

The Perfect Luna by Marissa Gilbert

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3 The Call

It did not take her long to get to her most favourite place in the world – the Silver Mirror Lake. This was the only place where Riannon could be alone. It was far enough from the packhouse and close to the borders of the pack. But it was safe since they did not have any rogue attacks in that area. Just one pack away from here was the Lycans territory and it was rumoured that the Alpha King residence was also somewhere close. No one was foolish enough to enter these lands and check though.

So, Ria did not think twice when she stopped by the ledge of the lake, naked, and jumped into the water. It was cold but at the same time, it was exactly what she needed to calm herself down.

She let herself embrace the dark night when only the full moon shone upon her, making crystals of water sparkle on her skin when she felt someone's presence. It was powerful and dominating, yet did not belong to her husband and made her alert at once.

Pretending that nothing happened, Ria carefully looked around and her eyes caught a figure of a huge wolf at a hill on the other side of the lake. He was dark, probably black. And his eyes were shining golden.

It was a bad sign. Very bad.

Riannon decided not to risk it and went underwater, getting to the shore as soon as she could and running for her life. Only a loud howl followed her.

She was back at the safe territory in no time. Luckily, her clothes were right where she left them. She pulled on her dress and tried to do the zipper at the back but her fingers were not reaching it.

"Let me help," two hands touched her back and Beta Asher helped her with her little problem. Ria wondered if he had been there the whole time. But it did not matter in the long run. Werewolves were used to naked bodies. It wouldn't be the first time he saw her without clothes. It wouldn't be the last... probably.

"What are you doing here?" she asked the man, turning to face him.

"I've been waiting for you," he said with an unreadable expression on his face, "Found your clothes and understood that you were on a run. But why didn't you shift?"

"I did," she lied without blinking. If anyone knew that she couldn't shift, then her fate would be decided even sooner. She couldn't afford that. Ria knew that she needed time. "But that's not important," she decided to change the subject quickly, "There was an intruder at the Silver Lake. Send wolves to check it out."

"Of course, Luna," he said and his eyes lost focus for a second as he was giving orders via the mind link.

Riannon decided not to wait for him and walked slowly into the house. But Ash caught up with her quickly and opened the door to the mansion for her.

"It's going to be alright," he said to her all of a sudden and she stopped. Back in the day, he used to say it to her all the time. Yet when decisions had to be made, he always took her husband's side. It was one of the betrayals that hurt the most because she was sure that her relationship with the Beta was good prior to all that. Yet he didn't even object when they stripped her of her title... There were a lot of things that she wanted to tell him but she couldn't.

So, she just placed her delicate hand on his broad shoulder and looked him in the eye, smiling sadly, "You knew, didn't you?"

His expression changed as if a flash of lightning hit him and his lips parted slightly.

"Yes, Luna," he confessed, darting his eyes to the ground.

"It's okay," she patted him, "I understand. You can't go against your Alpha's command."

"If I could..." he started to speak but she placed her finger to his mouth making a shushing sound.

"Doesn't matter," she shrugged her shoulders, "At least I will always have your support, Ash. Right?"

"Always, Luna," his breathing became heavy and Ria tilted her head watching him. This was an interesting development. Why was he reacting like that?

"Then of course I'll be fine," she chuckled and went inside. She had to think of what to do next.

Ria closed herself in her bedroom. She knew that Brayden would not be coming back tonight to share the bed with her. As far as she remembered, he wasn't sleeping with Roxy at this point yet and spent the whole in his private office drinking and thinking of life. In the morning, he would bring her flowers and gifts... and apology even. But Roxy would still stay.

After a long and relaxing bath, Ria went to her desk and got her old journal. She hadn't been using it for many years, but it was dear to her heart. And it was just

the right place to write down every single event that was important and that was going to happen within the year leading to her death.

She tried to remember everything while she still could.

And she knew very well what she was going to do with this information. The game was on.

The plan was simple, really. Since she couldn't change the main event and get rid of Roxy, she had to leave. But she couldn't leave without her pack and without making sure that all her dear friends were alive and well. Not to mention, that it was particularly important to try and show Brayden and the rest Roxanne's true face. Everybody around thought that she was an angel while in fact, she was the devil. Ria was afraid to even think what would happen if Roxy became the Luna for real because she for sure wouldn't have the pack's interests in her heart.

And although Ria's own heart craved revenge, she didn't want the work of her life to be ruined. Plus, she didn't have it in her heart to hate everyone. She saved it for just a selected few. The ones who betrayed her trust and led to her demise, the ones who promised her respect and protection but gave her humiliation and suffering. Yes, those were the ones she was going to concentrate on.

The door suddenly opened, and Brayden walked in, making her close the journal with the list of events and names rapidly and hide it back into the drawer. Luckily, he didn't pay attention to that.

Guilt was all over his face and Ria wanted to roll her eyes but held herself back. She couldn't give herself away. This event did not happen prior. In her past life, he didn't visit her that night. This was new and she had to be cautious.

"Ri," he walked further into the room, "Ash informed me that you encountered an intruder. Are you okay?"

This was funny. She was sitting there, clearly looking well and in one piece. Who was he kidding? Was it guilt because she put up a fight and he still chose his mate?

"It was unpleasant," Rhiannon shrugged her shoulders and stood up. If he decided to ignore the big pink elephant in the room, she could do the same. In the end, it was for the best. Their past conversations about Roxy never ended well. He would never believe what a monster his mate was. So, the less Riannon talked about her, the better.

"And also disappointing", she went to the window to hide her facial expression.

"How so?" Brayden caught the bait.

"We are one of the strongest packs and some wolves is just wandering on our territory, spies on your Luna who is swimming naked in the lake..."

"He what?" Brayden growled possessively. Back in the day, it would drive her crazy in the best sense of the word. But right now... she was annoyed. He just claimed another woman in front of so many people. He had no right to growl like that in her presence anymore. She didn't put it into words, of course.

"You heard me," she said, "And instead of looking for that wolf the Alpha is doing goddess knows what. No offence, but this is exactly what I was talking about earlier today. Your mate already distracted you from what was important."

It was a low blow. But she needed him to be busy with something else right now. In the past, the closer he got to Roxy, the more power and supporters she received. And the worse it got for Riannon and her close people. If she could postpone the wheel of events for at least one day, she would do it.

"You are angry," he sighed, "I understand, of course. I broke my promise to you. I..."

"Let's not speak of it," she stopped him, "It is what it is."

"Ri, baby," he nibbed on her neck, right where he marked her years ago, bonding their wolves forever, acknowledging her as his chosen mate. "I hurt you and I will do anything to fix that."

Not everything. She knew that too well.

"Only you can be my Luna, you know that, right?" he started peppering her neck with kisses, trying to unzip her dress at the same time.

This was... odd. She hadn't slept with him for a while. Their paths went in different directions more than half a year ago in her past life. She was his abandoned and rejected wife...

Ria clenched her fists and then turned to face him.

"No!" she made him stop, "Not today." Or ever. He had his last chance and he blew it. She did not want him anymore. If her wolf Onyx was here now, she would be howling from pain as she was attached to Brayden's wolf Ragnar. But she didn't feel Onyx now. She wasn't under her influence. And she was furious.

She did not show it though. Her mom trained her well to conceal emotions. Finally, it was useful.

"Ri?" Brayden looked at her in shock. Before this day they were happy together. Which reminded Ria that he probably found Roxy earlier and was lying to her for the past few days. Or maybe weeks. "Honey, don't do this. I love you and we are family. We will always be family."

"Believe it or not, but I am not feeling well after everything that happened today," she looked him in the eye, "But it will make me happy if you bring me the intruder's head."

He nodded quietly, "Anything for you, Ri."

Her husband brushed her cheek and she tolerated that. Even forced a smile for the sake of the show.

"You'll have his head in the morning!" he promised before leaving her alone.

Maya tried to reach her mentally but Riannon just asked her to wait until the morning.

After a mostly sleepless night, she knew what she had to do and she also knew her first step.

In her office, she dialed the number that none other werewolves would risk dialling. But she was left with no choice.

"Hello, Beta Reid speaking," the annoyed male voice sounded on the other end and Riannon gulped before speaking.

"Hello, Beta. This is Luna Riannon Thorn. Nee Michaels."

It didn't ring a bell to him.

"And?" he seemed bored.

"Seven years ago I saved your nephew during a rogue attack in one of the boarding schools. Back then you gave me this number and told me that you owe me one."

The lycan paused before answering her.

"And I guess you are calling to collect?" he chuckled, "And here I thought that there were selfless people in this world..."

"I wouldn't ask if lives did not depend on it," she interrupted him. Lycans were hard to get in touch with. They did not mingle with regular werewolves with rare exceptions. But sometimes they attended elite boarding schools for shifters. That's when Ria's luck was on her side.

"Fine," the man agreed, "What do you want then?"

"I need to speak to the Lycan Alpha King," Riannon said firmly.