Triplet Alphas Gifted Luna 127

3 - 16 Catan

Thea got out of the pool and threw on a dress.

"Hey, you're welcome to come down to the dungeon, but you don't have to," Thea mind linked Cassidy on the way to the dungeon.

"It's okay," Cassidy mind linked Thea. "After what Alessia said, I'm curious."

"Okay. If you feel off at any time, signal me, and we'll go get snacks or something. You don't have to stay."

"I appreciate that, but," she said, pausing. "You know I lived in the school for a while. I was in the ceiling hiding when Xavier attacked you. I saw. If you can forgive him and truly believe he's different—heck, if the triplets can too—I'm open. I mean, I was a rogue, and you gave me a chance."

"Well, you're a good and strong person."

Cassidy laughed over mind link.

"Hey," Thea said. "You know I lost my memory for a bit. Now that I have it back, I think I'm putting something together. Were you the person that followed us that day when we took home our first refugees? I felt someone and dropped my number."

"Yeah. Creeping around the school, I overheard people talking. I saw things. I had to follow and see if it was true. That's what made me go find the other rogues." 1

"You know," Thea said. "I think you must have a natural talent for hiding and spying. Maybe tracking too. If you're interested, we could get you into training with Delta team and hone those skills. Maybe get you on a career path. You have natural leadership skills too. I think you could be important. No pressure." 1

"I'd like that."

A few minutes later, Thea was in the dungeon.

"Your brother is here," Thea said to Xavier. "Are you up to seeing him?"

"Do you want me to?" Xavier said. 1

"I think it would be good for both of you."

"Then yes."

A few minutes later, Garret approached Xavier's cell. The rest of the group maintained a respectful distance. Xavier stood on the other side of the bars, only a foot from his brother.

"Hey," Garret said.

"Hey," Xavier said. Before Garret could say anything else, Xavier unloaded. "I'm sorry for everything, Garret. I can't make it up to you. To anyone."

"I don't need you to," Garret said.

Xavier looked confused.

"As your friends keep saying," Garret said. "That guy is dead.

I knew you were sorry before you died. I'm happy to see you doing so well. The last time I saw you, you were in bad shape."

"Getting a conscience after I did what I did," Xavier said. "It was like waking up from a nightmare to a nightmare. Like someone else used my body for years, but I'm responsible. I couldn't see a way through. I wanted to die."

"And now?" Garret said.

"Luna Thea won't let me."

"I'm glad you're alive."

"I'm not glad yet, but I'm not horrified to be alive anymore."

Garret smiled. "That's good."

"You're really okay with me?" Xavier said. "You're not mad?"

"I'm looking forward to having the older brother I should have had."

Thea felt Xavier's emotions go haywire. Hope. Gratitude. Love.

Garret looked around Xavier's cell. His eyes stopped on the books.

"I tried to get you to read Harry Potter for years," Garret said.

"What can I say? I guess it takes a heart," Xavier said. ①

Garret laughed. "Is it okay if I visit you?" Garret said.

Xavier nodded.

"What's it like being a vampire?" Garret said.

"I'm not sure I'm a normal vampire," Xavier said. "The most important thing—it's always there—is the Need. We grew up being told it was a hunger for blood. It's not. It's not even hunger. It's a Need for Life. Blood is just the vehicle for us to absorb Life." [1]

"Huh," Garret said.

"We were told vampires smell blood, hear heartbeats, and I can, but it's so much more than that. I have another sense now. It's not something I can fully describe. I'm aware of Life, which is this other thing entirely—a force. Like gravity. It's everywhere. Luna Thea can draw it from anywhere and funnel it into me. Yet, I don't know what it is. No one does. A body can be alive one minute and not the next. The body and molecules are still there, but the Life is gone. We can't comprehend what Life is, but it's there, and I Need it."

"Wow," Garret said. "You're a newborn, and you're talking like a philosopher. You're not fiendishly, ravishingly trying to feed on everyone."

"Luna Thea is feeding me with her magic," Xavier said.

"She told me you didn't feed before she found you," Garret said. "You have control over the Need."

"I don't know. I don't think I'm normal."

"When you can leave the dungeon, you could come back to Moonlit," Garret said.

"No," Xavier said. "I can never come back. You can see me

as something different from what I was, but no one else will. I don't want to force the people I hurt to have to see me. I can never make it right for those people. They should go on believing I'm dead."

"I understand." Garret thought about Brenda.

"I like seeing you here," Xavier said.

They talked a bit more until they were interrupted by Thea.

"Do you guys feel like playing a game?" Thea said. "I brought Settlers of Catan." [1]

The brothers looked at her, at each other, at the group behind Thea.

"Yeah," they said together.

The group set up the game and played inside Xavier's cell. They brought food down from the party and ate while they played. Thea funneled Earth energy and a steady stream of her magic into Xavier the whole time.

"Of all the times I imagined graduating, I never thought I'd spend the night in a dungeon playing games with a vampire," Lizzy said. [1]

"No kidding," Conri said.

"Did anyone ever win that betting pool?" Thea said.

"Yeah," Kai said. "Me."

Thea looked at him and shook her head, smiling. "You're ridiculous," she said.

"It was easy money," Kai said. "I always knew how this would go."

The group laughed, and Thea kissed Kai.

Thea discreetly kept an eye on Xavier. That's how she caught the genuine smile, then his laughter, and the effect it had on him. These people accepting him, including him—it made a difference. There was an exchange of Life. He wasn't so self-contained. His laughter gave off Life magic that went to the other people in the cell, and they sent Life back into him. 4

They kept playing and eating well into the night. 2

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" more tomorrow! Can I just say I'm so glad they're finally out of high school? Now they can get down to business! "

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