

## Triplet Alphas Gifted Luna By Samantha Doyle Chapter 31

Ch 31 Dresses and Lace ?

Kai was already on top of Thea on the bed, hand under her dress. Thea pushed against his hand, moaning as she kissed him, her hands on his back, feeling his muscles ripple.

Conri and Alaric stripped and joined them on the bed. Thea pulled Kai's shirt up. He sat back on his heels and lifted it over his head. Conri jumped in, turned Thea's face toward his, and kissed her. Alaric kissed her neck on the other side. Kai took the opportunity to undress. When he returned to Thea, he reached under her dress and slid her panties down her legs. When he saw the red lace, he froze.

After a moment, he pushed her panties back up her legs then pulled her up and off the bed. Conri and Alaric growled.

"Wait for it, guys," Kai said.

He stood behind Thea and lifted her dress up and over her head.

Alaric and Conri froze, eyes moving up and down her body. Kai took a step back to admire her backside.

Thea bit her lip and smiled. She turned around and looked behind her at the boys on the bed.

Kai stepped up to her, turned her to face Alaric and Conri, then slid his hands around to her front. He kissed her neck as one hand went to a

breast, and the other slid under the red lace panties. She leaned back into his chest as she sighed.

Conri and Alaric stroked themselves as they watched her getting worked up. She tilted her hips into Kai's fingers, arched her back to push her breast into his hand. She bit her lip, looking at Conri and Alaric longingly. Her hand reached for them, beckoning them over. Her breast joined his other hand in her panties. One pumping in and out of her, the other rubbing her nub as she tilted her hips back and forth. Kai could tell she was close to her climax by the sounds Thea was making. He bit down on that spot on her neck, and she came, shuddering and crying out. Her knees gave out, and Alaric caught her in his arms.

Kai's hand pulled out, and Thea whined at the

loss of touch. Alaric sat on the edge of the bed and put Thea on his lap, facing away from him, legs straddling his. He brought his knees apart, spreading her legs with his. She reached behind her back, found Alaric's erection, and took hold of it with both hands, pumping. Alaric kissed along her spine and held her in place with his hands around her shoulders. | Conri knelt in front of Thea, took a moment to admire the view of her spread before him, covered in red lace. Then he tore off the lace panties and buried his face in her wet folds. After a while, he added his fingers and let his mouth concentrate on her nub.

Kai ran his hands over her breasts, up and down. She leaned forward and took him into her mouth. Conri had her climaxing in no time, but he didn't relent as she came down. Pressure building everywhere, she sucked Kai harder, and he came. She swallowed his cum, and the feel of his hot seed sent her over the edge again. He pulled out of her mouth, and she whined, wanting more. She licked her lips, looking up at him. He leaned down and kissed her while palming her breasts.

Thea worked Alaric more fervently behind her, and he came, his cum landing on her back. He leaned over, grabbed a shirt, and wiped his cum off her back and her hands, then himself.

Conri didn't let Thea come down yet. He brought her to climax again then she pulled him up to face her. Her hands on his shoulders, she rested her forehead against his.

“What do you want, babe?” she said.

Conri bit his lip.

“Tell me.”

“I want to make love to you,” he said. “Before you Say it, I know you don't want to have sex until we shift. Can I make love to you in your—” he trailed off.

“In my butt?”

He nodded.

Thea smiled. “You've been working your way toward that for a while, huh?”

“Yeah,” he said.

“Is my butt your favorite part of me?”

“I love all of you,” he said. “Especially your amazing ass.”

“Then it's yours, babe,” Thea said. ‘

He smiled and kissed her. She tasted herself on him, and she deepened the kiss, adding tongue. He pulled her off Alaric's legs and set her on all fours.

"Wait," Thea said. She stood up, her legs a little wobbly, and went to the drawer where she stashed the condoms and lube. She pulled out the box and bottle.

"What are you doing with condoms?" Kai stormed over and grabbed the box.

"And lube?" Alaric grabbed the bottle.

"I just got them. They're both unopened, see?" Thea said.

"Another treat?" Kai said.

She nodded.

They calmed down. Then they got excited. Kai opened the box and set it on her dresser. Alaric opened the lube and set it down. She took one of the foils and walked back to Conri.

"What do we need the condom for?" he said.

"I did a little research. There can be sperm in your pre-cum, and in the fog of things, you can accidentally enter the wrong hole. I want to have your pups, all of you, but not right now. Not before we're even mated." :

Conri kissed her then put his forehead against hers.

"I will put a pup in you, but you're right. Now is not the time. Okay. Put it on me."

Thea tried to tear the foil open, but her hands were shaking. Conri kissed her again then took it from her. He ripped it open and handed it back to her. She took out the condom and examined it.

“Are there instructions on the box? I don’t want to get it wrong.”

She looked at Conri and blushed. He walked over to the dresser with her, Alaric and Kai joined them, and they all looked at the box. When she thought she got it, she pinched the tip, positioned the condom at the head, then started rolling it down his shaft. She let go.

“Looks right,” she said, blushing harder.

Conri pulled her in for another kiss.

“I love that we’re figuring this out together,” he said. 1

“Me too.”

She grabbed the bottle of lube, and Conri led her over to the floor. They kneeled, she set the lube down, he turned her facing away from him, and she got on all fours. Alaric sat in front of her. He ran his hands up and down her arms.

“I love you,” she whispered to him.

“I love you too,” he said. He kissed her.

Conri started kissing along her spine, then moved down. He spread her cheeks and massaged her anus with his tongue while he fingered her pussy. When he felt her start to relax, he brought his fingers up, dragging her juices. He inserted one finger and pumped slowly.

“Honestly, I don’t think we even need lube with how wet you are,” Conri said.

Alaric tugged on her nipples as he kissed her. Kai kneeled by her side and took over working her pussy and clit. Conri added a second finger. When he felt her stretch to accommodate it, he pulled out. He got to his knees and rubbed his cock over her pussy to get it wet, dragged it up to her ass, and started to push in.

He pulled out, then pushed in a little farther. He repeated the process until Thea relaxed, and he slid in all the way. He stood still for a moment, letting her adjust. When she started moving against him, he pulled almost all the way out, then slowly pushed back in, burying himself to the hilt. Out, in. Out, in.

Thea moaned and matched his thrusts. Kai was torturing her clit and curling his fingers to hit that spot inside her that drove her crazy. Alaric alternated kneading her breasts and tugging her nipples as their tongues made love to each other. Every inch of her was on fire. So much sensation, so much pleasure—she started to climax, but she didn't know from where. It seemed to be happening to her entire body all at once. Her toes curled. She cried out, and Alaric moved his lips to her neck. Kissing and nibbling until he found her sweet spot and bit down.

She thought she heard a scream. She was floating out of her body, didn't know up from down. Conri came inside her. He bent over, his chest to her back, and held her tight. Her limbs turned to jelly, and they fell to the floor on their sides.

Conri held her tight against him as they both came down. She reached out and pulled Alaric and Kai against her. Alaric laid down on his side and faced her front. Kai moved to her legs, curling up against them like a dog would its owner, resting his head on her leg like a pillow.

After a while, her eyes were able to focus. Alaric smiled at her, and she smiled back.

“I’m the luckiest girl on the planet,” she said. “ Did I hear a scream ?”

“That was you, babe,” Conri said behind her. He kissed along her spine.

“I screamed ? I don’t even know what happened. It’s like I was floating outside my body. Everything was on fire. Can you have a full-body orgasm ? Because I think I did. And it seemed to go on forever.” She bit her lip.

“You were making loud, incredible sounds for an extended amount of time,” Alaric said.

“Twas ?”

“Yeah. I take it you liked it ?”

“Oh, goddess, yes. It was indescribable.”

“You want to do it again ?”

“Do you want to make love to that part of me too ?” She bit her lip.

Alaric nodded.

“So do I,” Kai said.

“Mmm. Can you two go again tonight ? Or is this something to look forward to tomorrow ?”

“You look tired, darling,” Kai said.

“I’m a little melty,” she said. +

“Tomorrow, my love,” Alaric said.

Alaric got up and picked her up off the floor. Kai got up to turn on the shower. Alaric carried Thea bridal style into the shower. He set her on her feet and held onto her to steady her.

“I can’t believe you got me off with your hands behind your back,” Alaric said. “That’s gotta be some kind of magician’s trick.”

“It felt so good when you spread me open with your legs, and having my arms behind my back made me extra sensitive. Everything about it was incredible.”

Conri walked into the bathroom, took off the condom, and threw it away. Kai and Conri joined them in the shower, and Alaric handed Thea off to Conri.

Conri gently washed Thea, paying particular attention to the area he just made love to. Thea wrapped her arms around his neck.

“I love you, Conri,” she said. She rested her head on his shoulder. “That was amazing.”

“Did you like it?” She lifted her head and looked at him. He looked nervous.

“Oh, Con, didn’t you hear the sounds I made? I lost my mind. I’ve never felt like that before. I’ve never thought about doing that before, but feeling you inside me—it was like you belonged there. You felt so good.”

He breathed a sigh of relief. “I hoped you liked it, and you weren’t just trying to make me happy.”

“None of that was faked. I don’t even know how to fake.”

“Promise me you never will? I want to please you.”



“I promise. Did you like it?”

He smiled big and nodded.

“Being inside you makes me feel complete,”

Conri said. “I was made for you. I belong with

you, in you, to you.” His hand cupped her face and brought her in for a chaste kiss. “I love you so much, Thea.”

“I love you too.”

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Ch 32 Assistant

Lizzy had to spend every day for a week after school in training to be Thea’s assistant.

“It’s a bigger deal than I thought,” Lizzy said. “Luna Ada’s assistant is super strict. I have to behave a certain way in public, private, and with you—depending on where we are and who we’re around. There’s a lot of stuff I’ll do for you that you won’t even know about, and once you become Luna, yeah. It’ll be intense. So I can start now, but there will be more training as you get closer to becoming Luna.”

“Do you still want to do it?” Thea said.

“Of course! I’m not going to let someone else mess it up!”

After that, Lizzy joined her every day after school in the library. Together they were making a substantial stack of Xeroxes about goddess gifts and gifted. She also went to a few bars and showed them to Thea on video chat.

When the relationship books arrived, Thea put them in an unused corner in the library, and when she needed a break from goddess gift research, she read those or did school work. Since she was going through nearly every book in the library, she started a Xerox stack for any information she found on matebonds as well. If she was going to change the curriculum, she needed something to change it to, and she needed to be prepared to back up her arguments when she had the meeting about it.

“Goddess, those triplets are lucky,” Lizzy said. “ With everything going on, you make the time to research how to have the perfect relationship.”  
“I have zero experience! I don’t want to mess it up,” Thea said.

“I have the best Luna in the world.”

Thea rolled her eyes. “You were right, by the way.”

“About what?” :

“One wear, and they’re shredded.”

Lizzy laughed. “I’ll get you more. I’ll keep a steady stream coming in. I wonder if there’s a discount for buying in bulk.”

“And more condoms,” she whispered so just Lizzy could hear.

Lizzy gasped. “Has my lady become a woman?” Thea blushed. “Not quite.”

“I need to hear the details.”

“My guards hear the details, I’m sure. It’s so embarrassing. I know the pack house walls are all insulated with soundproof materials, but I’m pretty sure it’s not enough. I can’t look them in the eye in the morning without turning beet red.” Lizzy laughed. “That loud, huh?”

“The things they do to me. I have no control over the sounds I make.”

“Just think what it’ll be like once you’ve shifted, marked, and mated.”

“I can’t imagine how it can get any better.”

Lizzy smiled at her. “I’m really happy for you.”

“I’m surprised, but also not surprised how different they are in the bedroom. I had no experience going into this, I don’t know why I assumed it would all be the same, but it’s not. They each make me feel something that completes me in a way. I don’t know how to explain it.”

“You have this extra glow about you. You look really happy.”

“It’s crazy. Even with everything going on, being under house arrest, having guards shadow my every move, and not having any privacy, the stress of the investigation, knowing people have been on our lands, just, all of it. Even with all that, being with them has been amazing. We’re growing closer in so many ways. I’m seeing all these new sides of them.”

Lizzy sighed in contentment.

“I think I’m ready for some more risque lingerie.”

“I got you, boo,” Lizzy said.

At the end of the week, they had made it through a good portion of their pack library.

“All these Xeroxes, and there’s not a lot of useful information,” Thea said.

“It’s mostly the same story every time. Goddess- gifted comes of age, gets kidnapped, never to be seen or heard from again.”

“We need to see if the packs that kidnapped them in the past have records on them. Then maybe we could get real information.”

“That sounds kind of dangerous,” Lizzy said.

“They’re all long dead. These are histories. Bad Alphas from a long time ago.”

“But if their packs were okay doing that before, it’s likely they’d be okay doing it now. Culture stays pretty consistent like that. Bad Alphas tend to raise bad Alphas as sons. If they figure out you’re gifted, they’ll invite you to see their library, then boom! You’ve checked into the Hotel California.” ‘

“Because they won’t let me leave?”

“Yeah!”

“Then how do we look for more information discreetly?”

“I don’t know if you can. You don’t exactly fly under the radar.”

Thea sighed. “You have a good point about

culture staying consistent. If we identify the packs that stole goddess-gifted, that could give Delta team a place to start their investigation.”

“Smarter and safer than trying to look in their libraries,” Lizzy said.

“You know, the weaker packs may be looking for something to strengthen them. They could also be interested parties.”

“Then there are rogues, vampires, witches.”

Thea sighed. “Okay, let’s see if we can read between the lines with the information we’ve got. The gifts themselves vary. That seems to be where we have the most information.”

“We’ve read about being able to control] an element like fire, water. There are the healers. Others who can raise the dead. Weather manipulation. Nature gifts— making plants grow. Animal gifts—being able to talk to animals.”

“Wait,” Thea said. “If this is moon magic, would witches be able to extract the magic from the gifted? Maybe they use their blood in spells or something.”

“There are lots of reasons witches could want a goddess- gifted werewolf. Vampires too. Unfortunately, we don’t know what they could do with gifted wolves because they don’t share information.”

“Why do I have the feeling that they would have better records and knowledge about this than us?”

“Because they’re probably the ones who stole them,” Lizzy said.

“Why can’t we all just get along? Why does there have to be such animosity? Everyone is trying to hoard power.” °

“Is there anyone we know with diplomatic ties to them?”

“I’ll ask around,” Thea said.

“Okay, anyway, we know that the gifts start to show after they shift. It takes time to learn to control them. Often they’re taken before they do. So we don’t know if their powers were more than what’s written.”

“But, there are also the accounts of war and the weird things that have happened in wars. Like forest fires pushing an army right into a trap. It sounds like someone with a gift for controlling fire was involved.”

“Yeah. Strange accounts of weather phenomena. A nentire army fighting like Alphas. Alphas being resurrected, considered immortal. Those packs definitely stole a goddess-gifted.” |

“Wait. What about the school library? They teach history, mythology, religion. They must have books on it.”

“I check it out on Monday,” Lizzy said.

“Maybe some of the teachers know something.”

“I see what I can discreetly find out,” Lizzy said.

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### Ch 33 Two Weeks

When Thea’s parents came home, they hugged her tight.

“We’ve been worried about you,” her mother said.

“I know,” Thea said. “You’ve been texting me every day to make sure I’m okay.” °

“Are you?”

“Yes, Mom. Just like I’ve been telling you every day.”

“I know you have a lot on your plate. Alpha Ulric said you didn’t believe the rogue attack was about you.”

“I do now, don’t worry. I’m taking the threat seriously.”

“She knows how serious this is, Naomi. Let her be,” her father said.

It took two weeks for the Alpha to interview everyone in the pack. It was a difficult schedule to maintain for the triplets and Thea, spending so much time apart, but the triplets knew they were doing it to keep her safe, and she wasn’t far from them, so they didn’t go crazy. Thea made sure to make the most of the time they had together at night. She looked forward to that time as much as they did.

When most of the interviews were over, Alpha Ulric summoned Thea and the triplets to go over what he found.

“The interviews showed no one as knowingly disloyal,” Alpha Ulric said. “I asked everyone if they talked to anyone outside the pack about anything, specifically the pack or their future Alphas and Luna. Everyone loves you, Thea, so everyone talks about you. Glowingly.”

Thea didn’t know what to think about that.

“I also asked if anyone outside the pack ever asked them about Thea or the future Alphas. I have a list of people to investigate. There are quite a few pack members with family outside the pack. There are also pack members that work in the city with werewolves from other packs. Delta team will look into each potential vector.”

“Isn’t that a lot of leads to follow up?” Thea said. “Quite a lot,” Alpha Ulric said. “I point-blank asked everyone if they were helping rogues sneak onto pack lands. No one is. There are still a few people who are out of town, so I’m not finished, but that’s what we have so far.”

“Sir, what are people saying about us that would make someone think I’m goddess gifted?” Thea said.

“Things like, Thea visited me, noticed this or that, and the next day it was magically fixed or replaced. Those future Alphas are so lucky. Those triplet Alphas have always followed her around. They’re finally together, grown-up, about to shift. Can’t wait for the mating ceremony. She’ll make the best Luna.”

“How could someone jump to goddess-gifted from that?” Thea said.

“You never know the details a person hears. A person obsessed with goddess gifts could take note of triplets being Alpha-worthy healthy or that they exist at all. Following you around.”

“So, how do we investigate the people who are outside the pack?”

“Don’t worry about that. Delta team will take care of it. For obvious reasons, you can’t be involved.”

She nodded. “So I’m still under house arrest?”

“Yes,”

The next day, the trackers from Delta team, Chase and Hunter, came back without any leads. The Alpha immediately interviewed them and approved them for guard detail.



Alpha Ulric called the triplets and Thea back into his office. Thea's father and Liam were in the room too.

"The wolves Hunter and Chase were tracking knew they were being followed," Liam said. "They kept traveling, not stopping at any wolf packs. When it became clear they wouldn't go home, I called my men back. Sir, it may be time to consider setting a trap. Do recon excursions." "Like leave pack lands so you can catch more people stalking me?" Thea said.

"Basically."

"Yes! Please!" Thea said. "There are so many places I need to go!"

"Such as?" the Alpha said.

"A ton more bars, every pack library that will let me, I could go back to school—"

"Give her an inch; she takes a mile," Alpha Ulric said, looking at his Beta.

"And maybe, if we have diplomatic ties with any witches or vampires—"

"What?" All the men in the room said in unison.

"I've been researching goddess gifted and gifts," Thea said. "Our records are so sparse because the gifted get stolen so quickly. It seems likely that witches and vampires were involved in stealing them in the past. I think they will have better records with more information."

Alpha Ulric and her father sighed.

"I told you she had a good mind for this," Alpha Ulric said to Thea's father. He turned back to Thea. "You've been busy."

“Idle hands, sir.”

“We won’t be asking any witches or vampires about goddess gifted for the time being, Thea. We can’t risk tipping off the wrong people. We will investigate to see if they are involved first.”

She nodded.

“Tet’s hold off on excursions for now, Liam,” Alpha Ulric said.

Liam nodded. “Yes, sir.”

“Sir, I know this is kind of morbid, but what happened to the libraries of the packs that were destroyed back east? Has anyone mentioned anything?” Thea said.

“How do you know about that?” Alpha Ulric said.

“Your office isn’t soundproof, sir.”

The Alpha and Beta looked at each other, mind linking each other. They looked back at Thea.

“Your father will go visit his brother’s pack,” Alpha Ulric said. “Being the biggest and most powerful, they are involved in the investigations of the desolated packs. He’ll find out what he can without tipping anyone off about you.”

Thea gasped. “Isn’t there someone in Uncle Jerry’s pack mated to a witch? You could see—”

“Yes, Thea. I’ll see what I can discreetly find out,” her father said.

“And don’t they have a large library too?”

“Yes. Don’t worry. I’ll exhaust all the options.”

“I wish I could go and look myself,” Thea said.

“You’re not going anywhere,” the triplets said in unison.

Conri pulled her into his lap, wrapped his arms around her, and held her tight.

Alpha Ulric suppressed a smile. “Couldn’t have said it better myself.”

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### Ch 34 Chump

It took a week to get things in order, but Thea’s parents—Beta Walter and his wife, Naomi— finally left to visit Walter’s brother’s pack, Full Moon.

Liam requested a meeting with the Alpha. Thea and the triplets were required to attend.

“Sir, the latest group of Delta trainees are coming home soon,” Liam said.

“They’ve finished their terms serving in the military, and I’ve called home the men doing time in private security and private investigation.”

The pack members who wanted to join Delta team enlisted in the military to get experience and training. They were sent in groups to the military so they could serve together, learn to work together, and bring that trust and camaraderie back home.

“As soon as they’re back, they will complete Delta training. Then if they want to commit, they will take the oath to the future Luna, and we will

initiate them. We should know before she shifts how many more we'll have as permanent members."

Woah. No Delta team member had ever sworn an oath to Thea. Not to her knowledge anyway. What was Liam talking about?

"In addition to that, I think we should make an open call to add to the pack warriors. Maybe offer part-time positions. If we go to war, the more people we have that get training and experience, the better. In the meanwhile, we'd have more patrolmen on the borders."

"Make it so," Alpha Ulric said.

"It may be helpful to bring in experts for training, so we're free to continue running down leads on who is after her," Liam said.

"Whatever resources you need, you have them," Alpha Ulric said.

"Sir, as her shift comes closer, I think it expedient we start training a contingency of guards for the future Luna."

"Does Delta team feel inadequate to the job?"

"I don't want to be caught with our pants down," Liam said. "Half our team was injured when she went to scout bars. A backup team could be necessary if we're incapacitated. If she shifts and her gift isn't useful for fighting—if she's a healer or goddess forbid a resurrectionist—she may need a more substantial security detail. Even if she has a gift for fighting, she'd still have times when she's vulnerable, like when she's pregnant and can't shift."

Alpha Ulric nodded.

“Are you comfortable with more people knowing about her right now?”

Liam said.

“This is ridiculous,” Thea said before the Alpha could answer.

The triplets looked at their father, worried how he would react. Thea had never interrupted him. They spoke before their father could.

“They have a point, Thea,” Conri said. “We don’t know what your powers will be.”

Thea made fists with her hands.

“Once I shift, well before I get pregnant, mind you, everyone will see that I’m not goddess- gifted, and then I won’t be a target anymore!”

Kai put his hand on her leg. “Even so, you can’t shift when you’re pregnant, and you shouldn’t be fighting while you’re pregnant anyway,” he said. Thea bit back a growl. “No other Luna has a guard detail when she’s pregnant. I won’t need it either. How is it possible that all of you are making permanent plans for something that will be over in less than a month when we shift? This is insane! Do you even realize how rare gifted wolves are?”

“Of course we do,” Alpha Ulric said. “That’s why we’re going to protect you at any cost. We’ve been planning for this since you were infants. Why do you think Delta team exists?”

“What?” Thea looked over at Liam. He looked down, uncharacteristically, like he felt guilty. She turned back to Alpha Ulric.

“We knew we’d have to go to extreme measures to keep you safe,” Alpha Ulric said. “We knew you would need highly trained warriors to protect you. We knew it would take time to build the resources, the personnel, the skills, and experience. A minimum of eight years in the

military, special forces at that. Extra time as bodyguards, private security, private investigation. Delta team has been preparing for this for nearly two decades. We will not let anyone hurt you or take you away.”

Thea was silent.

“What is it, Thea?” Alpha Ulric said.

“We trained with Delta team growing up. I wanted to join them at one point,” she said. “Wouldn’t that be something? Trying to get on my own protection team?”

“There are reasons— ”

“I feel like a chump, sir,” Thea interrupted. “Everyone’s in on the joke except me. It makes sense, I guess, since I’m the joke.”

“We wanted you to grow up as normal as possible. Let you figure stuff out on your own. Delay the pressures and stress as long as possible.”

“Seems like everyone knows more about me than I do. I don’t want these expectations,” Thea said.

“You don’t have a choice,” the Alpha said. “Clearly.” Thea was on the verge of tears or throwing a fit that would end in a destroyed Alpha’s office. “May I be excused, sir?”

He sighed. “Yes.”

At the door, she turned to the group of men trying to keep her safe.

“Have you thought about what happens when I turn out not to be gifted? You’re setting me up to fail and disappoint everyone.”

“Thea, you’ve never given me a reason to discipline you,” Alpha Ulric said. “I knew it would be a shock when you finally learned about this, so you get a long leash today, but only today. I expect you to get your head around this quickly. That’s an order.”

She bit the inside of her cheek, forced herself to nod, then walked out to her current guard detail, Wyatt and Oz, waiting by the door. She felt claustrophobic.

She started down the stairs. She felt smothered. By expectations, by the resources that were being committed to her protection. She gradually picked up speed, taking the stairs three at a time. She needed space. Freedom. She needed to get out of there. Put distance between her and the mounting pressure.

She hit the ground floor at a sprint. She burst through the front doors and kept running. She hadn’t been outside in the sun, with wind and the trees, in what felt like forever. She had been dutiful, obedient, hadn’t left the pack house in weeks. Hadn’t run free. It was unnatural for a wolf to be caged.

She headed toward the woods.

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### Ch 35 How Long

Thea wished she could shift and run. Feel the wind rustle through her fur.

“Luna!” Oz called out after her.

“I can’t stay in there forever!” she yelled.

She knew they were probably mind linking the Alpha, Liam, and the whole Delta team to get orders. They’d tell them to subdue her and drag her back to the pack house.

“I just need a minute!” she added.

She pushed herself faster than she’d ever run before. Her muscles screamed at the exertion.

Into the woods. Past trees. She made it halfway to the border before the entire Delta team, minus Liam, ran up next to her in wolf form, encircling her.

She was surprised when they didn’t stop her. Instead, they ran alongside her in a protective circle. The wolf in front led the way. He turned away from the border but not back toward the pack house. He led them in a circle around the territory.

Tears started to build as she ran. Her vision blurred. Thea slowed to a stop. The wolves circled her.

Thea sobbed and fell to her knees. The wolves let out high-pitched whines. After a moment, a few of them approached her, heads down, ears and tails down. She didn’t tell them to stop. She knew them all, even in wolf form. It was Landon, Maverick, Jonah, and Logan. They laid down next to her like a dog would when its owner was sad. After a while, her crying slowed.

“You all know everything, right?” Thea said. Maverick trotted off and came back in his human form and basketball shorts. His tawny hair



looked the same as always in his short crew cut. Thea wondered if Delta team kept their hair that way so they never had to waste time styling it.

“Yes, Luna,” he said.

“How long have you been following me, watching me, without me knowing?”

“Delta team was created for the sole purpose of protecting you, Luna,” Maverick said.

“So I’ve never had a moment of privacy, have I?” He didn’t answer. His poker face remained intact.

“You all believe I’m goddess gifted?”

Again, no answer. Maverick stood there, stoic, as the turmoil built inside Thea. All these grown

men devoted their lives to her because of something that wasn’t guaranteed and was out of her control. She couldn’t do anything to ensure they weren’t wasting their lives.

They were recruiting more, and others were already in training, spending the better part of a decade risking their lives in the military to learn how to keep her safe. And like Alpha Ulric said, she didn’t have a choice in it. She was never consulted. She didn’t ask for this.

“I don’t want this,” she said.

“What do you need, Luna?” Maverick said.

She sighed. “It doesn’t matter. I don’t have a choice. Just, just give me a minute.”

“If I may, Luna,” Maverick started.

“I’m not the Luna,” she said. She looked up at him.

“If I may, everyone on Delta team is honored to serve you. Goddess – gifted or not, you strengthen the pack, the future Alphas, everyone. It can only do good to keep you safe.”

“I get that you believe that,” she started.

“Thea,” he used her name so she would listen. Maverick was the only one gutsy enough to do it. His copper eyes looked determined. “You’ve only ever known the pack with you in it. We were in the pack before you were born. We’ve seen the difference. Ever wonder why everyone in our pack is bigger and stronger than everyone else? It didn’t used to be that way. We noticed it after you were born. All the kids had a growth spurt. The adults even grew a few inches. People got better at their professions, skills, talents. Businesses boomed. Kids did better at school.” °

A few more wolves shifted back to their human forms.

“It’s true, Luna,” Ryder said. “I remember every member of our pack having a growth spurt, and the rest of the school didn’t. We started to heal faster. It was one of those experiences that changes you. Not just physically. On the inside. We knew something special was happening.”

“We went to the Alpha,” Hunter said. “Asked what we could do, how we could serve. We wanted to be involved in what was happening. The Alpha swore us to secrecy, told us you were responsible for the changes in the pack. That’s when we formed the idea for Delta team. We knew we had to train, get experience. So we figured out the best way to do that, and we did it. Our proudest day was taking the oath to guard you with our lives.”

“We’ve watched you grow up,” Owen said. “It’s one thing to have magic that benefits us all, but it’s something else to have a compassionate heart and soul. It’s obvious you love this pack and that you care about every pack member. From your earliest days, you’ve taken care of others. You sought out the weak and injured, the hurting, and you made them better. You supported the strong ones, enabled them to become stronger. We see you, Luna, not a set of expectations. We know who you are.”

“It’s not just your magic we’re protecting,” Liam said. He walked up from behind her, just joining the group. The meeting with the Alpha must have ended. His usual demeanor was back—the confidence and no-nonsense gait. He had the power to tell her the truth now, and he was eager to do so. “And it’s not just the future of our pack we’re protecting. I’m sorry you didn’t know our true purpose until now. Watching you over the years, we’ve all developed an adoration and respect for you that only grows stronger as time goes on. It’s not just duty that drives us. We love you.”

The wolves lying next to her—Landon, Jonah, and Logan—stood up, walked a few paces, and shifted, along with the rest of the group. They all knelt, facing her.

“We love you,” they all said together. +

Fresh tears filled her eyes.

“What if I’m not gifted?” Thea said. “You’ll have wasted your lives.”

“Did you hear us? You’re more than your magic,” Liam said.

She wiped the tears off her cheeks.

“Will you let us fulfill our purpose? Will you let us protect you?” Liam said.

She sniffled and nodded. She could never say no when someone asked something of her.

“I’m sorry. I’ll do better,” she said.

“You never need to apologize to us, Luna,” Maverick said. “We just want you to be happy and safe.”

Thea looked at the group of men. She didn’t know what to feel or think. She had respected these men as rational, powerful warriors all her life. Now she thought they must be crazy, but the earnest expressions on their faces wouldn’t let her insult their beliefs.

“I understand,” she said.

“You all better shift or get some clothes on before the future Alphas see you unmated wolves all naked in front of their mate,” Liam said.

The men shifted back to wolves except for Liam and Maverick, the only two with some clothes on.

“Tuna, what can we do to make this easier for you?” Liam said.

“I’m very uncomfortable with the assumptions everyone is making. That I’ll be Luna, that I’m goddess-gifted.” She shook her head. “I know you can’t do anything about that.” She sighed. “I need to get out of the pack house. I need to spend time outside. Feel the sun and the wind, the trees. I feel claustrophobic being stuck in there.”

“Okay. We’ll make it happen.”

They heard rustling in the trees.