

Chapter 41

I noticed there and then that I didn't fall asleep on my own will, and so I perked instantly when it felt like I had finally landed where I was supposed to.

Slowly, I opened my eyes and focused my senses, and indeed, there I was again, toe-deep in soft sand as a white dress swayed around my body. The sound of the ocean was just as peaceful as the last time I was here. The moon shone in all its beautiful glory on the horizon of the sea.

I glanced around. It was just like nighttime on earth, but far more magical. On one side of the island was the sun, and on the other was the moon. The hills and forests of the island separated them. Even though they were basically enemies, oddly, they created a beautiful atmosphere of whatever realm we were in.

I knew that the moon goddess brought me here, and I knew that she was the one I was supposed to be looking for.

But instead, I found myself drifting around the island in the same direction I went when I first came here, moving towards the sun.

As I bent the corner that led to the other side of the island, there it was, just like I remembered. The sun sat on the ocean in all its golden beauty, hypnotising me with its unbreakable pull.

The sun was just as big as the moon, and as I gazed at it, I felt oddly drawn to it. My mind was screaming at me to turn around and find the moon goddess. I knew I shouldn't have gone closer to the sun, yet I did.

One step. Only one more step, and I would've been at the sun dragon's mercy. But just in the nick of time, cold, slender fingers wrapped their way around my wrist and pulled me away from the sun.

I caught my breath as my senses focused, and I was yet again, for the second time, faced with the beauty of the moon goddess. Even though I was expecting her from the minute I was pulled here, I still was in awe of her.

"Hello, Melissa," she greeted softly as I caught my breath.

"H-hi," I managed through huffs. "I'm sorry, I tried to resist it, but the pull on the sun was so strong that I-"

"It's okay," she beamed. "That old dragon knows how to take advantage of his few strengths. But you're safe now. Come, walk with me."

She gestured to the open shore as she finally let go of my hand. I nodded after I was entirely myself again before following her.

"Congratulations," she said as soon as I was in line with her. "You now bear the mark of your mate and not of another."

For some reason, I felt annoyed at her after she said this. "So, you knew that... well, of course you knew. You're the moon goddess. But you cut me off from dreams for two whole weeks because I was sick and literally dying. Couldn't you have helped? I'm sure you don't bring just any wolf here, so I must be of some value to you."

Instead of being offended or angry at my tone like I anticipated, the moon goddess simply smiled.

"I was tempted on many occasions to help you. I heard your cries, and it pained me deeply to see you and your mate in pain. But a part of being who I am is allowing my wolves to figure out life independently. I wouldn't have made you die, Melissa, but I knew that you and your mate would've figured it out eventually. As for the dreams, you were in no state to visit me while you were sick. Your body wouldn't have made the trip."

I nodded slowly as I processed. "Still, you could've eased the pain a little."

"I did," she simply stated, but she didn't give anything else away.

We fell into a moment of complete silence as we walked along the beach. The waves splashed against the shores in an almost musical rhythm, and the entire area emitted peace.

Even though I was already asleep, I felt like laying on the sand and closing my eyes for a while.

"So, there must be a reason why you brought me here. The moon isn't even in the sky as yet, and I was already awake when you 'summoned' me. Was there something urgent?" I asked, trying to sound as respectful as possible. I wasn't upset that she brought me here again. It had been so long since the first time that I even wondered if it would happen again. I knew I didn't have any dreams because I was ill, but the thought occurred momentarily that maybe it was just a one-time thing.

I watched as her expression grew serious as we stopped walking. I feared that it would've been something terrible, but what else is new?

"The dragons will come back," she said. This much I knew. "They won't stop until they get the moon shard." It worried me that she seemed worried.

If the superior werewolf being was worried about this, what did that leave little ol' me to do?

"H-h-how do I s-stop them?" I stammered as my heart raced.

She shook her head. "You can't. There's only one way to get them to stop attacking your mate's pack."

"Tell me, please. I'll do anything."

She seemed reluctant to talk, which only made my anxiety worse.

"Please tell me," I urged just as another thought came to mind. "Can...can the sun dragon summon me here like you have? Each time I come here, I feel attracted to the sun, so can he..."

"No," she dismissed, causing me to sigh in relief. "You're a werewolf, which means only I can bring you here. However, he takes advantage of you being in here the second you arrive and tries to pull you to him."

I tried to imagine what he looked like. The dragons on earth were so scaly and had a burnt red colour, yet they weren't as ugly as I tried to make them seem. But this dragon of all dragons must be huge and ugly.

"That's one less thing I have to worry about, but please tell me how I can stop the attacks,"

I probed with desperate eyes. I hated that the Primal Pack was in danger only because of me. Innocent people could die for crying out loud!

Maxim killed some of their own twice, and something tells me that they won't play so nice when they attack again.

"You will have to give me the moon shard," she told me.

"Great, so take it. I have no idea where it is, but surely you do." I only knew I was connected to it, but I had no clue where it really was.

According to Fiona, the streak in my hair and my eyes were the colour of the shard, so it could be either.

The moon goddess sighed as she hung her head, allowing her white hair to fall over her face. "That's just it, Melissa. I do not know where it is."

My eyes widened. "What do you mean you don't know where it is?" I didn't mean to sound rude, but I was appalled. "It's your crystal, so can't you track it down or something? The dragons will take me captive until I give it to them, and I have no clue where it is. So, if you don't know where it is, what hope does that leave me?"

"Oh, my dear child, do not be weary," she whispered. "When I entrusted five wolves with the five shards centuries ago, I ensured I didn't know where they hid them just in case the dragon attacked and used his strength against me to steal my knowledge. But I have grown wiser and stronger over the years, and I am more capable of keeping them safe. But even after generations of guarding the shards, some of the locations are still a mystery to me. The shard your parents had is definitely one."

As she said this, my mind returned to the nightmare I had before stabilising my dreams. I always dreamt that I was at the stream where my parents disappeared, where two humans and a dragon stood.

In the very last nightmare I had, I saw that their feet were chained along with the dragons, and I firmly believed that those two people from my nightmares were my parents.

It made sense that they were keepers of the moon shard, and whatever happened on the day they disappeared meant they hid it with me, but I had no idea where.

"Could it be my hair or my eyes?" I asked in desperation. "The blue streak of my hair is literally unbreakable. Perhaps all it needs is a little magic to get it back to its true form. Or maybe it's my eyes. I mean, I will be blind for the rest of my life or better, I could go back to having brown eyes like I did when I was a baby."

The moon goddess chuckled a bit with a single shake of her head. "It's not your hair, and it's not your eyes. I would've known if it were."

"Then where is it?" I whined. This frightened me even more. I already had enough to deal with after two and a half weeks of having another wolf's mark on my neck. Now, I had to find a moon shard that my parents hid?

What were they hiding it from? The dragons, of course, but why hide it from the moon goddess?

"Melissa, you must find it, and when you do, I will bring you here, and you will give it to me. Then and only then will your mate's pack be safe, and so will you," she said as I felt myself falling.

I knew she was sending me back to earth.

"No, wait! Where do I even look?" I shouted, but she only slipped away farther and farther. "Wait!"

Just like the last time, I felt like I was falling, as if falling back to earth until I was suddenly in a bed, writhing in the sheets as I came back to the conscious world.

I glanced around me eagerly, trying to find out where I was. I wasn't in my room, and from what I remembered, I was on the balcony when I fell asleep.

The sun was rising, which meant I had been out for a while, and I shuffled from the bed as I tried to see what room I was in.

Alas, I recognised it after turning on the lights. It was our safe room, specially designed for Logan and me when we were kids for rogue attacks. Even though Logan never used it, Toya and I did.

Toya.

It then dawned on me that Toya had brought me here, but she was nowhere to be found. Still, a question I had been asking myself for years resurfaced in my mind. How did she even know?

What was the connection to Toya in all this? Somehow, she was always there at the right time, and it couldn't be coincidental.

And most of all, why did she bring me here and then leave? I gazed through the window that gave me a clear view of the pack. We would use it to see how close the rogues were or if they were leaving.

As I racked my mind for answers, I somehow knew where I needed to go for those answers. And strangely, I had a feeling Toya had a whole lot of them.



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Chapter 42

I had run this trail plenty of times when I lived here at Armour Pack.

I remember running in this very same direction when I was trying to run away on the night I learnt that my uncle was sending me away to Primal Pack. So the way to the river at the back's border wasn't new to me, and oddly I knew that this was where Toya wanted me to go.

I didn't wake up Maxim. The last thing I wanted was for him to get all worried and defensive against Toya. I knew that he'd be awake soon enough when he realised that I was gone, and since we have a mind link now, I knew there was no doubt that he would use it.

I came to a slow trot as I neared the river. I could hear it running water as I inched closer to the pack border. The sun wasn't entirely out yet, so the sky was littered in beautiful rays of orange and pink at the peak of dawn.

I stood behind a tree and shifted back to human form before quickly dressing myself in the clothes I carried in my mouth while I ran here in wolf form.

The area was just the same as I remembered. Even the trail that I walked in my nightmare was the same until the river came into view.

I froze as I saw Toya standing there, gazing ahead of her as the light wind swayed her hair all around. I knew she heard me coming because she tensed a bit as I approved.

I was still on edge. I had no idea what was going on with her. I no longer knew what to think when it came to her, so I needed answers before rushing in there like I always do.

So, I kept a decent distance away from her and stopped.

I watched in anticipation as she slowly turned around. I was relieved to see that she looked the same. However, there was still something different about her.

Somehow, she seemed more serious, and her eyes held more wisdom. She didn't seem evil or seemed like she wanted to kill me, but I could tell that there was a lot she had to say to me.

I took one last step closer towards her before I spoke, knowing I had to make this quick before Maxim woke up.

"You were there when my parents disappeared," I said, getting straight to the point as I started. "You're always there when I land myself in trouble that absolutely no one else found out about. You knew about Lukas's mark, and you probably knew about me all along. You always speak as if you have some hidden message in your words. You always know the answer to everything, and for some reason, you connect with absolutely everyone even if they are strangers." I took a bold move and stepped even closer to her.

Even as I spoke, her expression didn't change, as if she was expecting this. Then again, if she was, I wouldn't be surprised.

"You knew that there was a reason why I needed to go to Primal Pack, even though you didn't like how I was sent away. You know how to search for every little detail that reveals something to you, and somehow, you knew that I'd be on the balcony at five in the morning, probably floating while I had that dream about the moon goddess."

I resisted the urge to cry as an awful thought surfaced.

"Please don't tell me that you're in this for the wrong reasons. I have trusted you all my life, Toya. All my life. I can't bear to learn that you are evil or something. I just can't."

My heart slammed against my chest as I waited for her to reply, but all she did was stare at me.

She could be the answer to all my questions, but first, I needed to know if I could trust her or not. Of course, if she was evil, there's no way she would've told me. But it was worth a try.

I watched her carefully as she finally took a step closer to me, so there was about a six feet distance between us. Then, a gentle smile pulled on her lips.

"Melissa, if I was evil, wouldn't you have known by now?" she asked, though it still didn't answer my question.

I shrugged. "I don't know. You could be really good at it," I pointed out.

But she only chuckled at my response. "I'm not evil, Melissa. Far from it. I admit that there is a lot that I didn't tell you, and I didn't tell many people. But you must know that I only and always have your best interest at heart."

Feeling a bit better, I relaxed a little. "So, how do you explain the fact that you always know everything? Did you know that I was in a dream with the moon goddess when you found me? I bet you knew that I had been having those dreams all along, don't you?"

She sighed slightly with a nod.

I knew it.

"Do you know another reason why I was so upset that Lance sold you to Alpha Lukas without telling me first? There is a lot that I wanted to tell you before you left. There was so much that you weren't prepared for, and I feared that I didn't have enough time to do so," she explained.

"Like dragons?" I concluded. What else could she be referring to if she already knew that I'd have the dreams?

That only meant that she knew about the moon shard all along. She knew that I was connected to it, and she probably knew why my parents disappeared that day. She probably knew why I glowed a bright blue light on that day and why I did a few weeks ago at Primal Pack's barbecue.

"Yes, like dragons," she replied. "There is a power within you, Melissa, and I feared that when you left Armor Park, you'd become a beacon to the dragons. But I feared that if I told you on the night before you left, you'd refuse even more to leave home, and my mate would think I'm crazy for filling your head with my 'madness.'" She used air quotes to exaggerate the word.

I guess I could understand. But, she was right about one thing. I wouldn't have left home.

"So, is it true then? Armor Pack has some sort of protective shield that hid or subdued my powers until I left?"

"Yes, but it's not the pack that has a protective shield," she said. "I'm the protective shield."

I gasped as I stumbled back in shock. "What? But... but how?"

My mind was jumbled. This was far more than I could register at once.

Toya smiled gently at me, and I already knew that that smile would be backed by something I probably wouldn't like to hear. Yet, I knew she still had to tell me.

"Because, Melissa, there is something about me that you don't know. I am one of the few chosen special wolves from the moon," she provided, which only confused me more.

"I don't understand. You mean you're like me?"

She shook her head. "Not quite. The truth is, I'm an oracle, Melissa. I have been since the day I was born."

And that did it. My world was yet again turned upside down.



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