

# Luna

and the Masters of Magic

## The Trials

### Part I

A trilogy by  
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“An Enchanted Journey Begins”



## Foreword

Welcome, dear reader, to a world where magic is not merely a myth, but a hidden force woven through the fabric of reality. This is the tale of Luna, a young woman searching for her path amid the secrets of the unknown, the shadow of her past, and the promise of a greater destiny.

In *Luna and the Masters of Magic: The Trials*, we follow Luna as she finds her place at Mooncrest Academy — a school tucked away between shimmering lakes, lush valleys, and ancient, whispering woods. Here, she learns that magic is not just a gift, but a responsibility — an art that will test her heart, mind, and spirit.

Yet the trials Luna must face are not only about magic. They are trials of trust, courage, and self-discovery. Allies will guide her, enemies will challenge her, and hidden truths will make her question everything she thought she knew. In a world where nature breathes and secrets echo across the waters, her fate lies in her own hands.

As you turn these pages, prepare to journey with Luna through deep valleys, to feel the restless lakes, and to unravel the mystery of Mooncrest. Let her story inspire you to believe that true strength lies in perseverance — and in following your heart, even when the path is strewn with obstacles.

Let the magic carry you.

The adventure awaits — and I honour your spirit of discovery.

~ Tineke Vande Velde ~

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# 1 – The Stranger in the Snow

## 1.1 – The Encounter...

It was a cold, icy winter evening. Twilight crept over the city like a grey blanket. Fresh snow covered the streets and muffled every sound, as if the world were holding its breath.

Luna Seren walked along the pavement. Her bright red hair stood out like a fiery splash against the monochrome landscape of white and grey. She seemed to glow, as though she didn't belong in this world. Her face held a delicate, almost elusive beauty. She had high cheekbones... soft light-pink lips, and eyes that lit up like emeralds with a golden sparkle.

She radiated curiosity, mixed with an unyielding strength of will. Her skin... soft and fragile-looking, carried an unmistakable glow.

There was something timeless about her. A young woman of the present, yet with the presence of a figure from a forgotten legend.

Her emerald green coat shimmered under the streetlamps. With every step, her boots crunched gently in the snow. The cold air bit into her cheeks and released small clouds with each breath.

Above her, clouds gathered – heavy and threatening. Something hung in the air. Invisible, yet palpable. As though the world itself was holding back. A restless feeling settled in her chest as she walked on.

Her thoughts drifted like snowflakes – fleeting and without direction. But one thought lingered: the emptiness she couldn't seem to fill. Life in the city had become routine. The winding alleys, hidden squares and nostalgic cafés still held their charm,

but they no longer satisfied her. More and more often, she felt trapped in a pattern that wasn't hers. As she neared the apartment complex where she lived, her eyes were drawn to a figure in the shadows. Her pace slowed. The building was stately and bore visible traces of age: weathered stone walls, a wooden door with stained glass that reflected the streetlight – but Luna's attention was fixed entirely on the silhouette beneath the broken lamppost.

Someone stood there. Still. Motionless. As if he were part of the evening itself. The lamplight flickered faintly, casting erratic shadows over his contours, which at times seemed to dissolve into the darkness. Luna halted, her gaze fixed on the man. Her hand slid instinctively to the amulet around her neck – the only tangible thing she still had connecting her to her mother. The metal was ice-cold, yet gave her an inexplicable sense of protection.

Her curiosity was too great, and so... she stopped and asked...

“Who are you?” she asked.

Her voice was calm, yet deep inside, a sharpness hid that sliced through the silence.

The man slowly turned his head, just enough for his face to appear in the flickering light. Icy grey eyes looked at her – intense, but not unfriendly. There was a strange warmth in his gaze, a paradox to the chill of the night.

His voice cut through the silence. Deep. Penetrating. As if it rose from the earth itself.

“Perhaps you should ask why I am here, rather than who I am.”

Luna's breath caught. Something about his

presence made her nervous, but also... fascinated. An invisible force seemed to surround him. Her intuition flared.

“Why are you here then?” she asked. Her fingers tightened around the amulet.

The man gave a faint smile – not mocking, not kind. Rather enigmatic.

“I’m waiting,” he said at last. His tone was warm, yet carried something secretive. “And you... you carry something you don’t fully understand.”

Luna’s eyes narrowed. Her heart beat faster.

“How do you know that?”

Her voice sounded sharper than intended. Her muscles tensed, ready to react.

His gaze drifted to the amulet.

“Some things you just know.”

The wind brushed against her face. The cold suddenly felt deeper.

“What you carry is more than an heirloom,” he continued. “It’s a key.”

“A key?” she whispered. “To what?”

A hint of sorrow passed across his face.

“You will discover that when the time is right,” he said, softer now. “When you are ready.”

He turned. His form seemed to dissolve into the falling snow. One blink – and he was gone.





Luna stood still. The snow whirled around her like a veil. No trace of footprints. No proof he had ever been there.

Her breath was heavy. She lowered her gaze to the amulet. It shimmered softly, as if it wanted to speak. But what?

The stranger's words echoed in her mind. They carried weight. As if there was more behind every word. Was this merely an encounter... or the beginning of something much greater? She shivered... Who was this mystical man? What did he mean? Why did he know so much about her?

A tight feeling crept across her chest, as if he had warned her – without her understanding the message. She looked at the amulet again. It lay cool in her hand. A silent witness.

No, this was no coincidence.

The unrest in her chest shifted. Something took its place. Something resolute.

Now she knew.

The answers would not come by themselves.  
But she had to find them.

Luna walked on and entered the familiar doorway of her apartment. The transition from the cold, harsh outside world to the warmth inside felt almost unreal. A smell of roasted vegetables hung in the air, like a warm blanket wrapping around her. It felt familiar.

Her aunt Kitty's apartment reflected her eccentric spirit: a cosy space filled with eclectic treasures. Vintage trinkets lined the shelves, brightly coloured fabrics draped like a patchwork across the walls, and plush armchairs stood invitingly throughout the room. Everything breathed a colourful harmony of patterns and textures, as if every detail wished to radiate joy.

The walls were painted in warm honey-brown tones, and the floor creaked softly beneath Luna's feet, gleaming from years of loving care. In the corner stood an imposing bookcase, filled to the brim with books, photographs, and tiny curiosities. Between the shelves, a single goldfish moved about in a small aquarium. Kitty called him Frummel. His fins traced playful circles in the water, blissfully unaware of the world beyond.

At the stove stood Aunt Kitty. Her bright pink cat-eye glasses sparkled in the warm kitchen light as she stirred a spoon through the stew. Her style was unique — a masterful blend of vintage finds and pure eccentricity. Today she wore a bright yellow skirt with an exuberant floral print that swirled joyfully as she moved, paired with a turquoise satin blouse with playful ruffles and pearly buttons. Over that, she wore an oversized purple cardigan,

handmade, with knitted star appliqués. And to top it all off: bright green boots. Around her neck hung a necklace with a pendant shaped like an old clock, like a timeless piece from a forgotten world. But what truly set her apart were her eyes. Pearlescent and enchanting. They changed with the light: sometimes soft blue, sometimes silver, occasionally with a subtle lilac hue. Those who looked into her eyes felt momentarily drawn into a universe of secrets — as if she could see things no one else could.

Aunt Kitty radiated an unshakeable sense of freedom. She didn't care what others thought of her, as long as she felt good in her creations. Her clothes told stories — of colour, courage, and a love for the unexpected. She looked as if she'd stepped straight out of a painting.

“Luna, darling!” “How was your day?” Kitty called out cheerfully, without looking up from her stew. Luna gave a faint smile and hung her coat on the rack.

“It was... interesting,” she muttered, her thoughts still caught on the stranger she had encountered earlier.

Aunt Kitty looked up. Her purple curls swayed gently as she tilted her head.

“Interesting, you say?” Her eyes narrowed ever so slightly — barely noticeable, but... there.

“Come, sit down and tell me, sweetheart.” “What's on your mind?”

She gestured to a chair at the kitchen table.

Luna hesitated, but sat down nonetheless.

“It was... different from usual,” she said.

Kitty turned slowly, her curiosity piqued.

“Different?” “Tell me everything, darling.”

Her tone was warm, but Luna detected something else in it. An undertone. As if the words meant more than they seemed. She went on...

“I saw someone... a man.” “By the building.” “He was... strange.” “As if he knew me, but I didn’t know him.”

Kitty pulled a chair closer and leaned her elbows on the table. Her posture was relaxed, but Luna sensed something stirring beneath the surface.

“What do you mean by strange?” “Was he frightening?” Kitty asked.

“Not exactly frightening,” Luna replied, her hand moving to the amulet. “More... intriguing.” “His eyes were so intense.” “As though he could see right through me.”

“And what he said... it felt like it meant something.” “As if there was more behind it.”

Kitty nodded slowly. Her face remained calm, but Luna saw something shift. A tension barely visible, yet unmistakably present. Her smile was kind, but too tight to be reassuring.

“Hm... sounds like your intuition is trying to tell you something,” she said. “Maybe this wasn’t a coincidence, Luna.” “Maybe he had a message for you.”

Luna leaned back, her gaze resting on Kitty. She sensed that something wasn’t right. The subtle hesitation in her voice, the fleeting glance towards the door as if checking whether they were alone... something hung in the air.

“What kind of message?” she asked slowly. “Do you have any idea who he might be?”

Kitty smiled again, but this time, the silence before her answer lasted too long.

“Sometimes, answers only come later, sweetheart.”

“But you’ll know... when the moment comes.”

Her voice was soft. Whispering. As if she were holding something back.

Luna looked at Kitty’s hand. It was unconsciously tapping against the edge of the table. A small gesture, but to Luna it felt like a signal. She was sure now: Kitty was hiding something.

Still, she said nothing.

“Would you like some tea?” Kitty asked suddenly.

Luna shook her head. “I’m going to retreat to my room for a bit.” “Call me when dinner’s ready.”

Kitty nodded understandingly and turned back to the stove. Her hands stirred the stew, but Luna saw how her shoulders remained just a little too tense... and how her knuckles whitened around the wooden spoon.

As the evening progressed, Luna sat in her room. She clutched the amulet tightly in her hand as she stared ahead. Her thoughts lingered on her aunt’s strange behaviour. The walls, normally soothing in their soft cream tones, now felt like a quiet backdrop for the chaos in her head.

Her gaze drifted to the Polaroid photos above her bed, with cheerful snapshots — memories of lighter days. They offered a brief distraction, but the gnawing questions did not fade. Her bed, covered in a blanket of soft pastel hues, invited her to rest, but her mind remained restless.

The room was her refuge, her safe haven. A vintage lamp on the bedside table cast a warm light across the space. In the corner stood a large mirror with an ornate wooden frame. Books and notebooks lay scattered across her desk — an organised chaos that reflected her inner world. By the window, where

half-open curtains swayed gently in the draught, the snow glittered under the glow of the streetlamps. The reflections danced across her walls, but Luna's thoughts kept circling around the stranger... and Kitty. There was something about that man. Something that felt at once familiar and disturbingly unknown. Why had his voice made such an impression on her? Why did it seem as if he knew things no one could possibly know? His intense gaze and his words — they held her captive in a whirlpool of curiosity and unease.

The scent of stew suddenly drifted into her room. Warm, earthy — an aroma that brought her momentarily back to the here and now.

“Luna, darling!” “The stew is almost ready!” Kitty's off-key singing voice echoed through the apartment, followed by the scraping of a spoon on the bottom of a pan.

Moments later came the soft clinking of cutlery on plates.

“Come to the table before I eat it all myself!” she called, playfully yet insistently.

Luna remained seated for a few more minutes, as if her body were trying to catch up with her thoughts. Only when there was a knock on her door did she look up. Kitty entered.

Her face was serious — a rare contrast to her colourful outfit. It created an almost comical image: her brightly coloured clothing against the shadow that had fallen over her face.

“Luna, I know you have a lot of questions.” “But some answers only come when you're ready.” “Don't overthink things.”

She placed a hand on Luna's shoulder, squeezing it gently.

“All I can tell you is that the stranger plays a role far greater than you can now understand.” “Trust your instinct.”

Luna looked at her with raised eyebrows, surprised by the openness. But before she could respond, Kitty was already turning away.

“Come on, let’s eat.”

At that moment, a sudden outcry rang through the air: “Drat it!”

Luna looked up. Kitty rushed to the stove. The stew was threatening to burn. With panicked yet skilful movements, she grabbed the spoon and began stirring like a woman possessed.

“It’s always the damned thyme,” she grumbled, interrupting her own grumbling with a chuckle.

Luna smiled faintly, but her aunt’s words offered her no rest. On the contrary — they only raised more questions. Something was going on. She could feel it. Something big. Something that would change her life forever.

After dinner, Luna helped with the washing up, but her thoughts continued to drift. When she wanted to retreat to her room, she hesitated halfway down the hallway. Something compelled her.

With renewed determination, she walked to the entrance hall, put on her coat, and opened the door.

“I’ll be right back!” she called to Kitty, not waiting for a reply.

The cold greeted her immediately, but she ignored it. Her feet instinctively led her to the spot where she had seen the man. She stood still under the streetlamp.

“This is where it was.”

She closed her eyes and let her senses speak. The air still held that same strange energy. It was subtle, almost imperceptible — like a whisper in the void. When she opened her eyes, something caught her attention.

A glimmer in the snow.

She knelt down and carefully brushed some flakes aside... There, half-hidden beneath the ice, lay a small silver-coloured ring. An engraving drew her gaze. Her breath caught.

The same symbol as on her amulet.

A warmth surged through her hand as she picked up the ring. A vibration moved through her fingers, deep and resonant. As if it were meant for her. As if it spoke to her. Not with words — but with a silent promise.

Luna looked at her palm. The crescent moon mark. For a moment, it glowed. A faint, silvery radiance pulsing in harmony with the ring. It felt familiar, as though she recognised a forgotten language. A language of symbols, only perceptible in the depths of her being.

She brushed her thumb across the mark. Her heart pounded in her chest. This couldn't be a coincidence.

And then...

A presence.

Invisible, but unmistakable.

The air froze. A cold shiver ran down her spine. She hardly dared to turn around. The snow beneath her feet seemed to shift. As though she stood on the brink of stepping into another reality.

Then it came.

A voice. Soft. Whispering...

“You're closer than you think.”

The words were little more than a breath in the



wind. Luna lifted her head and scanned the darkness.

Nothing.

No shadow. No movement. Only the falling snowflakes, like silent messengers of something that had yet to reveal itself.

But the voice lingered.

Luna knew it for certain: she was on the right path. The ring slid into her coat pocket. It felt heavier than it should. As though it entrusted something to her. Something greater than she could comprehend.

She began to move, her steps resolute.

The ring pulsed again — soft, warm. An encouragement.

Keep going.

Her thoughts spun around the cryptic words, the symbol, the voice. Everything pointed in the same direction. Something had been set in motion.

Luna climbed the stairs quickly. Her aunt was clearly already waiting for her return.

“Where have you been, darling?” she asked.

“I went back to the spot where I saw the strange man... and I found something... a ring.”

Aunt Kitty looked surprised. “What kind of ring?”

Luna pulled the ring from her coat pocket and placed it on the kitchen table.

“This ring.” “It has the same symbol as my pendant, Aunt... Strange, isn’t it?”

Aunt Kitty hesitated for a moment, then said:

“Luna, sweetheart, sit down.” “I need to tell you something.” “Just promise me you won’t judge too quickly and that you’ll truly listen...”

Luna nodded, a sense of gravity settling over her. Whatever Aunt Kitty was about to reveal, she knew it would be important.

Aunt Kitty took a deep breath and looked Luna straight in the eye.

“The man you saw outside the apartment, Luna...”  
“I’ve seen him before.” “Many years ago.” “And this morning... he came to visit me.”

Luna stared at her aunt in disbelief.

“He was a good friend of your mother,” Aunt Kitty continued. “Someone she trusted deeply.”

Her voice took on a melancholic tone, laced with memories. She spoke of Luna’s mother — her laugh, her warm smile, and the deep bond she shared with the mysterious stranger.

Her eyes darkened as the memories resurfaced.

Then she spoke his name:

“Alexander.”

Luna’s heart skipped a beat.

Aunt Kitty paused briefly, as if gathering her thoughts before continuing.

“He was an important part of your mother’s life for many years.”

Luna listened closely. Confusion and curiosity bubbled within her. Perhaps Alexander’s presence was far more meaningful than she had suspected.

The room filled with a quiet tension.

Luna leaned forward slightly, hungry for the truth.

Aunt Kitty’s voice dropped to a whisper.

Slowly, she began to unveil the mysteries surrounding Alexander’s identity.

The words weighed heavily on Luna’s shoulders.

She felt her life on the verge of tilting.

Her family’s story turned out to be woven with secrets. Aunt Kitty’s words were like loose threads slowly being unravelled. Bit by bit, a tapestry became visible — a fabric of hidden tales that had

long lingered in the shadows.

Luna felt herself getting drawn deeper and deeper in. Alexander's presence was like a catalyst, a spark awakening old memories and forgotten truths.

What else would rise to the surface?

Aunt Kitty's eyes shimmered, a trace of sorrow within, as she continued.

"Alexander was once a guardian." "He had sworn to protect your mother from forces that sought to harm her."

Luna's breath caught.

"Their bond was more than friendship," Kitty said softly. "It went deeper... something unspoken."

"Something hidden."

A wave of confusion and fascination washed over Luna. She had always known her mother had a special history, but this... this went beyond anything she had imagined.

For years, truths and secrets had remained in the dark. Now they were coming to light.

The room fell silent. Kitty's words lingered like a veil in the air, woven from memories and ancient sorrow.

Luna's thoughts spun. There was something inexplicable that drew her to Alexander. As if their stories were bound together — on a deeper level than she could comprehend.

Her mind reeled, as if caught in an endless carousel of suspicions.

Her curiosity was ignited. What did it all mean? How did Alexander fit into her life? And what was she meant to do now?

Luna was determined to learn more about Alexander and his connection to her family's past.

The fragments of the story were slowly beginning to come together, but many loose ends remained.

Questions without answers.

Her desire to uncover the truth grew with every second, fuelled by Aunt Kitty's words. She knew she had to confront Alexander directly. Only he could help her unravel the mysteries surrounding her family.

It felt as though she stood at the threshold of a revelation that would not only bring answers, but change her life forever.

When she made that decision, Aunt Kitty's expression changed. Her eyes turned serious — a silent warning of what lay ahead. Secrets that had been buried for years were about to resurface. Kitty wanted Luna to be fully prepared.

The silence grew heavy with unspoken tension. The air felt thicker, saturated with the aftermath of everything that had just been revealed...

She stared outside. Her gaze rested on the city below, while the sounds of Brussels mingled with her thoughts.

She thought of the countless afternoons spent in the winding streets of Paris. Her mother's stories about their family history echoed in her mind — as if the past was calling to her.

But that past also carried weight, a legacy that had begun to envelop her.

Her fingers trembled slightly as she touched the cold windowpane. Her thoughts were spinning.

What would she discover if she confronted Alexander?

What if the truth led her to a past she would rather not know?...

But she no longer had a choice.  
The truth was something she could no longer avoid.  
It was time to reveal the secrets her mother had hidden — secrets Alexander had guarded all those years.

She slowly turned to her aunt, her eyes filled with resolve.

“What exactly do you know about Alexander’s past?”

“And why is he appearing now, after all these years?”

Aunt Kitty’s face softened. Her gaze drifted, caught in distant memories, as if she were momentarily transported back to those summers in Paris.

Then she began to speak... her voice steeped in the bitter truth of bygone times.

“Alexander wasn’t just a friend of your mother’s,” she began... her eyes still fixed on something only she could see.

“He was her protector... and more than that.”

“They met in Paris, when they were young.”

“Their bond was stronger than I ever managed to understand.”

“It went beyond friendship.”

“Perhaps even... a little dangerous.”

“Sophia trusted him completely,” Aunt Kitty went on.

“But there were always things she couldn’t — or wouldn’t — tell.”

Luna’s eyes widened. What exactly did Kitty mean?  
What had happened in Paris?  
Why was Alexander returning now?

Aunt Kitty’s voice grew softer.

Luna sensed there was more than what was being

said.

The words offered only a glimpse of the bigger picture.

“Your mother and Alexander were inseparable.”

“They met when they were young, full of dreams and a longing to explore the world.”

“Their friendship evolved into something deeper.”

“A bond that neither time nor distance could break.”

Luna felt a flutter of unease in her stomach.

Her mother had always felt like a mystery, someone who never became fully tangible in her memories.

And now she was hearing about a connection far deeper than she had ever imagined.

What did this mean for her?

Aunt Kitty took a deep breath.

“Their friendship was something special.”

“They would never let each other fall, no matter how far life pulled them apart.”

“But... there were always secrets.”

“Things your mother never shared with me.”

“Things I never fully understood.”

She fell silent. The silence spoke volumes.

Then, after a pause, she said...

“I believe the time has come for you to uncover those secrets yourself.”

Luna folded her hands together.

It felt as though she now held the key to a door she had always wanted to open — but one her mother had never led her to.

What was the truth behind that bond?

Aunt Kitty's gaze drifted again, her thoughts with Sophia.

"She had something special, you know."

"Her long, curly chestnut hair... it fell over her shoulders like a warm sunset. And her eyes... hazel. Not just beautiful, but warm. People felt safe around her."

Luna closed her eyes and tried to summon the image.

A woman she knew only from stories and faint childhood memories.

It felt strange to hear her described so vividly by someone who had truly known her.

"And then there was Alexander," Kitty continued, her voice now barely audible.

"He had something intense."

"Those grey eyes..." so sharp.

"As if he could see right through you."

"And his hair — dark and unruly... he had a rugged charm."

"Mysterious."

"As though he always remained just out of reach."

She smiled wistfully...

"But when he was with your mother... that rough edge softened."

"They brought something out in each other that I've never seen in anyone else."

Luna felt a jolt of curiosity.

This was the man with whom her mother had shared such an intense bond.

What had drawn her mother to him so strongly?

What was the true nature of their connection?

“Together, they were... powerful,” Kitty murmured.  
“You could feel the electricity between them.”  
“It wasn’t ordinary attraction.”  
“It ran deeper.”  
“Unspoken... and undeniable.”  
“And yet... they were always kept apart.”  
“By circumstances. By secrets.”  
She drew a deep breath.  
“I think your mother wanted to protect you from  
what she couldn’t control.”

Luna’s heart pounded.  
Secrets. That word kept returning.  
What had her mother hidden from her?

Aunt Kitty looked at her, her eyes filled with sorrow  
and conviction.  
“Luna, darling... there is so much you need to  
know.”  
“But you must also be prepared.”  
“Alexander is not merely a figure from your  
mother’s past.”  
She leaned in slightly.  
“He is part of your future too.”  
“Whether you’re ready for it or not.”

Luna nodded slowly.  
Resolve settled deep within her chest.  
She had to face Alexander.  
No matter what — the truth had to come to light.

Kitty’s voice drifted further into memory.  
A tale of passion and devotion, so strong that  
everyone who knew them had been enchanted by it  
— including Alexander himself, whose loyalty had  
never wavered.



And yet...

Something lingered around Sophia's family.

Whispers. Ancient traditions.

Primal forces passed down through generations.

Even to Kitty, the true nature of it all remained a mystery.

Her eyes grew distant as she recalled the strange occurrences that had haunted the family through the centuries.

Connections to the lunar cycles.

A sense that their fate was entwined with the moon itself.

“It was said that Sophia's ancestors possessed a unique gift,” she whispered.

“They could harness the energy of the full moon. It was a blessing... and a curse. A power that lived within their bloodline.”

Luna looked at her hand.

The crescent moon on her palm seemed to glow.

Every time the moon was full, she felt it tingle — as if it were trying to tell her something.

Perhaps she had inherited more than a physical trait.

Perhaps... the mark on her hand was the key to everything.

Why had Alexander returned now?

This could not be a coincidence.

Everything pointed to the approaching full moon.

Luna could feel it in her being.

He knew more than he let on — something that could change her life.

His presence felt uncomfortable — like a stranger at a family reunion.

Uninvited. Unpredictable.

And capable of reopening old wounds.

Aunt Kitty sighed deeply and leaned back.

“It will become clearer, sweetheart. Give it time. But be ready for what’s coming.”

Her voice trembled slightly as she met Luna’s gaze.

How could she explain that Luna was more than she ever realised?

That she had been born to carry that power?

And that Kitty herself had known her whole life what was coming?

No. Not yet.

Luna had to discover it step by step.

Kitty stood and walked to the window.

Outside, the moon hung low in the sky, half-veiled behind clouds.

She felt the tingling in her fingers — the soft call of the power in her blood.

Her hands itched to summon it.

To show Luna who she truly was.

But it was too soon.

She turned around.

A calm smile on her face.

“Know this... whatever happens, I’m here for you. Always.”

Luna nodded slowly, but her mind was buzzing.

Something had shifted in Kitty’s eyes, her voice... in everything.

As though her aunt knew things she couldn’t — or wouldn’t — share.

One thing Luna knew for certain: she wouldn't rest until she uncovered the truth.

That evening, the house had fallen quiet again. Kitty sat calmly knitting, her fingers gliding smoothly over the wool, while Luna had retreated to her room.

Suddenly, the silence was broken.

The sharp, unexpected sound of the doorbell echoed through the apartment.

Kitty stood at once, placed her knitting beside her and walked to the intercom.

She pressed the button, her voice clear but curious: "Hello?"

"Who's ringing at this hour?"

A brief silence followed, before a deep, calm voice answered:

"Alexander. I've come to talk."

Luna looked up from her room. Her heart skipped a beat.

Alexander.

She held her breath as Kitty pressed the door release without hesitation.

"Oh, Alexander! Of course — come in!" she called.

Moments later, footsteps echoed in the hallway.

Firm. Purposeful.

Luna froze. From her room, she had a clear view of the living room.

The warm glow of the lamps fell across the figure in the doorway.

There he stood. Dressed in the same dark coat, his grey eyes just as intense as earlier that evening.

Their eyes met.

For a moment, the world seemed to stop.

A shiver ran through her.

“Good evening, Luna,” he said, with a slight nod of his head.

His voice was low and reassuring — but carried something elusive.

“Take a seat, Alexander,” Kitty gestured, as if his visit hadn’t surprised her in the least.

She walked into the kitchen, her colourful scarf trailing behind her.

Moments later, she returned with tea, her finest porcelain cups, and a tray full of biscuits, which she placed carefully on the coffee table.

She smiled warmly.

“I thought you might come.”

Luna remained standing at the entrance to the living room, her feet rooted to the floor.

Kitty patted the sofa invitingly.

“Come join us, Luna. There’s so much to discuss.”

Hesitantly, she stepped forward and sat beside her aunt. Her eyes didn’t leave Alexander for a second.

“So, Alexander,” Kitty began, handing him a cup of tea, “what brings you back to our little corner of the world?”

But she already knew the answer.

Alexander took a seat in one of the armchairs.

His posture was relaxed, but his eyes were watchful.

Luna drew a deep breath. Her thoughts spun.

“Why are you here?” she asked.

Alexander held her gaze.

“We share a long history, Luna.”

Something flickered in his eyes.

She leaned forward slightly and said:

“We?”

“What do you mean?”

“You speak as if this involves me... so what is it?”

“Luna,” he said calmly, “there are things in your past — in your family — that you must come to understand.”

“Secrets that have remained hidden, but are now rising to the surface.”

“It is my task to guide you through what is to come.”

Aunt Kitty broke the tension with a smile and said,

“Well, Alexander, that all sounds very mysterious.”

“But perhaps you could be a little less cryptic for our Luna.”

“She has enough on her mind as it is.”

Alexander gave her a brief smile, tinged with admiration.

“You’ve always had impeccable timing, Kitty.”

His gaze returned to Luna.

“I know this is a lot to take in. But believe me, I’m here to help. It all begins with trust.”

Luna sensed instinctively that his arrival was no coincidence.

Everything aligned — the approaching full moon, her aunt’s tale.

There was something Alexander wasn’t saying.

Something that could turn her entire existence upside down.

His eyes sparkled. A subtle mischief, a touch of chaos.

The corners of his mouth curled into a crooked smile.

Luna's heartbeat quickened.

He inhaled deeply, his gaze intense.

"Luna," he began, "there's something you need to know."

The air in the room grew heavier.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

Her voice was barely audible, but her eyes spoke volumes.

The dimmed light faded further as Alexander began to speak.

His voice dropped, carried by a forgotten force.

"There is a prophecy."

"One that speaks of the return of a powerful Moon Goddess."

"Her descendants would possess powers that... are beyond comprehension."

Luna's breath caught.

This was about her. Not a myth. Her.

"Your family," he continued, "is bound to that prophecy.

Your fate is intricately linked to that of the Moon Goddess."

"But... how?" she whispered.

"What does this have to do with me?"

Alexander looked her deep in the eyes.

"Everything."

He let a moment of silence fall, then added:  
“The prophecy speaks of three lunar phases.”  
“Each phase is tied to a trial.”  
“Your crescent moon — the mark on your hand — is the key.”  
“It unlocks the first phase.”

Luna looked at her palm.  
The symbol she had carried her whole life now seemed like a gateway to something far greater.

“What is the first trial?” she asked softly.

“The Light Awakening,” he said slowly.  
His words hung heavy in the air.  
“It’s about facing the shadows within yourself.”  
“Not merely overcoming your fears... but embracing them.”  
“Only by accepting your darkness,” he continued,  
“can you unlock your true potential.”  
“Only then will the power that slumbers within you awaken.”

Luna shivered.  
The first trial didn’t lie outside her. It already lived within.

“Why me?” she asked.  
“Why am I the one who has to do this?”

Alexander’s eyes softened.  
“It’s not about being chosen, Luna.”  
“It’s about being ready.”  
“You are the heir.”  
“Your blood.”  
“Your mark.”  
“Your bond with the moon.”

“The full moon is a catalyst.”

“A reminder of what you already carry within.”

Luna frowned.

“But... what do you mean by embracing the darkness?”

“What must I do?”

“You’ll know when the moment arrives,” he said.

“Darkness is different for everyone.”

“It’s a part of you.”

“Something you may have avoided.”

“The trial will draw it forth.”

Luna felt a knot in her stomach.

Facing her own darkness... what would that mean?

“I don’t know if I’m ready for this,” she admitted.

Alexander nodded.

“Do not fear, Luna. You only need to be willing.”

She stared at him.

She wasn’t sure if she could trust him.

But something in the room — the moonlight, the stillness — told her she had no choice.

Everything was connected.

He stood.

His gaze remained fixed on her.

“The full moon is coming, Luna.

Time waits for no one.”

He turned and vanished into the night.

His silhouette blended with the shadows.



Luna remained.

Alone with her thoughts.

Alone with the knowledge that her life was about to change forever.

That night, the moon hung high above the city.

Its silver glow cast long shadows across the rooftops.

Luna felt her world shift.

The threads of fate were weaving around her.

The trials awaited.

She didn't know what they would entail.

But there was no turning back.

Luna drew a deep breath.

She had to prepare.

Outside, the muffled sounds of the city drifted in.

A soothing melody against the storm inside her: curiosity, fear, determination.

The universe itself seemed to be guiding her.

Three trials.

Each one designed to test her courage, her insight, her heart.

The first stood at the threshold.

The Light Awakening.

Luna placed her hand upon her palm.

The moon mark lay still — yet alive beneath.

She had to face her shadows.

Embrace the darkness.

Only then would her power awaken.

Alexander's enigmatic smile lingered in her mind.  
He knew more than he'd revealed.  
Luna was certain of it:  
the answers he hadn't given might be more  
dangerous than the questions she had.

She stared at the crescent moon on her hand.  
The light in her room made it glow faintly.  
A constant reminder of her origins.  
Of what slumbered inside her.

She felt it pulse.  
A call to begin.

But what if she failed?

What if the trials revealed parts of her she didn't  
want to see?

Her mother's legacy was far more complex — and  
more perilous — than she had ever imagined.

Now that the shadows of the past were closing in,  
Luna wondered...

Would she ever be enough to meet the prophecy's  
call?

With a sigh, she walked to the window.  
The city lay before her, bathed in moonlight.  
The streets, once familiar, felt foreign.  
Terrain she would soon have to leave behind.  
Guided by nothing but her own instincts.

In the distance, a church bell rang.  
Its hollow chime marked the end of the day.  
Luna narrowed her eyes.

Night had fallen... and with it, the first trial approached.

She didn't know what awaited her,  
but one thing was certain:  
Nothing in her life would ever be the same again.

For the first time,  
she felt ready to face the truth.

The following morning...

At the crack of dawn, Luna decided to clear her mind with a walk to the Sunday market near the South Station.

The morning market was a melting pot of colours, scents and sounds.

Stalls bursting with fresh flowers, exotic fruits and antique trinkets stood side by side, while traders called out their wares with spirited energy.

The scent of freshly baked bread and herbs filled the air — a strange comfort amid the confusion that churned within her.

As she wandered through the crowd, her eye was drawn to a stall selling old books and jewellery.

Behind the table stood a frail elderly woman. Her silvery-grey hair shimmered in the morning light, and her timeworn hands held up a small silver pendant.

“Come closer, child,” the woman said in a soft, mysterious voice.

Luna felt an inexplicable pull to listen. She stepped forward and studied the pendant.

The symbol on it bore a striking resemblance to the ring she had found the night before.

“What is this?” Luna asked, her voice barely audible.

The woman’s eyes sparkled, as though she knew something Luna did not — yet.

“A piece of a greater whole,” she replied.

“It will guide you... if you are willing to see.”

A shiver ran down Luna’s spine.

“Do you know me?” she asked.

The woman only smiled.

“All in good time, child.”

“Take it. It belongs to you.”

She extended the pendant towards Luna, offering no further explanation.

Luna hesitated for a moment, then accepted it.

The instant her fingers touched the metal, she felt the same warm glow as with the ring.

She looked up — but the woman was gone.

As if she had never been there at all.

Luna was left alone by the stall, her head spinning with questions.

The market bustled around her, but it felt as though she were in another world.

A world where answers hid beneath layers, waiting to be uncovered.

As she walked on, her thoughts lingered on the pendant.

“What was that all about?”

The snow crunched beneath her boots, the cold air

stung her cheeks, but her attention remained fixed on the strange energy emanating from the object. It felt as though it were guiding her somewhere. As though it pointed towards a path she didn't yet understand.

She paused for a moment, gazing up at the snow-covered branches overhead.

When she returned home, she was greeted by the savoury aroma of a steaming casserole. Aunt Kitty stood beaming at the stove. Her bright pink glasses — adorned with sparkling rhinestones — sat slightly askew on her nose. A colourful scarf in shades of orange and blue hung loosely around her shoulders, and her earrings — miniature coffee cups — swung merrily as she muttered something about the perfect blend of herbs.

The entire picture made her look like a walking work of art.

A touch too colourful, perhaps, but undeniably Aunt Kitty.

A dusting of flour graced her cheeks, her eyes gleamed with excited mischief.

“Darling, I'm making your favourite casserole!” Kitty said cheerfully.

“And I've something rather thrilling to share.”

Luna hung up her coat, curiosity piqued.

“What kind of news?”

Kitty leaned in slightly and whispered conspiratorially:

“I've been invited to a masquerade ball at the old

manor on the hill... and I'm thinking of taking you with me."

Luna's eyes lit up.

The manor on the hill.

One of the oldest and most mysterious places in the city.

It was surrounded by stories — of hidden corridors and forgotten legends.

"A masquerade ball?" Luna repeated. "There?"

"What will we wear?"

Kitty grinned and wiped her hands on her apron.

"Don't you worry about that. I already have a few ideas."

With a gleam in her eye, she opened a drawer and pulled out swatches of fabric, ribbons and lace.

Within moments, she was sketching away, her creative mind in full flow.

Luna watched, fascinated, as Kitty brought forth a design:

a silver mask adorned with glistening gemstones, paired with a flowing gown in shades of midnight blue.

"What do you think of this?" Kitty asked, her eyes shining with pride.

Luna ran her fingers across the sketch.

"It's beautiful," she whispered.

She could already picture herself at the ball.

The afternoon unfolded in a warm, cosy haze.

As the casserole simmered in the oven, the

apartment filled with the soft glow of candlelight  
and the gentle rhythm of jazz playing in the  
background.

It felt like the calm before a storm.  
A new adventure beckoned.

Luna felt a mixture of nervousness and anticipation  
settle in her chest.

But deep down, she knew:

This ball would bring more than just celebration.

It was the beginning of something far greater.  
A journey that would change her life forever.

## 2 – Beyond the Masquerade