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I Am The Luna Chapter 16 By Moonlight Muse

ZAIA

The entire ride home, I'm dead silent. I don't know what to make of it. Everything that happened has hit me like a tonne of bricks.

Atticus knew who I was... I knew I should have changed my first name! I should have worn contacts or changed my hair colour! We were too careless Goddess, I'm so stupid.

Mom said it isn't important, but deep down I know it isn't good enough, I just should have listened to my gut feeling. Plus, stupidly taking her maiden name? It's all one big stupid mess. I'm angry at myself for just going with it.

Mom has been stressed, I can't blame her. It was my duty to think carefully I should have been firm, even if it meant delaying leaving Dark Hollow Falls for a little while. We should at least have had a more solid backstory

How was I so foolish to think Atticus wouldn't investigate it? I bet he does his round of checks on everyone who shows up at his pack looking to reside here Of course, he must have!

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Why would he let random people in? I mean, anyone could be a spy trying to get in. Only now do I see how ridiculous it truly is... Everything about this was stupid.

Because we were thinking only in the moment and driven by emotion. I can't make that same mistake again Now is the time to think carefully and smartly....

"Zaia I blink, looking up sharply at Atticus and realise the car has stopped. I glance out the window and see we are outside our home The small hallway window upstairs is glowing with a dim light. Mom's still awake...

"I'm sorry I partially lied," I begin quietly "I know I shouldn't have, and you have every right to be angry, but we needed somewhere safe to stay..." I trail off, not knowing what to say, or how I can justify my lie He shakes his head, sighing.

"I had a feeling you may not know, but I have seen you before Zaia Toussaint back when you were still part of your father's pack remember the Lunar festival? I was there four years ago."

My heart skips a beat and I look up sharply at him. "That was an allied pack event.

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“Well, you’re not the only one to sneak into a pack uninvited. I was younger, wilder, the pleasure in taking a risk was enticing “He winks at me. I frown but say nothing, I am in ne position to question him.

“I wouldn’t forget those eyes or that hair I may have been drawn to you too But then I found out months later you were mated to Sebastian King,” he sighs as he leans back in his seat and places his hand on the steering wheel

“And although I never saw your face in that mask that night, I recognised your eyes when you stepped into this pack After all, the true daughter of Hugh Toussaint had eyes as unique as a shadow eclipse or as the saying goes

True daughter

Only my word...

“So, you knew all along,” I state.

“Not completely. Your aura was and is extremely less than what I felt from you four years ago, but a little background check got me some information I was missing. With Sebastian himself not announcing his split or rejection of his fated mate, I was a little confused... but tonight confirmed the rest.”

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I nod slowly. "I'm sorry..." I murmur

We need to leave this pack... there is no way I can stay here any longer. I don't want to come between Atticus's and Sebastian's issues and only make matters worse.

I bet that's the only reason Sebastian even paid me a little attention. "Don't be. You're safe here, and he cannot get to you," he says quietly.

Our eyes meet and I simply nod before I open the door. He instantly gets out and comes around, helping me out of the car. I hold my bag tightly, my other hand on my stomach as I look at the moon.

When do things get better?

"Just get some rest. Things will be back to normal tomorrow," he says, as our eyes meet.

I look up at him and although a part of me wants to believe that, my mind says there are too many red flags.

From here on out, I need to be smart going forward.

"Good night Atticus, and thank you," I say quietly before I head to the door.

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He's watching me, but I don't look back until I reach the door, giving him a small wave.

Someone knows I am here in this pack someone has been poisoning me. I can't trust anyone including Atticus...

I want to trust him but I can't risk it

I unlock the door, and he gives me a

smile as I close the door and lock it. Someone in this pack had met up with

Annalise... who?

I can't trust anyone and it's time we get out of here. I hurry up the steps and I hear mom's footsteps as she exits her bedroom.

"Zaia!" she exclaims, looking relieved, although confusion replaces it when she looks at my dress.

I'm about to reply as I stare at her. She's been looking ill

"Mom... I want to ask you something Please answer me truthfully"

She looks surprised at my question, but

she nods fervently.

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“How is your health?” I ask quietly, my eyes trained on her

Her eyes flit around before she looks at me “F-fine...”

“The truth.”

“I am fine, it’s nothing, I just feel a little tired lately, thats all...”

I frown as I walk over to her It makes sense if she’s being poisoned too. Who knows how it is being given to me? It could be through our food or even the water system... Whatever it is, someone is out to get us, and I need to protect her at all costs. The doctor had done tests here... had she never picked up on anything?

“Mom. Begin packing. We are going to leave.”

“No, why! What happened, Zaia? Did he find out?”

“Yes Mom, and it was a mistake to go... but I think it was needed. Tonight has been eventful... but... we need to go somewhere safe...” I say, entering my bedroom and taking out one of the empty suitcases from under my bed.

“Zaia... Zaia! Tell me what happened?” Mom says, helping me lift it onto the bed.

She’s worried, but I know my decision is the right one.

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I quickly fill her in on everything. What happened with Annalise, Sebastian, Atticus, and Valerie, not leaving anything out as I simultaneously pack my things?

“Wait... Sebastian said that?” Mom asks, making me pause from telling her about when he asked about the baby..

“Yes,” I say, as I zip the suitcase shut and take out the rest of the things from the cupboard.

“But Sebastian saw the report...

wouldn't he have known that you were carrying twins?” she muses thoughtfully

I pause, tilting my head. “I'm not sure I mean it depends on if he read it all... either way it doesn't matter whether he thinks it's one or two. I am done.”

She nods as I try to think back to my conversation with Valerie, but I can't really recall...

“Zaia... Atticus seems to be promising us safety....” Mom begins hesitantly when I finish.

I pause from where I'm placing some trinkets into a cardboard box.

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“But we’re not safe here... and I don’t trust anyone. You yourself said to be wary of him.” I remind her.

“Then what will you do? Where will we go?” Mom asks. “Zaia, we need to think things through!”

I stare at the box in front of me, a small frown creasing my brow. I haven’t thought that far but I will....

Where will I go...

I look up at her suddenly, my heart skipping a beat, knowing exactly where I’m going.

I’m shocked the thought didn’t come sooner

“I know exactly where we are going, Mom,” I say quietly. “Trust me, I have never thought things through better I’m done hiding, I’m done running and I’m done listening.”

“Where are we going?” Mom asks. She can tell how certain I am.

“Where else but to claim what’s rightfully mine...”

“Sebastian?” Mom asks, stunned.

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1 I tilt my head as I sit down on the bed and shake my head. “No Mom, we are going to the Crystal Shadow Pack.”

Her eyes fly open, and she places a hand on her chest.

“What... to your father’s...”

“Yes Mom, it’s time we go back... I think it’s high time I claim my rights,” I say firmly.

Mom and Dad were mated when I was conceived and had claimed one another

I am the rightful heir to that pack. I gave it all up for Sebastian and Dad had put it all in Annalise’s name But... now she is with Sebastian, I don’t think she’s winning any favours.

That pack is mine... and I think the time to reclaim it is now.

I’m tired of putting everyone before myself... I will secure my children’s future in an influential pack and if anything, it will be a little safer there...

Also, it might help to get some insight into everything that has happened with Annalise.

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After all, if she really was kidnapped for the last three years... Why had we never heard of it? Surely Dad and her mother would have been worried earlier if she didn't contact them in three years...

"Zaia... there's a fire in your eyes and it's worrying me," Mom whispers, taking my hands.

"No Mom, you're not the one that should be worried. Those who have wronged us should be the ones worrying, because it's time Zaia Toussaint rises from the pitiful woman she has become and fights back," I whisper.

"I will expose every single lie that has ruined my life and I will hold all who have tried to hurt me accountable." I continue.

"Oh, Zaia..." Mom looks worried, but I'm not changing my mind..

I know it's going to be hard for Mom to return there, but I need her. I need her by my side, and more so to keep her close and safe

"Let's do this, Mom... let's go back to the very first pack that ever wronged us," I whisper "Let's take back everything that was taken from us. For once... let's be selfish, for us."

Mom tilts her head, but I know she's beginning to crumble.

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I pick up my phone and send Valerie a text.

ZAIA. Call me when you can.

My phone beeps as I get a notification pop-up on the screen.

This message failed to send.

How strange...

I try again, but nothing.

Feeling worried, I hit the dial button.

“Sorry, but the number you have called cannot be recognised...”

I frown as I hang up.

Did Sebastian cut it off?

Then we are on our own...

“The number can’t be recognised...” I murmur.

“This isn’t good,” Mom replies nervously.

I simply shake my head.

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“Don’t worry Mom, we’ll be ok,” I say, taking out two vials of antidote. I open the first for Mom and motion her to take it.

She listens without even a question, trusting me with her life and takes it.

I take the second one myself before I stand up and walk around the bed to the window. I place my hands on the ledge as I stare out at the night sky.

For the first time in months, I truly feel strong.

I have a goal in mind, a destination to reach, a truth to reveal, and above all, a victory to achieve.

It’s time they all remember who I truly am.

It’s time that Zaia Toussaint steps back onto the battlefield.

“I’m coming for you, Annalise... I hope you’re ready.”

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SEBASTIAN

The journey home is a blur, and I can't focus on anything but what happened. The scene replays in my mind like a reel glitching, stuck on the same scene again and again.

My head feels clouded, and nothing makes sense. It's almost as if I'm listening to everything through a thick glass.

I've run my fingers through my hair a thousand times and even now, as Jai tells me to turn around and bring her home, I can't hear him properly.

Annalise is silent, her arm now bandaged up and Valerie is sitting there, tight-lipped. The tension in the car after I snapped at Jai to stop talking about her has been fucking intense.

More than them, I want her back.. seeing that fire in her eyes reminded me of the woman who always caught my eye... the fiery queen that I let go.

The passing cars are a blur, and the sound of my heart thudding is loud in my ears. "Stop it, Jai," Valerie says coldly "He doesn't want her!"

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"I know, I'm just "

"Drop it," she growls warningly. I look out of the window, replaying those final moments again and again

'I Zaia Toussaint reject you...

I close my eyes, trying to steady my breathing. The agony within my chest is almost suffocating...

I truly have lost her What am I without her?

A heartless Alpha, a foolish man a madman. Where did I go wrong?

The darkness of my thoughts suck me in until it's just me and those thoughts

"We're home."

My eyes snap open, and it takes me a second to process Jai's words. I glance around. I'm still in the car, it's still dark outside. I must have fallen asleep without realising

It's something that I seem to be doing a lot lately, whether it is getting drunk and crashing or just being so consumed by my thoughts that I fall asleep.

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but then again, that would happen when I spend the nights tossing and turning as I wonder and think of the woman I stupidly pushed away

I know I'm a mess, but tonight..

tonight I feel like I lost her all over again. I glance in the back to see both Annalise and Valerie have gone. "Where are..." I massage my temples.

"I dropped them home first," Jai says, sighing. "What the hell is going on Seb? What do you want? I mean, you rejected her and then you found her, ran after her and then you left so suddenly, not wanting to spend a minute more there. I'm not Zaia, but even I'm getting fucking whiplash."

Me too... me fucking too...

"He ordered us to leave his pack immediately and so we did," I reply curtly.

"Even with the men we took, we were on his territory, and I couldn't afford to risk everything, we were outnumbered," I mutter, staring at the mansion.

But the truth is I needed to be out of there before I broke down before so many. My eyes find their way to the bedroom that I have been unable to step into ever since she left. On nights I would come back this late, the light would be on. She'd always be there, waiting.

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Even on those nights that I would not return until the morning hours, I'd find her with a book or sitting in bed or on top of the sheets having dozed off – waiting. She never got into bed unless I was there. The house itself has become a cold, unwelcoming place.

I did this. The agony of my wolf slips through and I push it away. The fact I'm feeling his emotions means I'm hurting him, too.

Dad still refuses to acknowledge me and is causing problems in all my business ventures, wanting me to fail. Punishing me for what I have done. Then there's Mom... who won't even talk to me.

I wish someone could just figure it out. There's Jai who's trying to get it out of me, but how do I tell him? Soon he'll stop pushing too.

"Seb. Is Zaia – is she safe there? I mean, are you really going to leave her there?" he asks quietly.

"We're no longer mates. There's nothing I can do for her, nor do I care where she goes." I reply coldly. My voice is a lie to how I truly feel inside.

"Even though her twins might be yours, really Seb, who are you kidding?" Jai scoffs, resting his wrist on top of the steering wheel.

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"They aren't," I reply icily, glaring out at the mansion. Wait, twins? For a moment, it feels like the fog clouding my mind lifts and I stare out of the window.

Of course, they are twins... I knew that from the report then how come I hadn't even remembered it when I was confronting her... how did I buy that she had an affair? How did I even believe that?

My head's hurting and I am unable to focus on what Jai's rambling on about or what the fuck I have said.

"Shut up," I groan, pinching the bridge of my nose

"Seb? Man, can you fucking focus?" Jai growls in frustration. "You're acting like you're on fucking crack!"

I look up at him, taken aback. "What, I am fucking focusing," I growl irritably. He sighs. "No man, you're a mess."

I turn away, Obviously... I fucked it all up.

"What do you want me to do? Celebrate my fucking losses? I saw my mate walk away with another man after I accused her of cheating on me when... I knew she wouldn't... but I still fucking said it." I slam my fist into his dashboard, and he looks at me with concern.

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“Yeah, even I don’t get that... can you fucking explain why you’d do that? You practically pushed her into the arms of another man... one who we both know is dangerous.” Jai sighs.

“You know... although you won’t admit it... I know you wanted to find her... that’s why you went, right? To see if she’s there? I mean, I don’t think you’re over her All night, your eyes were on her, not on Annalise.”

I close my eyes, resting my head against the headrest.

“I know Jai... and I don’t have an answer ... I just... I felt it was the right thing to fucking do. At times I feel like I fucking did the right thing, at other times I know I fucking messed it up so badly. I drove her away where I was meant to be protecting her from whatever is out there... I didn’t. I put her at even more risk, and I don’t even know why.” I say.

He doesn’t reply and I open my eyes to look at him and he’s watching me intently.

“What, want to laugh at the fact that I’m a fucking fool?” I scoff. “Well go ahead because I totally deserve it.”

“No... I just... it’s not like you, Sebastian. I was wondering if you’ve somehow been consuming Ashbane?”

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Ashbane?

I frown, Ashbane is a herb that is similar to Wolfsbane but only affects the mind and clouds clarity. But that wouldn't work unless there's doubt in my mind and who would even give me that?

My head begins to feel heavy again, and I feel irritated. "Who would be able to get me to take Ashbane Jai? There's no one who..."

I trail off, the same person who was able to get close enough to threaten Zaia and take those pictures...

There's a who, a nameless person, but the why and how is still a mystery.

"I think we should ask Valerie to do a blood test, like right now," Jai says. "

Think of it Seb, you yourself seem confused. We learned of this as kids. The damn bane of the Bane herb family, their purposes and the side effects," he chuckles at his own dead joke and I cock a brow.

"Fine... right now, I don't know what to rule out. You know, I asked her Jai, if the child was mine... but I knew she was expecting twins. It's not something I can just forget, but that had escaped my mind entirely."

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It really isn't easy to forget, because those moments of her telling me she had something to tell me that night... the excitement in her eyes... it all pointed to the pregnancy... including the visits to the doctor... that report. All of these things replay in my mind, resulting in countless sleepless nights, so how did I just forget it. Why was my mind blank when I was in front of her?

"Well then, all the more reason to see what Valerie has to say," Jai says, as he turns the car around and drives

towards the gates of the mansion. I see a shadow in one of the upstairs windows, but I can't make out if it's a male or female

Mom wouldn't wait for me, not when she's so pissed at me, plus it's in the middle of the night already. Dad, it must be him, silently watching and judging me.

He had no opinion about going to the party when I told him. He only likes to criticise after I've done something he doesn't like, but before I make the mistake? He doesn't care.

The journey to Valerie's apartment doesn't take long. It's pretty dead around this time of night.

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"I hope she isn't asleep," I remark when Jai parks up.

"Na, I don't think she will be. I only dropped her off twenty minutes or so ago." He gets out of the car, and I follow as we glance up at her apartment.

The lights are off

"Maybe we should come back tomorrow," I remark as he locks the car doors, the sound is loud and the lights flash brightly in the silence.

"No, I need to know if you have the damn thing in your body," he isn't having it and so we head inside, and up the stairs to the fourth floor

"The light is off Jai," I say although I have no energy to argue with him.

I don't even know after such a long evening how he still has the energy to be so damn stubborn.

I feel defeated... tonight I lost Zaia completely...

Our footsteps echo on the tiled steps, finally reaching her room. Jai rings the bell and shoves his hands into his pocket.

"She's going to be pissed," he remarks. I frown, "Then we should have waited" I suddenly look up sharply.

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What if I ask her or beg her to tell me about the babies? She is Zaia's best friend and obviously knew she was at that pack. She would know, I could command her and get her to answer...

I just need answers to end this madness

I massage my temples to clear my mind that's beginning to feel overcrowded, and now even I'm impatient to see Valerie. She has answers I need.

"Damn woman, open up." Jai mutters, now knocking on the door "Maybe she's in the shower," I say, trying to listen. "Hmm maybe" Jai frowns. "Or she's gone to sleep."

He crouches down, putting his eye to the peephole I'm not sure what he thinks he'll be able to see.

"You know those are used to look out, not in?" I remark to the idiot.

Suddenly he jumps back, hitting his arm on the wall behind us, making me flinch.

That must have hurt.

"Stupid woman!"

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“What?” I growl, thinking he’s making so much damn noise! “She was peeking back! Why the fuck is she not answering?” he growls.

I roll my eyes. Seriously, he’s such a damn drama queen. I step forward.

“Valerie, open the door It’s Sebastian and the idiot,” I call out She won’t deny me.

Silence follows from inside, and I frown as Jai continues to grumble, rubbing his elbow where he had banged it when he sprang back like a fucking idiot.

“Val?” I call. I glance at the door, suddenly feeling uneasy.

Why isn’t she answering?

“Valerie! Open the door!” I say, now more urgently, knocking harder No reply.

I’m about to speak when I hear a faint creak of someone walking inside.

Something’s wrong.

“Move,” I say to Jai before I back away as much as I can.

Counting to three, I run at the door, slamming my shoulder into it with full force, ripping the door right off its hinges. It falls to the ground with a resounding thud, and I stare at the window right across. The very same

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window that we could see from downstairs, only now it's standing wide open, the curtains blowing gently in the wind.

"The fuck Seb, a little aggressive don't you think?"

"Valerie!" I shout as I rush into the room and scan it.

Where is she?

"Sebastian!" Jai snaps.

"I heard footsteps, Jai. Something's not right," I mutter as we both scan the open living area.

His face has paled, and I can hear his heart pounding as he rushes to the kitchen area.

I'm trying not to let that unease grow as I push open her bedroom door, not bothering to knock and stop dead in my tracks. The stench of blood hits my nose as Jai slams into me from behind at my abrupt stop.

My heart thuds violently as I stare at the scene before me.

It's right out of a horror movie.

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Blood covers the floor and the bedsheets. A sign of a scuffle is obvious from the mess and the way the bedding is dragged off and covered in blood and right in the middle of the room is none other than Valerie.

She's face down on the floor, lying in a huge pool of blood. The back of her blond hair is a bloody bludgeoned mess and beside her, a hammer is on the floor, covered in blood...

I Am The Luna Chapter 18 By Moonlight Muse

SEBASTIAN.

"Valerie!" I rush to her side, my heart in my throat. "FUCK!"

"Val..." Jai's voice is barely a whisper. Both of our hearts are like galloping horses, thundering loudly in my ears, but my only concern is the heartbeat of the woman before me.

Please be alive.

"Fuck Val... shit," I mutter, leaning closer.

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The faint sound of a heartbeat reaches my ears and I scoop her up quickly, my heart filling with relief.

“She’s alive, Jai! Take her to the hospital now!” I shout.

As much as I would do it myself, it means the footsteps I heard belonged to the attacker. They could be nearby.

Why was she targeted and by who?

“Jai! Her life depends on you! Go! I’ll call the hospital.” I growl, making him snap out of his trance.

“Right...” he whispers, taking her

lifeless body from me.

“Run,” I command, taking out my phone and dialling the hospital. “Go!”

Jai nods, his eyes flashing with

determination before he turns and

breaks into a run towards the door.

You have got to make it...

“Hello, Opal Hospital-”

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“Sebastian King. We have a critical patient on the way. Doctor Valerie Scott has suffered blunt force trauma to the head and needs attending to immediately. Beta Jai O’Dell is bringing her. Make sure she survives.” My command is absolute as the woman hangs up, and I take a moment to calm myself.

I can hear Jai’s footsteps as he runs down the hall and I glance around the bedroom, making sure no one is here. I try to listen for any other presence but there’s nothing. Exiting the room, I close the door behind me, scanning the main room.

My gaze snaps to the window. Did they jump?

Swiftly I move to it, my eyes blazing as I scan the ground below. Wouldn’t we have heard it?

Nothing

I sniff the air trying to catch a scent, but the only thing I can smell is cleaning products, blood, perfume, and her diffuser...

Whoever was here knew what they were doing.

Clicking the first number on speed dial on my phone, I call the Pack Security Squad Captain.

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“Alpha.” Captain Silas William’s voice comes.

“I need a complete lockdown of sector three, and the apartment blocks and block the exits all around the area, including the park entrances. There’s been an attempted murder and I want the culprit found. Get the forensics into Valerie Scott’s apartment too. There might be some clues left behind.”

“Understood.” He hangs up and I’m about to head to the door when I think I hear something. I stop, my gaze snapping back to the bedroom before I glance at the bathroom door that is right beside it.

Or did it come from there?

I’m not sure...

My eyes flash as I cross the room swiftly. There’s the window in the bedroom, although it’s quite a drop... the bathroom one leads to the side of the apartment.

Hesitating, I move towards the bathroom silently, I reach for the door handle, when suddenly I hear movement from inside.

I pull the door only to realise it’s locked.

Fuck!

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Backing up, I slam into it with full force, knocking it off its hinges.

I can hear shouts from the hallway. All the banging has woken up the neighbours, but I don't really care.

I scan the small bathroom, and I growl, seeing the scuff of blood on the window ledge.

Fuck!

Running over to it, I look out to see a hooded figure running along the bottom of the apartment block. The shadows hide them, and the ledges of the building hide them from view, making it harder for me to make out their build.

I glance at the window. There's no way I'll fit. I rush out to the main room and climb out the window.

"Stop!" I growl, as I jump, flipping in the air before I land on my feet. I scan the area, breaking into a run in the direction I saw them running.

Why is there no scent?

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I keep going for a few minutes until I realise that I've lost them. I'm not sure if it's the alcohol in my system or if I'm simply too fucking slow but somehow, they've outrun me.

I stop, breathing hard as I look around the dead streets.

What the hell is going on in this pack? How many enemies are around us that I have no idea of?

I take out my phone hearing the distant shouting of the security squad and there's not much I can do anymore. I will leave it to them.

Whoever it was, is long gone.

I call Jai and wait for him to pick up.

"Yeah?" his strained voice comes.

"How is she?"

"I don't know, she's in the operating theatre... I don't know if she's going to make it Sebastian... I heard them... they said it's not looking good." His voice is hoarse, and I know he's breaking down. I can hear the anguish in his voice.

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"It's going to be ok, she'll pull through this Jai, this is Valerie... she won't go down like this. She's a fighter."

He's silent and right now I know he just needs time.

"I'm putting a high-threat security alert out. We have someone who needs to be caught." I hang up and decide to head over to the squad to tell them what I know before I go to the hospital.

I need to check if I do have Ashbane in my system, just in case.

"I'm sorry, Alpha Sebastian, but the chances of her awakening are next to none. We gave it forty-eight hours, but she has not awoken."

"No! She's going to wake up!" Jai

shouts, grabbing the doctor by his coat

.

"Jai..." I say quietly, pulling him back. "No Sebastian! She will wake up! I know what he is insinuating!" He

growls.

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“Beta Jai, I am only stating the facts. The surgery took us eighteen hours... and it’s been fifty hours since she has come out of the Operating Theatre. But she hasn’t awoken, and the chance of her waking up now is very low. Please understand, the cost of her medical insurance won’t-”

“So that’s what this is about! The cost of keeping her alive!” He snarls. “ You’ll get your fucking money!”

“Calm down Jai. We will not be pulling the plug on Doctor Valerie. Is that clear? Her medical expenses will be covered by me, as for where she will stay... I will be finding a safe place for her until the attacker is caught.” I say firmly, my eyes flashing.

“Yes Alpha.” Doctor Thomas says quietly, bowing his head. “Well, I will give you both a moment with her.”

He walks to the door and Jai drops into the chair..

“Fuck, I never apologised for all the shit I did to her,” he mutters, his voice clearly full of regret.

I squeeze his shoulder, he still loves her... that much is obvious,

“One question Alpha,” Doctor Thomas says making me turn towards him.

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“Yes?”

“Will you tell Doctor Valerie’s family, or shall I?” he asks sombrely. I look up sharply, my stomach twisting

at that, her father and grandmother...

“I’ll do it,” Jai says.

I give Thomas a nod before he leaves and shuts the door behind him.

“They’re going to be devastated,” he murmurs. “I shouldn’t have left her alone.”

“No Jai, this isn’t on you. We dropped her home. Everything was alright. How were you to know what was about to happen?” I reason as I look at the bed.

They’ve placed her head to the side. Bandages wrap around her head entirely and I frown, deep in thought.

Why?

Is it linked to what happened with Zaia? The same person threatening us all?

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“What is with the face?” Jai asks, looking up as he scrubs a hand down his face.

I shake my head.

“Not here,” I say quietly, now isn’t the place, but the time to tell Jai the truth is here.

I don’t know who I can trust, but if there is anyone, then that person is Jai. I know I have him on my side.

There’s a knock on the door, and we look up as Doctor Thomas returns. He’s holding a paper in his hand, a look of concern on his face.

“Alpha.”

“Yes?”

“You may want to see this,” he holds. the paper out and I stare down at the report.

My blood reports.

My heart thuds as I stare down at the Reports. My blood reports.

My heart thuds as I stare down at the paper.

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“What is it?” Jai asks sharply. I don’t respond, and he stands up, taking the paper from right!” my hand. “Shit... I was

Yes, he was, because there are indeed strong traces of Ashbane in my system.

I Am The Luna Chapter 19 By Moonlight Muse

ZAIA

Two days have passed since that night, Valerie didn’t call again and even when I tried to leave a message or call. Nothing. I guess Sebastian found out that we were in touch.

It leaves a bitterness inside of me, but he’s selfish... that’s clear enough. And as much as I want to find a way to keep in touch with Valerie, there is no way I can justify making her life harder just for my own benefit.

Sebastian’s wrath can get out of hand and if he punishes her for talking to me ...well, it won’t be pretty and it’s unfair on her. She’s already done so much for me.

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A part of me wants to fight him for it, but right now I'm pregnant, and my babies are a priority. I need to get my health back up first before I go against the world..

I'm at a coffee shop far away from Atticus's pack. I had requested a meeting with my father anonymously.. Saying I know where his daughter is.. Surprisingly, he wanted to know, and it seems he has been searching for me.

I'm sitting in the private restaurant room of a hotel. The food has just arrived, yet Father hasn't. Turning I scan the cobbled street outside. It's a quiet area and the blinds are partially drawn, casting strips of light over the table and carpet. I have a wide-brim hat on, with sunglasses, disguising myself the best I can.

The door opens and I look up just as a man wearing a black suit steps inside. His coppery-coloured hair is several shades darker than mine, and it is peppered with silver. His blue eyes instantly fall on me, and he motions for his men to stay outside.

"Keep watch," he commands in his deep, gravelly voice. "Yes Alpha," someone replies quietly, and the door shuts behind him.

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“So, you finally showed yourself,” he declares. I stand up, knowing he’s recognised me. “Father,” I say, bowing my head slightly to him.

“Zaia... and to think I’ve been looking for you.” There’s irritation in his voice, but not as much anger as I predicted. That’s a good start.

I remove my glasses and hat as Dad stares at my stomach, a frown furrowing his brow. “You’re carrying his child?” he asks sharply.

I look down before I motion for him to take a seat opposite me. “It’s a long story... but yes, I am.”

“And he discarded you?” he asks, his eyes flashing with anger as he sits down. “Annalise returned, and they want to be together, and that’s fine, they can.”

Dad slams his fist onto the table, making the dishes rattle. “Does she know you’re pregnant?” he questions sharply.

Interesting, is Dad really angry at his favourite daughter? “She does know,” I say quietly. “But I’m not here to ask you to fix things or to complain about her.”

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He's about to speak but stops as if the words I have spoken just registered. He frowns as I motion at the food. " Let's begin on the meal before it gets cold. I will fill you in." I say.

His eyes meet mine, but he doesn't argue and begins to put food on his plate, and I do the same. I had ordered a selection of dishes, most of which used to be his favourite. I just hope they still are.

For a few minutes, we are silent. The only sound is the tinkle of dishes and the rustle of cloth as he fills our plates up. When we are finally done, I wait for Dad to tuck in first before I begin eating my own food.

"I have a proposal," I state when he's taken his first bite.

"And what may that be?" Dad asks, cocking a brow. "I told you that man is useless, that you were better off without him, and the same arrogant man you decided to marry has now tossed you aside."

"It has nothing to do with Sebastian, father... and the time we were together, he was... good to me, until he decided to divorce me," I whisper.

It still hurts, and no matter how strong I want to be, I don't know if this pain will go away.

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Taking a deep breath I look at the man before me, the man who practically disowned me the moment I accepted Sebastian as my mate.

“My proposal is, you only have two daughters, Annalise and myself, and you need to have an heir who can successfully run the pack.”

“Are you offering me the offspring of Sebastian King?! Never! A King will never run the Toussaint pack!”

“Father, not my child, Goddess! They are not even born yet!”

“They?”

“I’m having twins,” I say.

His eyes widen in surprise before he nods in understanding and for a second, I thought I saw a glimmer of a smile on his lips.

“Ah I see,” he says curtly, taking a sip of his wine. “Then?”

“Me. Zaia Toussaint, I am no longer a King, father. I want you to consider making me your heir again. I know you have currently said that everything will go to Annalise, but give me a chance to prove that I’m worth it. I don’t want money. Just allow me to help with running the pack.” I say, hoping he listens. “Give Annalise the businesses.”

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He frowns staring at the door to the room before he looks at me. "She's not been around for years, what makes you think she even cares for the business, as long as she gets the money," he says coldly.

I'm not surprised, but I am surprised at the way he's talking about her.

"But I am not someone who goes back on their word," he says, staring at me coldly. "I am not making you my heir, I was as good as dead to you remember?"

I tilt my head but wait for him to continue. When he doesn't, I speak.

"Perhaps I'm not asking you to give me inheritance, or asking for shares in your business. I want you to allow me to help you. I want you to give me a chance to prove I am capable."

"You may be angry at me, Father, but you know that every pack in the country has a high level of respect for me. I as Luna Zaia King, have an excellent reputation and if I stand by your side, even more, people will be willing to join hands with you. I promise to take the pack and even your business to even better heights." I continue.

I can't afford for him to deny me what I'm asking.

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“Give me a window of time, a chance to prove myself, and if I fail, then I will walk away,” I say quietly.

He frowns but says nothing, and I know he’s considering it.

My reputation does precede me. One thing that I learned from Sebastian was to believe in myself, and he saw I had a knack for these things and pushed me to do more.

In a way, I owe him that, but I will now use that to defeat him.

“I have indeed heard of your endeavours... and although I am still fit and healthy, I do have many people asking about my heir.”

“What else do you want?” Dad asks.

“I want to be granted permission to join the Crystal Shadow Pack, with Mom and guaranteed safety, along with my children,” I state.

His face falls at the mention of Mom.

“That woman is trouble, but very well, if she wants to return to the pack, I won’t stop her.”

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“Don’t misunderstand, she doesn’t want to, but for me, she has agreed.” I say firmly, making it crystal clear Mom does not want anything to do with him.

He nods arrogantly and I try my best to hide the bitterness that I’m feeling.

“Very well. You will be protected. I will make sure you have a place to stay, but you will be given one year after the birth of your children to prove you are capable and, if not, you will be thrown from the pack, understood?” @

That’s more time than I had expected him to give me.

“Very well. That is fair.” I nod, eating a piece of my grilled chicken.

We fall silent enjoying the meal when I tilt my head and look across at him, wondering how to word this next thought.

“Father, in the last three years, where has Annalise been? I mean, I heard she was on a trip.”

I make sure my voice sounds nonchalant and casual.

Dad’s observing me and I wonder if there’s something else going on. I know she faked it, but who else was in on it?

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"I'm only asking because she told me she was so heartbroken that she had to get away from here." I lie with a heavy sigh.

That seems to relax him a little. "Yes, she wanted to get away for a bit, and truth be told, her mother agreed, and neither was willing to listen and so she left," he replies, a glimmer of irritation in his eyes.

Oh, so all is not well in the world of father and daughter....

But my relationship with my father is rocky, and until I win some trust, there's no point in me mentioning what Annalise truly had said. I'll bide my time.

"And Sebastian, will you really just forget him?" he suddenly asks. "What he did was wrong, but I don't think you will simply let him walk away. You were his mate and I'm certain you will want him back. Will you really be able to focus on the Crystal Shadow Pack?"

I scoff,

"What he does is not my issue any longer, and father, really, it's like the pot calling the kettle black. Please remember that you did the very same thing to Mom, that he did to me. You took a mistress when you had a mate, I remind him quietly, my heart thudding as I try to remain calm.

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My eyes flash as I feel my anger rage within me as his defiant gaze meets mine.

“Fine. I hope you don’t go back on your words then?”

“I assure you I will not.”

As a child I saw the pain my mother experienced, and I will make sure that my children never feel that way. Ever.

As for Sebastian... well, Sebastian King will have a business rival, one that he didn’t see coming,

“Excellent. I like that look in your eyes.

Then we have a deal. Welcome back home, Zaia,” he holds his hand out to me over the table.

Home... home is where the heart is... I place my hand on my stomach as I take his hands with the other and give it a firm shake.

Home is where my babies are.

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I Am The Luna Chapter 20 By Moonlight Muse

SEBASTIAN.

“I can’t believe you never told me any of this,” Jai says quietly. The sunlight is shining through the hospital window as we discuss everything. I did tell Dad what had happened, but of course, he simply blamed me for it.

This pack is meant to be my responsibility, and it should be. It is my fault that someone was able to get in and try to kill her. As the Alpha, it’s my job to keep everyone safe. “I know, and I should have. But it was my mistake to act so blindly.”

“Ashbane in your system, remember?” Jai reminds me as if it’s obvious and enough of an excuse. But it’s not, I should have been more careful, everything I did was wrong.

“No Jai, it’s not an excuse. I fucked up and it’s on me to make amends, not blame it on something else. I can’t make an excuse for myself.” I sigh. ”

Also... We won’t mention the Ashbane to anyone. The doctor also knows this, and I have the only copy of the report. He didn’t file it in my reports. I don’t want to alert whoever it is that we figured this out.

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“Well then, be careful what you consume. You’ve somehow been ingesting a large amount on a daily basis if we go by the test result.” Jai says, picking up the paper that sits on the hospital table between us.

Two cups of steaming tea that a nurse had brought in not long sits between us. I pick mine up, nodding in agreement to what he said as I take a gulp, but it does nothing to warm up the cold and emptiness I feel inside.

“I don’t know how...but with Ashbane it means someone would have had to be near to instigate me into thinking what I was thinking. It doesn’t just work on its own. Someone is telling me what to do...”

That thought alone is chilling, especially for someone in my position.

“And since you don’t seem to remember, I’m assuming they knew exactly when you were consuming it and when it’ll take effect,” Jai mutters, folding the test result and passing it to me. “Keep it safe.”

I slip the piece of paper into my pocket and tilt my head. “Or it’s someone who I’m around daily or often enough, so because they’re always around... I wouldn’t realise.”

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“I bet it’s that awful woman that you really need to get rid of. I mean, I get why you did what you did but flaunting an ex in front of your mate, really? Even as a cover is fucking stupid.”

“I know. Like I said, I fucked up.” I glare coldly at him. He doesn’t need to remind me.

“Ok ok, fine. I’ll drop it but I really wouldn’t put it past her to be the one administering it.”

I shake my head. “She’s not had anything against Zaia...”

She has. The negative vibe and the remarks and jabs she’s always made towards Zaia now seem a little too obvious, but I just turned a blind eye to it... is it her? 2

I mean, I’ve felt she is dangerous, stupid and annoying, yes... but is she really this cunning? The chance that it is her is low, but I can’t rule her out, I need to find out about her apparent kidnapping.

Anger flares inside of me and the glaring reality of how foolish I have been screams inside of my head.

I was blinded... I can’t blame Dad for being so disappointed in me.

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“The pregnancy... I mean... I have a confession.” Jai mutters. I cock a brow, waiting for him to continue.

“I knew the twins were yours... but you were with Annalise, and when Val explained to me that Zaia was scared, you’ll take the kids, she didn’t want you to know. And yeah, I agree, you were being a dick and so I respected her decision.” Jai admits, making me look up at him sharply.

“So you knew.”

He sighs. “Valerie told me when that entire report fiasco happened. Plus, there’s more...” He sounds uneasy as he glances around as if making sure no one can hear us. “What is it, Jai?”

He picks up his cup and takes a gulp.

“It’s about Zaia... when they did some tests on her and she found out she was pregnant, they also discovered she’s really weak. Valerie felt she was being poisoned and had some tests done... Zaia was being poisoned. Right here under our noses.

My stomach twists, and I look down, my heart thundering in my ears. “And why didn’t you tell me something so important?” I ask quietly.

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“Because you weren’t listening, Sebastian, you didn’t deserve to know. I know you would have become possessive of the babies, but in the process, you would have only hurt her more.” He answers.

I look away, guilt washing over me, and here I was, not thinking I could get any angrier at myself. She is going through so much and I’ve been blind to it all...

Zaia poisoned...and me taking Ashbane, it isn’t a coincidence. “There’s more.” He begins hesitantly.

“What is it? Tell me everything, Jai.” I warn. “The day after you handed her those divorce papers, she asked Valerie about the risk of a rejection. She asked if her babies would be ok.”

“And what did Valerie say?” Lask hesitantly. I know I won’t like this, but I pray that my pups are ok.

“The babies will be fine, Seb... But Zaia, that rejection has cost her. Due to her weakened state when she was rejected, the chance for her to get pregnant again is next to nil.”

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I close my eyes, turning my head away. What have I done? I place my head in my hands, trying to calm the storm of guilt that is threatening to destroy me

“It’s not too late Sebastian... do the right thing by her...” Jai’s voice is drowned out by the agony and self-hatred that is screaming at me, in my own mind. It’s worse than the pain of the rejection.

Fuck, what have I done?

Ashbane...

My eyes flash as a sudden thought comes to me and I sit up straight. Sleeping pills. I’ve been taking them pretty often to help me sleep better.

“I know that look. What is it?” Jai says.

I frown as I look at him. “I’ve been taking sleeping pills almost every day. What if it is those pills that have been tampered with?”

His eyes widen before he frowns. “Where did you get them from?”

“The pharmacy... it was a sealed bottle.” “Then possibly the ones you have at home? Maybe it’s worth getting them tested by someone down at the squad.

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I nod, "I think I will... I will get my woman and children home." I say, standing up. Jai smirks, his eyes looking a little alive. "You hear that Val? We're bringing Zaia home."

I look at the woman who is lying in the bed and I know I do need to tell Zaia about her... and not as an excuse to make her come back, but because she deserves to know. She and Valerie have always been close and the best of friends along with their other friend Cara.

I down my coffee and glance at Jai. "Let's go, we need to tell the Scotts." He nods as he stands up, his gaze falling on Valerie before he steps around the table and caresses her hand softly.

Leaning over the bed, he kisses her cheek softly and I turn, exiting the room to give him a moment. I lean against the wall, staring at the white walls opposite me. The only thing on my mind is that I have hurt Zaia in so many ways.

I'm fucking sorry... and I'll bring you back. I'll fix this. I have to. The visit to Valerie's family is rough, breaking the news wasn't easy. The Scotts' didn't take it well and I could practically feel their pain.

Along with the devastating news, they were angry we waited so long to break the news to them, but I didn't want to alert anyone. The fact she's

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alive makes me wonder if she knew something that someone wanted her to keep quiet about.

And does it mean they might attempt to come back to finish the job?

These are things I didn't share with her family, her grandmother's health isn't great and unless its necessary, we don't want to stress her even more. But she had ended up almost fainting as she sobbed her heart out and I felt like a failure.

I just wish there is something I can do aside from having guards posted outside her hospital room. Jai has gone back too, which will give both me and him some peace of mind.

Even though the security squad is on watch, I don't know who I can trust, even in my own pack. The search of her apartment and of the crime scene didn't bring up anything.

There was no sign of a break-in, and the locks had not been tampered with, so either someone had a key, or they were let in, to make it worse the security cameras were coincidentally not recording anything due to a glitch for over a week, leaving us with even more disappointment.

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The guard who was on duty at the apartment block that night didn't spot anything unusual either. So many answers yet no answer. But I'm not giving up... I want the answers.

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