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## I Am The Luna Chapter 11 By Moonlight Muse

A Dress

ZAIA

New Year's Eve is upon us, and I am rushing around helping with setting up the banquet hall.

Atticus's mother fell ill with the cold a few days ago and since I was helping Mrs Watson with the flower arrangements I offered to help with the event organising. I wish I didn't, because I didn't think it meant I'd be stuck around Atticus for the last few days.

For an Alpha, who surely has much more to do, he visited often until I was getting looks from the other female staff

Envious, amused, and a few jealous. I did not ask for his attention, and I really wish he wasn't so intrigued.

Since that day in the car, things have been a little more awkward between us. "Place them to the right. They'll fit better there" I call out to the organisers as I make my way over to them.

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"Here, Miss?" The man replies, looking confused. I nod with a small smile.

"Yes, right here "

He obeys, before smiling slightly." You're right. It reflects just right Thank you."

"No problem. Do the same for the other tables and just make sure they're not placed right near the mirrors "I turn away and glance up at the floral arrangements that hang from the ceiling of the grand hall.

It's going to be a masked ball, something I had suggested after I had 15 ROHAUS

learned that Sebastian will be making an appearance. It was a risky decision and the chances he'll see right through me are high, especially due to the fact that last time I lost my composure at the mention of Sebastian. But he hasn't said anything again. I think for now he believes me. I look around the hall and hide a smile, satisfied.

It's breathtaking but it's also a painful reminder of every party I've attended with Sebastian. When he treated me like I was the only one for him.

Where did it go wrong?

"Such a pretty face in a stunning environment shouldn't look so down."

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I spin around to see Atticus walking down the centre of the hall, hands in his pockets as he looks around the hall and whistles slowly

“Oh, I’m fine,” I reply, smiling smoothly, squashing my thoughts.

“You did an incredible job, almost as if you’re used to it,” he says, whistling slowly. “I’m truly impressed, Zaia. ”

“Thanks, I just like party planning,” I reply By now I’ve noticed he is indeed rather sharp and I’m aware of his indirect remarks, already prepared and alert around him.

“Well, I don’t think our hall has ever looked better Mrs Watson told me you helped with the flower arrangements, too”

“I did. So tell me, Alpha- sorry, Atticus why do you choose fresh flowers every year?” I ask, trying to divert the conversation from myself

He sighs, but smiles, clearly happy I’m making conversation “Why I don’t really know it’s always been a tradition but this year I chose a specific colour”

“Lilac

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“Yes, violet because that’s the colour of something that I have come to admire recently,” he says I make the mistake of looking at him and our eyes meet

“That’s beautiful,” I reply, glancing around in hopes of a distraction.

“I’m hoping you’ll save me a dance tonight,” he says quietly, as he glances at the people working around

“I” I am torn How do I tell him I don’t plan on being here tonight?

Valerie told me they will be coming and I simply can’t risk it, plus Sebastian is bringing Annalise I don’t need to see them, only to scratch open my wounds that are still not healing.

“Please don’t deny me. I hope you will come, even if it’s simply as a gesture of goodwill towards your new Alpha and Pack”

Our eyes meet and he couldn’t be more

obvious. Disobeying him means disobeying my new Alpha and showing disrespect towards him.

“Atticus I-”

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“Alpha!” Two men in suits approach Atticus, and one of them leans closer to him, but despite speaking quietly, I manage to make out what they’re saying.

“The Black Beast is almost at pack borders.”

My heart skips a beat and I try to calm myself by thinking about something else anything else! The flowers.. Think of the flowers!

The Black Beast .

A name that was given to Sebastian years ago, because of his power and the

colour of his wolf’s fur

I can feel Atticus’s eyes on me, but I’m certain I haven’t given anything away as I scan the garlands that wrap around the double-door entrance, keeping my face calm and at ease

“Zaia, I’ll see you tonight. I have to go,” he says

“Of course, see you then.” I smile, despite how sick I feel inside.

His final words are a command, not an offer, and if things couldn’t get any worse, Sebastian being here is the icing on the cake!

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“When did that arrive?” I ask as I stare at the unzipped dress bag that sits on my bed.

“Not long after you left,” Mom replies, shaking her head. “He had it ordered at the boutique 1 lane Maggie was working on an order for the Alpha, but I did not think it was for you. It now makes sense why she has been so nice lately”

I shake my head. “And the colour. “I say, staring at the lilac shade of tulle.

“He, for some crazy reason, is into you,”

“Mom, am I that bad?” I ask, amused despite the situation.

Mom tilts her head and wrings her hands.

“No! but you’re pregnant! With another man’s children, why would an Alpha... I don’t know, I mean it can happen and you are a beauty but...” She sits down and I’m about to speak when I pay attention to her.

Her clothes seem to be ill fitting and only now do I realise just how much weight she has lost. I feel guilt eat up at me. This is my fault

“You’re right,” I say quietly, looking away and back at the dress. “But he practically commanded me I can’t refuse”

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Our eyes meet, and Mom places her head in her hands. "I'm scared Zaia"

My heart skips a beat. I've never heard Mom say something like that before.

I slowly kneel before her and take her hands in mine "Mom we're going to be ok, I'm sorry I know this is all very hard on you too."

She shakes her head. "No, No Zaia, don't ever apologise That's what mothers are for Everyone will learn that the Alpha asked you to the ball."

"Mom, he said I should come. He didn't say about being his date."

"The dress did Zaia!" Mom sighs and closes her eyes. Up close, I can see the wrinkles in her skin I should be taking care of her not the other way around. "I just don't want you going from one ruthless alpha to the next"

I nod in understanding. "Don't worry Mom, I'm not that stupid. I learned my lesson once Zaia Toussaint needs no man."

Mom nods, but at least my words brought a smile to her face, albeit a weak one

"With Sebastian coming here tonight. It's so risky I'm just scared that..."

My smile fades. Something is troubling her "What is it, Mom?"

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“What if he learns these babies are his and takes them away?” Her voice is lifeless as she says those words, and I realise she’s remembering her own past When I was born, my father took me away and gave me to my stepmother With his power and influence, Mom had no one to help her Luckily, for both Mom and I, my stepmother didn’t want me, nor did she want me raised in that household and convinced my dad to return me to Mom

It is the only thing I am thankful to her for Even though her intentions weren’t good, I at least got to be with my mother

But I am not Mom

“I won’t let anyone take my babies away,” I say, the power in my voice surprises even myself as I stare at Mom, my chest heaving

I swear if he tries. I won’t just walk away I will wreak havoc if I have to, but no one, and I mean no one, will take my children from me.

-15 BONUS

A strength I have forgotten I possess rises within me and I stand up.

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“I will go to the ball, show Atticus that I went. He will be too busy with other Alphas, anyway. I will make sure I avoid Sebastian and the first chance I get, I will leave ” I state “This is just a small hurdle, and we will overcome it, just as we have overcome so many before it.”

My confidence seems to give Mom the courage she needs and she nods

“Then, let’s get you ready.

With those words, she stands up with rejuvenated strength, ready to tackle the challenge ahead.

A few hours have passed, and it is late in the evening when I’m finally ready for the ball. Earlier, I messaged Atticus to ask him if it is ok not to be addressed as Zaia at the ball, just in

case it got back to my ex. After all, word can spread and my name is a little unique.

Something I now wish I had changed when we came here, but it’s too late to change that.

He had agreed and said it made sense and he would let the pack know, so no one accidentally let it slip and how he’s simply happy I will be attending.

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Mom and I struggled to make myself look as different as possible. In the end, I had contoured my face heavily before applying a matt base and very pale lips.

Anyone who knows me, knows I love my bold lips. We have twisted my hair into a small bun, and the aim is to make it look a lot less than it is. I am personally satisfied with how I look

From afar, you wouldn't be able to tell that it's me I pick up the purple mask that mom had just coloured in with felt -15 BONUS

pen to match. The original was a lovely ivory shade

"I wish you had a heavier mask," Mom murmurs

"It should be ok, we won't be that close," I reply, placing it on my face and before I can tie the ribbon, Mom takes over and ties it for me.

"Thank you," I say softly as I look up at

her, patting her hand gently.

"Well it's time for you to do what you need to do, but rest assured, if things become difficult there and if he tries to get close to you, leave " Mom warns

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me as I stand up, spritzing plenty of perfume over me, before I kiss her cheek

“It’s going to be ok I won’t be long, and my phone will be with me at all times. I’ll keep you updated.”

She nods reluctantly, helping me with 15 BONUS

my gown as I make my way downstairs Draping my shawl around my shoulders, I step out into the cold.

A car is waiting for me, but it doesn’t surprise me Atticus had given his order. It’s no surprise he sent someone

Once the driver shuts the door and gets into the driver’s seat, we are on our way towards the grand hall.

I glance down at my phone, seeing the message Valerie had sent earlier whilst I was getting ready

VALERIE We’re at the hall.

I take a steadying breath when the venue comes into sight. It’s lit ablaze with dazzling lights. Pots of purple flowers line the entrance steps as guests pour into the hall.

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Here goes nothing....

Before I know it, I'm about to enter.

15 BONUS

Knowing that Sebastian is right inside sets my heart into a frenzy of emotions. He hurt me in so many ways, but the thought of him still makes my belly flip from excitement.

Deep down, a part of me wants to see if he'd even recognise me or would he be too lost in the arms of his beloved Annalise?

I know I'm playing a dangerous game and I remind myself I need to steer well away from them.

Someone takes my shawl away, and I look around, wanting to blend away into a corner, however the moment I step into the hall, silence falls from those around me as all eyes now turn to me

I carry myself gracefully, not making eye contact with anyone, but the whispers follow

"It's the Alpha's woman.

"No wonder he is so infatuated."

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I'm beginning to feel uneasy. I knew people would misunderstand, but right away?

I hurry away, blending into the crowd,

not wanting to remain in the limelight,

when Atticus's voice reaches my ears

surprise

"You are the one who sent the invitation. Did you think I wouldn't show up?

Or were you hoping that I didn't?" Sebastian's cold, callous voice reaches me

My breath hitches, his voice making it hard to focus. A crushing pain fills my chest and I slowly turn, scanning the crowd, but I don't need to search for long

Like always, he stands out, even in a room full of handsome alphas, and stunning ball gowns, his deadly allure,

or the aura he exudes stand above all.

Even the black mask on his face does nothing to hide his identity. The black suit he wears fits him perfectly, a suit that you know is expensive, yet it's

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classy. Unlike others, he wears only a black satin tie with a silver pin. One hand is in his pocket, and Annalise clings to the other. She's in a dark pink gown and I can't help but stare at her stomach.

It's hidden by the many layers of tulle of her extravagant gown, and I find myself slowly backing away.

"Oh!" a man behind me exclaims, and I turn quickly.

"I'm so sorry!" I whisper.

The elderly man smiles and shakes his head.

"Not at all, dear, just be careful." He says with a pleasant smile as his gaze falls to my stomach.

I nod, thanking him before I glance over my shoulder at the man who broke my heart, only to find him looking directly at me.

Those piercing blue eyes meet mine as time seems to stand still..

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I Am The Luna Chapter 12 By Moonlight Muse

ZAIA.

“Naya!” Atticus’s voice calls, and I freeze. The name he said he’ll call me by... Oh no...

I turn gracefully and look at him, smiling brightly. His brown hair is styled back, making him look a lot sharper without the tousled mess it usually is in. He’s in a dark grey suit that makes his eyes look a tad lighter, paired with a teal mask and tie.

“Atticus,” I reply, trying to make my voice sound a little pitchy.

He’ll know... there’s no way you can live with someone for three years and not be able to recognise them from close I can’t go over there.

Yet Atticus has other plans, and to my dismay, he motions me over, making my heart thunder.

Thinking fast, I raise a finger and gesture to the left. “One moment, I have to check on something.” I mouth to him, bluffing.

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He tilts his head, smiling, before he walks over to me. For once I'm relieved he came over to me rather than persist. He touches my upper arms, giving them a gentle squeeze. "Hey, are you alright?"

I nod. "Absolutely, I just want to make sure everything is in place," I reply quietly, certain that Sebastian can probably hear me.

"You look beautiful tonight... I'm glad you were up to coming. I didn't really have a choice..."

"Thank you, you do too. I mean, you look handsome, not beautiful." I reply, internally cringing at my mix-up.

He lets out a breathy laugh, reaching up and caressing my cheek – much to my surprise, and it takes my all not to move away from him.

"Thank you," he replies before he bends down and kisses my cheek. I can feel several pairs of eyes searing into me, but there's one pair that is burning holes through my head.

Sebastian's. Does he suspect something?

"Come, allow me to introduce you to Alpha Sebastian King"

I look at Sebastian before lowering my gaze. "Of course "

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Atticus offers me his arm and I hesitantly loop my hand around it and allow him to guide me over to them. What do I do? Goddess, what do I do?

I'm dragging my feet, walking slowly as Sebastian's piercing blue eyes continue to burn into me, as if delaying it will somehow stop me from having to come face-to-face with him..

Suddenly someone knocks into me, and something cold splashes down my arm and over the skirt of my dress.

I gasp, my foot catching in the hem of my gown, making me stumble. I grab onto Atticus, my other hand going to my belly protectively, just as Sebastian steps forward, almost as if to grab hold of me, but whoever bumped into me grabs my upper arm, pulling me back.

"Shit, sorry! I am so sorry!" Jai?

I turn to look at the man who has ruined my dress.

My saviour...

"I am so sorry, miss," he says apologetically, as a snarl rips through Atticus's throat. "You will be more careful. If anything happened to my woman, you..."

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His woman?

“It was a mistake, and she’s ok. I’m sorry Alpha,” Jai says, raising his hands in defence.

His gaze dips to mine, and his eyes soften. He did it on purpose as he recognised me...

“Get out of here before you are forced out.” Atticus spits venomously.

“You should know better than to threaten my men,” Sebastian growls.

Their auras are raging around them as the ballroom falls silent.

“It’s alright, I’m ok,” I murmur, keeping my head down as I gather my wet skirts. “I’ll just go clean up.”

I spot Valerie, who is standing beside Jai, but there’s no way I’ll be able to speak to her now. “Excuse me,” I murmur to Atticus before I pull away gently.

I look back, worried for Jai, when I see Sebastian block Atticus’s path.

His gaze flicks to me almost as if he knows I’m watching them and I quickly turn away, and hurry into the crowd...

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I reach the side hall, making my way to the bathroom. My heart is thudding and only when my phone vibrates, and I fumble with the latch on my clutch bag do I realise that I'm shaking.

VALERIE. I'm coming, wait in the bathroom. Goddess, that was nerve-wracking. I walk over to the sink and open the faucet, staring at my reflection.

Thank God Jai came. I hope he doesn't get into trouble...

This was not how the evening was meant to go...

I bite my lip, feeling my heart clench. He even brought her here... but obviously, why wouldn't he?

I don't know why it's upsetting me. I know that we never heard anything about my divorce, and there was no rumour about Annalise becoming the Luna. Even Val told me that... but what was I expecting? Them not to be together?

But... they are together regardless of if she's the official Luna. If it wasn't for his parents, she would be Luna already I am certain they are the only ones stopping her from becoming Luna.

"So, this is where you've been cooped up for the last few months."

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I freeze when the bathroom is pushed right open and none other than Annalise steps inside, shutting the door behind her. She knew it was me...

“Oh please, we aren’t in one of your stupid romance novels where a mask is going to keep your identity a secret. You made a good attempt with the makeup, but you’re still Zaia.” She sneers.

“And what do you want?” I ask, turning to her.

“I just thought I’d come to see my precious sister I never thought you’d move on so fast And there you were acting all broken-hearted. Trying to buy pity

I scoff, smirking.

“Really Annalise? And why should I remain brokenhearted? I’m over Sebastian and I really don’t care what he does with his life. As you said, I’ve moved on.”

“Oh? And does Alpha Atticus know you’re his rival’s ex-Luna? Or did you somehow trick him into getting you pregnant to trap him?”

“He knows everything, don’t you worry,” I mutter How petty is she ” I’m not the type to trap anyone, Annalise. Whatever I do, I do openly”

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“Yet you clearly slept with him the moment you rejected Sebastian...” She trails off as if something suddenly occurred to her

She frowns, staring at my belly, and I place a hand on it protectively. There’s a glimmer of confusion in her eyes.

“You look at least eight months...” she mutters. Her face pales and she stares at me, as realisation dawns upon her ” No... No... tell me it’s not true... it shouldn’t have happened...”

“What’s wrong Annalise, does it hurt to know that I’m carrying your man’s child?”

I’m not planning on telling her I’m carrying twins. I also know my secret is safe enough with her. She will not tell Sebastian because she wants him all for herself.

Her eyes flash as she curses. “How dare you! You-you can’t be pregnant! You miscarried. Val-Valerie said the bitch lied.”

“Don’t call her a bitch.” I warn, my eyes blazing. “You clearly aren’t happy in your own life, Annalise, if you have to interfere in mine. Neither can you accept the fact that, despite carrying Sebastian’s pup, no one wants to see you as his Luna. Tell me, have you come here to try to rain on my parade?”

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She looks offended. "What?" she scoffs.

"You heard me. Are you that unsatisfied in your life that you find happiness in hurting others?" I ask icily.

She clenches her jaw, touching her stomach. "Don't get so full of yourself, Zaia. The pack knows that this baby is their future Alpha, as for your child, if. The door opens, and she stops as Valerie freezes, looking between us.

Annalise looks between us before she claps slowly "Oh? So, you knew your precious friend was here, that's why you were so adamant to come along. I wonder if Sebastian would be happy to hear that." She sneers.

"I can handle him," Valerie replies confidently, her eyes cold as she glares at Annalise "You should go. There were several women all over Sebastian and he doesn't seem to be missing you."

That makes her tense before she turns back to me.

"Well.. dear sister, I'll leave you for now... until we meet again," she says in a sing-song voice, coming closer to me. She leans over, adjusting her mask and hair before she turns and pauses.

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She looks over her shoulder at me before she moves closer I'm about to push her away when she wraps one arm around me in a sudden one-armed hug. one that is painfully tight.

"Make sure Sebastian does not learn that that child is his.... We wouldn't want anything to happen to it, right?" she threatens in such a faint whisper I almost don't hear it.

My face pales as she moves back and caresses my belly, this time I shove her away, roughly clutching my stomach.

"Don't touch me!" I hiss, how dare she she threatened my baby!

She lets out a tinkling laugh as she pushes past Valerie and leaves the bathroom.

I gasp as I grip the counter as Valerie moves closer. "Zaia... are you alright? What did the evil witch say?"

I shake my head. "It doesn't matter"

Valerie has to return to that pack. I can't make things harder for her "Just stay alert and be wary of her Valerie, I don't want you getting hurt because of me.

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“I’ll be fine. You need to take care of yourself, Zaia. This evening was a mess. I wasn’t expecting you to go over to Sebastian like that! I thought you were staying low!” she whispers, glancing towards the shut door.

I nod. “I was, but Atticus didn’t leave me an option,” I explain, sighing.

“Be wary of him... he’s still the enemy I don’t reply What option do I have?”

“Thank Jai for me. He didn’t need to do that, but he did. Did you have to nag him to help?” I ask apologetically.

She shakes her head, and a slight blush coats her cheeks.

“No, it was actually his idea,” she mutters with an eye roll. “As much as I want to chat and catch up, I need to go before someone notices I’m gone.

I nod. She reaches under her dress, and I smile at the leg strap she’s wearing. Ever efficient.

“Here.... I want you to take these every night... ok?”

“What are they? I ask curiously.

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She hesitates. "I sent a friend in Chicago some of your blood samples, recent ones plus some older ones, there are traces of poisoning in your system or so he thinks."

I stare at her, shocked..

Poison?

"What?" I manage to ask.

"It's hard to pinpoint, as our cells still regenerate fast, but if he's right, it means whatever's poisoning you is still somehow being consumed by you," she explains quickly.

"Are you sure?" I ask quietly.

"He was 90 percent sure, look, Zay, please, just be careful with what you eat and what you drink from here on out, because I think someone knows you're here and whoever it is... is still somehow making sure you are affected by the poison... This is a special antidote, make sure you take it every night...."

My heart is thumping as I grip the counter

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Who would be so cruel to try to hurt a pregnant woman and why? What have I done to harm anyone?

Annalise.

But deep down, I don't think she's capable of such a complicated operation

Did she have help?

Is there someone watching me that I don't know of?

The bathroom door opens as two women step inside, laughing and chattering away, unaware of the dark atmosphere that hangs above our heads.

The merriment from outside fills the bathroom, but all I feel is dread, unable to focus on anything but the fact that someone wants me hurt, or worse...

Dead.

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I Am The Luna Chapter 13 By Moonlight Muse

ZAIA.

“Zaia!” Valerie turns back to me the moment the women leave the bathroom.

“Sorry, I got distracted.” I shake my head, trying to clear it.

“Are you really ok? I know this is a lot to take in, but I really do need you to listen,” Valerie whispers urgently.

“I know Val, I’m sorry.” I reply. “I just Sebastian clearly moved on and does as he wants. I don’t understand why he isn’t making her his Luna. She’s carrying his child. What more do people want?”

A part of me wants to tell him her truth, tell him that she threatened our children and at least warn him that even if he doesn’t want me, to tread carefully, for the sake of the pack.

“What?” Valerie asks, staring at me, her eyes wide

I look up at her. “Hmm?”

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“You said she’s pregnant... did she say that? Jai’s not mentioned anything... I mean, even if it’s early days, Sebastian would tell him.”

My brows furrow; Early days?

“Valerie, she was pregnant four months ago... I know you can’t tell too much in her gown-”

Valerie scoffs. “What? The bitch wears skin-tight clothes every damn day. Trust me, she’s not pregnant. Plus, she was drinking the moment we got here!”

My heart skips a beat as I stare at her in shock

She lied to me.

“Oh... I’m going to kill that bitch.” Valerie turns, and I grab onto her wrist and shake my head.

“No... leave it. It was probably to hurt me... regardless of if it is... she’s still the one he chose.” I reply, now fearing for my children even more.

I look down at the antidote vials I had hidden behind me when the women entered and slip them into my clutch bag. I need to get stronger. I need to get back to the healthy me so I can protect my babies from anything.

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“We need to tell Sebastian, the dumbass – that she’s lying!”

I frown. It makes me wonder... what else has she lied about? The kidnapping? And who knows what else she’s been telling Sebastian?

Someone who can threaten an unborn baby and lie about being pregnant can’t be trusted as a Luna. The pack doesn’t deserve that.

Although I am no longer part of the pack, I’m still worried about them.

We both agree to leave the bathroom at separate times, with me leaving first, and I almost bump into Atticus, who is waiting outside, leaning against the wall.

My heart thumps. I didn’t notice him.

He’s standing there, arms crossed, and he gives me a small smile, his eyes raking over me and to the darker patch on my dress, where the drink had spilt.

“I’ve had a dress brought for you, so you can change,” he says, motioning to the right, and I turn to see a woman standing there holding a dress bag.

He won’t let me leave so quickly...

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“Thank you,” I reply, knowing I can’t refuse Things have already become quite suspicious.

I take the peach dress from the woman.

“You are most welcome. Come this

way, ma’am.” She motions for me to follow, leading me into one of the side rooms to change.

Once I have changed, I put on the ivory heels and mask before I head back out to where Atticus is still waiting for me.

“Come, let’s return to the party.”

I nod, giving him a small smile, although his comment from earlier still makes me uncomfortable

“Atticus...” I begin, after we have taken a few steps.

“Yes?”

“Thank you for standing up for me, however... you called me your woman in front of the entire room. We both know that’s not true... I don’t want people to misunderstand,” I say, trying to sound as gentle as possible The last thing I want is to piss off another Alpha.

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He stops in his tracks and looks down at me.

“Zaia...”

I look up at him, and he glances down the hallway as if making sure there’s no one around. I see two people walking in the opposite direction, but otherwise, we are alone.

“I am sorry for that, but I wanted to make it clear to that man that you are not just anyone. You are born to be a Luna.”

My heart thuds at those words. It’s not the first time a man has said that to me

But I’m never good enough to keep as a mate or wife...

“I will wait for you, Zaia. Take as much time as you need. I’m not going anywhere.”

I open my mouth to tell him I am not looking to move on when he places a finger on my lips and shakes his head.

“Don’t reject me now... I said I’ll wait... because I am ready to, whether that’s weeks... months... or even years. You stepped into my life when I was least expecting someone to, and I want you to stay.”

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I remain silent. Fate plays its twisted game... The man I have always loved doesn't want me, yet the one I am not interested in wants me...

I'm better alone. Don't cause heartbreak and you will not face heartbreak...

He takes my hand and guides me back inside the ballroom. I spot Sebastian talking to a few men, a wineglass in his hand, and Annalise is by his side.

I frown slightly, staring at her puffy dress. She played it smart. Not only is the dress extremely full of ruffled

layers from the waist down, but when she hugged me, she had been by my side, not in front of me

There was no way for me to have known she was lying if Valerie didn't tell me.

She's clever, I'll give her that, but then, she has always been excellent at manipulating the situation.

Sebastian suddenly looks up and for a second our eyes meet before I quickly look away.

"May I have one dance?"

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I look up at Atticus before I nod. One dance, and then perhaps I can get out of here.

Escaping the ball was impossible. Atticus has kept to my side like glue. One dance became two, and then he introduced me to a few people.

For dinner, I am seated beside his mother and sister. His mother, Shelby, is a lovely woman, and you can tell she still has a sore throat, as she keeps thanking me for taking over. On the other hand, his sister, Linette, well she isn't too keen on me and I can't blame her.

After all, like she muttered earlier, he could do better. I want him to find a woman to have his children and be a good Luna to the pack.

Sebastian's eyes have been on me a few times, and if there was any doubt that he didn't know who I am, I am now certain he knows.

It's not a coincidence, the way his irritation is rising, every time Atticus is close to me. Funny... he got the woman he wanted, yet he isn't even focusing on her, nor has he given her any attention the entire evening.

Pity.

I glance back at Annalise, only to see her glancing around the hall, almost as if looking for something before she mutters something to Sebastian,

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who gives her a nod without even looking at her before she disappears into the crowds.

"...I'm considering buying the land west of the Plaza... perhaps a ten- storey shopping mall." Atticus is saying to the two men he's talking to.

"West? Isn't that the land that Sebastian King is after?" I glance at the man who spoke, and Atticus smiles.

"All's fair in love and business, wouldn't you agree, Naya?"

I nod distractedly, wondering where Annalise has gone.

Hmm. "Ah Alpha, Mr Vermont wishes to speak to you," Atticus's Beta Cameron says quietly.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he says before he turns to me. "Mind if I go to the bathroom?" I ask quietly. "Not at all. Take care of yourself," he replies, before we part ways.

I leave the hall, taking out my phone and text Mom that things are going ok. After a run to the bathroom, I message Atticus, letting him know that I feel tired and I'll be heading home. ATTICUS: Won't you stay for the fireworks?

ZAIA. I'm sorry, but it's been a long night.

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It's not a lie. My feet are aching and I'm ready to just turn in for the night.

Deciding to avoid everyone, I leave the bathroom, remove my heels and head around the side of the building.

We kept all the supplies for the evening down this side, and unlike the main areas of the mansions, this area is deserted and there's not even a guard on site.

Nothing to do or see here, anyway I lift the dark purple rope barrier and bending over, slide under it as I turn left, I key in the code for the double doors and I frown when it doesn't beep.

I tug at the door, and it pulls open. Not locked?

My heart skips a beat. Who was so careless as to leave it unlocked! Especially when we have so many guests around. Even if it's just a public hall, the staff needs to be more careful.

I will mention it to the head organiser tomorrow.

Shaking my head, I step inside; the door dulling the sound of the music from the ballroom and I walk down the corridor, ready to go home, and have a long bath!

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I glance back at the door, remembering Sebastian, and I sigh softly. Although he betrayed me, seeing him again... it hurt, but deep down, I wanted to too.

I turn the bend, stopping when I hear quiet voices.

Who's down here?

I glance around and spot a shaft of light from one of the storerooms. Maybe one of the staff had come to get supplies, so I head over to the room, planning to tell them to keep the doors locked at all times.

I'm about to open the door when I recognise the voice from inside, freezing. Annalise?

What on earth is she doing here?

"... now," she murmurs.

"Remember what you're told. Meeting here is a risk."

A man's voice... but I can't make much out, it's too low...

"I know. Everything is going to plan," Annalise responds.

I lean closer, wanting to peek inside, but the sound of footsteps makes me quickly back away and round the corner, praying they didn't hear me

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I peer around after a few moments and see the shadow of a man on the floor. Who is it?

I hear footsteps and pull back. I can't risk being seen. I glance around, wondering where to hide, but to my relief, the footsteps are fading, probably heading towards the exit I was planning to take.

Thank the goddess!

I wait a few moments, but hearing the sound of heels, I realise only the man has left. I quickly hurry back the way I had come, quietly exiting through the double doors and swiftly making my way to the front hall.

My heart is still racing from the near run-in and I'm almost at the front door when I stop, glancing back over my shoulder

I don't know if I'll ever get the chance again...

After a few moment's hesitation, I hurry back through the crowds until I spot Annalise making her way through the hall back towards the ballroom.

"Annalise!" I call her when I'm a mere few feet away from her.

She stops in her tracks and turns to look at me. "What do you want?" she mutters, glancing around.

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I motion with my head to the front doors, "Come with me," I say quietly.

She casts a furtive glance around and from the half of her face that I can see, she doesn't look pleased, however, it's obvious she doesn't want to be seen with me either

"Fine," she mutters following me out.

I walk down the steps, still holding my shoes and bag and we move to the side, plenty of people are out here and everyone is minding their own business.

"What do you want?!" she hisses, "Who were you speaking to inside?" I ask her.

"Who?" she asks, confused.

"In the storeroom." Her face instantly pales and how I wish she wasn't wearing a mask so I could see her expression, but the shock is soon replaced by a sneer.

"Wouldn't you like to know... be careful, Zaia, keep pushing your nose into others' business and only you will suffer. Ever heard of the saying, curiosity killed the cat? No?"

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“Ever heard that a cat has nine lives, no?” I counter sarcastically “Answer me Annalise, who were you speaking to?”

“No.”

I didn't think she would tell me, but it was worth a shot.

I smile coldly and step closer. “Fine. Don't answer me, but remember, every lie ever told will always be revealed. Tell me, Annalise... Were you really held captive for the last three years, or was it all a façade to manipulate Sebastian into believing that I had a hand in it, because we both know that its not true”

Her chest is heaving as she stares back at me, tight-lipped, and I gauge her reaction. A wave of cold washes over me and I know I'm right....

It was all one big lie.

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I Am The Luna Chapter 14 By Moonlight Muse

SEBASTIAN.

From the moment she stepped into the hall, she took my breath away.

She looked as beautiful as ever, Zaia was always the one that stood out. Even back when other girls fawned over me, she was in her own world, planning her dreams and talking about her ambitions but even then, she won the attention of most.

That girl who became the most important one to me... but it wasn't meant to be...

Then why, even after I ruined it all, after I cast her aside, is she having this effect on me?

I promised, for her safety, I'll control my emotions and accept that this is safer, until I find the one behind it. 2

The moment Atticus Payne went over to her, jealousy reared its ugly head and I wanted to tear her away from him. She's alive, she's ok, and she's... pregnant.

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Valerie's words flash through my mind and I suddenly feel she lied... is it a coincidence that Zaia is so far along in her pregnancy and the timeline makes it obvious she was pregnant when she left.

I need to talk to her, but the irritating grip Annalise has on my arms reminds me that I need to be careful. Am I really going to fuck up the sacrifice I made to keep her safe just to satisfy my own curiosity?

But if she is... she's even more vulnerable...

She has consumed my mind all evening, but seeing her so cosied up to Payne makes my blood boil with rage.

Now the bastard's there, smirking

away. For once, he's alone and without Annalise clinging onto me like a leech. I'm going to take my chance.

I'm about to make my way over to him, but instead, his eyes meet mine and he smirks.

Muttering an 'excuse me' to the man

beside him, he walks towards me,

arrogance and amusement clear on his face.

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The man might act pleasant, but he's a

master at hiding his true colours.

"I hope our little disagreement earlier isn't still on your mind. You don't seem to be enjoying the party, Alpha Sebastian," he remarks.

I raise an eyebrow. "I'm honoured that you care so much for my enjoyment, however, you need not worry," I reply coldly.

He chuckles. "Ah, even on this day you can't forget our differences. Let's enjoy the party, shall we?"

This isn't about our differences. I clench my jaw, refusing to answer him, and he sighs.

"Very well then. I, Atticus Payne, apologise for offending you over your beta's mistake. It's just that I am extremely protective of my woman."

My eyes flash as I look at that smiling face of his, one that is taunting me.

"I never knew you had taken a partner," I remark

He laughs. "You don't know

everything about me, Alpha Sebastian.

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No, I don't, and I really don't trust you.

"Seems like it, and you're about to become a father if we go by the fact that she's your woman," I say, the words sending a flare of rage through me.

He nods slowly. "Yes, it's only right. You know how important heirs are...

We've been together for a while,

although it's only recently that she's moved to my pack."

My heart thuds as I watch him sharply, but he's lost in thought. That taunting smile on his face makes me want to punch him.

I don't believe that... I never smelt another man on her... I never saw her out of the pack... she wouldn't cheat on me. I know Zaia.

"Oh yeah?"

"Yes. I truly am lucky to have her." Atticus says, his eyes meet mine, and that cunning glint in them confirms my thoughts.

He knows she's mine... If they were in a relationship, he would know what pack she's from... something isn't adding up...

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“Alpha.” His beta calls him and he flashes me a smile before excusing himself. If they were together, which I highly doubt, it could be why Zaia accepted the rejection so fast... and why Valerie lied about losing the child.

Unease fills me as I remember the month trip I had taken several months back.

If you go by the size of her bump, the chances that perhaps it was then that she fell pregnant is possible, but I refuse to believe she'd cheat on me...

I suddenly feel sick remembering a week or so after I returned, she was quite sick, and even felt nauseous...

My wolf's emotions are swirling around, and my heart clenches and I shake my head.

No, I don't believe she'd cheat... there has to be something... maybe she was pregnant prior to my trip... fuck. 2

Were the threats from Atticus, wanting me to let go of her?

But the image that was included....

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Was he the one behind freeing Annalise because he wanted Zaia completely? Thinking if Annalise returned, I'd let her go, or worse, was he somehow the one who helped Zaia keep her away?

No. That's not Zaia.

Nothing is making sense and my brain is beginning to over analyse everything.

I need to talk to her.

My mind is made up. Scanning the room swiftly, I head to the exit. I need to find her and ask her about this child.

It would make sense for Atticus to lie just to make himself feel better... and if that pup is mine... even more reason for him to pretend it's his.

And if it proves to be mine, then I've made an unforgivable mistake.

Just the thought of what I have put her through is making me sick. I don't deserve her forgiveness, but if she's pregnant with my child, then I need to beg her to return to the pack.

She'll be safer there. Right now, she's in the lair of a psychotic asshole.

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It takes me a while to find her. With so many people swarming around, it's not easy. The smell of the perfume she had worn to probably try to disguise her scent lingers, making it a little easier to pinpoint it, although it's far less than what it was earlier.

I manage to track her to the front gardens, and I scan the grounds. It's vast, with trees, bushes, and fountains all around. The lighting is dim out here and there are far fewer people out there.

All minding their own business.

Where is she... Has she left?

The thought makes my stomach

plummet.

No, I need to see her!

Frowning, I look around, trying to catch her scent, and when I do, I follow it.

It leads me to the side of the garden and soon I pick up the sound of talking.

"How dare you!"

Zaia.

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I look up, and spot Zaia, behind some large bushes, but her back is to me and she's talking to Annalise... who's face I can see from here and she looks visibly upset.

What is going on?

"Please Zaia! Stop it!"

"You want me to stop? I'm saying nothing but the truth, Annalise! You are a snake. It's time the entire world knows it!" Zaia hisses.

I make my way towards them, ready to break this up when Annalise screams.

I break into a run, jumping over the bush, when I see Annalise on the floor, clutching her arm. And it's bleeding.

She pushed her...

"Zaia!"

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I Am The Luna Chapter 15 By Moonlight Muse

chapter 15 A Harsh Truth

SEBASTIAN.

Both women turn to me, relief flooding Annalise's face whilst Zaia's anger fades a little. Her face paling and her chest rising and falling rapidly before she looks down at Annalise.

"I...I didn't push her, she fell herself!" she says. My heart squeezes as I look at her, tilting my head. I wish she didn't let her jealousy and anger get the better of her. 3

Annalise struggles to her feet, and I help her up. "Go inside and get it cleaned up." I command, quietly.

She looks at me with tears in her eyes as she clutches her arm, and I feel a sliver of guilt. I'm really using her...

"Annalise, tell him the truth. I didn't push you!" Zaia snaps, glaring at her sister. "It was an accident. I... I must have tripped." Annalise whispers, avoiding her sister's gaze.

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I close my eyes, wishing Zaia at least saw that no matter how annoying Annalise is; she did love her..

“Stop acting like you’re innocent!” Zaia says, frustration clear in her voice.

“You are a fool, Sebastian, if you believe her!”

“I saw enough... Annalise go.” I

command.

She looks at me before she whispers a ‘ I’m sorry’ to Zaia, and hurries away, trying to stifle her sobs.

“Do you really think I pushed her?” Zaia asks me.

I look at her, hating how much I missed her... how do I stand here before her and not pull her close?

My stomach twists as my gaze falls on her stomach.

“What are you doing here, Zala?” I ask quietly, stepping closer to her.

She steps back. “Don’t change the topic. You think I pushed her, don’t you?” she asks me angrily. There’s intense rage and hatred in her eyes and for a moment I wonder where my Zaia has gone...

“Zaia-”

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"No! Not until you answer me. You think I pushed her, don't you!?"

"I saw her fall." I say quietly.

"She probably saw you and did it on purpose. She's a snake and you're an idiot to fall for her. Her kidnapping-"

"Zaia. Stop it." I warn her quietly.

"No! For once, at least try to listen to me! Call her back and ask her yourself

"Stop causing a scene!" I growl, glancing around as I grab her arms and yank her close.

Tingles rush through my hands the moment I touch her and my heart thuds as her breath hitches, our eyes meet, and the proximity seems to make time still.

Only her stomach is between us as I gaze into those unique amethyst eyes.

"Zaia. Calm down." I say softly.

Her eyes flash in anger, but there's

also hurt...

Why are you hurt when you apparently cheated on me, too? 2

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“What do you want?” she asks me venomously.

She’s still hurting... but it’s hard to see this side of her.

I let go of one of her elbows. Reaching up, I pull at the ribbon tie of her mask, tugging it off and gazing into the face of the woman who means the world to me.

My gaze dips to her plump lips, and pleasure rushes through me. The temptation to kiss her is consuming...

“What do you want, Sebastian?” she whispers.

I lick my lips, swallowing hard as i force myself to look into her eyes. Tell me, Zaia... is this child mine?”

She scoffs bitterly, looking away from me as she pulls out of my hold.

“And why should I answer you when my plea to have you listen moments ago fell on deaf ears?”

I sigh, closing my eyes. “Zaia...I’m trying to ignore everything. Tell me, is this child mine?”

I need the answer, I need something to tell me she didn’t betray me...

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"I owe you nothing..."

"You owe me the truth." I reply dangerously. My eyes flash as I advance on her, cupping her face.

she tenses, her heart thumping, but

that fire in her eyes remains strong "It's not yours." She says.

My heart sinks, the pain in my chest growing.

No. I don't believe it.

She tries to pull free, but I refuse to let her go.

"Look me in the eye and say that again." I whisper.

Her eyes flash as she glares up at me.

"This child is not yours." This time she doesn't bat an eyelid as she holds my gaze and with those words, it feels as if something inside of me breaks.

"Then whose?" I ask quietly.

She's about to answer when a voice from behind us beats her to it.

"Mine."

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My heart thuds loudly as we both turn to see Atticus standing there, a frown on his face and hands in his pockets.

No...

Deny it Zaia, I don't believe it..

Zaia instantly moves away from me, her heart thumping as she watches him.

"I'm asking her, not you," I reply venomously.

He isn't surprised... so I was right; he knew.

He walks over to her, gently taking her wrist and moves her behind his back.

"Let it go to Sebastian, she's chosen me... and remember, you were the one who ended it with her. Let her go." He says quietly as I stare at the woman who is looking at the floor. 2

"Zaia... is he the father?" I ask quietly.

Tell me it's a lie...

"You don't need to answer him, Zaia.

It's been a long night. You need to rest," Atticus says.

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“No. I think I do... so he can step out of my life and never return,” she replies, glancing up at Atticus before she turns to me.

“He is... but you shouldn’t be so shocked, Sebastian... you were able to cast me aside for another... just the way you cast Annalise aside when we turned out to be mates... why so shocked when the same happens to you?” She says.

I stare at her, unable to explain it to her. She’s never mentioned the time before we found each other as mates. She never questioned anything about Annalise and so I never brought it up.

But for her to mention it now...

“Zaia, I think we need to- She shakes her head, raising a finger to stop me.

“Na’a. WE don’t need to do anything, the time to hear is long gone... I’m done screaming and not being heard.

You’ve moved on and so have I. Goodbye, Mr King, I think you have overstayed your welcome.” Every word she speaks is ice cold, her eyes glaring at me as she holds hostility and rage within them.

“Zaia-”

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"It's Ms Toussaint to you, Mr King! And in case you need a reminder, I Zaia Toussaint, reject you, Sebastian King. Once and for all."@

The words cut into me like a knife and I can see Atticus trying to hide his amusement... but it doesn't matter.

What matters is... I truly have lost her...

She spins around and looks at Atticus." Please take me home." She says, her voice far softer than it was when she spoke to me.

"Of course. Come." He says, caressing her cheek before he looks back at me, his eyes hard.

"You are no longer welcome here, Alpha Sebastian. Take your men and leave as soon as possible or I will have my men escort you out."

His words make my blood boil and my gaze snaps to Zaia's back, but she doesn't bother turning back...

What am I holding on to?

"Did you hear me, Alpha Sebastian?"

I glance back at Atticus as he puts his arm around her shoulder. He turns away, just as fireworks erupt in the sky, signalling the end of the year.

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Atticus pauses, shoulder at me, and looks over his his eyes glinting dangerously, and a victorious smile crosses his face.

“Happy New Year, Alpha Sebastian.”

With those words, he leads her away, leaving me seething and feeling completely alone.

This is my doing... 4

I watch as she walks away, staring at her back. Hoping and praying, she'll glance back ... but she doesn't. Not even once.

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