

An Alpha Luna Story:

**"BETA-COLLIE "**

By Leonardo Vidal

**Chapter 2 : "Intimate Scents "**

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This story follow the events of the comic: "An Alpha Luna Story: Beta Collie" which acts as Chapter 1 of this series. While "Beta-Collie: Luna's Interlude" expands on the comic events which I recommend reading first, which you can find in this gallery. Thanks in advance and don't forget to leave your comments!, Leo.

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Luna's gaze remained fixed on the fang necklace resting on her right hand, the heavy weight of its significance settling in her heart. The pendant that recently stirred a familiar bond with her past now felt dangerous, a symbol of a heritage she was just beginning to understand. Her left hand continued to absentmindedly massage her neck, a futile attempt to alleviate the stress knotting her muscles. The necklace, which she had worn just moments ago, was revealed as the source of Collie's lupine transformation. Her legacy had inadvertently entangled her best friend into a life that, until now, she believed was her own burden to bear.

"If this belonged to my real mother, I don't understand why it'd be cursed," Luna murmured, her gaze still locked on the fang necklace. Collie, who was busy admiring her reflection in the mirror, responded nonchalantly, "Who knows...maybe it only affects humans...ooh." Her voice trailed off in surprise as she lifted her arms out of her tank shirt, striking poses to flaunt her newly formed, tight muscles.

"Huh?" Luna's voice was filled with confusion.

"Oh my god, Luna! Look, I have biceps, triceps, and everything in between," Collie exclaimed, a broad smile spreading across her face. She then flexed her abdomen, "If I do this, some abs show up, look! This is so cool!" Her enthusiasm seemed to know no bounds as she turned around, trying to show off every angle of her enhanced physique. Despite her concern, Luna couldn't help but raise a faint smile at her friend's antics. No matter how she looked, it was still her Collie, who was now, albeit subtly, more athletic and still waving a furry brown and white tail behind her.

"I guess you look a tad more athletic," Luna conceded, her eyes drifting towards Collie's tail. "But...I don't think you can show yourself to gym class with that..." Her finger pointed at the bushy appendage that swung along with Collie's movements.



Oh my good, Luna! Look , I have biceps, triceps and everything in between, oh if I do this some abs show up, look! This is so cool!

Collie grabbed her new tail and wrapped it around her waist, hugging it like a newborn baby. "My new friend?" She queried with a playful grin, her face arranged into a silly expression, as if imitating a tearful moment. "I don't think it's that ugly!"

"What?" Luna felt like she had missed something.

"It's kinda cool, you know. I was scared at first... but I don't know. It's grown on me!" Collie confessed, her voice filled with an unexpected fondness.

"It definitely grew out of *you*..." Luna retorted, a subtle mix of amusement and bewilderment in her voice.

"Hey, it feels funny and it's so fluffy and soft," Collie's enthusiasm seemed to be growing as she explored her new accessory further, completely oblivious to Luna's state of shock.

"Really?" Luna's expression became dumbfounded as if she was left thinking if she had journeyed into another dimension.

"Huh?" Collie turned her attention back to Luna, tilting her head in confusion as she tried to decipher her friend's discomfort. "Did I say something wrong?"

"Oh my god! And I was here dying thinking you'd be hating me for cursing you into a werewolf life! Seriously!" Luna exclaimed in utter disbelief, falling back onto her bed with her hands clutching her head.

"But you didn't curse me, it was the fang, right?" Collie sought to clarify, attempting to dispel the guilt Luna felt.

"Yes, I know...but, I was born one. The fact you got close to me made this possible, so... in a way, I still feel responsible. It's like you got infected just by hanging out with me," Luna confessed.

"Huh... I see. But I was thinking... I may not even change again, you know," Collie mused, a hopeful note in her voice.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Luna asked, her hazel eyes narrowed in confusion. Collie shrugged nonchalantly, her lips curling into a small smile. "I mean, the fang made me change, not the full-moon, right? So...I may not even be a real werewolf after all. So in time, my tail may shrink; I guess, like when you get poisoned and then you have to recover yourself with a proper rest...and chicken soup, eh?" Collie chuckled, trying to lighten the mood.

Luna couldn't help but let out a small laugh at her friend's analogy. "Chicken Soup, really?" Luna giggled, holding back a surge of laughter. At this, Collie also started giggling, fully aware of the absurdity of her statement given the gravity of their situation.

"You're one of a kind, Collie. Seriously." Luna's words came with a smile, as if a weight had been lifted from her shoulders. She let out a sigh of relief while Collie just stuck out her tongue playfully, rubbing the back of her head in a silly gesture.

"But you know, that part before the soup... you could be right. I really hope you're right, Collie," Luna's tone grew serious.

"Right? Besides, as you said I became a different-looking werewolf compared to you, like a full wolf. I wasn't even able to talk... Although now that I think about it, I remember talking through...barks, hmm..." Collie started, her voice trailing off in thought.

"Huh....so how much do you remember? Collie," Luna interjected, her hazel eyes filled with curiosity.

"Huh...parts of the change, the fur and the smells. Running. Eating...."

"Do you remember that?" Luna pressed for more details.

"Huh? the deer! Oh my god, Luna! That was... so cool!" Collie's eyes lit up with excitement.

"Really?! I thought you'd be throwing up if you'd happen to remember that." Luna's voice was filled with surprise.

"Oh, well. For some reason, I don't remember much blood...but a sweet sausage and some intense flavors. Weird, right?" The confusion in Collie's voice was evident.

"I'm pretty sure that sausage was the blood, Collie," Luna clarified, a hint of amusement in her voice.

"Huh... oh well!" Collie's face morphed from a look of confusion to a silly grin as she scratched behind her right ear.

"Well, I'm glad you have a convenient editing software within your head, that'd be handy." Luna teased.

"Huh, thanks?" The confusion returned to Collie's face.

"Do you remember anything else?" Luna inquired, intrigued by Collie's experience.

"Mostly the smells to be honest. While running with you, you smelt ...like cinnamon and ... the leaves of autumn, I think.." Collie replied, her thoughts trailing off again.

"Really? Do I smell like that now?" Luna teased, a smirk playing on her lips.

"Well..." Collie began, sniffing the air around Luna with her arms stretched beside her friend's hip, with one knee clinging to the edge of the bed, while her head slowly grew closer around Luna's neck. Luna started dodging her friend's head while trying to keep her movements minimal. However, one of Collie's hands slipped from the edge of the bed, causing her head to inadvertently plunge into Luna's chest. Luna could only momentarily react, her elbows sinking into the sheets as she leaned back slightly, with Collie's upper body securely resting on top of her.

"Ungh! I-" Collie started, but was cut off as she lifted her head. Luna was left speechless. They looked at each other, their eyes meeting as if time had suddenly stopped. Despite their friendship, Collie realized she had never seen Luna's eyes this close, neither felt her breath nor sensed her scent this strong, not knowing fully if part of this was her new heightened sense of smell. Luna on the other hand had similar thoughts running but noticed how Collie's

green eyes now had a small hue of amber clinging around the center of her iris while also sensing a distinctive new scent similar to her own, diminishing Collie's chances of her return to her normal life. But above everything, Luna felt something genuinely new stir within her that she couldn't quite understand.

As Collie's perspiration trickled down her forehead, her cheeks flushed. Her breath caught, and her heart rate quickened. Almost unconsciously, Collie's lips drew closer to Luna's, inch by inch. With eyes gently closing, she diminished the gap ever so subtly and slowly.

But their trance was abruptly shattered by a repeated knock at the door. Collie's eyes darted desperately from side to side, as if attempting to hide her flushing face with nothing but air. Luna, though her blush was more subtle, stood frozen for a moment before slowly returning to reality.

Nonetheless, Collie leaped off the bed, her eyes still wide with shock. She attempted to conceal her flushed face and shielded her visible cheek with one hand, out of Luna's line of sight. Barely sparing a glance, she rushed past the figure standing at the doorway. It was Laura, Luna's adoptive mother. Collie's abrupt exit left Laura taken aback, her eyes darting between her daughter and the retreating figure.

Laura's gaze softened as she observed her daughter. Luna, with a slow and deliberate motion, brought her right hand near her face and subtly sniffed it. Laura observed this unfamiliar behavior with quiet curiosity, her gaze unwavering from Luna's countenance.

"Luna," Laura finally broke the silence, her voice holding the warmth of a caring mother. "Is everything okay?"

Luna's face brightened with a nonchalant, almost indifferent smile. "Yeah, I'm sorry Mom," she responded, trying to brush off the seemingly strange act. "What's up?" she quickly added, eager to steer the conversation away from her odd behavior.

Meanwhile, Collie was frantically gasping for air as she entered the bathroom, her face as red as a beacon in the night. She forcefully turned on the faucet, causing water to splash out of her hands. Hastily, she rubbed her face with the spilling water, oblivious to the excess that cascaded over her shoulders and chest in a vigorous splash.

"Ah-Ah!" Collie gasped, her mind racing. "Why did I do that?!, WHY?!" Her eyes, shining like crystals from unshed tears, seemed to hold an ocean of regret, knowing that they would soon be lost amidst the water dripping from her face. Her right hand instinctively moved to cover her open mouth as she tried to calm herself down, dramatically slowing her breaths.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid!" She berated herself, her right hand smacking against her head as she shut her eyes tightly. Her breathing resumed, albeit interspersed with long pauses, as she was left alone, her gaze fixed on her moistened hands gripping the sink tightly.

"What am I gonna do?!" She moaned, lifting her head to face her reflection in the mirror. The image staring back at her was one of disarray - green eyes now stained by a growing yellow hue flushed with regret, a mess of hair strands glued to her rain-soaked face.

Back in Luna's room, Laura's voice echoed with concern. "Yes, I told her parents that you and Collie have been studying for a difficult exam, but it's been a whole day since. And now I'm worried about what happened to her."

Luna's voice softened, "I know Mom, me too. But, we're figuring this out. The necklace I got was the cause of Collie's change, and we really don't know if its effects are gone for good or not."

Laura interjected, her voice a touch more stern, "Well, with that tail of hers, I wouldn't count on it. As I've been a guardian for you, now Collie must be your main concern. Your meeting with the elders can wait."

"I know, I..." Luna's words trailed off, her gaze falling to the floor.

Laura, softening her tone, interrupted Luna's thoughts. "In any case.... you'll feel better to think after you eat some of my lasagna. So now, why don't you call your friend and come to eat?"

Luna hesitated before responding, "I don't think I'm hungry mom."

Laura's response was immediate, "That is not an excuse." Luna sighed as she watched her mother descend the stairs, then turned her gaze towards the hallway where Collie disappeared. Slowly, she rose to her feet and moved towards the bathroom. Her hand hovered over the door, about to knock, but paused when she heard a faint whimper from within.

Luna didn't know what to make of this situation, she had a faint idea of what Collie could be thinking, but Luna couldn't fathom ever thinking that Collie could really have feelings for her. Not that it would be necessarily a bad thing, however, Collie's attempted kiss could've been a playful moment that turned into embarrassment and nothing else. Her friendship was crucial to keep her close and safe, especially with the unexpected dangers of their werewolf lives they now had. Complicating their relationship at this very moment seemed a bad call, although deep within her chest something hung in Luna's heart as she leaned closer to the door.

"Collie?" The whimper halted abruptly, as Luna waited for a response that didn't come. She took in a deep breath, preparing her next words which turned out simpler than she initially thought. "Collie... are you okay?" Once more, her question was met with silence. Luna recalled a familiar moment in their shared past, finding herself resting her head against the closed door. "Collie, this happened once before. Do you remember the school bathroom? You were crying... I acted so foolishly back then... But it's also when we became friends. And...well..." she paused, "that hasn't changed."

"But..." Collie's voice was barely audible, trailed off as her inner thoughts continued *-I may want it to change-* which she quickly rephrased in her head before they could be heard for real "But... I may have changed more than I thought, Luna..." she said, despite the mismatch with what she had just mentally whispered.

"What do you mean?" Luna asked, her voice with genuine concern. The clicking sound of the opening door resonated throughout the room as Collie emerged, her sad, green eyes meeting Luna's once again.

Collie's long tank shirt was drenched in various spots, while her normally tidy hair was a loose, messy cascade of threads, wet and clinging to her face. Without her usual ponytail, Collie's hair looked oddly longer, adding an unfamiliar touch to her overall appearance. A delicate blush decorated the skin under her eyes and nose, giving her a glowing warmth that Luna found mesmerizing. Luna's eyes softened, the edges of her vision blurring as she was enveloped in a soft scent that seemed to radiate from Collie.

"So?" The short questioning word of her friend froze Luna's thoughts as she felt an uneasiness climbing up her spine. A part of her wanted to embrace her, another part wanted her to keep things as they were. But above all else, she wanted to protect her, a word that both parts of her mind could agree on.

"Y-You look the same to me! For a second there I thought you were going to show me claws or something," said Luna as she casually petted Collie's head, startling Collie's thoughts with more questions than answers, never expecting such casual demeanor from Luna of all people. Luna then added, " Anyway, my mom invited us to eat and...I'll be waiting for you down there."

Luna sighed immediately as she turned around. While walking away she looked to her side for a moment before going down the stairs, drawing a smile to her friend as if to remind her that everything was okay. Collie was left there, deep in her thoughts.

Collie stood there, alone in front of the bathroom, her thoughts racing. She shook her head slightly, letting out a sigh. "I guess I should stop thinking about odd things and just try to be myself again," she muttered.

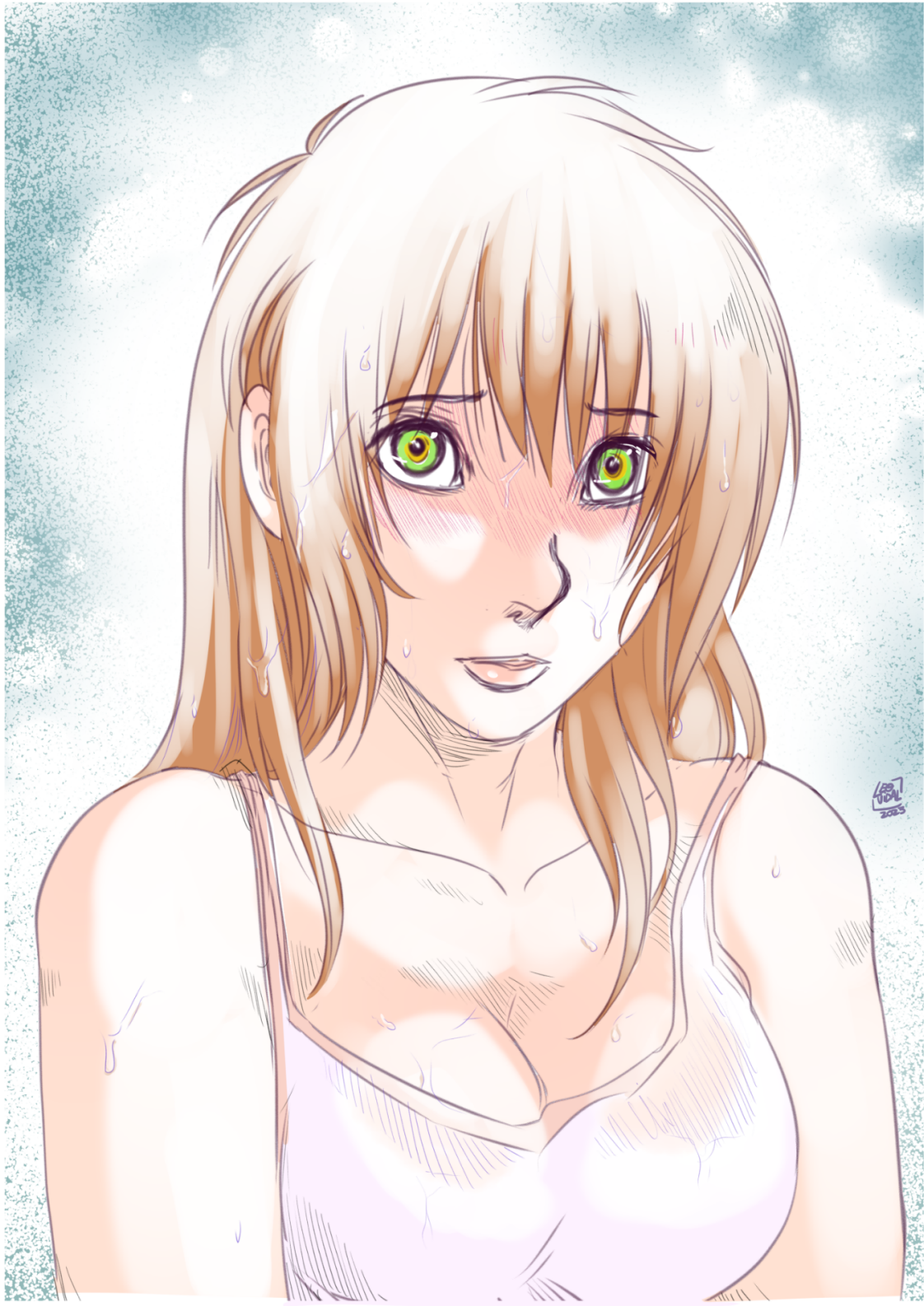
Her body slumped forward, defeated, as a weight seemed to hang over her head. "I better dry myself up," she mumbled to the empty room. She strode over to the bathroom door, opening it wide before stepping inside and hastily pulling it shut. As the door closed, she nearly trapped her new furry appendage. "Ouch! It's your fault, not mine... Damn it," she exclaimed, berating the unexpected body part as if it had a mind of its own.

The dinner table was filled with an unusual scene – three werewolves, still looking indistinctly human, were seated and sharing a meal. Fang was devouring the lasagna voraciously. Collie, on the other hand, seemed to have tidied herself up, donning new clothes, and wearing her classic ponytail.

"How can you still be this hungry,?" Luna questioned Fang. "You even had breakfast, not to mention last night."

Fang managed to reply between bites, "Well, this way, I may be skipping the hunt tonight."

"What?" Luna retorted, sounding surprised. "You said we were obligated to hunt."



"So...?"



"Well, kinda," Fang said nonchalantly, "It was Collie's first full moon, so the deer was well deserved. Tonight you should be good with just a hare if you want."

Collie chimed in, "Oh, I see, it's like having a big party. You have the barbecue first and then you let people have some snacks and then some beverages."

Luna, while chewing on some salad, corrected her. "Usually it's the other way around, Collie."

"Oh yeah, something like that," Collie giggled, grabbing a drink and locking her eyes with Luna's as if trying to discern if the recent events were just fragments of her imagination.

"So... about tonight," Luna initiated, breaking the silence.

"We have two options," Fang started, sounding serious. "If 'Tails' doesn't change, she can get back here while we travel to meet the elders. If she is tied to the moon as we are, we take her with us."

Luna immediately protested, "I can't do that. I think Collie is still more important than any of your plans."

Fang's reaction was met with frustration as he uttered, "What?". Collie just hung her head lower thinking about the burden she had become to her companions.

"Even if she doesn't change, her tail here is still an issue," Luna continued, holding her resolve. "She can't pretend forever that she is wearing a costume and be by herself. We need to help her, I need to," she added.

"Luna..." Collie's voice trailed off, her eyes filled with a mix of appreciation and concern.

Fang sighed before replying, "Sure, but you know, the elders could have an answer to this issue. The fang necklace was something they've passed from alpha to alpha."

Luna countered, "Huh...well why don't you call the one that sent you and ask him to come? I think that'd help us a lot."

Fang, looking a bit skeptical, responded, "Huh...I guess. But I feel you're just dragging this thing out just to avoid "the call"."

Luna didn't hold back her feelings, "Believe what you want, I don't care. But I'm not going anywhere without Collie."

Fang, rubbing his temples, said, "Look, even if I do that it may take a while, the geezer usually doesn't carry a phone. He uses the email, though."

Collie, who had been quiet all this time, suddenly grinned excitedly, "An old werewolf wizard uses a computer? Oh my god, I want to meet him!"

"He's not a wizard... he's a shaman," Fang corrected her, remembering something, "And yeah, he likes watching weird cats and dancing videos all the time." A chill traveled down his

spine as he reminisced about a specific instance. It happened when he entered the shaman's chamber at an inconvenient time. The room was filled with the eerie sounds emanating from the computer, while Alban cast a cold-eyed glance over his shoulder. "Yeah....cats," He murmured.

Fang's train of thought was derailed as he noticed Luna and Collie staring, waiting for his next words. He cleared his throat and said, "In any case, IF... I manage to reach him, it could take the old man a couple of days to get here, tops. That means we'll still have to face the last night of the full moon by ourselves."

"That sounds reasonable," Luna nodded, idly playing with the fang necklace that started all this.

Collie, suddenly perked up, raising her hand like a schoolgirl waiting for permission to speak. Luna gave her a nod of acknowledgment. "Just talk, Collie."

Clearing her throat, Collie began, "I.. I was thinking that we should probably carry a backpack with changing clothes. You know, to travel back more safely?"

Fang scratched his head before replying, "I usually do that when I'm by myself. But you can carry one for all of us if you want."

Luna rolled her eyes, "What a gentleman."

Fang shrugged, "Hey, it's her idea."

Collie was quick to interject, "It's ok! Luna, seriously. It's just clothes. Besides, I'm still filled with so much energy since I woke up that I think I could run for hours." Luna just sighed in resignation, taking her friend's words for granted.

"Ok, it's settled then," Fang wrapped up the conversation as he chomped on the last piece of lasagna from his fork.

Collie stole a glance at Luna's eyes one more time, her eyes filled with a mix of fondness before adding Fang into her field of view. A part of her realized her life had been turned heads down into an unknown territory of which she now was part. She had companions, friends with supernatural gifts that she, to some extent, now shared.

Her exhilaration at being part of an adventure she had only previously encountered in her fantasy books surpassed any fear she could have about her newfound werewolf nature. The radiant smile on her face revealed her uncontrollable excitement, while unbeknownst to her, her tail wagged with delight behind her chair.

Laura, on the other side of the room, noticed this unmistakable sign and released a brief chuckle before her gaze shifted toward the window behind her. She turned around while her eyes fixated on the distant horizon beyond the ominous woodland hills, lost in contemplation.