

The dark side of fate (Tamia) novel Chapter 121

~Tamia~

Getting Nicole and the children settled in wasn't a challenge. The children were pleasant and a joy to have around. They were eight years old, and I was a bit envious of them but glad I had my little bundle of joy growing inside me.

"Lady Tamia, I am grateful that you would welcome us into your home," Nicole said while her husband helped put their bags in the room. It was my old room.

I thought Amanda would be in it, but I was told Sylvester changed his mind about putting her there and put her in the smaller room.

"Oh, I am not Lady yet. Our wedding is in two weeks. Stephanie Volkov is still the Lady of the north; they refer to me as Luna for now, and having you in this place is a joy. It is also your home," I said, and she smiled and came to hug me.

"Thank you so much. It really means a lot. We had been running around and hiding before we had our triplets. At least now we can rest." She said, and my heart broke.

Hearing her say they have not known peace for the years they have been together was hard. It is the worst thing that can ever happen to anyone.

"Please rest," I said, and she held my hand.

"If there is anything you need me to help with, kindly let me know. I am good with house chores," She said and looked at her husband.

"We do not plan to be freeloaders here. We would like to earn our keep," she said, and my heart broke into pieces. David is a Volkov. I wonder how he grew up and how they have lived for them to be this way.

"I am sure Sylvester would find a place for his brother. As for you, you're a luna here too, so start acting like one. My friends and I are having evening tea later; I would like you to join us," I told her, and she looked at David, who nodded.

I did not know if Sylvester would want to spend time with his brother and get to know him. We were planning an operation; I could not jeopardise it and send David to where Sylvester was having his meeting. I would have to allow Sylvester to move at his own pace.

"Do you know where my older brother is?" David asked me, and I knew he was talking about Dominic.

Dominic might have changed, but he was still a douchebag.

"You mean Dominic?" I said, and he nodded.

"I am sure he will come searching for you once he is through with his engagements," I said, not wanting to get into details and start explaining things to him. I wanted to keep it simple.

"Okay, ehm, I will take the triplets to their rooms. Tanya and Liz would have a room while Justin would have a room to himself," I said, and Justin squealed.

It was clear he had to share with his sisters most of his life.

"A room would be fine. I am sure you have other guests," Nicole said, and I shook my head.

"He is a boy and deserves his own space, and the girls deserve their privacy, too," I said, winking at Liz and Tanya, who grinned at me.

"Come on," I said, and with that, I exited my former bedroom, which was now David and Nicole's bedroom.

I did not take the children too far away from their parent's room. I gave them the rooms immediately after their parents' room. Justin started jumping on the bed when we entered the space allocated to him. He looked so excited that it warmed my heart.

I gave the girls the only room left; Amanda's room was beside it. I needed to question Amanda before the tea party.

Once the girls were settled into their room, I excused myself.

I went to the door of Amanda's room, and one of the Kappas lurking about used the key to open it so I could enter the room.

I entered the room, and there she was, standing by the window with her hand on her bump, staring outside. She turned to look at me. Her eyes were swollen, and I knew she must have cried her heart out.

"Amanda," I said, and she left the window and approached me. She looked like she had aged a bit from the last time I saw her at the Arena.

"Lady Tamia," she said and bowed her head to show her respect.

"Why?" was all I could ask her.

We stood there for a few seconds, and she looked at me. I knew she was thinking of how best to start. I was all ears.

She wiped away her tears.

“I had no choice. My father already had set everything in motion. I did not know until they took you to the north. That was when he became forceful. He had set everything in motion.” she said, and I sighed.

“Before then?” I asked her knowing she had visited her father too often for comfort before the north attacked. I thought she went to complain to her father about her living condition, but now I know better.

“When he asked me to lie that Leo accepted me, I went along with it because only a fool would defy my father. Everyone that defies him ends up dead,” she said, and she did not need to elaborate on this. My parents paid the price for their defiance. Leo’s father, their Alpha then, could not protect them.

“He would invite me, and during my visits, he would ask me what was happening in our house, pretending he cared about my well-being. I did not think much of it, so I talked.

I said everything exactly how it was, and he would tell me to hang in there and that it would soon improve. It sounded generic and rehearsed, but I would excuse it since I knew he did not know how to show affection.

When you gave yourself up, and they took you away, everything changed. He began to push me to marry Leo, and he started asking me private questions about Leo’s moves and what Leo was up to if he was going to avenge the attack and so on. I thought that was a bit too nosy, so I pushed back. He told me I was dispensable; if I did not do what he wanted, he would just get me out of the way and do what he liked. Knowing his brutality, I knew he could kill Leo and me, so I agreed to feed him information. After that decision, I did not know what to do, but I knew it would buy us time.

You need to understand that I was grabbing on straws. Leo hated me, so I dared not confide in him, and you were no longer with us. I was alone. Everyone looked up to me as the head Luna of the east, so I had to keep going. I performed these luna duties to the best of my abilities while I fed my father lies to satiate him.

It was getting tedious, especially when I feared my information would not check out.

One day I decided I would run away. Leo didn’t love me, and he didn’t want me around him, and I knew my father would soon find out that I had been lying to him. Leo had the power to push back; he had Max and Kyle, but I had no one, and I doubted he would protect me from my father since he blamed me for losing you.

Leo saw me moving out of my room with my bags the day I wanted to leave. I could not tell him the real reason, so I made it seem like it was a matter of the heart, hopeful that he would let me leave, but he pleaded with me to stay, and I was too in love to walk away.

I knew he needed help and could not be left alone, so I chose to risk it and stay. Every day I woke up fearing my father would find out I had been lying.

When Leo decided to leave for the games, I decided to visit my father's house and steal some information that I knew might keep me safe. The flash drive is currently in my bag at the hotel. It has the list of people he planned his mutiny with and how they funded themselves. Every single one of them. I made sure I took the information before joining Leo in the north," She said, and I paused.

"Where is the flash drive right now?" I asked, and she sighed.

"In our hotel suite, I put it in Leo's bag before we came here. So if they checked my things, they wouldn't find it," She said, and I was elated. That was all the information we needed to nail more people. I hid my excitement so she would finish talking and I could send people to get their stuff.

"Continue," I said, and she nodded.

"My father followed me here, and he was mad but couldn't do anything. That was why I was always in public or with Leo. I had lied to him that Leo won't come to the north. I had messed up his plans because I knew he wanted to plan an attack on your life and make it seem like it was an act of revenge by Leo. He knows Lord Volkov would lose it and attack Leo blindly. I happened on that information the last time I visited him, so I lied to him.

He also knows Leo isn't a pushover and would fight Lord Volkov. Leo and Devin are friends, so they would get into the war they have been trying to create. Leo being here spoiled the plan, and he was mad.

The night Leo caught me, I had learned that day from a friend who was in a society that my father had put a target on my head and they were going to kill me. I could not tell Leo, but I remained with him, waiting for an opportunity to run. The fact that I am almost due did not help the matter either." She said and went to sit on the foot of the bed. That was when I noticed that she had silver bracelets on.

"Who put that on you?" I asked her.

"Leo. I told him I won't run, but he wouldn't have it," she said, and I took out my hairpin to pick the lock on the bracelet.

Taking her hand, I began to pick the lock.

"You know how to do this too?" she asked me, amused while I picked the lock.

"Yes, Leo taught me when I was young. It was the only way I could get out of the house at night so we could hang out," I said, and the bracelet opened.

"I am sorry I ruined your happily ever after with Leo, Tamia. I wish I never went to that damn party," she said, sounding genuinely regretful.

"We all wished we never went to that party, but I believe it was meant to happen because I am where I was meant to be all along," I said, and she nodded, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"I am glad you got your happily ever after, Tamia; you deserve it. I was too jealous of you to be nice to you back then, and I am sorry. I wish I could take it all back. But know that I did not want to come into your home. When my father found out we were fated, he began to scheme. I should have fought back," She said, and I pulled her close to hold her. She broke down completely.

I felt her fear and her anguish. I wished Leo would just try with her. She was a victim like all of us, caught in the web of her father's lies.

As things were, if we did not put an end to Ramsey, it is only a matter of time before he gets to Amanda and kills her. Any man that can order the assassination of his child is cold-hearted. When we catch the bastard, there is no point in being merciful. He did not deserve it at all.

I left Amanda in the room and sent Kappa Wilson to Leo's hotel to get their stuff. I also asked two female staff to cater to Amanda's needs. The woman had been through enough, and the truth was, if she had not come into our lives, I would not be with Sylvester now. I was grateful for how things turned out; it was time for peace.

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~Sylvester~

Tamia woke me up from sleep, and I realised it was nighttime. I must have fallen asleep while resting.

"Sleeping," she teased, and I managed to sit in bed.

"Where are you going?" I asked, noticing she was in her casual outfit.

"You do not expect me to go to dinner in my nightwear," she said, and I looked at the clock.

It was seven-thirty. I managed to get off the bed to get ready for dinner.

"Were you with Nicole all the while?" I asked her while I changed my clothes because I had slept in the ones I had on.

“No. I went to see Amanda. Learned a lot of things and then had tea with my friends. Nicole joined us during tea, but they will have dinner in our former dining room. I did not want awkwardness there, and besides, we have an operation to discuss,” She pointed out, and I nodded.

“What did you learn from Amanda?” I asked her, and she sighed.

“Well, for starters, I have a flash drive she claims has the names of all Ramsey’s associates,” she said, and I looked at her, leaving my shirt unbuttoned. She showed me the drive in her hand and giggled.

“How?” I asked her.

“According to her and Annika, she has been lying to her father. She knew he would find out soon, so she took an insurance policy to make sure he left her alone when he found out. She hid it in Leo’s bag. I sent Wilson to get the bag, and I asked Leo to hand it over to me. This is it,” she said, grinning, and I buttoned up my shirt and went to her.

I took the drive from her while kissing her. There was peace and giddiness in me.

“It is all strange. Why didn’t she give it to Leo before he brought her here?” I asked her, and she shrugged.

“I thought as much, too, but right now, we need all the information we can get,” Tamia said, and I sighed.

“Can we trust what she has?” I asked Tamia, and she shrugged.

“Trust is a strong word when it comes to Amanda. But we can check it out and see if she is telling the truth. I also released her silver bracelet and had two maids attend to her,” she said, and I was a bit uncomfortable.

“Don’t you think you jumped the gun there?” I asked, and she shook her head.

“She is still under lock and key. I just wanted her to be comfortable because of her condition. We can’t rule out the part where she fed her father information. Whether they were lies or not, the man almost succeeded.” She said, and I understood her point.

“Have you checked the files?” I asked her, and she shook her head.

“I was going to leave that bit for you,” She said, and I was too eager to check it out.

The drive would need studying. We would have to spend a whole day figuring out the information on the drive.

“We will still carry out our plan, and then we will arrest the remaining people some other time. That is if they do not go into hiding by then,” Tamia said, and as hard as it was to admit, she had spoken the truth. There was so little we could do between tonight and the next day.

“How did you get her to give it to you?” I asked her, and her smile faded.

“She claims she is like us, trying to survive her father. Too bad Leo isn’t willing to give her a chance,” She said, and I knew she felt bad about it.

“Let’s not conclude. She is Leo’s mate, and he knows her more than us. We can’t rule out that she had all the opportunity to come clean about her father’s schemes to her mate, and she kept silent.

Ramsey wouldn’t have been able to do anything to Leo. He is your ex, and you know him better than everyone. He might like peace, but he isn’t a weak man. I am sure there is more to their problem, but I doubt Leo wants her back. Even his wolf hates her.

I have never seen something like it where fated mates are concerned. However rare it may be, fated mates don’t hate each other. Leo’s wolf detests her. He does not even want to speak her name. Let’s survive this and see where it takes them, but I doubt there would be reconciliation between them,” I said, and she smiled.

I put the drive in my pocket and buttoned up the rest of my shirt before we headed out.

I noticed my mother was absent when we got to the dining room. When I learned she was having dinner with David and his family, I was glad she had decided to try to know the guy. Dominic was with us, and I suspected he had not checked on David. I did not bring it up but let it go.

We discussed the drive Amanda had given us, and I deliberately thanked Leo for letting his mate help us even though I knew he had no say in it. He warned us not to trust her, and the feeling was mutual. We just wanted peace so we could get on with our lives.

I also noticed Leo did not like that I referred to Amanda as his mate. But that was precisely what she was, whether he liked it or not. It was easy for the guy to forget his role in messing his marriage up and blame it on the woman. I was glad Tamia was out of their mess.

“My daughter has been brought to the north. She doesn’t know what is happening yet. Her brother brought her. I do not know if we would be arresting her or if she should be brought to the mansion immediately,” Jake Brighton said, and I knew it was a difficult thing to do.

“Tell Donald to bring her here. Make it seem like we are having a party. The rest would be taken care of.” I said, and though it was eight thirty, I knew they could arrive before ten.

I was looking forward to our activities in Lucland. Questioning Iris would have to take a back seat even though I wanted to punish her for poisoning Tamia and almost killing her and my unborn child.

The rest of the dinner went quietly, and I advised Dominic to try and see David.

He protested, claiming he wanted to rest because of our activities the next day. That was when I decided to explain something to him.

“You won’t be making the arrests with us,” I said, and he frowned at me

“I do not have to be an Alpha breed to be useful, Sylvester. I am your big brother, and I have a stake in this too.” He protested, and I shook my head.

“No one said you won’t be doing anything. In fact, you will be doing much. You will help us keep up our appearance and remain at the arena for the party of the medalists. One of us has to be there. The cups will be presented before the closing ceremony the day after tomorrow, but there will be a party for the medalists after the games tomorrow. I need you there.” I said, and he shook his head.

“Mother can do it,” He protested, and I looked at him.

“We both know our mother isn’t cut out for things like that, neither are we, but we must do it. It is part of our duty and a sign of respect and gratitude to our people. A Volkov has to be there,” I said, and he bowed his head. He really wanted in on the action.

“Okay, Sylvester. I will remain at the arena, but I must be a part of the interrogation,” He said, and I nodded.

“Of course, you will be. The arrests would be silent. There will be no interrogation, so it is quick. I just hope none of them would fight back,” I said, and he smiled.

“As long as no one tips them off, they won’t fight back. It would be too sudden for them to even consider it,” Dominic said, making a valid point.

I hoped an unknown informant would not ruin our carefully planned arrest. Those people were too resourceful. The fact that they did not have an army made this more of a mental war, and they were brilliant.

Tamia and I returned to our room to sleep. I wanted Tamia to avoid following me to the arena for security purposes. I could not risk it if they planned to assassinate people with

guns. It was one battle Tamia was going to lose with me. There was no way I would let her go. So I decided to occupy her with Iris's questioning.

The thought of the gun assassination baffled me. It felt odd, but I wasn't going to dismiss it.

The moment I laid down, sleep returned. Knight and I needed all the rest we could get because tomorrow would be a very long day.

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~Sylvester~

I woke up early in the morning feeling well-rested and pumped up for the adventure. I had slept in the clothes I ate dinner with, so the flash drive was still in my pocket.

I placed it in a drawer in the closet before showering and getting ready. Theodore had set out the game for the afternoon so Kyle and Max could join in.

I wonder how Theodore and Marcel would handle those men, but the situation forced us to collaborate with them. It was weird.

I was working with Devin and Leo, and Theo and Marcel had to put up with Kyle and Max, all for the greater good.

All our issues seemed trivial compared to solving the problem at hand. Even if we did not catch the king, the rapid arrest would slow them down or stop them completely.

Installing me as king would give us more power over the following events. The main aim was for the four of us to wed in peace and have some quiet time with our mates before we continued the search. If the King's name happened to be among the names in the drive Amanda gave us, then we would have hit the jackpot. Either way, I see peace in our near future, whether short-term or long-term. It was better than nothing.

I finished dressing up and exited the closet when Tamia stood akimbo looking at me.

"Good morning, darling," I said and went to her.

"What a nice way to want to sneak off," She said, sounding hurt and betrayed. I knew Tamia would want to be a part of the action, but I needed to deny her the thrill this time.

"You have Iris to question and the drive to look into," I said, avoiding telling her she could not follow me.

"I wouldn't follow you even if the opportunity presented itself," She said, and we laughed.

“But I need you to be careful,” she said with concern.

“If they have started thinking of gunning people down, you are not safe either. What if they decide to go for you?” she asked a valid question, and I knew it was a risk I would have to take.

I also knew that killing me won't give them what they wanted. They needed to discredit me, my bloodline, and my friends to install a new king and make the people accept their decision. They couldn't do that with me dead. Causing a war was their best bet, but I kept it to myself and smiled at my mate.

“I think whoever this king is, wants me to suffer. I am going to hope that is his goal and push. Once we arrest the people in question, we would tread with caution.” I assured her, and Tamia did not seem convinced.

“Just come home to me, Sylvester. Asking me to carry on without you will be asking for too much,” she said, and I knew she meant her words. With that, I knew failure wasn't an option.

We kissed, and I headed out.

We all converged outside at the entrance and left in different vehicles.

We arrived systematically. Our guests went to the arena ahead of us, and the rest arrived an hour later.

We knew the uprising would have eyes on us, but we planned to arrest Ramsey and the council members on our list.

Leo and Devin, max and Kyle had a separate list. The Kappas had a different list. We were all to move at once.

I sent Kappa Levi and Kappa William to ensure everyone we wanted to arrest was in the arena. It was paramount that they were taken at once. We would have to deal with the rest later.

We all went to our respective booths, and my Itinerary was brought to me to sign.

I wondered why I had many guests on a day that no one knew I would be at the arena. The Kappa that brought the list said it was a spillover, and I had to deny them admittance because some of the names were on my list of suspects.

“I will be playing today, so I will see them tomorrow,” I said, making it seem like a meeting would hold tomorrow. I knew there would be no meeting because we would be busy questioning the prisoners. I also knew the council would call an emergency

meeting after the arrests to question my conduct. That is when I would take over as king.

We had it all planned out, and everything would have to go as planned.

“Alpha Christian is here to join us; I said he should join Leo’s team for the arrests,” Marcel told me as soon as the Kappa with the itinerary had left, and I nodded.

It was wise to place alpha Christian with Leo since his wife was in our custody, and some of the people we arrested might know.

We tried to keep it under wraps, but we could not deny that they were resourceful.

We spent a few hours in our booth, and soon it was time for our game. Playing polo without our mates present was boring, but we had to keep up our appearance; there were a lot of Kappas on the watch for snippers and suspicious movements.

The game went smoothly, and I noticed Kyle and Max putting in some effort. Since we did not know how the arrest would go, we were not rough with the opponent. We wanted everyone to be in good shape when we moved in on our enemies and arrested them.

During the game, I noticed Leo’s team was good, and it was our brutality that had caused them to fail the last time woefully. The crowd also hoped to witness what they had seen the last time. Too bad we had to disappoint them.

My team won the match, and we went to freshen up and return to our booths.

I presented some medals later and gave a short speech. So far, so good we did not do anything suspicious. Once we finished at the arena, it was time to move in on the people on the list. Dominic remained to honour the medalists as planned.

I became nervous because we did not know what we would find.

They could be prepared or not. They could fight back or not. Anything could happen, and it wasn’t given that we would succeed, but we knew we had to move in on them.

Leo’s team split into two: Leo, Devin, Jake and Christian, Kyle and Max. The kappas had six groups altogether. Everyone had their lists. It was time to move in on the suspects.

We abandoned our cars and used vans instead. My team started with the Mikhailovs.

We followed the Mikhailovs with our van, overtook them and blocked their car. Lenny exited the vehicle, not knowing we were the ones, and I stepped out of the van to make the arrest.

We arrested him and his brothers. They protested, but I did not care. My wedding was coming, and I didn't want trouble.

We drove to Gaston Wayat's house and arrested him and his mate. They protested, but I did not speak a word, and it was too sudden for them to put up a fight.

I maintained my silence and saved my questions for later.

While taking them to the van, I called Devin on the phone, and he informed me that their arrests were going smoothly and none of the suspects had fought back.

Due to the number of people we were arresting, we would lock them up in the council prison. I had changed the guards to my men a few days ago so no one would be allowed to escape.

"What is going on here? Lord Volkov, you cannot do this. You have no right," Gaston said while I bundled him and his mate into the back of the van. The moment he saw Lenny, he knew his game was up.

"Not talking now, are you?" Theodore said, smacking the back of his head and pushing him in. His mate was in tears.

Theodore sat with the prisoners at the back while I closed the back of the van and went to sit in the passenger seat in front, happy for the ease with which we were arresting the suspects.

"Sometimes, when you need something done, you do it yourself," Marcel said and started the van.

We were enjoying it, and Knight wanted to be let out, but none of the suspects had shifted to warrant that type of brutality.

We picked up Gezel and her mate and likewise Carla and her mate. Our van was full, so we drove to the council Prison.

"What is going on here, Marcel?" Gezel said, and Marcel did not respond. He was too disappointed to speak.

"Thoe!" Carla asked, and he growled at her.

"You had it all, Carla; why do this to our family's name?" Theo asked her giving her a hint that their game was up, and she became silent immediately. Her husband kept asking what was happening. He clearly didn't know what his wife had gotten them into.

"Ask your mate," Theodore said, and there was silence.

We arrived at the prison and moved quickly.

We did not want time to lapse or for the rest of the suspects to find out about our activities and escape.

One of my trusted Kappas, Tom, was in charge of the prison guards, and Donald was helping him. I did not want him there, but Jake said we could trust his son. I had not spoken to him, but I instructed Kappa Tom to keep an eye on the guy.

We put the people we arrested in different cells in the council prison and moved to arrest the remaining people on our list.

When we got to Neil Peakman's house, he was loading his suitcase in the trunk of his car.

I exited the van and clapped for him.

"Going somewhere, Councilman?" I asked him, and there was fear in his eyes. Someone must have informed him that we were making arrests. Seeing that we were arresting everyone, I wondered who had the time to do that.

"I am innocent," he said, and the man looked pathetic.

"Save it for your questioning," I said, and Marcel cuffed him with silver. We loaded him into the truck and arrested two more people before heading to Ramsey's hotel.

When we got to the hotel, we found a commotion in the front, and I saw Leo's van parked there. Ramsey wasn't on their list, so why did they come there?

"What the hell, Leo!" I said aloud.

"We had to get here as fast as we could. My Kappa said he was running away. Someone had tipped them off," he said, defending his actions, and I wondered who that person might have been.

"Have you gotten everyone on your list?" I asked, and he shook his head.

"Gabriel escaped. I have declared him wanted," He said, and I nodded.

"Where is Ramsey?" I asked, and he pointed at the reception of the hotel.

"In there acting crazy," Leo said, and I noticed that Devin and Jake weren't with him.

I moved close to Leo to ask him about Devin and Jake.

"They went to get in through the emergency at the back. My Kappa would open the exit from the inside for them to get in. Ramsey is focused on us, so he won't see them coming," he whispered, and just then, Devin and Jake came out dragging Ramsey in chains.

Ramsey was screaming he wouldn't say anything until he was put before the council. A little torture would change his resolve.

He had also received a beating, and I did not need to guess who did it. Devin looked very pissed.

"We got the bastard!" Jake said, enraged, and I knew his daughter's involvement was part of it.

I was so elated so much that I had a big grin. I felt a weight lifted, knowing we had caught a break.

Maybe not a solution but a break, a massive break! I could not wait to get on with the rest of the plan.

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~Tamia~

I was worried about the arrests, primarily because of the rumours about the gun assassination. I did not know if it were the truth or a piece of false information to mislead us. Anything was possible because the people were intelligent, and they were multiple steps ahead of us.

After Sylvester and the other men left, I knew we had to set some things in motion and reduce the workload.

Iris's questioning would have to wait. I was curious to find out what was in the flash drive.

Sylvester had asked a valid question, and I was tempted to ask Amanda, but I changed my mind. No one trusted her intentions, and they all had valid reasons.

I needed to consult with my friends to figure out what to do.

Carrying Sylvester's laptop, I took the drive from where Sylvester kept it in the closet and headed to Avery's wing so we could check the content together.

We decided to have breakfast there because time was of the essence. Since the information wasn't encrypted, there was no need for a hacker. We would just do well enough.

“Where are you?” I heard Stephanie’s voice in my head, and I honestly did not want to see her until I was done, but I knew she would just come looking for me.

“On my way to Avery’s room,” I replied.

“Nicole wanted us to have breakfast together. I do not want to be there alone,” She confessed, and I giggled.

“You will have to. I have been given a task which I have to complete before Sylvester returns,” I confessed, and she was silent a bit before responding.

“Very well then, I will see you later,” She said, giving up, and I was glad she was letting the matter rest.

I arrived at Avery’s door and knocked. She answered, and I let myself in.

Linda was there eating a sandwich, and we all greeted ourselves.

“Doing some tech stuff?” Linda said, pointing at the laptop, and I giggled.

“No, Linda. We are going through the flash drive Amanda gave us,” I said, and Avery rolled her eyes.

“You mean the snake because that is what she is,” Avery said, not wanting to give Amanda the benefit of the doubt.

Looking at it, nobody gave the woman the benefit of the doubt. We all believed she was up to no good.

“You have to agree with Ave, Tamia,” Linda said.

“We were there, remember. Leo took her everywhere; introduced her as his luna to people. They abandoned you at home most of the time and left you to attend serious meetings only. If Leo could admit more than one Luna or replace you, he would have. We all knew how she was eager to attend those meetings, and he had to say no because you were the strategist,” she said and stood up.

“The three of us have come a long way, Tamia, and the goddess has smiled on us again, but we should not forget our enemies and the pain of our past. It is what has brought us this far.” Linda said and looked at me.

“Amanda should have gracefully walked away from that party and returned to Cain Island when she realised her fated was already happily married. She should have exposed her father’s lies when he tried to force her into your home. And if she did not dare to do so, she should have rejected Leo and stayed out of the way of your marriage when they brought her to your home; she is an Alpha breed, Tamia. Unlike you, she

could let go without his consent. Leo is rich; he would have set her up wherever she wanted. She ruined a perfect marriage and claimed she did it because her father said so. Please,” Linda said, rolling her eyes.

“She continued her deception,” Avery continued, “just like the women that took those douchebags from us. Amanda continued her deception after you had left. She had Leo all to herself, and she knew what her father was doing, yet she did not tell Leo. It is almost as if she wants her father to succeed. Claiming she fed him lies? Was that really necessary? She did not need to lie to anyone; All she had to do was tell Leo the truth, Tamia, and she didn’t. For whatever fucked up reason she may have, she didn’t tell him the truth, and that is the most painful part of all this. She held on to the truth and continued to allow Ramsey to succeed. People died in that attack. What if our men weren’t so nice? Do you know how we would have ended up? They were going to kill Leo, you say. Why didn’t the bitch give herself up to be taken as tribute? Why did you have to do it? I bet she hoped you would shift, fight and get killed in the process. She is only crying now because she got caught,” Avery said, and I knew both she and Linda were right.

I sighed and sat on the chair, a bit weak in the knees because they had opened fresh wounds. No matter how much I say I forgive Amanda and Leo, my heart couldn’t let the pain go. Leo and I were best friends, and he betrayed me for a total stranger. He was my first in almost everything, relationship and friendship-wise, and he betrayed me. Pain like that does not go away. I fought my tears because this wasn’t the time to break down.

“I agree with both of you. Sylvester and I discussed it, and we felt it was weird that she did not give Leo the drive after he confronted her. What was she playing at?” I asked, and Avery laughed.

“Last resort, if all fails, she will pretend to be on the winning side,” Linda said, and we laughed. As funny as the answer was, it was true.

“You know the painful part of all this is that Theo told me we can’t hold the bitch here for long if we can’t link her directly to anything. Leo would have to send her back to the east, and then they would solve their matter there.” Linda said, and I nodded, knowing that bit too.

“The arrests might yield something no matter how little; we might get something that we can pin on the bitch and deal with her, pregnant or not. I do not care. She deserves to suffer. Maybe sentence her to prison and take the babies from her when she gives birth. I am just thinking. But she has been too wicked to you, Tamia, for her to go scot-free,” Avery said, and I appreciated their support.

“I would like that too, but unless someone says something to implicate her, we will have to let her go soon,” I said, and we were all silent.

I turned on the laptop, and Linda frowned at me.

“Is that Sylvester’s?” she asked, and I nodded.

“I do not think connecting Amanda’s drive to that laptop is wise. What if there is spyware in it,” she said, and it did not cross my mind.

“You need a blank laptop, one that is not connected to the internet and that has nothing on it to monitor or copy. I am still baffled that she gave you the drive instead of Leo. What if it is all part of the plan? After all, that was what Lilly was doing for them here before the two-timing, two-faced bitch got caught. I am just saying,” she said, finishing her sandwich, and I felt foolish.

How could I have been so careless?

I was very grateful to Linda for her wisdom. I guess that questioning and critical thinking had slowed me down mentally.

I linked Kappa Wilson to get me a laptop that wasn’t used for anything serious. I was glad Sylvester left Wilson for me. The Kappa has been an asset, and even though we started off on the wrong foot because of the slap, he has been respectful and efficient. I wouldn’t change him for anything.

“Yes, Luna. I will bring one to you now.” He said, and I relaxed.

Food was brought, and we ate while we waited for Kappa Wilson to get the laptop I requested.

“Our wedding is fast approaching, and we have not decided what to wear,” Avery said, sounding worried.

“I hate this uprising group. They are a pain. We should be receiving beauty treatments and having the wedding planned, but as things are looking, it would be rushed, thanks to those bastards,” Linda said, and I felt the same way.

Although Sylvester and I did not need the blue moon ceremony to claim each other and be connected, we still wanted to experience it and be a part of it. It was a fantastic feeling. Our wolves and us would have ceremonies, and people would witness our declaration of love and union as we claim each other under the particular moon. But these bastards were occupying our planning time. I didn’t want it rushed, so I thought of an idea.

“How about I have Katya, Stephanie, and Nicole plan it? Katya will be getting married on that day, Nicole is looking for something to do, and Stephanie has been bored lately. We can ask them to do it, and we would just worry about our dresses.” I said, and Linda smiled.

“That is very smart. I hope your sister-in-law won’t mind and Stephanie would willingly oblige because we both know how the woman is. She comes off as unstable sometimes,” Linda said, and I knew Stephanie gave that vibe, but I knew she wasn’t unstable. Yet, I could not defend it because I knew Stephanie’s secrets, and Sylvester and I vowed not to tell anyone of the demons that haunted the woman. As things were, it was clear that it would soon be out in the open, but I was hopeful we would nail the bastards before all that happened.

“I understand, but I am sure she would love to do it,” I said, and Linda nodded.

Wilson soon brought the laptop, and I connected the drive to it.

On it was a folder labelled Files. Inside that folder were other folders marked Desktop, downloads, and documents.

We went through them, and they all had just one file. Each had a document file of lists of names. The one in the downloads was from an email, while the others were screenshots of a folder. The information wasn’t coherent initially, but it soon made sense. By the time we finished going through the drive, we had found over eighty names of the members of the uprising.

We didn’t even have that number of names. The people we arrested were about thirty-fourty altogether, eighty names of which we already knew twenty-seven on the list was a huge break.

Amanda really had in for her father. The sad part was their aliases weren’t there, so we did not know who the king was and if he was among them. I would have to have Leo question her about the king before he decides what he would do to her. So far, Amanda has cooperated and has no direct link to anything. We had nothing to hold her with, we would be violating her rights by holding her in the North. Unless Leo decides to take her to the east and deal with his problems there, there was no reason to hold her.

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~Leo~

The arrest went smoothly. It would have been easy if it weren’t for the informant that might have tipped them off. I had an idea of how it might have happened, but we needed to question the suspects to conclude.

Ramsey was despicable. He kept yelling he would not speak until he was brought before the council. If only the asshole knew what we had in mind for him.

With the present hierarchy, he was right. The lord would have to take him to the council to question him before passing judgement, but Sylvester would be king soon and then have the power to do as he wills with the prisoners.

It was a lot of power to bestow on one person, but I trusted Tamia's judgement of character and decided I would support the cause.

We parked at the estate and walked in.

Devin was excited; I am sure he had not had so much excitement in a while. For someone that likes to fight a lot, this was thrilling for him.

As for me, I felt nothing.

My life would still be fucked up after this. One thing was sure, no matter what Tamia said, I would let Amanda go. If the children were mine, I would find a way to be in their lives.

Thinking of all the damage she caused broke my heart completely. Although we couldn't link her to anything, and the song the suspects were singing made her seem innocent, I still did not want her. There was just something off about her behaviour that did not sit well with me.

The only reason I wasn't going to push was because of her condition. If we could not prove that she was actively and deliberately working with these people, then she was a free woman. One thing I was certain about is she would never be the head Luna of the East or my mate. I was willing to move on from Tamia, but I wasn't willing to move on with Amanda.

We arrived in the early hours of the morning, tired from the arrest and headed to our room. I did not know what would happen the next day, but I knew it would be fast-paced henceforth.

We also had to wait for the council to summon Sylvester for an impromptu meeting so we could move and install him as king.

Christain was with us, so we were complete.

Everyone that had a say in making Sylvester king was with us; the only pushback we might have was from Vino Lawrence, who might see it as a slight, but as far as I was concerned, the guy should be happy that he remains on the council. His family aren't truly northern. They originated from the west, and his aunt had a big hand in this mutiny.

He should be happy if we leave him on the council. It was a shame that Gezel and Carla were involved. If not, I would have pleaded with Sylvester not to abolish the law that holds every family member accountable for the crimes of a member. It would have been nice to have the bastard resign because of Jenny and Neil's conduct. I knew it would also affect the Babanins, but the Lawrences, through Jenny, had stylishly taken over that seat so far. It was all a colossal mess.

I went straight to my room, and sleep came quickly.

I woke up late. It was expected since we arrived at the estate in the morning, and we were tired when we arrived.

I looked out the window and saw the sun was up in the sky, which meant it was afternoon. I freshened up in a hurry and left the room.

Entering Volkov's lounge, I noticed everyone was there. Sylvester, Marcel, Theodore, Devin, Christian, Jake, Dominic, Kyle and Maxwell. I was the last to join them, and Sylvester smiled at me.

"Must have slept well," he said, and I nodded.

"Like a baby," I lied, and Black grumbled in my head.

"We found out that Mikhailovs were the ones that warned the others of the arrest," Devin said, just as I had suspected, and I was relieved that there was no traitor in our midst. It would have been another headache to deal with.

I sat and picked up a sandwich from the table. There was a list in Sylvester's hands, and I wondered what it was.

"What's that?" I asked him, and he handed it to me.

"Eighty- three names of their members that we got from your mate's drive," He said, and I knew he meant that mate thing as a jab since everyone knew how it offended me. I had to let it go because I deserved it. I had thrown away a gem for that shit, and Sylvester now had my gem. He wasn't letting her go.

"I do not trust her information," I said, glancing through the document. None of them seemed surprised, and I was glad we were on the same page.

"Well, we still can't link her to the events, and everyone is singing the same song where she is concerned. They claimed she fed her father lies, and he put a target on her," Sylvester said, and I shook my head.

"You all do not know Amanda like I do. She had all the opportunity to come clean to me but held it," I said, and Devin shook his head.

"You were not easy to be with, Leo. I saw you in the east. You did not seem approachable. She might have been scared of your reaction and chose to handle it the best way she could," he said, making a valid point, but something did not sit well with me about her still. I felt it was odd.

"I am just uncomfortable letting her off the hook," I said, and Theodore sighed.

“Well, the north has to let her go. We can’t hold her here. She has fulfilled all obligations. She has confessed and cooperated. According to our laws, she is free. It would have been a different case if we could link her to these people as actively among them. We have to let her go today, Leo,” he said, and I looked at him in shock, then looked at Sylvester, who nodded.

“We do not want anything to work against installing me as king. Holding a pregnant Luna prisoner after she has confessed and cooperated might be seen as tyranny, and that could make the council try to push back longer than we can afford. Of course, they won’t win, but it would unnecessarily prolong the situation. We need to strike once and hit hard. So I will advise you to figure out what you want to do with your mate today so we can move on to more pressing matters, like figuring out who this king is. Sixty per cent of the people on this list are from your territory, Leo. You still have a lot of work to do to keep your place clean.” Sylvester said, and I was a bit angry. I did not want Amanda to go scot-free for all she did to me.

“I know you have scores to settle with your mate, but it is between you two now. I cannot be involved.” Sylvester added gently, knowing exactly how I was feeling, and I decided to do the right thing.

“I will deal with it now, but please, I want to be a part of the questioning,” I told them. They laughed.

“We won’t question anyone until Sylvester is king. They all demand to be brought before the council before they speak, so we can’t question them. There is a possibility they would go free if we allow it. It will be a shocker when Sylvester is made king, and they have to answer to him,” Theodore said.

Stalling their questioning with the council is the fastest way to make Sylvester king, and we all knew it. The council will send Sylvester a summon, which he is meant to ignore. Then the four leaders would be asked to come to the council and vote that Sylvester steps down for blatantly refusing to see the council and violating rights.

During the voting session, we would push forth our agenda and demand he be made king because the current situation is not helping us. For whatever reason we choose to come up with, however stupid it may be, we would just unanimously agree that we want a king and not a lord anymore.

After a long debate between the council members and us, the top families would be asked to choose sides. We knew what the top families would decide, championing our proposal.

After the top families side with us, the council would have to back down. This process might take a day or two, pending when the council chooses to act between summoning Sylvester and us.

I knew dealing with Amanda's issue was essential so we could focus on the problem at hand. She was more of a distraction and liability.

I excused myself to go deal with my problem.

I moved through the hallway, and when I got to the room that Amanda was being held in, a Kappa came to open the door for me. I walked in, and she was sitting in the chair reading a book. She looked at me, and there was fear in her eyes.

"Leo," she said, and Black growled at her.

"It is alpha to you!" I said, and she averted her gaze.

"I guess you have not forgiven me yet," She said, putting down the book and standing up.

"I can never forgive what you did to me," I said, and she shook her head.

"I did not do anything to you. We are both guilty. You could have rejected me but refused to do it, so do not put this on me. Do you think I wanted this life? Do you think I wanted to play second fiddle to Tamia? I didn't, Leo, but you put me in that situation. You put my wolf and me in that situation, so don't blame me for this. Tamia has the right to be angry but not you. I did everything I could to fit in her shoes. I loved you the best way I could, but I was never enough," She said, tears streaming down her face, but I was numb to them.

"You could have come clean about what your father was doing, what he was making you do," I said to her, and she shook her head.

"Would you have listened? You rarely spend time with me, and when you are around, you are buried in work. I was alone, so I had to figure it out alone." she said, and I nodded.

"I do not trust you, Amanda, and I do not want to waste any more of my precious time with you. Sylvester says he can't hold you, but I still believe you have a hand in all this. Because if you can sleep with me, and hide this magnitude of information from me, then you can as well kill me in my sleep the moment I stop being useful," I said. She looked hurt, but I did not feel a thing.

"You can say all you like but do not belittle my love, Leo. I love you, and you know it, so don't say things like that," she said, crying, and I exhaled.

"I will let you go, but you can't be my Luna. I do not even want you in the east. You can go home and pack your things. When you settle, let me know where you are. I will find a way to be in my children's lives after they have been tested. But our relationship is over Amanda," I said, and she looked at me angrily.

“Very well, I do not need you to take care of my children,” she said, and I did not know if she wanted me to plead with her or not. I did not care.

“Suit yourself. However you want, it is fine by me,” I said, and she nodded.

“I will let them know the kind of man their father is,” she said as a threat, and I nodded.

“While you are it, tell them how you got into my life and ruined it. Tell them how you helped your father almost destroy me. There might be no evidence linking you directly to this shit, but I don’t trust you. I promise you that if I find out you had a hand in all this, I will hunt you down and destroy you,” I said; she stepped back.

“I, Leonardo Albert, reject you, Amanda Richford as my mate. May your days be full of the anguish and pain you brought me,” I said, finally speaking the words I should have said on the balcony that day, a little too late.

She stepped back, anticipating pain, but it never came. I looked at her and frowned.

“Accept!” I yelled at the stubborn woman, and her tears began to fall freely as she shook her head, refusing to accept the rejection: hoping I would take it back, but my mind was made up. I was done.

“Accept!” I yelled.

I needed her to accept because she was an Alpha breed. Getting impatient, I advanced towards her, and she accepted before I could reach her, but the pain did not come.

I felt a disconnection and emptiness but no pain.

With Tamia, there was pain. Did it have something to do with the blue moon?

Finding a fated was hard, let alone rejecting them, but Sylvester had felt pain when he rejected Susan even though he masked it. I knew it, which was why Tamia took him out of the ball, but I felt nothing with Amanda.

“May I see Annika before I leave?” She asked, wiping away her tears.

“My father misled her, and I felt I should have saved her. I would like to see her before I leave,” She said in tears, and I nodded.

“I will tell Tamia to permit you,” I said and turned my back. I was a free man, and even though I felt empty, I knew I would start on a clean slate.