

# The Perfect Luna by Marissa Gilbert

## Chapter 14

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### Chapter 14. The Phone Call

was slowly coming to power, how he watched when Brayden stripped her of her title... She knew very well that she couldn't rely on him.

"That's very sweet of you to say that," she sighed, "But as you can see, you may as well

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have a new Luna soon."

Riannon walked past him and got inside the car. She was about to pull the train of her

dress in, when Ash kneeled next to her, doing it for her carefully. Their eyes locked just for a

second and his shone blue as he said, "Brayden may have a mate or a new wife even. But I will

only have one Luna."

He closed the door for her before she could say anything and got to the driver's seat.

Just then the passenger door opened and Harper, Brayden's sister tried to get in.

"Oh, good, Ash!" she giggled, "I want to go home early too!"

"You'd better find another car, Har," the Beta said dryly. "But I..." the girl seemed stunned and looked at Ria questioningly.

"She can ride with us," Riannon sighed. She really did not want to. Harper was almost never nice to her. And she did not want to make her even angrier than usual.

"No," Ash said dryly, "I have my orders to take Luna home alone. For safety reasons. Find another car, Harp."

"But..." she tried to object but a loud Beta growl made her leave the car in an instant.

Ash rarely used his dominance but today he did.

The car doors locked, and he drove off. They spent most of the road in silence, just exchanging a few phrases about the party.

"The lycan king...", Ash muttered, "What is that about?"

"He is just trying to maintain the friendly relationship with our kind," she shook her

shoulders and looked away.

"And yet he spoke and danced with you only," the Beta noticed.

"Turns out he heard about my work," she lied without blinking, "You sound so surprised.

Is it so strange for him to pay me attention?"

"Of course, not," Ash cleared his throat and grasped the steering wheel tighter, "If anyone deserves recognition, it's definitely you. I am just surprised he arrived at all."

It was true. Riannon was surprised as well. Back in her previous life, he never arrived at

the Alpha Ball. They never met.

good thing as this was what she needed – to change everything. But on the other hand, it was scary. Because if the changes were drastic, she wouldn't know where she could place a safe

bet.

Everything was complicated.

They arrived back at the pack late at night and Ash offered her his hand to help her out of the car. His fingers grasped hers and he did not let go when she was already out. This was odd. He wasn't like that before.

Ash was Brayden's best friend since high school, but

*they* never actually hit it off as

friends. He was quiet around her although he performed his duties just perfectly. She used to

rely on him and take it for what it was. Yet his betrayal still came as a shock to her.

As a Beta, he gave her a vow when she became the Luna. And he didn't keep it.

It was probably because his vow to the Alpha was more important. But it still hurt her.

So, it was strange for her now to receive his affection. Not to mention that it was very

new even if the betrayal never happened.

They walked inside the mansion and everything was already quiet.

"Thanks," she mumbled, "I am going to get some sleep."

"Of course," he suddenly appeared way too close to her in this dark reception area, "Luna No, Riannon... I think that Brayden is an idiot."

She did not know what to respond to that. But decided to go with the first thing that came

to her mind.

"That makes two of us," she let out a little laugh, "Shame he can't help it."

But then the silence between the two of them became awkward and she simply turned and started walking up the stairs. When she turned to look at him, she noticed how his eyes

shone blue and gulped, saying nothing and just speeding up.

Back in her bedroom, she locked the doors behind her.

"What's up?" Maya looked worried sitting at her desk with a sketchbook. Ria was relieved

to see her best friend here and she gave her a relieved smile.

"Nothing. Just came back early." She sighed, throwing off her heels. Maya put her

sketch away and Riannon noticed that it was a caricature of Roxanne this time. And a very

good one. The girl was smiling way too wide while holding a knife behind her back.

"That bad, huh?" she asked with a hint of disappointment in her voice.

Gideon gave her, "You wouldn't believe it but the Lycan King himself was there!"

"What?!" Maya gasped and jumped to her feet, "For real?! What did he say? What did he do? Did you talk to him?"

The two girls talked until it was way too late. Riannon told her best friend everything and then they were planning and strategizing for the next few days. They had to be in perfect sync for everything to work.

Before sleep, Ria sighed, looking at the cell phone which she placed on top of her bedside

table. There weren't any numbers in it, no instructions. It looked like the phone was brand

new.

Just why did the king give it to her? What was the point? He had her number anyway, he

could call anytime.

She caught herself on the thought that this man wasn't leaving her mind. She was

supposed to think about her husband and his betrayal, yet thoughts of king Gideon prevailed. He was unusual. Even for a lycan. The way he spoke, the way his lips curled into a smirk... It seemed like he knew something that she didn't.

see

And that dance... It was short but it made an impression. And not only on the guests. On

her as well.

"I have my reasons for everything," he said and she could only wonder what those were in her case. He went really fast from ridiculing her to giving her the chance of her life.

She was still thinking of him when the phone rang.

She hesitated before swiping her finger to start the conversation but did it anyway.

"Hello?" she hated how her voice trembled.

"What are you wearing?" the lycan king's voice was huskier than she remembered.

What kind of question was that? She started to get worried that he was interested in her

for the wrong reasons.

"I am not answering that," she said.

"Why not?" he asked as if this was not the first time they were doing it.

"Because it's inappropriate!" she scolded him, "Who even asks a married woman that?! What are you wearing, Gideon?!"

She couldn't control her rage and used his first name, biting her lip at once.

"Easy," he chuckled, clearly enjoying the conversation, "I am wearing nothing, Ria."

tried to control herself.

"That was... I didn't mean to..." She tried to explain herself, blushing. This was not going

well.

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"No offence taken," he assured her, sounding amused, "And I bet you wear something lacy and... cream. You look like the cream kind of girl."

She looked down at herself, almost cursing under her breath. He was right. She was wearing a cream slip with lace. Most of her nightgowns looked like that.

"I am not going to deny or confirm that," she tried to sound professional, "And if that's the only reason for your call, then I have to hang up now..."

"That's not the only reason," he said without any kind of worry in his voice.

"So?" she felt like he was playing with her and she did not like it. Yet she couldn't bring

herself to end this either.

"I will be visiting your pack tomorrow," he said and she sat up on her bed. "You will?" her throat suddenly went dry.

"I will," he snorted, "But unofficially. Out of all your pack, I only want to see and speak to you. We need to discuss a lot of things."

"That we need," she agreed with ease, feeling how her mood went up instantly.

"Then I'll be seeing you tomorrow, Riannon," he said and she just knew that he was

smiling.

"See you then, Gideon," she grew bolder. But before he managed to say anything else, she switched off the phone and fell back to her pillow.

What was she doing? And most importantly, what was he doing?!

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In the morning, Riannon had her breakfast in her room, trying to figure out what she could and couldn't say to the Lycan king when he would arrive.

Brayden was out since early morning with Ash. They both trained the pack warriors at

that time.

That's why Ria was surprised when she heard a commotion in one of the drawing rooms

of the packhouse.

She opened the doors and dozens of eyes met hers. The room was filled with omegas

having some kind of a tea party. A party that she wasn't even aware of.

friends here! This... we..."

Fake tears started forming in her eyes again and Ria had enough...

# The Perfect Luna by Marissa Gilbert

## Chapter 15

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**Chapter 15. The Tea Party**

Here she went again.

It was extremely hard for Riannon not to roll her eyes. That girl was beyond annoying. And

absolutely shameless.

It was pretty clear what she was trying to do here with all those omegas. She did it in the

past too. Since she didn't have a chance with higher-ranking wolves before, so she tried to get all the lower ranking ones on her side. This was one of Riannon's first serious defeats. Back in her past life she used to be respected by everyone and believed that their loyalties would stay with her until the end. Their pack was always good to omegas, after all. And she personally

saw to it.

There was one thing that bothered her a lot. As far as Rhiannon remembered, last time or

Roxanne started acting much later. Those parties with omegas took place months after she

appeared at the pack. And now she was already at it. It was another change and Rhiannon

didn't like it. However, luckily, in the past, she was thinking a lot about her mistakes. This one

always seemed like the hardest one to fix, but she had to at least try.

"Luna," Roxy was almost crying, "I'm so sorry that I invited all the omegas over. But I felt

so bad for them since it never happened chance to enjoy things like that. And especially at the \*ckhouse. Please, don't be angry at us. I assure you, we all know our places in the hierarchy."

This was going to be funny. Ria looked around, scanning the room. Roxy was serving them biscuits and sandwiches. So, she gave her guests a wide smile and entered the room, taking the central seat.

"Roxy," she said with a grin, "you are still very new here. As I always tell you during your panic attacks, this pack is very different from the one you came from. Omegas can enter this house anytime they like as any other member of this pack. Everyone is welcome here, although it would be better if you let us know beforehand about big gatherings like this. Our omegas don't lack biscuits or sandwiches. If you really wanted to treat them, we could have prepared something a bit better. Like what we do at our seasonal parties. You enjoy those girls, right?"

"Of course, Luna," a few of them squeaked, feeling slightly awkward.

"Oh," Roxy took another seat, "I didn't know..."

"Don't worry, dear, no one expects you to learn everything so fast," Riannon chuckled as someone handed her a cup of tea, "That's why we are going to take care of your education from now on. Did you decide what you would like to do already? Remember, we already talked about it? You have absolutely no limits on what you can do."

liked to exploit her background and get all the pity from the people around her by playing the poor and abused omega. The Luna wanted to take that from her. She wanted the other omegas to know very well that they weren't the same. Roxanne stopped being a plain omega the moment she entered the pack as the Alpha's mate. That wouldn't work with everyone, of course, but at least as far as they didn't have that unity...

"I am not sure," Roxy mumbled, "It's all so sudden... I don't know if I would ever get used to something like that."

"Of course you will!" Ria tried to sound really sincere, "You looked like a natural at the Alpha Ball yesterday! I would have never thought that it was your first. The designer dress and diamonds fit you well."

The silence in the room became awkward and Riannon got worried that she overdid it. "Th-thank you," Roxy tried to force a smile, "It's all thanks to your kindness, Luna."

"Don't thank me," Riannon put the teacup down, "It's not like I have much of a choice here. Not every day your husband brings home his mate and makes us live together."

Now the silence was deadly.

"And how are you, Luna?" One of the girls asked, playing with the hem of her dress and darting her eyes to the floor, "I mean... considering..."

"Considering everything," Ria leaned to the back of her chair and sighed, "I am trying to cope. It's not easy when it happens to your family. You have married a chosen mate too, right

Alice?"

The girl looked at her, shocked that the Luna of the pack knew her name and even such details about her family.

"Yes, Luna," she nodded, "Mark and I are chosen mates."

"Then you can probably imagine how I feel right now," Ria smiled sadly and brushed away a non-existent tear off her lashes, "It doesn't help that Roxy here is such a sweet and caring child. I couldn't hate her even if I wanted to."

"You are very kind," someone else said and others started agreeing with this.

Soon Roxy's party turned into the support event for Riannon and she made sure that she let them all know that she was aware of their names, position, problems and so on. When they were leaving, they were thanking her for everything and Ria was now able to smile genuinely. She noticed that a few people were still hanging around Roxy. But this was inevitable. Those

no chance to attach themselves to Riannon, so the alpha's new mate was their best bet.

But at least now Ria knew what to expect.

"Thank you so much!" One of the omegas gave the Luna an awkward hug, hearing that she just approved the increase in the school budget to make sure that omegas could be trained physically along with everyone else. This was something that Brayden opposed for a while and thanks to that, omegas rarely could compete for a warrior place. Although some of them weren't born to fight, some were just as strong as deltas and it was a shame that they never had a chance to prove themselves.

However, Riannon was one of those who wanted to change that.

"Don't worry," she smiled, "The plan is to give everyone an equal chance. I am sure that sooner or later everyone will get on board."

They were walking out of the mansion, saying their goodbyes and Roxy kept quiet. A few of her newfound friends kept close to her, realising that today's battle was mostly lost.

"I am sure you will be able to do all that and more," Roxy said, grinning widely, "Our Luna is now friends with the Lycan king, after all. There is hardly any problem that she can't solve

now!"

That was the definition of false advertising. And it was dangerous. "We talked once, Roxy," Riannon almost gritted through her teeth, "That hardly makes us

BFFs."

"But the lycan king..." The redhead wanted to say something else but they all heard a burst of resounding laughter.

"And who the hell are you to speak for me?!" Gideon Stormhold, the Lycan King himself, took off his sunglasses as they all turned to the sound of his voice and saw him leaning over a huge black car at a distance.

# The Perfect Luna by Marissa Gilbert

## Chapter 16

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### Chapter 16. How Dare You?

"I am asking you again, omega," the Lycan king growled, "Who do you think you are to say such things?!"

All other omegas bowed their heads and only Roxy stood there, trembling.

Riannon's lips parted in shock as she took him in. Today he was wearing ripped jeans and a grey T-shirt that was slightly too tight around his muscular body. He had sunglasses on which he took off right before their eyes met.

He was a fine specimen of a Lycan. Tall and broad-shouldered as if he spent most of his time training and fighting. Yet his green eyes gave away his sharp mind and experience. Someone like him wouldn't buy the pathetic lies of the scheming omega in front of him. And for some reason, it made Riannon very happy inside.

"I am so sorry, Alpha," Roxy started stuttering and Ria thought to herself that for the first time ever this might have been genuine. The aura around the Lycan King was deadly and even she could feel it.

"I am afraid a simple sorry is not going to cut it, little girl. You are not that little thought to not know any rules. Or now that you found out that you are the Alpha's mate you decided that you are above everyone and anyone?" Gideon chuckled darkly, "I hate to break it to you, but even Alphas are not above our laws. And you are still a no one as of now. I don't see a mark on your neck, do r?"

No one dared to speak and Roxanne's head was getting lower and lower.

"Not to mention that even if you did have a mark," the Lycan king stepped closer, "I could still demand your life as a tribute to me for your insolence. And, trust me, your Alpha would kill your himself in an instant just to appease me. If he is not a complete i\*\*\*t, of course. Which I

am starting to doubt..."

"What is going on here?" Brayden showed up from the side leading to the training field

with Ash and his best warriors, all sweaty after yet another exercise round. He looked worried

when he saw the scene unfolding before him and Ria decided to take a step back simply watching what would happen.

“What happened, Alpha...”, Gideon paused, not even trying to hide that he did not remember Brayden’s name.

“Thorn,” the wolf tried to suppress a growl but it did not work very well.

“Alpha Thorn,” Gideon practically spat the words and Riannon enjoyed that way more than she should have, “Your mate here disrespected me. And your Luna too. She is too brazen

“My apologies, King Stormhold,” Bray was forcing the words out of his throat. He was a strong Alpha and submitting came hard to him, “It is my fault. I have to teach her better. She didn’t have the opportunity to learn since in her previous pack...”

“I don’t want excuses,” the lycan did not even try to hold back his growl, “There are things that even mice in the house know. And if she is that not ready to meet people, maybe you should look into that and stop parading her at parties for the time being. After all, you don’t want the whole pack to pay the price for the stupid words that leave her mouth, right?”

“Of course, not,” Brayden got pale. No one wanted to mess with the lycans. This was a war lost before it even started and everyone knew that. There were less lycans than werewolves in the world but they were bigger and stronger, and way more powerful. And there was a reason why everyone obeyed them. There had been wars where werewolves tried to end lycan’s dominance and they all ended badly for the wolves. So, no one tried that before. It did help that lycans, however cruel if crossed, seemed to be reasonable rulers. They implemented l’s that more or less took care of everyone under their wing. However, there was one thing that they did not tolerate and it was disrespect.

“I am so sorry!” Roxy rushed to fall into Brayden’s arms with eyes full of tears again. The girl was shaking uncontrollably as her mate wrapped his hands around her protectively.

Gideon turned to look at Riannon and she sighed, rolling her eyes, which only made him smirk and clench his fists. He looked like he was ready to tear the omega apart any moment now. That got Ria worried. For the first time, she realised that now she really needed Roxanne alive for her plan to come true.

A small part of her still cared for Brayden and it made her mark ache to see him so protective of his mate. But in the end, more than anything now she wanted her freedom. And her pack. If Gideon killed Roxy now, Bray would be devastated, yes. But he would survive. And never ever give her a divorce. And she wouldn’t have grounds for that and for taking her pack

back as well.

No, this was not good for her.

"How about we forgive her just this once," the Luna stepped in between the lycan king and her husband who held his clinging mate in his arms, "We will all teach Roxanne and next time we will be sure she is not even around when you visit if that's what you like."

"As you wish, Riannon," Gideon raised his chin but his facial expression warmed up as he looked at her. Everyone around them was stunned at how easily he listened to her and how he

Anyway, I came here to discuss a few things and to have a look at your pack. How about you

show me around?"

"It would be my pleasure," she gave him a soft smile and this time he worked really hard to suppress an internal and possessive growl.

"I will go with you," Brayden said all of a sudden as Roxy still had her fingers dug in his skin.

"I think you have your hands full, Thorn," Gideon chuckled not even bothering to add the

title Alpha, which probably meant that he wasn't considering his opponent one.

For the first time ever Bray looked at his mate as a nuisance as his wife came closer to the king. But he couldn't do anything about it in front of so many people.

"Then at least my Beta.." he wanted to suggest Ash go with the two of them.

"There is no need," Ria smiled innocently, "This is an informal visit, Bray. And I am not in any danger from King Gideon. Go deal with your important matters and let Ash do his work.

While I'll do mine."

With that, she turned on her heels and gestured for Gideon to follow her which he did after giving her husband a look of disdain. Making others feel inferior to him was a gift sent to him by the Moon Goddess.

They walked in silence for a while and Ria contemplated how to start a conversation with him. She was telling him this and that about the pack but he did not seem interested at all. And from time to time she caught him watching her with a gaze that made her lose her breath

and feel the heat inside.

She tried to control her emotions just the way she was taught but couldn't do anything about the blush that appeared on her cheeks. Just why was she reacting to him like that?

"And here we plan to build a few new rows of living houses. Our population increases rapidly in the past few years and we want to create more separate houses for new families," she went on and on, even though she knew that he was not interested. But he kept listening to

her and watching her every move without interrupting her.

Until they came to the main gardens of the pack and walked up to a little lake with ducks

swimming in it.

She did not know what else to say and was about to ask him bluntly what the real reason

for his visit was when he turned to face her with a very serious face.

swallowed. Just what was it that he wanted to know?

"Of course," she mumbled, feeling worried.

"What happened to your wolf?" the words cut through her mind.

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### Chapter 17

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#### Chapter 17 Stinging

Riannon did not know how to react to this question. How did he guess?

Maya told her that she still smelled like a werewolf and an Alpha at that. So, it couldn't be her scent. Yet somehow the Lycan king already knew that her wolf was missing. This was not the first time he was asking about Onyx. And Ria wasn't stupid to consider it simple politeness. He wanted answers.

But so did she.

Even though everyone around them was ready to faint as soon as they were close to Gideon, she did not feel this way at all. She was sure that he wasn't going to hurt her. Not at all. He did not give her that vibe. He felt like... She wasn't sure like what. Not a friend.

Definitely not a friend.

Anyway, this was not important as he was staring at her expectantly with his arms crossed on his chest. His deep green eyes were on her and she felt pressured to give him an

answer.

"My wolf is not talking to me," she said, choosing her words deliberately. She did not

want to lie to him. For some reason, she knew that it was very important to never lie to him.

And it was the truth at the end of the day. Some part of Onyx had to be there since she still had her werewolf senses and physical strength. But no matter how much Riannon tried to call for her wolf, Onyx did not reply to her. Thus – they were not talking.

"Hmm," the Lycan king was watching her with a hint of doubt in his eyes, "For how long?" "A few days," Ria coughed. What was it? An interrogation?

"What happened prior?" he asked and it made her flinch, letting him know that there was

something there.

She paused and he got tense. Just what was it that made her wolf go away? Did

someone hurt her? Sometimes, in very rare cases, wolves were retreating to the back of their host's mind to recuperate if something terrible happened to them. Gideon's fists clenched on an instinct as he imagined that someone may have hurt his precious mate.

"It's personal," she said, turning away. But he couldn't let it be like that.

"Riannon," he stepped right behind her, itching to close her in his arms, "It's okay. You

can tell me. If you want, it will forever stay just between us. But I need to know."

For a second there she contemplated telling him the truth. Would he believe her?

Maya did.

But Maya was different. They knew each other for so long that they were practically

While Gideon was new in her life. For goddesses' sake, he wasn't even her kind. He was a lycan and a royalty. And she needed his help to get her divorce and pack back before anything. What if she told him everything now and he considered her crazy? There would be no way he would let a crazy Alpha take reigns of her pack.

No, telling him that she died and was brought back in time wasn't an option at all.

She needed something else. But not a lie.

"Well," she turned to face him, finding him way too close. But she gathered all her

strength and looked him in the eye. "What do you think happened?" she furrowed her brows, "My husband of 6 years brought home his true mate, breaking our sacred promise to each other and destroying everything I believed in within one day in spite of me being the one wearing his mark."

She noticed his Adam's apple twitching slightly as if it was suddenly hard for him to

breathe.

"Is that why she is gone?" he asked menacingly and for the first time, Riannon felt a

shiver go down her spine when she was with him.

"She did not tell me for sure," Riannon chose her words carefully again, "So, I am just

assuming."

His face suddenly looked relieved. And also slightly... hurt. Why did he take those matters so close to heart?

Then again, this was probably why he was considered to be such a good king. He was concerning himself with the matters of his subjects.

Unknowingly, Ria rubbed the mark on her neck as it started stinging slightly. This was

happening a lot to her lately.

"This omega," Gideon continued, "Is she always like that?"

"Usually she is worse," the Luna muttered under her breath, but it did not escape the

lycan.

"Then your husband is an i\*\*\*t," the man snorted and it made Riannon smile, which she tried to get back under control immediately.

"Don't hide that smile," he told her at once, shocking her slightly, "It looks good on you and I prefer my... allies to be honest with me about their feelings."

She swallowed. So, her inner hunch was correct. He did not like being lied to. Not that

politician to know that. So, she just nodded to him and curled the corners of her lips a bit again to his satisfaction. His eyes lingered on her lips for far too long and she turned away from him, feeling how unnecessary heat was rising inside of her by the minute. Just why did this lycan had been influencing her so much?

"So," she cleared her throat, "You are seriously considering helping me?"

"I already promised you, didn't I," he stood right next to her and his hand accidentally brushed over hers, making her feel... tiny tingles.

Tingles! Her eyes darted to his at once but he only looked at her expectantly.

No, this couldn't be. This was probably in her head. At least that was what she tried to

convince herself in.

And also it was nothing like the mate tingles. She experienced those after Brayden marked her and this was definitely more intense.

Her mark started stinging again and she rubbed it more furiously while trying to gather her thoughts.

"What is it?" Gideon looked at her with sincere concern on his face and she opened her mouth to try and explain it, but he already took her hand into his, opening the view of her mark and lowered himself to have a better look at it.

She felt slightly embarrassed at that. The marks of chosen mates were just red ugly scars. Everybody knew what they were of course, but it wasn't the same as what true mates had. No matter how they wanted to pretend that it was.

True mate marks looked like two crescent tattoos looking at each other. And deep inside this was what Riannon was dreaming of every time she looked in the mirror.

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But Gideon's hot breath on her neck distracted her from her thoughts. He was close.

Almost too close and he brushed his thumb over her old scar gently, making her feel things.

"It looks a bit inflamed," he said with worry in her voice and she gasped. Inflamed? Why the hell was her mark inflamed?!

A loud growl distracted them from each other and Riannon turned her head to see one very pissed werewolf glaring at the two of them...

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## Chapter 18

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Chapter 18. Not Greedy

Riannon froze with the lycan's hand still on her neck when she saw her Beta baring his canines at the two of them. What was he thinking? This was offensive to any lycan and the

one next to her was their king for Goddess' sake!

"Do you have a problem?" Gideon angled his head to look at the intruder, still not taking his hand off Ria's neck. He looked absolutely unbothered on the surface, but the Luna did not let herself be fooled. She could feel fury radiating from his body. Fury and something else. She couldn't get what it was though.

But she knew one thing – Ash was in big trouble now.

"Yes, I have a problem," he said, clenching his fists, "You have your hands on my Luna and I demand..."

It was just one second and Riannon felt cold as the king's arms left her. One second –

and he already stood next to Ash with his fingers locked around the Beta's neck, lifting him in the air as if he weight nothing and making her gasp. She knew very well that lycans were faster

and stronger. But she couldn't even imagine that the difference was so vast. If they ever had to fight for any reason then werewolves would have zero chances at winning.

Ash was now making gurgling sounds and Ria hurried to the two men.

"Please, no!" she begged the king and he looked at her unexpectedly softly.

"He was insolent," Gideon tried to explain to her but seeing a spark of fear in her eyes

brought him back to his sense. He was doing it again. Making the wrong impression on her. All he wanted was to find out why she did not feel him and make her used to his presence in his life, but he was showing her this feral side of him. Instead of the one, she could potentially be

attracted to.

So, he placed the Beta back to his feet, even though in reality he wanted to snap that

neck of his. He never let anyone doubt him in his life except for his sister and Reid. And if anyone did...

"Please, forgive him, Your Majesty," her formal voice was cutting his ears. No, no, no. This was wrong.

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"Gideon," it slipped off his tongue faster than he realised, and he met her widened eyes."

Don't forget that we are not using formalities anymore," he cleared his throat.

"Of... course," she mumbled, not knowing how to behave now.

"Luna!" Ash tried to gather himself, still panting. But before he managed to say anything, she gave him the look. The one that meant, shut up now or I will not be able to help you next

"Did anything happen?" she tried to change the subject, "Were you looking for me?"

"Yes," he practically gritted through his teeth, adjusting his shirt that now looked all crumpled and stuck out of his jeans, "The mail came."

"And?" Riannon raised her brow not grasping what it had to do with her.

"I think you need to see this," the Beta turned around and she looked at the king, shaking

her shoulders.

"Well, if you have to," he chuckled friendly as if he did not just try to murder a member of her pack. But yet again, Riannon did not feel any dangerous vibes from him that was why she waved at him to follow her. Living him alone wasn't an option anyway.

At the entrance of the packhouse a few cars were packed and people were getting boxes out of it, big and small, as well as huge extravagant bouquets of flowers that filled the air with their overly sweet scent.

For a second there, Riannon frowned. Back in her past life, something like this happened. Brayden decided to give his mate "what she deserved" since she had nothing and showered her with gifts. In this life Roxy already had a budget allocated for her needs. And it was annoying that he still did it without any kind of excuse.

However, next, her eyes were drawn to her gloomy husband standing on the stairs and Roxanne, sheepishly hiding behind his back. She wasn't jumping with joy like the last time. And he did not have the smug smile plastered all over his face... Something was off.

"You seriously thought that I would want to see this?" Riannon tried to hold back her

annoyance as she darted her eyes at Ash.

"Why not?" the Beta seemed puzzled there for a second, "The alphas of so many packs

sent their regards to you. I thought..."

"I am sorry, what?" she opened her mouth in shock and the beta grazed his eyes over her

lips.

"Those are gifts sent by alphas for you, Luna," he said calmly as he took his eyes off her, "They are..."

"...not wasting their time!" Gideon said in a very deep and cold voice while placing his hands in his pockets. Just why did he think to bring her anything? It was so obvious! You court a woman – you give her gifts. He wanted to swear at himself but this was not the time.

"Oh," Ria looked back at the people who seemed to be taking the boxes to her rooms.

But nonetheless good.

She could use this in so many ways. It was giving her options for her plan and she immediately started to think of what to do next.

"Riannon!" her husband growled, coming closer.

He did not look happy. Of course, he didn't. Back in the day no one would dare send gifts like that without a special occasion to his wife. But now they all thought that she would be back on the market soon. He gave them this impression when he did not reject his mate and even brought her to an important event for everyone to see. And now he was reaping what he sowed.

"Yes, Brayden?" she flapped her eyelashes a few times. Even though he was furious and she had no wolf, the Lycan king was still standing by her side. And for some absolutely ridiculous reason, this was giving her even more confidence than she usually had.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded as if he still had the right to do so.

She was annoyed by his behaviour and looking at him now she wondered what the hell

happened to him? Had he always been like this? Or did she not see his true self before because

she was in love?

"I don't know, Brayden," she said in the most innocent tone, "I am as surprised as you are. So, if you want to know what is the meaning behind all those gifts from other alphas for your wife, you would probably better call them and ask them."

They all knew that it would not be possible. If it was just one Alpha, Brayden could call

him out and challenge him. They could have a fight and Bray would probably even win. He was

one of the strongest after all. But there was one little problem... There were far too many gifts

there. From far too many alphas. He couldn't challenge them all – they would gladly kill him and share his lands. He couldn't challenge one or two of them – they would ridicule him for the

rest of his life for not being brave and strong enough to do it to all of them. Even in turns.

It was a game where he couldn't win. And everybody knew that now.

So, for the first time in his life, Brayden would have to swallow the insult. Hard.

And it brought a newfound feeling of inner satisfaction to Riannon. That may have been his first time, but she sure as hell would make sure that it wasn't his last one.

"Anyway," she chirped, turning to the kind and wrapping her arm around his in a friendly manner, "We still have so many things to discuss. How about we do it in my office?"

to the entrance, they almost bumped into Roxanne with trembling lips and gleaming eyes. She was about to give another show as soon as they left, so Ria stopped right next to her and

placed a hand on her shoulder.

"No need to cry, Roxy," she said loudly, "Just pick what you want and take it. Don't insult your Alpha and Luna. I think I already proved that I am not greedy and I can share those insignificant things with you."

She kept on walking without waiting for a response. She knew that she already achieved

the desired effect.

Gideon next to her had an inner fight this whole time. His wolf Mars was roaming inside trying to get out and claim what was his. He wanted Riannon so badly, that it was getting dangerous for everyone around them. The Lycan king was used to their inner fights. All royalties had powerful beasts inside them because only they could contain them. But this was getting out of hand. Having their mate so close and not being able to do things to her was maddening.

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But at the same time, he couldn't help but admire the woman who was now calmly walking next to him after dealing with the ones who oppressed her without even needing his

help.

A true queen. A treasure.

He was always wondering if the Moon Goddess would be sending him an equal. And now he knew that she did not fail him. For Riannon may have been a werewolf and not a lycan, but she did not lack anything.

"Here," she pointed to the door that led to her own spacious office and he opened it for her, letting her in first. But as soon as he closed it, he scooped her in his arms, making her squeal from the shock and took her to the desk, gently placing her on top of it.

All that he wanted now was to remove her clothes and take her roughly right there, the way Mars insisted.

But of course, he couldn't... Her big wide eyes told him that. She still did not feel the

bond.

"Wh-what are you doing?" she practically stuttered looking around and he tried really hard to show her his most harmless facial expression. But it probably did not go that well because it made her flinch.

"Your neck," he coughed, pointing at her so-called mark, "It's still inflamed. Not Greedy should probably call the pack doctor," Riannon prepared to mind link her trusted friend, but Gideon took her face in his hands.

"I can help," he said, looking straight into her eyes and for some reason, she trusted him instantly, "Would you let me try?"

"Erm," she trembled, "Okay."

She had no idea what she was agreeing to and when he buried his face in the crook of her neck, she forgot how to breathe. His hot breath was on her skin, making her feel all kinds of things. The man had this strange effect on her which she could not name.

"What are you doing?" she asked, starting to pant at their closeness.

"You know," Gideon almost chuckled into her hair, "Lycans have this... healing gift." "They do?" she asked. She never heard of it before.

"Kind of," he avoided a straight answer and she wanted to question him more but then

she felt a slow and torturous stroke of his tongue onto his sensitive skin. She couldn't believe what was happening.

The Lycan king was licking her now!