it finally decided the hunt was worth the effort.

Albericus did not say a single word out loud. He did not need to. His veteran men were already braced and ready, their eyes glowing in perfect sync with their Alpha's silent command.

That left my own immediate squad.

I stepped forward, facing the fierce warriors I had personally trained, commanded, and bled beside. I raised my voice, amplifying it both out loud and directly through the vast pack bond, letting it reach every single mind even those standing far in the back.

"We are the first wave," I told them firmly. "That means we are the primary target. Some of you may fall before you even land your first strike. That is the harsh reality of war. But do not let fear take root in your minds."

I swept my glowing gaze across them, letting my heavy dominance settle over the pack like a second skin.

"No matter what hits your senses what you see, hear, or smell move to the right the second we are through that portal. Do not question it. Do not hesitate for a second. The worst enemies are always the ones you carry inside your own head. Fight them off."

I let the heavy silence hold for a single breath, then went on.

"The rest of the massive army will follow our lead. That makes us their anchor. If you spot something dangerous out there, speak up. Do not bottle it up or pretend it will pass on its own doing that gets good people killed."

I paused, letting the next part settle deep into their bones.

"You are all strong enough to take down entire enemy squadrons on your own but do not do it. This is not about seeking personal glory. It is about survival. Fight smart. Fight as one unified force. And remember your hard training."

My voice dropped down into something deeper, darker, and much more intimate.

"Good luck to all of you. And may the blood you spill today remind them why they fear us."

With those final words, I turned around and headed straight into the trees. The air thickened around us instantly, heavy with moisture and clouded by a thick, unnatural mist. The earth felt far too still, too expectant like the ancient forest itself was holding its breath.

Then I felt it a nearby pack. Small. Curious. Their Alpha was desperately trying to decide whether to approach us cautiously or prepare for a defensive stand. I could sense his

heavy worry vibrating across the shared mental link that united all shifters. A gathering like ours could easily be mistaken for a declaration of all-out war.

I sent a sharp pulse of calm through the bond. A silent, wordless message. Stand down. This is not your fight. Only a true wolf Alpha would understand the deep meaning hidden in it. I simply did not have time to deal with a panicked Alpha getting in our way right now.

There was far too much at stake. And far too much blood waiting to be spilled on the other side.

Beyond the very last veil of trees, tucked safely out of sight from prying eyes and nosy creatures, stood the doorway. Or at least, what passed as a doorway in this forgotten place. Its shape never stayed the exact same sometimes it looked like solid stone, sometimes like twisted dark wood but today it looked like the crumbling remains of some once-grand medieval archway, half-eaten by thick moss and centuries of time. Of course, normal medieval ruins did not usually thrum with heavy godly energy, nor did they shimmer with an invisible defensive field that repelled even the boldest of forest animals. Not a single bird chirped anywhere near it. Not even the harsh wind dared to whisper too close to the stones.

As I approached the structure, the forest shifted quietly behind me. One by one, Lexero, Albericus, Fern, and Venom appeared silently at my sides, each with their own chosen men shadowing their every step. The collective presence of their elite soldiers and the wild beasts stirring within them thickened the air until power crackled between us like static electricity before a massive storm. Bloodlust pulsed thick in the air, eager and deeply primal.

They did not say a word out loud, but I could feel their collective tension. The kind of heavy tension that only comes right before bloody carnage.

I, unlike all of them, had passed through this strange door more times than I cared to count. A god among mortal men even if I was now exiled I still held a rightful claim here. The ancient force field recognized my soul. It did not try to stop me. So, when I stepped forward and crossed straight into it, I felt nothing unusual save for the familiar chill of divine energy sliding over my bare skin like cold mist.

The young soldier behind me was not quite so lucky.

He had followed just a fraction too close, and the exact moment his heavy boot touched the invisible barrier, his entire body ignited like dry parchment tossed into a blazing fire. He did not even have time to let out a scream just a single breathless gasp before his bones collapsed completely into a pile of fine ash right at my boots.

I stopped, turning my head slowly to glance over my shoulder at the smoking pile on the ground. The rest of the advancing soldiers froze mid-step, their youthful bravado snuffed out instantly like a candle in the wind.

My hidden grin stretched wide across my masked face. Not as a cruel warning, but out of sheer dark amusement.

Lexero cursed softly behind me, breaking the silence. "Ah, fuck, man. I have got kids back home. I actually need to go home after this fight. Do not tell me I am going to die before I even get to swing my heavy sword."

I could see it clearly in his eyes curiosity still clawed at him, tempting him with the urge to test the deadly field himself. Absolute idiot.

"Give me a brief moment," I said, my voice low and dangerous. "You will all get your chance to die soon enough. Unless you actually want to follow that fine pile of ash over there, Lexero. But by all means, please be my guest."

He wisely took two steps back and shut his mouth.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 226: The Gateway of Gods[1,249 words]

Chapter 226: The Gateway of Gods

Zahliver's POV

The others waited behind me, feeling uneasy, as I slowly turned back to face the ruined archway. This ancient place had once been sacred. A direct point between worlds. A tool used by gods to descend and meddle in mortal affairs. They had barred me from ever returning here, but they could never strip away what I truly was. Once divine, always divine. This sacred door still knew my soul.

I raised my right hand clawed and crackling with restrained, ancient power and sliced hard through the air in front of me. Four glowing streaks shimmered to life, acting like giant claw marks of pure energy etched right into the nothingness of the air. They stretched outward, expanding wider until they reached the very edges of the stone arch. Bright light bled through the cuts, and thick fog began to seep out like the heavy breath from the lungs of the door itself.

Still, it was not quite enough.

I tilted my head back toward the dark sky and let out a howl so deep and fierce that the surrounding trees trembled in fear. It echoed upward into the heavens, straight into the

realms above, and right into the hearts of the arrogant gods who thought I would stay buried forever in silence.

I was coming for them. And I wanted them to feel it deep in their bones.

The solid ground vibrated heavily underfoot. The protective force field cracked loudly, then shattered like brittle glass, its shimmering remnants vanishing instantly into the rising fog.

The exact moment the barrier dropped completely, my massive army moved forward. No hesitation. No fear.

I did not look back.

Drawing both heavy swords from my back, I gripped their steel hilts with steady, calloused hands. One blade in each hand. The ancient weapons hummed with excitement, sensing the coming carnage.

I stepped through the shattered doorway and straight into war.

I heard the danger long before I actually saw it an arrow slicing fiercely through the damp fog, the sharp whistle cutting through the thick silence. My blade was already moving, slashing upward in a swift, practiced arc. Hard steel met wood with a sharp snap, and the arrow splintered into pieces just inches from my face. A low, irritated growl rumbled deep from my chest.

They really thought a few arrows would slow me down?

Not a single chance.

I pressed forward through the blinding fog, my elite warriors close behind my heels. The mist clung to us like damp breath, making visibility nearly impossible, but I knew it would not last long. Fog was never Alstha's strong suit in battle. It was just a weak stall tactic. She always loved her cheap illusions shadows, whispers, and confusion. But none of those parlor tricks would save her today.

My fists clenched even tighter around the hilts of my swords. I had waited years centuries, even for this exact moment. I was going to bury my blade so deep into her gut that she would choke on the memory of every single punishment she had ever inflicted on me.

Another flurry of arrows tore violently through the air. I heard the sickening thuds as they found their targets in the ranks of my men, their low snarls echoing through the thick mist. I could feel the intense frustration boiling up behind me. They wanted to shift into their massive wolf forms, to rip through the enemy lines but they could not. Not without

exposing themselves to grave danger. Armor had its strict limits, and going bare-skinned meant going dangerously vulnerable.

I broke through the jagged edge of the fog first.

And I arrived just in time.

A massive wave of arrows hurtled straight toward me through the open sky.

"There he is! Aim to kill!" a sharp, commanding voice snapped across the field. Female. And entirely familiar.

My eyes narrowed down to slits as I caught sight of her Alstha. She stood tall and arrogant at the very front of her massive army, her own sword held loosely in crossed arms like she had all the time in the world. Thousands of archers lined up solidly behind her, all of them cloaked in crimson red. Her long blond hair shimmered unnaturally in the dim light, and those damned green eyes glowed like wildfire in the dusk.

Then she smiled smug and entirely sure of herself. It made my skin crawl.

"Fire!"

At her crisp command, the archers released pure hell upon us.

The sky darkened instantly with the cloud of incoming arrows. I did not flinch away. Instead, I planted my heavy boots firmly into the earth and raised my twin blades, my muscles moving automatically before my thoughts could even catch up. The world around me slowed down as I spun and struck, my blades slashing in tight, fan-like arcs. My arms crossed, flicked, and moved with deadly precision and rhythm. Arrow after arrow shattered into pieces around me like falling rain hitting hard stone.

Brown wooden fragments flew everywhere, catching the faint light like glowing sparks, but I did not stop my relentless assault. I would not stop until the sky was completely empty of their weapons.

And through it all, something deeper stirred inside my soul something dark, ancient, and entirely primal. Every silver soul that died around me bled its remaining energy into my senses. I felt their fading strength merge seamlessly with mine, adding fresh fuel to the beast locked inside me. Each death fed my intense focus. My speed sharpened. My whole body hummed with raw, unstoppable power.

By the time the very last arrow fell harmlessly to the ground, I stood completely motionless in the eerie stillness, surrounded by heavy silence and the soft crunch of the dead beneath my boots.

Then, our eyes finally met.

Green met pitch black.

She slowly uncrossed her arms, her steps deliberate and slow as she walked forward to meet me. Her armor gleamed with a false, blinding purity, her dark magic twisting the battlefield around us. The air dimmed further, creeping shadows closed in, and the light hovering above the ancient temple warped strangely. Of course she did. She always had an annoying flair for the dramatic.

"Zalvius," she started, her smooth voice lilting with a forced, fake calm. "There really is no need for all of this violence. Honestly, we should just sit down, talk it out like civilized beings, hear both sides of the story, and then "

That name.

A cold, vicious sneer curved my lips upward. I lifted my heavy blade and pointed the tip directly at her throat.

"It is Zahliver," I snapped, my voice sounding like grinding steel. "And you are right there is not a real need for talking. So why do you not do me a massive favor and stand there nice and still while I carve out every single lie you ever told?"

Her smug smirk faltered instantly as I took a menacing step forward, my eyes burning straight into hers. "Call off your little toys, Alstha. Let me enjoy your final screams before I move on to everyone else's."

Her pupils shrank down to pinpricks, just for a brief second. Pure fear. Good. She quickly masked it behind a cold mask, but it was already too late.

I had seen the terror in her eyes.

And I would remember that exact look when I finally dragged her down into the dirt.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 227: The Price of Arrogance[1,223 words]

Chapter 227: The Price of Arrogance

Zahliver's POV

On the chaotic battlefield, true fear is a weakness it is a heavy gift you should never offer to your enemy.

Across the distance between us, through the blur of moving bodies and pounding hearts, one distinct scent sliced straight through the thick noise and struck me deep in the gut. It was not blood or hot steel. It was fear. Sharp, raw, and unmistakable. And it certainly did not belong to me.

The ancient beast resting inside my mind stirred instantly, its lips curling back with dark delight. Nothing ever thrilled him quite like that the rich scent of prey finally realizing it was about to be hunted down and slaughtered.

"I have been trying to speak to you for a long time," she snapped, her voice sounding low but dripping with venom. "Pero if you insist on doing things the hard way, then so be it. You have lingered on this earth far too long, taking whatever you want, slaughtering anyone at will. You honestly believe that I fear you, do you? The great Lupus Deus." She sneered harshly at the title like it was some kind of bad joke. "You are dead wrong. I am the one who made you what you are. I trained your kind. And I can end you just the same. You have always been a dirty stain one I should have wiped away long ago."

Ah. There it was. That tiny, nervous flicker in her voice, the ugly crack she desperately tried to patch over with loud rage. A fatal mistake. A trembling word. The absolute truth. She was terrified of me.

I began moving toward her, slow and steady, my twin swords humming dangerously at my sides. "Guess that makes you a pretty shitty teacher," I said flatly.

She stepped forward quickly to meet me, trying desperately to match my pace with a predator's calm, but I could clearly see the hesitation hiding behind her eyes. She had never fought me like this before. Not in this powerful body. Not at this towering height. I towered over her now, even without shifting into my full wolf form.

She was only just beginning to realize just how completely outmatched she really was.

Without any warning, I surged forward, disappearing in a sudden blur of motion. My sword sliced fiercely through the empty air right above her head. She ducked just in time and spun away, her green eyes flashing. And then the entire battlefield erupted around us.

Our soldiers clashed fiercely like a crashing ocean tide steel meeting steel, and sharp claws tearing against armor. But none of them dared interfere in our personal duel. This fight belonged only to us.

She came at me with both blades, fast and relentless. I blocked her heavy advance with my own weapons, the hard steel singing loudly as it collided. I bared my teeth, my tongue sweeping slowly over the sharp points in dark anticipation. The beast inside me was practically giddy, urging me to sink my fangs into her throat and end it right now. Her frightened gaze flicked down to my mouth, and she visibly faltered for a second.

She tried to stab low at my stomach, her blade grazing my left side barely before I twisted sharply and deflected the rest of the blow. Not a bad move. I will give her that much.

She dropped down suddenly, rolling smoothly into a crouch before whipping her swords back up in defense. I launched myself high into the air and tucked tightly in a mid-spin, landing squarely behind her with a forceful push that sent her stumbling forward. It could easily have been a fatal blow but I was not quite done playing with my food yet.

She turned around fast, her eyes wide and her face starkly pale.

"Slower than I remember you being. Are you getting old?" I teased, grinning widely as I easily danced out of range from her next desperate jab.

Her sharp blade caught me cleanly across the left cheek as I lunged once more for her side. I hissed softly as hot blood dripped briefly down my face, but the wound sealed itself up a second later. My divine healing was far faster than thought. She already knew that fact. Still, the shallow scratch stung more out of sheer irritation than actual pain.

She looked briefly smug, just for a moment. So I quickly returned the favor.

My counterattack was swift, and unlike me, she did not have the luxury of instant, miraculous healing.

Her face twisted into agony as the harsh reality finally set in.

This was not a fight she could possibly win anymore. Not by a long shot.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Albericus disarm one of the enemy soldiers with brutal efficiency. In a single blink, he ducked low, spun around, and lopped the man's head clean off his shoulders. Without pausing for a breath, he flung his heavy sword up into the air, shifted mid-motion into his beast form, and launched himself at another attacker. His powerful jaws clamped down hard, tearing through flesh with ease. Before the body even hit the bloody ground, he shifted back into human form, caught the falling sword out of the air, and drove it straight through the next man's chest. Flawless execution. I turned my attention right back to my own fight.

Alstha had already started to bore me to death.

I slashed downward with my right blade, aiming to sever her leg, but she leaped high into the air just in time. I fully expected that trick. As she rose up, I thrust my other sword upward toward her chest. She blocked it midair and retaliated instantly, swinging one of her own blades straight for my head.

Ah, gravity. It is always so terribly predictable.

As she descended downward, hell-bent on impaling my skull, she did not even notice the first sword I had swung was already carving sharply back up toward her from below. She was far too focused on attacking that she completely forgot I always played with more than one hand in a fight.

The clean slice cut through flesh, bone, and everything in between. The exact moment the hard steel met her leg, the wet sound of it slicing through and the sharp crack of bone echoed loudly above the surrounding battlefield noise. Then came her piercing scream.

Raw. Shattering. More painful than anything else the field had heard all day.

All around us, the ghostly battlefield began to tremble and flicker like a dying candle. Her powerful illusion was rapidly weakening, her heavy focus breaking apart at the seams.

She toppled hard to the ground, and to my complete surprise, instead of desperately shielding her bleeding wound or trying to crawl away to safety, she raised one of her swords at me with trembling hands defiant even in blinding agony. Her face was deathly pale, sweat beading heavily down her temples. All around us, the surrounding warriors had paused hers gaping in horror at their fallen leader, mine far too disciplined to ever look away from their own ongoing fights. As I had strictly warned them earlier: distraction equals death.

Apparently, Alstha did not believe in following her own rules.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 228: The Fall of the Queen[1,241 words]

Chapter 228: The Fall of the Queen

Zahliver's POV

I bent down slowly, grabbed her severed leg by the ankle with my sharp claws, and walked a few paces closer to her. For someone as feared and revered as she had been for centuries, I could clearly see the deep disbelief swimming in her eyes. It was not just the physical pain eating away at her soul it was the profound shame. The total shock. The brutal realization that she had finally lost.

I held her blood-soaked leg up in front of her face and looked down at her crumpled form. "We gods do not simply die," I said, my voice calm and ice-cold. "You already know that very well. But did you ever stop to seriously consider... even if a limb is completely removed from the body, you can still feel everything that happens to it?"

Her vivid green eyes narrowed instantly, flickering rapidly between my face and the severed leg in my grasp.

"I was curious once upon a time. Did a little bit of dark experimenting," I twirled the heavy limb slightly in the air, watching her flinch violently. "But here is the real fun part of the curse. Even when your physical body is no longer connected to it... you can still feel every single agony that happens to it."

To prove my point clearly, I slowly dug my black claws deep into the muscle of the severed leg. Her fresh blood spilled warmly over my hand.

She shrieked in absolute horror, her swords slipping entirely from her weakening grip. Her body curled tightly around her bleeding stump as she gasped and screamed, clutching the mangled end with shaking fingers. She kicked out weakly with her remaining leg, pure reflex rather than strategy. Pathetic.

Time and endless power had truly softened her up. The Alstha I had known long ago would never have ended up sprawled out on the dirt, weeping openly right in front of me.

"Beautiful," I whispered darkly. "That sound right there. Do you hear it?" I let out a rough, humorless laugh that did not feel quite right even inside my own throat.

She completely broke right then and there. "I am so sorry," she sobbed, her voice hoarse and trembling violently. "I was completely wrong! I did horrible, unforgivable things to you. Please stop this madness. I am begging you for mercy!"

The sky above us wavered and rippled again, and this time, it did not recover. The massive illusion shattered completely into nothingness. Her mental control had completely crumbled, her fading power unable to hold the fake facade together any longer.

Now I could step directly into her hidden stronghold without ever having to walk through the mental hell she had once cloaked it in.

And she could do nothing at all except sit there and bleed.

I stood tall over her trembling figure, watching the hot hatred and the cold fear twist together tightly in her eyes as she looked up at me. She was still desperately trying to look defiant, even as she shook uncontrollably with blinding pain. Pathetic. I crouched low to the ground, making sure her wounded leg stayed pinned safely out of reach before I drove my claws deeper into the dirt. Her mouth dropped open in a silent scream no sound came out, just pure agony etched across her pale face.

The rich scent of her warm blood tugged heavily at the darker, feral part of my soul. My gums throbbed, my sharp teeth aching with the primitive need to rip straight into her

flesh. I could almost taste the sweet satisfaction of it. But not yet. That specific kind of final punishment was a dish I was saving for later.

"If I took every hollow apology tossed at me as absolute truth," I said, my voice dropping until it sounded like sharp, broken glass, "I would not be the man I am standing here today, would I?" I leaned in just close enough for her to feel the heavy weight of my overwhelming presence. "And let us be completely honest with each other... you do not mean a single word of it."

I pushed myself upright again, letting out a cold, low chuckle. She glared up at me with pure hatred, those vivid green eyes swimming with a mixture of blinding fury and intense pain. The edges of her eyes had even begun to turn a sickly yellow whether from lingering poison or sheer terror, I did not care in the least.

"Venom," I called out loudly, not tearing my fierce gaze away from her until I caught a bright flash of stark white moving toward me from the side.

There was only one creature in this world who could casually stroll through a bloody, mud-soaked battlefield without getting so much as a single speck of dirt on his clean clothes. Not a single hair out of place. Venom.

His pristine snow-white hair caught the dim light as he strolled leisurely toward me, his hands tucked casually deep inside his pockets like he was just out for a quiet evening stroll instead of crossing a brutal warzone. Completely casual. Untouched. And entirely lethal.

A squad of Alstha's remaining loyal soldiers noticed him approaching and made the fatal mistake of thinking he would be easy, defenseless prey. Poor, stupid bastards. They lunged at him all at once as a group, foolishly hoping that sheer numbers would somehow tip the bloody odds in their favor.

Complete idiots.

Venom did not even flinch. He just rolled his striking golden eyes, the expression on his handsome face landing somewhere between utter boredom and mild annoyance. I was not the only one watching now Alstha's terrified eyes followed mine as her confusion rapidly bled straight into raw fear.

As the charging soldiers closed the distance, Venom's skin suddenly shimmered, a faint, translucent sheen of hard scales forming rapidly across his exposed arms and neck. His handsome face sharpened aggressively, becoming more angular and distinctly alien. The vertical slits of his dark pupils widened for a single breath, then narrowed down into lethal, cold slivers. When he finally stopped moving, his jaw parted just slightly, and I caught a quick glimpse of his forked serpentine tongue flicking out into the air.

The desperate men surrounded him completely, their sharp weapons drawn and ready.

He still did not move an inch.

Mistake number two.

Venom exhaled a long breath slowly, and with that single breath came something truly otherworldly thick, white smoke shaped like a long, coiling serpent poured directly from his parted lips. Wraithlike and unnatural, it slithered swiftly through the air straight toward the surrounding men.

They tried their best to fight it off, swinging their heavy swords wildly through the harmless-looking vapor like it would actually matter.

It did not matter at all.

The dense smoke coiled tightly around each of their necks like a lover's embrace turned instantly deadly. Venom stood completely motionless at the dead center of the sudden chaos, watching with detached, mild curiosity as the men clawed frantically at their own throats, blind panic completely taking over their minds. Their heavy blades dropped uselessly to the dirt. Their eyes bulged wide. Their faces flushed a dark crimson.

And then

Snap.

Snap.

Snap.

Snap.

All at once. Every single neck was broken clean. Their lifeless bodies collapsed heavily to the ground like broken marionettes with their strings suddenly cut.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 229: The Venom's Kiss[1,244 words]

Chapter 229: The Venom's Kiss

Zahliver's POV

The smoky snake gave one last slow loop around Venom's broad shoulders before vanishing completely into thin air.

His handsome face returned to normal smooth and pale as ever as he casually stepped right over the lifeless corpses and made his steady way toward where I stood.

I looked down at the trembling form of the so-called war goddess. Her face had gone completely white as bone, the raw horror trapped in her eyes so intense it almost made a cruel smile touch my lips.

She began to crawl backward through the dirt, her limbs shaking uncontrollably, desperately trying to flee now that she finally realized what kind of monster she was dealing with.

Pathetic.

Before she could drag herself very far, I brought my heavy boot down firmly on her remaining leg not too hard at first, but just enough to stop her escape.

Crunch.

A bit too hard, apparently. The sharp, sickening crack of breaking bone made my inner beast stir with deep satisfaction.

Her pathetic whimpers filled the damp air, forming a broken melody of pain and total defeat.

And by the gods, I thoroughly enjoyed the sound.

"This is my good friend, Venom," I said coolly, my voice barely audible over the distant sounds of ongoing carnage. "He is exceptionally skilled in many things, but today, I specifically asked him to use one of his more unique talents. Just for you."

I handed him the severed leg without a single moment of hesitation. He accepted it smoothly, opening his mouth wide to reveal two glinting fangs long, sharp, and deadly. As he sank them deep into the bleeding flesh, I turned my full attention back to the wretched creature groaning painfully at my boots.

Altha. Bloodied, broken, and completely clueless.

The dark anticipation that had brewed deep inside my chest for centuries coiled like a storm waiting to break over her. I had waited so terribly long for this exact moment.

Her low whimpers suddenly faltered as she caught sight of Venom and what he had just done to her limb. Her frantic gaze locked onto her bitten leg, her eyes fluttering rapidly in and out of focus. Her pupils expanded, then shrank in a fast, erratic rhythm. Pure panic had set in.

"W-What have you d-done..."

She never got the chance to finish her sentence.

Her entire body convulsed violently, jerking around at unnatural angles as if something toxic inside her blood had suddenly turned fiercely against her. Thick greenish foam burst rapidly from her mouth, heavy and acidic, the foul stench alone strong enough to make any ordinary creature retch in disgust.

I crouched down low beside her trembling form, tilting my head with cold amusement. "You see, Venom did not get his nickname because it sounds intimidating. He is literally venomous in the most physical way possible. But lucky for you," I smiled darkly, "I only requested a very specific dose of his poison."

She did not respond to me she was already too far gone into shock. But that certainly did not stop me from finishing my thoughts.

"Right now, your nerves are lit up like raging fire. And because you are immortal, your physical body will not just shut down and give you peace. It will simply keep bringing you back to life... over and over again. Every single time you die from the agony, the venom will still be waiting right there in your veins. And each time you wake, you will feel it twice as badly." I leaned in close, my voice dropping down to a harsh whisper. "I have heard it is a lot like being burned alive from the inside out except you never actually get the sweet release of death. You just feel every second of it."

I stood up straight, brushing some nonexistent dust from my dark pants. She was twitching weakly on the ground, barely conscious.

"Oh, and if you want all of this excruciating pain to finally stop, you will need to extract the venom directly from the original wound." I cast a quick glance back toward Venom. "Why don't you go hide that leg somewhere fun, hm? Maybe deep down at the bottom of an active volcano?"

Venom gave me a brief nod and vanished smoothly into the thick fray of battle, melting into the rising shadows like curling smoke. I turned my back on Alstha without a single shred of sympathy left in my heart. The road ahead of us was finally clear no more annoying mental games, no more cheap illusions, and no more frustrating delays.

It was finally time to move.

I had not gone very far into the camp before I felt it a sharp blade pressing lightly against my ribs. One of Alstha's foolish soldiers, clearly under the delusional illusion that he could stop me all by himself.

Without even turning my head to look at him, I reached backward and grabbed him firmly by the throat, my black claws digging deep into his skin. He made a sharp choking sound as I yanked him forward and held him up high in front of me. His boots dangled uselessly in mid-air.

He was very young. Brown hair, with wide green eyes trembling with sheer terror. Brave, but incredibly foolish.

"Give me one good reason not to crush your windpipe right now," I growled, my voice low and deliberate, letting my sharp canines show in the dim light. His panicked gaze dropped straight to my bared fangs, and he began to writhe frantically, struggling desperately to pull in some air.

I loosened my grip slightly just enough for him to suck in a ragged, desperate gasp.

"T-There is something I can actually do!" he choked out, his hand tapping frantically against my tight wrist. "I-I can be... useful to you!"

I narrowed my eyes down at him. Maybe he could be. Maybe he could not. But something about his desperate willingness to live piqued my dark curiosity.

I dropped him abruptly to the ground and grabbed a thick fistful of his hair, yanking his head back sharply as I dragged him along behind me like a ragdoll. I moved through the chaotic battleground like a sharp scythe cutting through tall wheat. Any enemy soldier that dared approach me got the exact same brutal treatment bones cracked, necks snapped, and bodies dropped to the dirt without a single hesitation.

Eventually, the message got through to the rest of them. They stopped charging at me.

Cowards.

"What is up with the kid?" Fern called out loudly, jogging over to me with that damn black pistol in his hand. He fired a quick shot clean through an oncoming enemy's head before raising a skeptical brow at the young soldier I was dragging along.

"I needed a useful distraction," I muttered shortly, not really in the mood to explain my reasoning. That modern gun still felt a bit like cheating to me quick, easy, and entirely impersonal. It completely lacked the raw satisfaction of feeling your enemy fall directly beneath your own claws.

Still, I could not deny that it was remarkably efficient.

Fern gave me a knowing look but chose not to press the issue further.

I kept moving forward.

Because now that Alstha was officially dealt with, nothing was standing between me and what I came here to claim.

And absolutely nothing was going to stop me now.

The Wolf God's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 230: The River Guardian[1,394 words]

Chapter 230: The River Guardian

Zahliver's POV

I did not look over at Fern when I spoke. My gaze stayed firmly fixed ahead, my eyes narrowed against the strange, unnatural glow of this foreign realm. The grand temple loomed in the near distance, standing like a dark silhouette of raw power and old secrets. Reaching it would not be an easy task. Alstha was down, sure, but it was foolish to think that Fate had not layered her defenses. She always planned for the worst-case scenario.

So did I.

"He is going to be my little pebble," I muttered with a wicked curl of my lips.

Fern blinked in surprise, clearly thrown off by the comment. "What?"

It did not matter.

"Where is Lexero?" I asked, finally turning my head to glance back over the battlefield a shifting chaos of steel and blood, with bodies colliding in brutal dances. Warriors from both sides fell in droves, and with every single death, a heavy thrum of raw power pulsed straight through my veins. The ancient magic tethered to this world responded to death just like dry kindling responding to a sudden flame.

"Just look for the oversized cat that is still playing with its terrified prey," Fern drawled, completely disinterested, casually lifting the barrel of his black gun and pointing across the field.

My eyes followed his direction, and there he was.

"Damn it, Lexero! Finish the bastard and move your damn ass!" I barked across the open space.

Lexero did not even bother to glance my way. He simply raised a blood-slicked thumb in silent acknowledgment, then launched himself forward, sinking his sharp teeth deep into the throat of an enemy soldier twice his size. The heavy body crumpled instantly to the

dirt, and Lexero stood tall, his face painted entirely in crimson red. He wiped his mouth casually with his forearm, smearing thick gore across his cheek, his golden-black eyes glittering wildly with surging adrenaline.

"Such killjoys," he crooned playfully. Then, seeing my dark look, he raised both hands in surrender. "Alright, alright. I am good. All done here."

I did not waste time responding to him. I turned back around and started walking toward the ancient temple.

The other men fell neatly into step behind me without a single question.

Albericus, I reached out through the mental link, *secure the field completely. Let me know the exact moment anything feels off.*

On it, he answered immediately without any hesitation.

The sky above us was nothing like anything found back on Earth. It bled wild colors across itself deep blues melting smoothly into purples, and rich reds streaked with bright gold and vibrant green. The strange stars were always wide awake here, shining alongside both the blazing sun and the pale moon at the same time. On my right side, the sun blazed fiercely in warm shades of amber. To my left, the moon hovered silently, acting like a ghostly eye glowing in a field of darker hues.

And straight ahead of us stood the temple.

It looked as though time itself had built it ancient in its massive shape, yet edged with something unnervingly modern. Heavy magic clung to its dark stones. RIVERS, floating clouds, and shifting forests all framed our narrow path, and any single one of them could easily become a deadly trap. This entire magical realm could bend easily under someone else's fierce will, which meant we had to stay completely alert every second.

After a short hike through the mist, I stopped dead in my tracks at the edge of a wide riverbed. The water shimmered like polished liquid glass, flowing gently over a quiet path of flat, grey stones.

An easy crossing.

Far too easy.

"Hold," I said sharply, halting both Fern and Lexero in their tracks. They did not seem to feel the dangerous tension humming thickly in the air, and I could easily see it in their faces they thought the river was completely harmless. Quiet. Peaceful.

Their survival instincts were dead wrong.

"This river is much more than it looks," I warned softly, my eyes scanning its deceptive surface. "It was not placed here by pure accident."

Fern tilted his head, looking thoroughly confused. Lexero sniffed the air, squinting hard at the calm flow of water. They looked at each other, then back at me in disbelief.

"There is nothing in there "

"What are you talking about "

"Quiet," I snapped, raising a single hand to silence them.

That precise moment was when I felt a sudden movement right at my side. I had almost completely forgotten that I was still holding the young soldier my little bargaining chip who was squirming frantically like a freshly caught fish. He looked up at me, his eyes wide with stark panic.

I smiled down at him, my expression sharp and cruel.

"Hello, little Pebble," I whispered.

And just like that, he started thrashing wildly again.

Without a moment of hesitation, I hurled the kid forward with everything I had. His terrified scream tore through the air as his body flew directly over the center of the river. For a single heartbeat, he hung suspended mid-air caught safely in that comforting illusion of security.

Then the water violently stirred.

From the glassy surface of that too-calm river, something broke free a hideous creature no sane mortal mind could have ever conjured. It exploded upward in a wet, grotesque lurch. Towering in size. Slathered completely in thick, purplish slime. Its skin was so thin and translucent it might as well have been see-through, revealing tangled internal guts and rotting tissue beneath. Two warped, skeletal fins stretched wide from its sides, revealing dozens of blinking eyes staring in every possible direction. No symmetry. No logic. Just pure nightmare fuel.

Where its proper face should have been, there were only two gaping, empty sockets. But when it slowly opened its wide mouth...

Its foul tongue slithered out made entirely of decaying human hands. They were fused tightly together at the wrists, the dead fingers twitching rhythmically, the nails painted black, and some still wearing old metallic rings.

The damn thing giggled aloud. Just like a little girl.

And then it devoured the boy whole in a single massive gulp.

Gone.

Not a single ripple remained on the water's surface. Not even a tiny splash to mark his passing.

"Goodbye, Pebble," I muttered dryly.

Beside me, Fern suddenly bent over and threw up hard onto the dirt. Lexero's upper lip curled back with open, burning revulsion.

"This is precisely why I always tell my young pups to stick to meat that walks safely on solid land," Lexero said, his voice deep and gruff.

Fern was still heaving, wiping his mouth with a shaking hand. "Goddess above... I am going to be sick. Shit, I am actually sick. What the hell was that unholy thing?"

"You really do not want to know the answer," I muttered darkly, scanning the dark tree line ahead. My senses prickled sharply. Something else was off more than just the nightmare thing hiding in the water.

"Yeah... you are probably right about that," Fern rasped, wiping his mouth clean. Both he and Lexero were now completely tense, their hands twitching closer to their weapons, their broad shoulders angled like predators ready to spring at any second.

I narrowed my eyes down to dark slits.

There.

Far ahead in the distance, a hunched figure emerged slowly from behind a thick tree trunk. He did not run or try to sneak around he walked. Leisurely. As if we were not standing here freshly traumatized by a river monster. As if the foul creature he had just sicked on us was nothing more than a simple parlor trick.

My survival instincts screamed even louder the closer he came. Lexero and Fern crouched down low to the ground, their fierce eyes flicking to me in a silent, questioning look. I did not answer them with words. I did not have to.

"I always told them you would never fall for old Berna's simple trap," a raspy voice echoed through the trees. "Your survival instincts were always far too sharp, Zalvius. And you never really liked animals of any kind, did you?"

His voice sounded entirely calm. Almost sickeningly fond. It made me want to rip his throat out with my bare hands.

