

UntitledNaNo 2013

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Life for Death

In a time, when the world was young and human kind younger still the great dragon, Xi'thanus, watched uneasily. Seeing that the people whom his child, Trsianus, had created were ravaging the land. Taking and building and expanding, the more they were given the more they demanded. Finally Trsianus came to his father and said.

'father, my people can not find balance. They are greedy and when I punish them for their greed they rue my name and I am weakened. What am I to do? I can't allow them to continue this blind path but they can't see the trees for the forest.' The great dragon nodded and replied.

'My child they are greedy because you made them so. They are blind to the damage they do because they are not connected to the earth.' Trsianus seemed confused and worried, had he made a mistake when he created the humans if so what was it?

'What can I do to cure my people of their madness?' Trsianus asked his father, desperate to rectify his mistake.

'There is little that you can do child, they have already been created and loosed on the world.' the great dragon unfurled his bulk from the star in which he slept and stared down at the little world. 'We could destroy them and you could start over?' he offered his child but Trsianus seemed distraught by the idea.

'Father it is not their fault, I created them and I love them. each as it was my own .' Trsianus looked down on the little world dismayed at what his father was saying but

the dragon chuckled at him gently.

‘I thought as much, never fear my child there is some thing that we can try first.’ and the great dragon explain his plan to Trsianus. The plan was simply to create a people similar to the humans and allow them to co exist. Before this time the humans had no grasp of magic, because they were sculpted by the demi gods hand and he made them from bits of other animals the humans them selves had no magic in them. The lack of magic was what caused the blindness that Trsianus had spoken of. The great dragon explained that Trsianus himself was made of magic and the very soil of the world so he understood inherently the needs of his world, the humans lacked this but it was not too late. The dragon advised that Trsianus create different humans and place them among the ones who now existed, humans to guide these wayward children.

So Trsianus did as he was told and he took the soil of the earth and crafted the bones of this new race, ensuring that they would be forever connected with the land. Then he built the rest much as he built the first humans, one by one he built this new people and as he finish them he placed them among the highest ranking humans. He told the humans that these new individuals was there to guide them, to help them, these new people had magic and could see the damage that had been wrought.

Slowly the new peoples integrated and bred with the humans, this had been Trsianus’s hope, and so the human race became imbued with magic. But still many ignored the sight they were given, too greedy was the human heart

and Trsianus went back to his father more distraught than before. the great dragon took pity on his soft hearted child and so he created the first lupine, the Mother of the Pack.

The great dragon made her to be all caring and nurturing, much like Trsianus but the great dragon too had learned that he was capable of mistakes. So to go with her caring nature he also gave her a wrathful side, strong enough to punish those that wronged her but soft enough to nurture a new and better race. A race strong enough to force the humans in line yet soft enough to nurture the earth back to health. And when she was finished the great dragon laid a gese on her, to ensure that she never strayed from her purpose.

‘Never shall you let your children stray, family and life and balance will be everything to them.’ The Mother nodded to the great dragon as he continued. ‘you shall created them from the earth, the mountains will be their bones, the soil their flesh, the lava the blood that flows through them.’ The Pack Mother nodded her understanding but the great dragon continued. ‘as for their minds and skin that shall be of the wolf, where the good of the pack is everything and thus they shall never be in conflict with the needs of the earth.’ the great dragon nodded that he was finished and the Pack Mother grinned toothily. ‘I shall see it so.’ she growled and she was off to the world below to build her people..’

Leshara opened her sleepy violet eyes and peered out of the blanket into the dark room. She sat up brushing long ivory wisps of hair out of her eye, her mate Trel shifted

restlessly. She yawned and licked her chops as she reached out to sooth him back to restful sleep. He mumbled, one ear twitching gently before his breathing evened out and slipped back into deep slumber. Leshara sighed as her pup swollen belly trembled, the solitary pup as awake as she was.

She cradled her stomach with one arm as she hoisted herself off the bed, making for the shuttered window. To think that a lone pup could be so troublesome, Leshara found herself thankful that she wasn't harboring a litter in there. Her lips curled up over her long teeth as she pushed the shutters open and breathed in the cool night air. She breathed deep leaning on the window sill, her nostrils flaring a little and her ears laid back. Leshara ex-hailed and the pup calmed enough for her to sit in the chair next to the window.

"There now little one," she rubbed her stomach rhythmically and she anxious pup slid to a stop. Leshara smiled. "I know you're anxious to meet the world but not yet, little pup." her stomach shivered and she felt the strange dropping sensation as the pup inched lower. "Now, now," she scolded gently, still rubbing her stomach. "You still have a whole week at the very least." the pup wiggled as she cooed softly. She smiled, her pearly teeth hidden behind her whiskered lips.

Leshara sat rocking in her chair, she closed her eyes and listened to the frogs and night bugs sing into the darkness. Trel rolled over a whuffed quietly in his sleep, she glanced at him and her smile widened her lips pulling

away from her teeth slightly. Her smile quickly turned into a grimace as her back started to ache, more so than usual anyway. Leshara blinked and sat straighter as she realized something wasn't right. Her stomach tightened and here eyes went wide, the whites showing in the starlight.

After a moment the sensation subsided but her anxiety did not. Leshara took a breath and closed her eyes, concentrating on the cool breeze rustling her fur. That didn't last long, moments later her stomach tightened again harder than before. Leshara snarled, her lips pulled back baring her teeth.

"Trel!" She barked as the sensation passed and wetness spread across her hindquarters. His golden eyes slid open and he looked at her groggily. "Your whelp is ready now!" Trel leapt out of bed and loped over to her.

"What, now?" He asked gently as he rested his hand on her stomach, the pup within seemed to thrash eagerly. Leshara looked at him and nodded, her eyes were glazed and her usually pink nose was white as linen so was the skin around it. Trel fell back on all fours and shot out of the room, howling for the midwife.

Leshara panted and heaved herself out of the chair, planing to make for the birthing mat not a foot away. As she came to her feet her knees gave out sending her sprawling to the floor. Fortunately Trel appeared at her elbow, catching her and easing her way down.

"A little eager your self aren't you?" his tone gently reprimanding as he helped her to the mat. She looked at him and smiled. It was then that the midwife came in, two

young bitches in tow carrying birthing supplies.

“Lay back dear and let me have a look at you.” The midwife crooned gently as she crouched at the end of the mat. Leshara nodded and laid back as the she-wolf examined her carefully. After a moment she looked at Leshara and smiled. “The pup is well on its way.” She gave Leshara’s leg a comforting squeeze as she stood and ushered her apprentices off to the side of the room. Leshara watched them for a moment then looked to Trel. He smiled at her, ears twitching wildly.

“Somethings not right, Trel. I can feel it.” She shook her head, she didn’t just feel it. She had seen it, Leshara closed her violet eyes and gasped as another spasm shook her.

The mid wife glanced at her then with sharp words sent one apprentice skittering from the room and the other set to lighting candles. The midwife settled next to Trel and took Leshara’s jaw gently in her hand, she turned the pregnant she-wolf’s face too and fro. The skin around Leshara’s eyes and nose had turned gray now, her eyes glazed over. The midwife gently touched her nose, it should have been cool and almost clammy. Instead it was hot and dry, rasping when she drew the pad of her finger across it. Their eyes met and each female confirmed the others fears.

“Tisha.” the midwife said calmly looking at the only apprentice in the room, the young she wolf looked at them and blinked. “I need you to get our lady something to drink, her nose is dry.” The young bitch nodded and turned from the room, the sound of her foot steps belayed her panicked smell. As the young she wolf bustled from the

room the second apprentices led the household priest in. The youngster stood off in the corner as the priest came and took Trel by the arm.

Leshara watched as her mate was taken to one side, she licked her chops with dry tongue and panted as another contraction came to her. The priest spoke to her mate as the midwife crouched next to her. Before she wolf could open her mouth to speak Leshara laid a hand on hers, the midwife's fur was soft and ruddy brown, her eyes like liquid honey.

"I know." Leshara spoke softly. The midwife's sharp almost fox-like face was troubled. "Did you wall the girls from the village, the wet nurses?" The midwife frowned at this and looked back as the apprentice who had disappeared to get water shoved the cup in her mistress's face. The midwife took cup and pitcher, setting the pitcher on the floor and holding the cup to Leshara's face.

"I did Mistress, but I disagree." the woman sounded almost bitter. "Bringing a human in to whelp your pup..." her words died away as she took the now empty cup from Leshara's lips.

"There is a lupine girl as well, two to watch over her, to share the responsibility." Leshara cried out as another pain struck her.

"They are closing together." the midwife said needlessly, Leshara frowned at her as Trel padded over softly. The big red male seemed to collapse next to her, he looked at the midwife as the priest stood back.

"There is nothing you can do?" Trel asked the midwife,

his bright gold eyes misted over. The midwife shook her head and sighed. behind them the apprentices were pouring heated water brought from the kitchens into a kettle placed in the small fire place. A flame under it to keep it ready.

“It is a matter of time now,” the she wolf shook her head. “the pup is early, but not too early. The Mistress on the other hand, she is bleeding far more than normal.” Trel shook his head, his mane of red and black hair rustled as he grabbed Leshara’s had.

“There has to be something you can give her...” He started looking from one to the next, hoping that someone had something else to say, the midwife rested a hand on his bare shoulder.

“Would that there was. I gave her something to slow the process before she went to bed, and another dose just now.” The she wolf sighed, her hand on his shoulder tightened. “I dare not give her more, it may harm the pup.” Leshara shook her head as vigorously as she could manage, another pain took her before she could speak.

“I would not let her if she was willing.” Leshara said fiercely when the words would finally come. the midwife moved back to the end of the mat and another pain washed over Leshara, her abdomen tightened so the at it seemed to burn. Trel’s lupine mouth twisted into a frown, Leshara took his hand and he squeezed it tight.

“Leshara, there could be others...” she chuckled at the greedy male, he was close enough that she could rest her head on his knee.

“No,” she sighed. “there couldn’t.” she turned here violet

eyes up to him, seeing him through her blond lashes. He nodded and gently stroked the top of her head, her ears laying back with each stroke. The pain took her again, the midwife sat at her end of the mat murmuring affirmations and waiting. As she said it was only a matter of time now.

“You knew this would happen didn’t you?” Trel asked her softly once the pain had passed and her head was resting on his knee again. She nodded, panting. Leshara looked up at him again and sighed.

“Grieve not for me, I have done what the Den Mother put me on this planet to do.” She mumbled, her tongue felt thick in her muzzle. “I always knew giving you a child would kill me.” She chuckled softly, feeling a little loopy. “I just thought it would be later on down the road.” he gently stroked her hair, a pain took her again and the midwife frowned.

“Vinea!” she growled sharply at the young she wolf, the girl came forward. “the contractions are inconsistent, bring a small does of star flower essence.” The girl looked at the mistress.

“Is that wise, it will bring forth the pup more quickly...” The midwife forgot her self and snapped her large maw at the youth.

“Do not question me!” Trel looked at the midwife frowning. She looked at him and snorted her displeasure. “the Mistress is weakening, we must bring the pup forth before we lose them both.” Trel nodded and turned his attention back to his mate, stroking her head gently

“It is because she will have the sight.” Leshara spoke

weakly. “That is why she takes my life,” she grabbed his hand with surprising strength and her violet eyes turned on him. They were fever bright and glossy violet. “She knows not what she does, promise me you will not blame her!” Trel nodded.

“I promise.” Leshara relaxed against him and smiled.

“I knew you would, its why I took you as my mate.” he smiled sadly at her, stroking her mane. As they sat waiting for the next wave of pain to hit her the priest walked over and knelt next to Leshara. His dark lavender eyes met hers, platinum fur bristled. Her brother looked on her with grim eyes.

“I will be sure to teach her everything she needs to know...” his voice choked off and she smiled at him ruefully until the her abdomen tightened again making her growl.

She would have spoken more, they knew but the spasms came closer together and there was nothing left to do but let the midwife do her work. The apprentices bustled around her as she barked commands at them, towels, hot water, more towels. Leshara’s eyes glazed over and grew dim as she howled over the commands, it wasn’t long before some of the servants, human and lupine alike had gathered at the door to their lords apartments. Waiting anxiously to see if their mistress was going to survive.

“I can see the crown!” the midwife announced excitedly. “This is the hard part mistress, when I tell you push!” Leshara nodded, mate on one side, brother on the other each with a hybrid paw in hand. The pain seized her and the midwife commanded. “PUSH!!” Leshara growled

with determination as she did. “Good, just a couple more. And Push!” Leshara howled, squeezing the hands of her mate and brother. “The head is out, keep pushing.” Leshara snarled and bared down hard, there was a wet sliding sound and the pup was cradled in the arms of the midwife.

She quickly wiped away the membrane, setting it in a bowl, as the splatting noise came so did the mewling of the pup. Proof she lived, Leshara collapsed and there was no small amount of cheering from the doorway. Trel looked back at them and blinked, almost as if he had been unaware of the audience. An apprentice handed the midwife a small knife without being bid to do so. The midwife cut the cord and towed off the pup with a wet hot cloth, then she dried the small bundle as the apprentices started to clean up. Leshara blinked her eyes clear and looked down as the midwife tightly wrapped the small blond and red bundle in a blanket.

“Let me see.” Trel said anxiously, she the wolf smiled at him and handed over the pup.

“A perfectly, healthy bitch.” the midwife stated for all to hear, the crowd at the door murmured approvals, affirmations and congratulations until she turned the apprentices on them. The two young bitches hastened to shoo the crowd away and close the door.

Trel crouched next to Leshara and nestled the pup in her arms, Leshara’s brother hastened to get her pillows and get her set up. the apprentices came back moments later with a big copper tub, they started to fill it with water and a procession of scullions came from the kitchen with buckets.

the tub was ready in not time. Leshara looked up at them and blinked.

“Time to clean you up.” her brother stated as he took the pup from here. “Be sides its my turn.” he said gently. Leshara laughed at him.

“I guess it would be.” she said as the apprentices helped her to her feet and then into the tub. As they bathed her Trel took the midwife aside, his ears twitched restlessly.

“Lady Marga..” Trel started, the midwife looked at him and smiled sadly.

“Yes my lord?” Trel looked at the pup and his brother in law.

“She’s tired yes but...” The midwife stopped him there.

“It’s more than that.” the she wolf shook her head and crossed her furred arms, one claw tapping her fleshy arm, the black and tan markings on her face shifting as she considered her words. “The Priest Balfor,” Leshara’s brother pricked his ears hearing his name. “Could probably explain better than I, but as i understand it when a seer is born they draw on the life of the mother.” she seemed hesitant to continue so Balfor picked up where she left off.

“The good wife is right.” He looked at Trel with his sisters eyes, or close enough that in this moment of vulnerability is gave Trel the shivers. “That’s how Seers pass on their power. It’s in the blood, each seer takes the life and experiences of the ones before.” Trel wrinkled his muzzle, that didn’t make sense.

“If that’s the case, what happens if more than one is born to a mother. Or if one dies in battle.” Rare though that

was it happened. “What about the? they don’t give birth what happens to them?” Balfor looked at Trel crossly.

“Ferna, the den mother tell us that when a male seer has reached his end he returns to her and she chooses a worthy female to gift with a seer pup. The spirit of the male is passed on in this way.” Trel growled under his breath, gods and their mysteries!

“Bah!” he shook his head, ears laid flat. “and if a female births more than one?” Balfor growled pulling his lips back a little.

“Yo think this is easy for me to accept either.” He handed Trel the pup and glanced at his sister relaxing in the tub as the apprentices washed her. “When more than one pup is born a seer to a seer the pups are weaker in proportion to how many there are.” He glowered at Trel. “Its simple math Trel!” The midwife snarled and grabbed them both by the ears, giving them a sharp tug as if they were pups.

“Both of you calm down.” they looked at here unhappily as she took the pup from Trel, the apprentices were helping Leshara out of the tub and drying her off. The pup was mewling hungrily. “The pup must eat, Mistress Leshara may not last the night.” She hushed the pup and turned away from them. “the more mothers milk the baby can get the better.” The she wolf walked away form the, dismissive of anything else they may have to say.

“I’m going to bed.” Balfor stated tiredly, knowing his sister she would be around for the night at least. She was powerful and would not consent to return to the den mother until she knew her pup was well cared for.

Trel nodded and watched his brother in law depart, he sighed heavily and went to sit with Leshara. As he approached the pup turned her head to him, despite her ears being folded. She then looked at him, despite her eyes being closed she seemed to focus on him as he sat on the edge of the bed, where Leshara was curled feeding the pup. the whelp turned her attention back to her mothers breast and suckled hungrily as if she knew there would be little time to spend with her natural mother. The midwife turned to him and took a deep breath.

“Arrangements have already been made to bring wet nurses here to care for the pup.” her arms crossed she watched his reaction, confusion clouded his gold eyes.

“Wet nurses.” He blinked at her. “Plural?” The midwife nodded.

“Quite so.” The wolf woman straightened her apron, the only bit of clothing she wore. Though patterns were bleached into her fur at the shoulders. “Why more than one, surely you and the apprentices with one wet nurse could make due?” Then his mate laughed at him from the bed, where she caressed the tiny lupine pup.

“She will need more than Lupines to care for her, to prepare her for her place in the world.” Trel blinked at his mate, nose twitching.

“I take it I have no say in the matter?” Leshara shook her head and cooed at the fuzzy pup.

“If you deny her this you deny her destiny.” Leshara’s eyes met his and in the violet depth Trel could see that he was beaten... there was no winning. He didn’t have the

strength to deny what could be the last request she ever made of him. Trel nodded and laid back, draping his arm around her shoulders, the pup nestled between them.

“I will leave you now, if you need anything my quarters are not far.” the midwife stated as she exited the room. Trel scooted closer, pressing the pup between them.

“What shall we name her?” Trel asked quietly as he stroked the pups soft head, the little whelp rolled over on her back and grabbed at his hand. He smiled as she brought it to her toothless mouth and gnawed on it.

“Le’rala.” His mate said decisively, Trel looked at her and laughed.

“I never had a choose did I?” Leshara looked at him and grinned a toothy wolf grin.

“No chance in the hells.” They laughed and the pup played with Trel’s hand. He leaned over and nuzzled his mate gently, the musky smell of her clean fur filling his nose. “And you must move closer to the village, or foster as many young here as you can handle.” He pulled back and looked at her strangely.

“Both easier said than done love.” he focused on the pup, Le’rala. Her fur was patterned like his, but she favored her mothers color. Platinum blond Vs alternated with strawberry blond, little strawberry colored eyebrows. The little thing seemed to be all ears! Leshara laughed at him, as if reading his mind.

“She’ll grow into them, have no fear.” He smiled at them both.

“You have done well my love, she’s perfect.” Leshara

laughed heartily at that and nuzzled closer to him.

“You say that now, wait until she’s old enough to have opinions of her own.” HE rolled his eyes at her. “She will be willful try and temper her with patters as much as you can. but there will come a point where nothing you do but let her go.” she sat up and looked deep into her mates eyes. HE nodded.

“I will pray that the den mother provides me with the wisdom to know when that is.” Leshara laughed at him again, her eyes sparkled though they seemed dimmer than they had at dinner.

“My brother will know, never fear.” Trel rolled his eyes at her and she whuffed. “you must trust him to guide you, with me gone he will be the only one who knows what needs to be done.” Trel nodded and stroked her blond cheek.

“Never fear, your brother and I have always had an understanding...” She gave him a look that made the words die on his lips.

“I know you, you will be a fiercely protective father, but you have to let her get hurt or she will not learn the lessons needed.” She blinked at him seriously and he conceded.

“I will do my best.” he affirmed. she smiled.

“That’s better.” she teased him gently and rested her head on his chest, the pup between them sleeping. “I guess we best follow her example.” Leshara settled and quickly drifted off to sleep.

After a moment Trel checked her breath, it still came and went steadily. In the candle light it was hard to tell that some of the color had returned to the skin around her

eyes and nose. Unsure if he was going to be able to sleep he grabbed a pillow and propped it against the wall, resting his head on it. He was asleep in moments and then morning was upon them.

Trel woke first, he glanced out the still open window. The sun was out and the birds were singing, the rain storms of the week before forgotten. He sighed and nuzzled his mate, she groaned and blinked very slowly at him. He smiled his best smile but the skin around her nose and eyes, even her mouth had gone gray. Her eyes had lost their color, as if the den mother had added water to them during the night.

“Trel, I would sit in the garden with your and Le’rala to break my fast. I feel some sun would do me good.” He nodded and stood gently, the pup whined none the less and Leshara comforted her.

Trel summoned some servants and had a liter brought up, Leshara and Le’rala were loaded in. The servants carted then out to Leshara’s garden, she had chosen the plants and grown them herself. Next he went to the kitchens to see that breakfast was well on its way. then he ventured out to the garden, having had some moments to compos himself. Leshara was seated in a large circular chair, curled up with the whelp. He joined her with a smile, her fur was dull and seemed brittle. Such a change over night, he knew that Balfor and Marga were right.

He sat in the chair opposing her and they chatted amiably until breakfast was brought to them. Bacon, eggs, liver and a brace of rabbits. There were some sweet meat

cakes as well, he could also smell bread and porridge but that was for the human staff. Lupines were not fond of oats and vegetables, though the fancy did take them once in a while. Vegetables added wonderful flavors to a roast. He ate heartily of everything provided, Leshara picked at a meat cake and some liver. Any other time he would have harped on her, she never ate well in the mornings then complained of being hungry later on... but today. No today he would let her eat how ever little she wanted. Her fur seemed to be white instead of the stunning platinum that it was suppose to be and she seemed more listless by the moment.

Shortly after breakfast was taken away Marga bustled into the garden. She was in her humanoid form dressed in a plain blue dress and corset, her bushy brown and black tail swaying gently behind her. She quietly checked Leshara and the pup, seeming satisfied she offered Leshara a small cup, which she took and drank with out question. then the she wolf turned her brown human eyes on Trel.

“I received a message from the wet nurses, they will be arriving with in the hour.” Her hands came together and she started to wring them. “The potion should perk her up for long enough to meet the women, that will satisfy her last wishes and her time will come soon after.” Trel nodded and the wolf woman bustled away, he could see her hands go up to her face. He presumed she was drying it. HE looked at his mate and she did seem more alert.

“They will be here soon and I can rest.” She shifted and the pup curled closer to her. “I have it on good authority that these women will be perfect.” Trel snorted quietly as

Balfor came out, also in his humanoid form, garbed in cream robes bordered in the pattern that denoted his station.

“Good morning sister.” he sat in the third chair, the trio had frequently sat in the garden to discuss what ever was needed.

Their wild nature drawing them out from behind walls, even after learning to walk upright few Lupines opted to live in the confines of walls that humans found so comforting. After the War a few select families, those that were involved in the treaty had chosen to live as the humans do. With walls and roofs closing them in, the goal was to keep a line of communication open with the humans. A way to maintain peace. Scant two generations later they still were not accustomed to such enclosures, nor was the endeavor of peace looking bright. Le’rala would be the third generation of Lupines to live thus, Trel had often wondered if Lupines would ever really adapt. Or if it would make a difference, living behind walls made it easy for the human envoys to find them but they rarely tried. Nor did the Lupines, he had to admit, try their best to maintain contact. He shook his head to himself, Leshara and Balfor looked at him.

“Whats wrong my mate?” she asked Trel in a weak voice. Balfor raised a human eyebrow at him. Trel cleared his throat.

“I was just contemplating the ill fated endeavor that my Grand father signed out family on for.” Leshara smiled wryly at him.

“It was necessary.” she said softly. There seemed to be more that she wanted to say but one of the serving girls

bustled in and cleared her throat.

“The Wet nurses are here my lord.” Trel nodded and shifted in his round chair.

“Bring the girls in.” he said lusterless, he had been hoping that they would be a few more hours.

Trel snorted when the whelp bustled away again. It seemed that most of the household had chosen their humanoid forms in order to better welcome the human wet nurse. He didn't understand the pandering, she would have to accept that she worked, lived and was in fact raising a Lupine. He shook his mane out and the trio waited quietly.

Moments later the two women were ushered in. One was a tall and rounded Lupine. woman, she wore simple riding gear and had a motherly look about her even in her humanoid form. The other was a young human woman, surprisingly young and dressed in a fine riding frock. The Lupine. had gray eyes that shone with intelligence. By her hair, which was braided away from her face, he guessed that her pelt was a mixture of brown and gray much like their timber wolf cousins. The human girl was small and almost frail looking, her straw blond hair pulled back in a braid. Her blue eyes strangely showed no hint of fear. Leshara looked back at the young pair and smiled gently.

“Come join us, the servants should bring chairs a soon.” Leshara and Balfor looked to be sizing them up. Trel knew they would be a better judge of who should help him raise little Rala, his nick name for the wolf pup who was still nestled in her mothers arms. The two bowed in unison.

“We are honored to be chosen for such a monumental

task.” The wolf woman spoke softly as she and the other made their way closer. “My name is Rona Thislefur.” The human woman trailed behind her a little. “and this is Lady Shira.” Balfor narrowed his eyes and looked from one to the other.

“Lady Shira, daughter of Baron Weather Heights.” Rona looked at him and smiled.

“The very same, her father was instrumental in the original treaty signed between ourselves and the humans” two servants each brought a chair and added it to the circle, the prospective wet nurses each claimed a seat and situated them selves. Trel shifted this claim would make her father at least 70.

“And why doesn’t the charming young human speak for herself?” Trel asked before he could reign in the thought. The human made the first noise since her arrival, jovial laughter. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw little Rala turn her attention in the direction of the amused sound.

“My father warned me you would be blunt! I’m surprised he remembered so well, he was only a boy when the war started.” the woman said, her human smile showing all of her strait white teeth. “Why he had reached his majority only 2 years before he helped devise the treaty. As to why I may not be the most apt at conversation, Rona has been my most talkative companion for many long years now. I find that she is usually more articulate than I am in most cases. Though I am better with numbers.” The lady Shira smiled softly at Rona, who snorted at her. “Besides, I was not sure how welcome I would be in a mostly lupine household.”

Rona glared at her.

“Now you say too much, your congeniality lessons are seriously lacking.” Rona’s tail twitched in irritation, Shira smiled and rested a gloved hand on Rona’s knee.

“So says the Mistress of the ritual.” Shira looked at Leshara and pulled her gloves off as she heard Rala make a little noise, her tiny hybrid hands reaching toward the human woman.

“It looks like someones ready to meet you.” Leshara said as she held out the bundle of pup to Shira. Trel was hesitant but allowed it. Little Rala cooed gently and grabbed onto the woman’s free hand, sticking it in her toothless mouth to gnaw.

“Such a curious babe.” The woman cooed at her as she rocked the pup. “You are going to be a smart one aren’t you?” she said in a high sweet voice, Rala nomed her hand and gurgled happily. “Isn’t she beautiful Rona?” Rona leaned over and stroked the soft pups pelt.

“Quite.” the wolf woman stated as she looked back to Leshara. “You know that we are not the women that your Mid wife originally sent for yes?” Leshara laughed gently, Balfor looked confused and Trel just sighed in exasperation.

“Oh yes I was aware! We were told to expect the other women this afternoon, it is barely past breakfast!” Leshara composed herself and leaned toward them. “How did you know I was in such need, two well educated and acquainted women such as your self.” Rona shifted and looked at Shira.

“One of the mystics that my father employs is a Priest of the order Vie’Rick, who gave some of the lupines future

sight.” the human woman stated matter of factly. “He told us that a Lupine lord was in need of a human and a lupine to raise his new born daughter.” she looked at Trel directly. “He said it was a matter of war and peace.” she looked back to the babe and let Rona take up the conversation.

“He had the vision 3 weeks ago...” Balfor interrupted.

“I am of that order and so is my sister,” he gestured to Leshara. “How is it he didn’t know of your coming?” Leshara chuckled at him.

“I knew.” she said softly as she curled under the blanket more, shivering despite the warmth of the morning. Trel stood and moved to her.

“Are you alright?” he crouched in front of her and she frowned at him.

“You know I’m not...” Rona looked at Shira and they both looked at Trel.

“Would you like us to find our rooms and get settled, while you have time for yourselves?” Balfor and Trel looked at them, then at Leshara. Leshara shook her head.

“No you may stay, one day she will ask about this day.” Leshara shivered and Trel tossed another blanket over her. “You are raising my child, you are now part of this family...” She looked at her mate and her brother. “There must be someone to tell her the truth, these two nitwits are too male to do so.” the two women chuckled as if there was some secret cosmic joke that the males didn’t understand.

“Of course.” Shira said as she stood. “Rona, would you be a dear and move my chair a smidgen closer.” Rona stood and moved not only Shira’s chair but her own closer to

Leshara.

The small group sat in the garden for a time, passing little Rala about like a toy. She cooed and gnawed on all of them, as they sat Trel became more comfortable with Leshara's choices. though no one had known that these two would be the ones to show. during the warm morning Rona and Shira disclosed their educations. Rona was well educated in philosophy, alchemy and a number of smaller disciplines. Shira had a well rounded education as her station demanded, everything from arithmetic to politics. Together they could have effectively run her fathers lands between themselves. When asked how they had convinced her father to allow her to take up the task of raising the lupine pup Shira shifted a little.

"I promised that if father made a match for me I would return to his keep." she looked down at the pup in Leshara's arms and smiled. "though if this child is as charming as I suspect she will be I will be loathe to go." She cooed at the pup and Leshara. looked up at her.

"If you must leave why don't you foster her for a time?" Shira smiled and glanced at Trel who nodded solemnly, she looked back to Leshara and smiled happily.

"I would love to." she said as Leshara. handed her the pup. Leshara looked at her mate and smiled at him, he nodded.

Understanding on an unspoken level that Rala would have much to do with humans in her future and she must learn to deal with them on equal footing, the conversations continued for another hour or so, it was plane by Leshara's

lack of participation that she was slipping. the midwife had come and checked on her a few times, giving her what ever she needed to be more comfortable. Suddenly a strange look came over Balfor's face and Rala started keening, Balfor happened to be holding her and he looked at Leshara. She hadn't moved for quite a while and he knew.

"She's gone." Trel's ears twitched and he shifted.

"How do you know?" he asked as he stood and moved to His mate. Balfor looked at them in turn as he cradled the child close.

"Rala told me..." They all looked at him astonished.

"You mean when she started keening..." Trel said as he covered his mates face with the blanket, she had gone cold and they skin around her nose and eyes was white.

"No, she saw it and I saw it through her." Balfor clutched the tiny pup close as she keened loudly, inconsolable.

"She is quite a gifted seer." Rona stated. "As I understand it that is a rare gift." Shira and Rona looked at each other and nodded.

"It is good that you came." Trel said stiffly, this voice thick and his golden eyes brimming with tears as he looked at the two women. "She is your daughter now as much as mine, please excuse me." he dropped to all fours and loped into the surrounding woods. Balfor stood and the two women stood also.

"Well lets get you settled." He looked a little lost, Rona stepped forward and Balfor handed her the pup.

“Get someone to settle us for you so that you may grieve in peace.” He nodded and strode to the kitchens. Women and pup in tow.

He got one of the errand girls to show the two women to their apartments. They were already set up for two women and an infant, the rooms also adjoined the main apartments. So Trel would have access to the pup as much as they would, Shira and Rona’s things had been brought up already. Their escort had also been put up in the small barracks for the night, they would start home a carry word of their success.