

FIELD OF BLOOD | BOOK THREE

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# COVEY PUBLISHING, LLC

Published by Covey Publishing, LLC

PO Box 550219, Gastonia, NC 28055-0219

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Book Design by Covey Publishing, LLC, www.coveypublishing.com

Copy Editing by Covey Publishing, LLC

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-948185-91-2

First Printing, 2019

# CHAPTER ONE

yes blurry, I stare down at the paper while my pen methodically scratches out the conversation I just finished with a fellow pack member. Rosalina gave me the easier tasks to tackle as the new Luna while she continues to teach me the more challenging duties in my free time during the evenings.

Rosalina used to do her work from the Alpha's office, which had three desks set up. Kenji and Quimby argued over having to share their father's old desk, so I quickly decided I needed a room of my own and took over a spare sitting room in the main house.

With the walls painted a warm cream, I added mismatched pillows and brightly coloured curtains to provide pops of colour. Dad tried to

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give me his desk knowing how much I hate it, so I opted for one of the pack to make me a simple one with two drawers. Plants sit on the deep windowsill to the left of the desk, but not a cactus is in sight in case the little ones get in here and become curious.

Less than two weeks ago, Rosalina was the Luna to Argent pack with her husband Henrique as Alpha and husband Leverette as Beta, but since I performed the bonding ceremony with their sons, Theo, Kenji, and Quimby, we've taken on the roles of Argent packs Luna, Alpha, and Betas.

When the three decided they wanted to hand the reins to my mates, I was nervous, but I knew they were more than capable of filling their fathers's roles. Saying mates, even now, feels weird. As a half-mutt, I never expected to find a mate of my own, and now, I have three. I have faith my mates will fill their fathers's shoes. However, I don't have that same confidence in myself to take over for Luna Rosalina.

She's a force to be reckoned with, but she also has a knack for perfectly balancing her mates and her responsibilities and still be a positive figure to look up to.

. . .

Once I finish recording my last meeting, I turn to a fresh page and call out, "Next, please."

"Hey, Luna." A shy girl around the age of twelve pokes her head around the door but hesitates to open it any wider.

"Come in. Take a seat." I smile, hoping to coax her in.

She enters—eyes downcast— and takes a chair opposite my desk.

The young girl fidgets in her seat, and I recognise her immediately as Culgan and Linota's daughter, Dezra. With her brown hair down and framing her face, she looks so much like her mother.

Kenji tagged along with the patrollers to check the edge of our terrority for any traps and caught Dezra with two boys getting into mischief outside of our territory. Any other time, it wouldn't have been so bad and they'd have only received a warning.

But right now, we're preparing for a war against a rival pack.

The Blood Moon pack have been determined to find me since I was five when they became

privy to me being the next Luna. Even I wasn't aware of that information until recently because my mates decided it was best to hide me away for my own safety. If the Blood Moon hunt for me wasn't bad enough, they attacked my father's house while I was there with two pups, then turned Lana, a member of our pack, against us by giving her false promises.

For too long, they've pushed their dominance too far.

We received word from the vampire's that Blood Moon took their warning, but when we found the disfigured body of Lana dumped at the edge of our territory a few days ago, we knew the threat of war fell on deaf ears. While I wasn't a massive fan of her, especially when she fought me and tried to lay claim to my mates, the pack still considered her, very loosely, as one of our own. We held a small funeral the next day and placed her body next to where her parents were buried. They were finally reunited.

Blood Moon are also known for snatching females, and the last thing we want is Dezra being taken because she had a point to prove. Kenji scared the kids half to death and ordered the three of them to see me. The other two,

Decker and Goro, have already been and gone this morning, leaving me with a headache.

Dezra wasn't like the two boys, though. I've never heard a bad word said against her. She's always on her best behaviour, so to have her sitting in my office for doing something she knows she shouldn't have is a bit of a surprise.

Ignoring the pen and paper for now, I lay my hands flat on the desk and get right to it. "Are you going to be the one to tell me why you were outside our territory with the boys?"

Her fingers twist in the material of her blue dress as nervous energy rolls off her. "I had a point to prove."

Thankfully, she keeps her head down, so she doesn't see the surprise on my face that she answered without giving me the run around like the two boys did. "And what point was that?"

Her shoulders curl inward, as if cocooning herself from my prying questions. "That I'm capable of hunting, running, and not being a helpless pup that the rest of the pack has to carry."

Her voice comes out small, and I struggle to hear the words, but the anger and frustration is easy to pick up.

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I give her a moment to collect herself, before asking, "Why would you think that?"

Her eyes lift to mine for the first time since she stepped into the room, and my heart breaks. Tears slip down her cheeks and land on her hands which still clutch her dress. "My wolf, she's tiny. She struggles with some of the tasks the bigger wolves can do. She's too timid and cowers when confronted."

Not sure if it's protocol, and not really bothered if it isn't, I stand and rush around the desk to kneel at her side. Sobs shake her small frame, and I wrap my arms around her, pulling her into my body. A strawberry scent comes off her hair as she settles against me and takes comfort. Seeing her this upset opens up my own wounds on how I can't shift at all.

I keep silent, allowing her to get her frustrations and hurt out while I think of ways to help her. I have no idea how to approach this conversation, but I can at least draw on my own pain from growing up different from the rest of the pack. Hopefully, it will guide her in the right direction.

Pushing my own pain down, I loosen my hold on her to better see her face. Tears still roll

down her cheeks, and her chest hitches with every breath. Clumsily, she wipes at her nose and face with her sleeve but gives up when a fresh wave of tears fall.

"Just because your wolf is smaller than the others doesn't mean she's less able. Because she's small, you'll be able to do a lot more than you realise. You'll fit into tighter spaces, be harder to catch because you'll be able to duck and dive while the other wolf will struggle." Making sure I have her full attention, my fingers gently grasp her chin to lift her face. "I can set something up for you to practice on, if you'd like."

"W-what do you mean? L-like what?"

"While I was growing up, my father made me an obstacle course. I'd also spar with some of the wolves who stayed with us to better my skills. I can't shift to fight, so I needed to make the best of the situation I was given. We can do something similar for you."

"You'd do that...for me?"

"I'll admit, I don't understand what it's like to have a wolf inside you, but from what I understand, you both have to work together to be one. If giving you this helps you gain the

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confidence you need with your wolf, then of course."

A watery smile spreads across her face, and she launches herself at me. "You're the best Luna ever!"

"Just promise me you won't go disappearing to try and prove a point, especially not to Decker and Goro. And don't let them pressure you into anything. You don't have to prove yourself to them."

"Oh no, they weren't. It was my idea. I asked them to come with me." A blush stains her cheeks, but I don't comment on it. Instead, I file the information away for later and vouch to keep an eye on the three of them.

The boys are only a couple of years older, but are already magnets with the girls. If Dezra's having trouble with her wolf and some of the girls get jealous of the attention she receives from the two boys, the girls might decide to use the information to their advantage.

Now that Dezra is happier, I move back to my desk. Not long after, she promises no more stupid stunts and leaves the room with a skip in her step.

Rubbing tiredly at my eyes, I open the

notepad and quickly make a list of the things we'll need to help Dezra gain her confidence. Once there's nothing else I can think of, I turn to a fresh page, ready for the next person to come in.

"Next, please." I wait a few moments, but no one enters. Looks like I went through my audiences quicker than I thought I might.

I never knew how tiring and frustrating Rosalina's job was while she was Luna of Argent pack. But I'm beginning to understand why she was ecstatic to take a step back from the role. If every day was like this, it would become boring, fast.

Returning to the pen and paper, I go through the different lists for the day. Most consist of issues within the pack or personal matters that need to be reviewed with my mates so we can come to a suitable decision.

After scanning those, I turn to the list of prewritten questions some of the younger ones like to send before they come in. It helps them to get down what they truly want to ask without the pressure of trying to be open about it once they're here.

A groan slips free when I notice more than