

A Gift from the Goddess by Dawn Rosewood Chapter 20

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I sighed internally. There was only one option.

As much as I wanted to hate my pack and condemn them for turning on me in my past life, a part of me would always see myself as their caretaker, as their Luna. By remaining silent, I would be forcing them

into a fate where some would lose their loved ones. I wouldn't be able to remain silent living with that knowledge.

"With all due respect, I believe the Gamma's plan may backfire tremendously," I started.

I could see Oliver's face frown, looking as if he wanted to have another outburst, but he contained himself.

"The tax could hold us in a very precarious position if others wished to join the Jade Moon pack. Alone, they may be a weak and insignificant pack, but we would be underestimating their ability to rally forces if we were to go about this wrong. We could be looking at an uprising from several of our allied territories. Why else would they start by picking off just an unranked girl? They wanted us to retaliate savagely for the injustice."

Oliver scoffed and everyone looked at him expectantly.

"Oh please, don't look at me like that," he said, laughing. "I'd like to remind you all that you're listening to a fourteen year old right now."

"Gamma, you will be quiet and listen respectfully," Tytus ordered.

We could all hear the Alpha tone in his voice and I did my best not to smirk at the look of submission Oliver gave.

"Please continue, Aria."

I nodded my head to the Alpha.

"I believe that our best course of action is one of peace as much as possible. By going in and attacking without mercy, we will risk accidentally killing innocents as well as losing some of our own pack members in the process. This brutal force strategy will only turn their pack into a martyr for others to

follow. No, a quiet approach is definitely required here.”

Tytus raised an eyebrow. “What do you propose then?”

“For starters, we cut off their supply routes and box them in, using their mountainous terrain surrounding them to our advantage. The landscape would make for a difficult battle head-on since they know the area well, but sealing off their exits would be very easy.”

“Wouldn’t this have the same negative reputational effects as meeting them in battle head-on?” Tytus asked.

“No, Alpha, because we will be allowing them a chance to do the right thing. We will cut off their supply temporarily on the condition they hand over the perpetrators of the attack. By showing them mercy, we will demonstrate that we are inherently trying to do right by them at least.”

Tytus laughed, amused by my idea. “And were you counting on their Alpha to hand themselves over willingly?”

“Of course not,” I said and smiled. “But, if he wants to avoid a direct war with one of the largest packs in the country, he would need to at least hand someone of value over to take the blame. If it’s the large brown wolf you have in your custody currently, I’d wager he is either the Gamma or Beta of their pack. The young Alpha will most likely say they moved of their own volition in an act of independent treason. By giving him an out to end things peacefully, he would have no other choice but to take the deal or risk

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looking like the villain.”

“Mmm... your plan is certainly extremely attractive,” Tytus said, deep in thought. “But what’s to stop them from trying to attack again in the future?”

“We establish a consulate from our pack inside their territory to oversee their future dealings. It may also be worth investigating how close the Alpha is to the ranked member we have in custody. We could be looking at a potential chance to utilise a hostage situation regardless of whether he plans to use them to take the fall or not.”

I then gave a small shrug. “Either way, we have given them a way to spare their people from unnecessary war. The other territories will not rally behind someone who would sacrifice their own pack members needlessly when we will be showing them nothing but our benevolence in return. If they try to make any plans to attack us again then at least we have our consulate representative with them to notify us immediately.”

"You are indeed extremely intelligent, young Aria," Tytus praised, thoroughly pleased with my responses. "I cannot fault your logic in this matter. Your father must be very proud."

"I am, Alpha," my father said.

I smiled and bowed my head to Tytus. "Thank you."

"That being said," he continued, his tone becoming more serious, "I must admit I'm a little surprised you gave such a detailed and well thought out strategy given your current circumstances. I'm sure you must know what I'm referring to."

I did know. I knew too well. I was hoping we weren't going to have to address this topic today but it seemed there was no avoiding it.

"I only thought of the wellbeing of our pack before my own security," I replied.

"It would seem so.... Truly an act that would be extremely fitting for a... future Luna."

I gritted my teeth. He was trying to emphasise placing me into a Luna role in order to establish control.

"You are a smart girl, as we have all plainly witnessed here today. I assume you know what a Goddess mark means, Aria?"

His eyes were back to their speculative sharpness. 'Friend or foe?' I was sure he was thinking. I wanted to curl away from his gaze but I held my own. I knew what he really wanted to know was what the Goddess mark meant to me and what I planned to do with it.

The reality was that the mark was not just a symbol of favour; it was a sign of higher authority. I now possessed the potential to hold as much control over the pack as the Alpha. I was a living threat to Aleric's very future position unless I submitted to him. This was why Tytus was pushing for me to become his son's Luna; possibly even if we weren't destined mates. He wanted assurance I would not call upon my new authority and disrupt his bloodline one day.

It was a double-edged sword, to say the least. On one side, it meant that it would be almost impossible for Aleric to publicly disgrace to the extreme degree he had once before. Someone blessed by the Goddess herself could not be convicted of a crime so easily once our mark was confirmed by the Elders, this being due to the fact that we become known as a "Saint" or "Saintess". Therefore, it was far more likely now that I would not stand trial for Thea's poisoning in the future as those marked were considered to hold a piece of Selene herself. It was incredibly reassuring in that regard, but it didn't completely guarantee my safety.

On the flip side, it opened me up to a greater danger. I was now a very big target for assassination if the Alpha felt I was a threat. I would probably be found dead by mysterious causes and the case would eventually go cold. Wherever I went, no matter how far, I was now the only current living werewolf marked

Alpha,

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wish to become Luna, no coltare any desire to be mated to Alio,' I

SA SUW8On me which I ignored, continuing to keep my fee forward and espressionless

"Then what of our yopheoll" shouted out one of the Elders. We believed you to be the fated mate of blog and your union is for told to bring goat 853 to the Winter ist,

**The Wings ist will always have my love and surt reardless of my portion. I dont need to be*

More murmurs spread throughout the hall as they discussed the implications of my words

But suddenly, they were all silenced as the Alpha began to laugh loudly. I wasn't sure whether to feel cotoneos Worted by his reaction,

"1110045 19 our young bola here is still capable of showing her true age on occasion," he said, still checking, "We will chalk this up to discuss at a later date. I can see now that at maybe discussing future romantic projects with the young lady is perhaps 100 coon. For now, I will just take your request into

But Alpha! She is destined to be our Luna!" said another Elder.

"That will be all!" Tyrus said, holding his hand up. We are lucky to have such a blessed and intellectual young wolf amongst our pack. We would be foolish not to take her desires into consideration. There is nothing to get a worked up over just yet, we still have plenty of time until her coming of age for final decisions to be made

Everyone was unsure how to take the news but they bowed respectfully nonetheless.

Asia, thank you very much for your contributions to the pack I will see to it you are greatly rewarded," Tyus said before turning to Cai. As for you Cai, our pack is your pack. I will be sure to send our immense gratitude to your father and I will ensure that you, too, shall be rewarded."

**Thank you, Alpha, we both replied.*

**This meeting is adjourned. Council please follow me*

Everyone began to move and leave via the hall's back entrance which led to a smaller meeting room, most likely because they had other confidential matters to discuss. My father gave me a final look of concern before following the others out.

Before too long, only Cai and I remained in the meeting hall.

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"Cai, I really did want to thank you for saving me," I said.

He waved off my thanks. "It's fine. I heard you speak during the meeting and I understand where you're coming from. Both of us wanted what was best for our packs. I think we should just leave it at that and go our separate ways."

... Separate ways?

My cheeks flushed.

He was politely telling me that he wanted nothing to do with me. I suppose that was to be expected given the amount of grief and pain I had caused him. I'd wanted to do something to make it up to him, but it sounded as though the best thing I could give him right now was for me to leave him alone completely.

"Oh...yeah, of course," I said, a little awkwardly.

We both walked to the door and I reached my hand out to the handle, turning to speak to Cai one last time as I did so. Only, I never got the chance to talk.

Abruptly, before I could move away, the door was then pulled open from the other side.

I fell forward, tripping from being dragged along with the opening movement....

...And suddenly I found myself face-to-face with Aleric.