

## Chapter 153

It's been three months since we published the article and we've not heard a single thing from Lucas. Seth still doesn't know if their baby made it, and the guilt is eating him alive.

After the article went to print, we started receiving information throughout the kingdom. Some have been quite helpful, and some have not, but weeding through everything has helped to keep me occupied. We've been able to complete a trail that they've taken across the kingdom and, due to its size, we know that they have been stopping to rest somewhere along the way. The Alphas that Seth believes he can trust are investigating pack members to try and locate them.

Shortly after it printed, my brother kept being called to the border because people were trying to cross it. Many packs started sending a few warriors to help protect me, which was so unexpected, but very kind. Seth and Robbie decided to allow some of them to stay but eventually, Robbie had to turn some away because there just wasn't enough room to house them. There are quite a few tents around in random places where members of Lunar Falls opened up their properties and some, even, opened their homes.

I was surprised that the article was so well received. Shortly after, Peter announced that after the pups arrived safely and we are able to return to the palace, that he would be stepping down and handing the throne to Seth. Thankfully, that seemed to be enough to placate the anger of the kingdom, though I think that the knowledge that I was able to forgive him truly helped them to do so as well.

Stella shifted in December and my brother asked to meet with her on her birthday. She was nervous, but I reassured her that it wouldn't be something bad and, well, we didn't see them much for a few days. They seem quite happy and she has jumped right into the Luna role. It's also been nice having her around as I'm not allowed to do as much.

The babies should be here in just a few weeks and while the tea from Lily helped with the sickness and exhaustion, it doesn't do anything about the pain from growing two large and active pups. I'm so sore, and they never quit moving. I've not been able to move anywhere as quickly as before since I'm lugging my belly around.

Sofia says they are growing well and have stayed on schedule since her initial check. I'm assuming the doctor at the palace was incorrect and it makes me that much more thankful that we decided to stay at Lunar Falls.

Albert and his new pack are doing quite well. They finished construction on his house and have been working hard towards becoming financially stable. Electricity lines have been run to the houses that wanted them, though some did decline, and wells have been dug so they have running water. After some time, the pack agreed on the name Waxing Forrest pack, honoring their growth and the land that they're on. They've been welcoming to me when I've visited and they're even warming up to Seth a bit.

Seth has been taking such good care of me, something I've come to learn from reading Cora's journals never truly happened to her. Joseph forced her to carry another baby after a terrible first pregnancy because they needed 'a spare'. It almost makes me have a little sympathy for Lucas. As I've read through the journals, I can see why Seth does some of the things that he does. It is important for him to be better than past generations and he has definitely succeeded in that.

Seth is going to visit Alpha Blake tomorrow to inform him that he is aware of his involvement with Lucas. He will be forced to step down and Chris will immediately be named Alpha. He seemed like a really nice guy and I wish he could become Alpha under better circumstances, but it just isn't that way for everyone. George and I have been working on putting a plan in place for him for the pack finances and Seth agreed that the palace would help out for a bit until they can get on their feet.

I asked to join Seth on the trip since it is just the neighboring pack, but he completely refused. He did, however, agree to let me take a walk through the woods in a few days, but demanded it be a path that is reasonable and flat. I was thinking about what would be best but then he informed me that Oliver would be joining us and leading the way so they could make sure I didn't pick anything too crazy.

My mom had been decorating the nursery for me, and then redecorating it after everything was pink the first time. Everyone is so excited that I'm having a girl, that they keep forgetting that I am also having a boy. Audrey has had a few video calls with us to show us the nursery she's put together at the palace since we aren't there to do it. Sometimes it gets a little overwhelming, having so many parents involved, but I often remind myself that they just love us and the babies and there's no need to be upset when there's just so much love for my children. They won't always get that from the world, especially our daughter.

"I'm thinking of naming Michael as your head guard," Seth tells me, unbuttoning his shirt and throwing it to the floor. "I wanted to check with you first, though. I know you also really like Toby."

I smile and shake my head at him. "Toby doesn't want the job."

"What?" he asks, looking confused and concerned. "Why is he here then?"

"He wants to be on baby Cora's guard," I tell him, trying to ease his concern. "He knows she may not have a wolf and said it sounded like a fun challenge. His ultimate career goal is to be HER head guard, though he didn't seem upset at the thought of remaining in mine."

Seth pulls on a pair of joggers and climbs into bed, pulling me to him and rubbing his hand against my large bump. "Everyone loves Cora. It's hard to believe that people are forgetting about Andrew as he's the heir to the throne."

I giggle at him, and place my hand right next to his, feeling one of the pups roll against it. "No one is forgetting him. There just hasn't been a girl born first in either of our families in... well... I think ever. They're just excited. Everyone will be just as happy to see him once they're out."

"It's crazy to think that in just a few weeks I'll be able to hold them," Seth says wistfully, but he looks nervous.

"Hey," I say gently, cupping his face with my hand. "What's wrong?"

He looks at me and shakes his head. "I'm just nervous. I've never been around a baby. I've never held a baby. I don't know what to do."

Oh, this poor, sweet man. "Seth, you'll know exactly what to do when the time comes. You've always been so kind and gentle with me. I have no doubt you'll be the same with them. Maybe a little too much with Cora."

"I'll spoil her," he agrees, a smile across his face. "I'll spoil both of them, honestly. You'll have to help control me."

When we wake, he gets up and gets ready for the day, putting on a very nice, black suit with a black shirt. He looks amazing, as he always does, but I can tell that he's expecting this trip to go poorly. I slip into a flowy dress, because that's just about all that will fit me now, and we head to the dining room for breakfast.

It's been nice having George back and I go sit in my normal seat next to him, Seth sitting on my other side. The two men spend the morning discussing their plan as George will accompany him, leaving my brother to watch over his pack.

After they leave, my mom suggests that I go back upstairs and get off my feet, something she has been suggesting every chance she can for a few months now. I let her lead me back upstairs and sit on the couch as she grabs some pillows to prop my feet on.

"I don't know how you've managed it," she says, a little frustrated. "My ankles were so swollen just halfway through. That tea truly is amazing."

I can't help but giggle at the jealous look on her face. "It really is. I feel completely fine, except for the pups constantly moving and always needing to pee."

"I know you don't want a baby shower," she says and I can't help but roll my eyes. It's been a constant argument between us. "Pack members have been bringing gifts for them, but we've also been receiving gifts from around the kingdom."

I sigh, realizing that I'm not going to win this. "I just don't want anyone to spend money, especially if they don't have it."

"I know, but people are excited," she tells me, sitting in a chair next to the couch. "We don't have a shower, but we need to open them and send thank you notes. I'm sure Stella would be happy to help."

I know she's right, but it just feels wrong when we can afford everything we could ever want. It's not like pups will actually need anything. I guess everyone loves a baby, though, and I should be happy that the overall consensus of the kingdom is that there isn't an issue with Cora having magic. I nod to my mom in agreement and she pops up, disappearing outside the door, but reappearing shortly after with people carrying arms and arms worth of packages, Stella bringing up the rear with an apologetic look on her face.

We get to work opening things and, goddess... there are so many things. There are blankets and clothes, shoes and bows. Some people even sent matching outfits for them which, even I can admit, are adorable. Stella takes note of everything, including packs and names so that I can thank them appropriately for each and every gift.

I move to open a particularly well wrapped gift when I stop, a feeling washes over me that makes me take a breath.

"Are you alright?" mom asks, clearly very concerned.

"I'm fine," I tell her with a sad smile. "Seth just named the new Alpha."

Stella looks at me with wide eyes. "You can feel that?"

"It would seem so," I tell her with a nod. "He's only named a new Alpha once so far and I was there. I felt it then, but I was right next to him so that made sense. I hadn't really thought about it after."

"That's so weird," she tells me, completely in awe. "What does it feel like?"

"I can just feel, like," I begin, not really knowing how to put it into words. "You know the feeling you get when there's a new Alpha?" I ask and she nods. "It's like that, but instead of feeling like there's someone new above me, it feels like they're in front of me."

"Below you," my mom corrects with a small chuckle. "We're all high ranking shewolves here. It feels like that, but below you. Because they are."

"I didn't want to be rude," I tell her, sticking my tongue out as I lift a set of silver rattles out of the box.

We had lunch together, continuing to sort through the sea of items. It was a few hours late when Seth finally arrived home to find me in the nursery, trying to find a place to put things.

"Hey, Love," he says softly. "What's all this?"

I turn to him with a sigh. "Gifts from the kingdom. Mom finally convinced me to open them."

"How much can two tiny babies possibly need?" he asks with a bewildered look on his face as he looks around.

"Apparently, quite a bit," I say with a giggle. "How did it go?"

Seth sighs and flops down into one of the rocking chairs in the room. "It was terrible. Gus had to handle him. I decided at the last minute to bring him to the dungeon here. I just wasn't comfortable with the security there, especially with him being their Alpha."

I nod to him and walk over. He reaches up and pulls me into his lap, burying his face into my neck. "That was probably a wise choice."

He nods, not lifting his head and speaking against my skin. "Can we just eat up here tonight? I don't want to see anyone else. I just want you, naked in bed."

I can't help but laugh at him. "We can stay here, but I'm basically a whale now."

"No, not at all," Seth says, lifting his head and gently guiding my face to look at him. "You're absolutely perfect."