

The nest

Written By

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Current status:

- * Main plotline finished
- * Early game over ending finished
- * Still needs intro scene with exposition about the background plot
- * Additional endings to be added later

EXT. LUNA'S STUDY - DAY

SERACH stands in front of the door and knocks, then slips a note underneath before Luna can answer.

INT. LUNA'S STUDY - DAY

LUNA jumps in surprise and scrambles to hide the papers she's reading.

LUNA

Come in.

But there is only silence except for the rustle of paper. Luna frowns as she picks it up.

LUNA

An ad...?

[[Show ad on screen:

"~ Moonlight Woods ~

Furniture, signs, dolls, anything that requires skill and quality--bring it to us.

246 Ailey Street"]]

LUNA

(almost laughs at the
sheer normalcy of it)

An ad. Oh Divines, what did I think
it was? I'm far too worked up...

LUNA

(pauses and looks at the
note again)

But still... No ad magically finds
its way under a High Mage's door
like this.

LUNA

Someone wants to meet with me, and
I'm curious who it is.

Luna carefully clears her desk of any evidence and leaves.

INT. MOONLIGHT WOODS STORE

LUNA pauses for a moment, examining the eerily realistic wooden dolls displayed in the shop. Snapping out of it, she hands over the ad to the OLD MAN at the counter.

LUNA
 (smiles a little)
 This found its way into my office.

OLD MAN
 (smiles and motions to a
 door at the back)
 He's waiting in the workshop.

LUNA (V.O.)
 He...? Well, let's see who this
 secret admirer is...

INT. EILHART'S WORKSHOP

EILHART is hunched over a table working on a doll, and
 straightens back up to look at LUNA as she comes in. SERACH
 is studying quietly in a corner, half hidden among dolls in
 progress.

EILHART
 So you made it. I was starting to
 get worried.

EILHART
 I realize this isn't the most
 conventional meeting place, but
 please humour me.

EILHART
 Why do you think I had you come
 here?

[[Show choices:

1A - "I'd say your guess is as good as mine, but you know
 why you brought me here."

1B - "You have something to tell me about my investigation."

]]

1A -

["Eilhart affinity"++]

LUNA
 I'd say your guess is as good as
 mine, but you know why you brought
 me here.

LUNA

I doubt it's for jubilant reasons,
so why not just cut to the chase,
hm?

LUNA (V.O.)

(trying not to look
worried)

He can't know who I'm working
for... Can he? There's no way
anybody would know.

LUNA (V.O.)

But I'd better not look nervous...

[[Skip to 1-CONTINUE]]

1B -

LUNA

You have something to tell me about
my investigation.

EILHART

(chuckles a little,
though the smile never
reaches his eyes)

Straight to the point, aren't you?

1-CONTINUE -

EILHART

(goes serious)

I fear you've been a bit too
aggressive in your digging around.
Asking questions, no matter how
discrete, never goes entirely
unnoticed.

EILHART

Some of our colleagues... I'm sure
you can guess which... are less
than pleased by some of those
questions.

LUNA

(nervously)

Are they now. What are you getting
at?

EILHART

I just came out of a meeting a few
(MORE)

EILHART (CONT'D)

hours ago. They will be sending
someone to tail you from now on.

LUNA (V.O.)

Oh, snap. Not good.

EILHART

Look, I don't know what you're
looking for, and it's your choice
whether you're going to continue
despite the spy or not, but...

EILHART

Whatever it is, is it really worth
risking your sister over this?

LUNA

Risking her?

EILHART

(pauses)

I'm afraid if you don't stop, we'll
have another Nikolai on our
hands...

[[Show choices:

2A - "Why would you warn me about this?"

2B - "Is that a threat?"

]]

2A -

[["Eilhart affection"++]]

LUNA

(trying to look calm)

I think that's blowing things out
of proportion, don't you...?

LUNA

I know my sister is innocent of
anything they could accuse her of,
and anything they could possibly
come up with wouldn't lead to an
extreme measure like that. Unless
they plan on framing her, but can
they really justify doing that to
someone who isn't even in the Guild
anymore?

LUNA

I suppose the part that I should find most concerning, however, is that you'd warn me of this.

EILHART

(smiles a little)

I would be surprised if you didn't find it strange.

EILHART

(looks serious)

I'm not stupid, Luna. Maybe a lot of it is my own fault, but I know I'm not exactly beloved by our "esteemed colleagues".

LUNA (V.O.)

...Pretty sure they would like you better if you didn't sound so sarcastic, Eilhart.

EILHART

Right now, the only reason I'm fine is because they have a common enemy. But if they take you down, it's gonna make them more confident, and there will be less opposition when they turn on me.

EILHART

And I know they will. In fact, more likely than not I'm the next target. So call it taking preventive action.

LUNA

(sympathetic)

Well I can't really argue with that. They've been apprehensive about you since the beginning...

EILHART

(chuckles a little)

Well, I suppose not many powerful, hard-working High Mages who descend from the great magical families of old appreciate having some random Joe go from nobody to the same rank as them.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Tell me about it. But it does make
 you wonder how he got into the
 Council...

[[Skip to 2-CONTINUE]]

2B -

["Eilhart affinity"--]]

LUNA
 Is that a threat?

EILHART
 (just stares)
 Why you I threaten you?

EILHART
 I'm just saying, Luna.
 You get people in the Council upset
 asking questions about their
 affairs, and they start asking
 questions about yours.

EILHART
 There's always something to be dug
 up. Even a necromancer like him
 probably wouldn't have been exposed
 if he kept to himself.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Is he saying Nikolai asked
 questions too? What kind of
 questions?

2-CONTINUE -

EILHART
 (shakes his head)
 In any case... You underestimate a
 High Mage's determination to keep
 their secrets safe.

EILHART
 They didn't really approve of it,
 but framing her is the back-up
 plan. You know how influent some of
 us can be... how many favors are
 owed. Your sister really doesn't
 (MORE)

EILHART (CONT'D)
need this right now.

LUNA (V.O.)
Really? He's telling it to my face,
that they're going to frame her?
They went and decided that in a
meeting?

LUNA (V.O.)
I can't tell if he's playing me, or
if they're really that rotten...

EILHART
Won't you stop, Luna? While you
still can?

LUNA (V.O.)
This sounds awfully familiar. But
my answer is still the same.

LUNA
I can poke around with a little
more finesse, but I can't promise
I'll stop what I'm doing. I don't
want to put Sola in a tough spot,
even more now that she has Alice to
worry about...

LUNA
But I can't just sit by and do
nothing. I've done far too much of
that already.

EILHART
(sighs)
I can't talk you out of it, can I?

EILHART
But there are so many that are more
than content to just sit by and
watch. What suddenly triggered this
need of yours to risk your own
family for this?

[[Show choices:

3A - "I'd tell you, but that would give you far more
leverage than I'm comfortable with. Nice try though."

3B - "I made a promise..."

]]

3A -

[["Eilhart affinity"++]]

LUNA

(smiles)

I'd tell you, but that would give you far more leverage than I'm comfortable with. Nice try though.

LUNA

I've sat by and watched innocent people take heat for our mistakes one too many times, thank you. And I will not sit quietly if my sister has even the slightest chance at being one of them.

EILHART

(gives a mock sigh)

Oh, well. It was worth the try.

[[Skip to 3-CONTINUE]]

3B -

LUNA

(softly)

I made a promise...

EILHART

Could you be any more vague? Who did you make this promise to?

[[Show choices:

4A - "As a matter of fact, yes. It wouldn't be fun if I told you, would it?"

4B - "I met Dmitri Amarov."]]

4A -

LUNA

(smiles)

As a matter of fact, yes. It wouldn't be fun if I told you, would it?

EILHART

(makes a face)

Why tell me at all if you're just going to leave me curious?

EILHART
 (gives up and sighs)
 Fine. So... What are you going to
 do with all of this?

[[Skip to 3-CONTINUE]]

4B -

[[Set "told Eilhart about Dmitri" to TRUE]]

LUNA
 I met Dmitri Amarov.

EILHART
 (stunned)
 What?! Nikolai's kid? How... Where?

LUNA
 In the demon realm. It turns out,
 he infiltrated the Guild and was
 under our noses all along.

LUNA (V.O.)
 It might be better not to tell him
 I was the one who helped him
 infiltrate us at this point...

LUNA
 He was one of the apprentices that
 got left behind in the first
 expedition.

EILHART
 (raises an eyebrow)
 And he managed to survive in a
 place half a dozen High Mages
 couldn't?

LUNA
 He made friends with some demons.

LUNA (V.O.)
 ...Better not say they were undead.
 Divines, I'm not helping convince
 anyone his father wasn't a
 necromancer, am I?

LUNA
 Anyway... He told me Nikolai was
 framed. He wanted me to investigate
 the matter.

LUNA (V.O.)
Well that caught his attention.
Maybe too much?

EILHART
(frowns)
But the evidence was pretty
convincing.

LUNA
(scoffs)
You're the one who was just warning
me that the Council wanted to get
rid of me so badly they might frame
my sister. You tell me if the
evidence wasn't a little too
convincing.

EILHART
(slowly nods)
Alright, I'll bite. Suppose you do
find evidence that he was
innocent...

3-CONTINUE -

LUNA (V.O.)
Wow. I've never seen him look so
serious.

EILHART
What do you expect to do with all
of this? Bring down the Council?

EILHART

You know the problem isn't just one
of us, but all of us. And even then
it wouldn't keep innocent people
from being hurt... Other rotten
High Mages would just find their
way in.

[[Show choice:

5A - "I just want to convince everyone that not all High
Mages are sell outs."

5B - "I will bring down all of you if I have to."

]]

5A -

[["Eilhart affinity" ++]]

LUNA

I honestly don't know what I plan
on doing with the information.
Perhaps simply convince everyone
that not all High Mages are sell
outs.

LUNA

All I know is that I've been quiet
for too long, and I can't let
things continue.

EILHART

(looks surprised)
You don't think all High Mages are
sell outs?

LUNA (V.O.)

So you do?

[[Skip to 5-CONTINUE]]

5B -

[["Eilhart affinity" -= 3;

[[Set "threatened to bring down Council" to TRUE]]

LUNA (V.O.)

I have to do this. I owe it to
Nikolai...

LUNA

I will bring down all of you if I
have to.

LUNA

I don't care if more rotten High
Mages get in. I'll bring them down
too.

EILHART

So you don't care about the damage
you'll do?

LUNA (V.O.)

(pauses for a moment)
That look in his eyes... Did I make
a mistake here?

LUNA (V.O.)
But I've gone too far to back down
now. Nikolai deserves better.

LUNA
Someone has to do it! The Council's
corruption is an insult to the
entire Guild!

EILHART
(looking carefully
neutral)
I'd agree with you... But you know,
as refreshing as your dedication
is, people like that never last.

5-CONTINUE -

A knock interrupts them. ERIK, Eilhart's sickly looking son,
shyly pokes his head inside the room.

ERIK
Pop? Mom wants...

EILHART
(interrupts him)
What are you doing here? Didn't I
tell you to keep out of the
workshop?

LUNA
(does a double-take)
Wait what? "Pop"?

ERIK
S-Sorry. Mom asked me to ask you to
buy some milk...

ERIK
(coughs quietly in the
back of his throat)
Who's the lady?

EILHART
She's from work. Now what did I
say?

EILHART
(looks at Serach)
Serach, take him back to his
mother.

SERACH
 (stands up and takes
 Erik's hand)
 Yes, sir.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Too late, Eilhart. There's no way I
 wouldn't notice this much dark
 energy.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Is this... A curse? A powerful one,
 too... What's going on here?

[[If "threatened to bring down the Council" is TRUE and
 "Eilhart affinity" is less or equal to 0

LUNA (V.O.)
 There's something off here. Eilhart
 looks tense... I don't like it.
 Maybe I shouldn't linger here.

{{Show choices:

6A - "I didn't know you had a son." (Stay.)

6B - "Uh... I'll be going." (Leave.)

}}

6B -

LUNA
 Uh... I'll be going. See you at
 work.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Why do I feel like I'm running?

[[Skip to Amarov house]]

6A -

LUNA
 I wasn't aware you had a son... not
 that I've ever delved into your
 personal life. He seems rather...
 under the weather. I don't suppose
 there's a reason for that, is
 there?

EILHART
 (looks amused)
 (MORE)

EILHART (CONT'D)

Maybe, maybe not.

EILHART

(suddenly serious)

Honestly, you don't really expect me to tell you, do you? Right after you threatened to bring down the same Council I happen to be part of?

LUNA (V.O.)

(eyes go wide)

I have a really bad feeling--

Serach moves behind her unseen and traps her in a headlock.

LUNA

Ahh! Get--off--

Luna lashes out with sharp shadow tendrils, but Serach keeps choking her.

LUNA (V.O.)

Impossible! How are they still standing?! How--

Luna sees metal peeking out from Serach's torn skin.

LUNA (V.O.)

An automaton?!

LUNA

Eilha--

EILHART

(keeps his expression entirely neutral)

Do it, Serach.

LUNA

(horrified)

Serach? Divines. His apprentice is an aut--

Serach snaps her neck. Luna slumps against him.

EILHART

(shoulders slump, suddenly looks so very sad and tired)

I don't disagree with you, Luna. The Council is rotten. Bringing it down would be a favor to

(MORE)

EILHART (CONT'D)
everyone...

EILHART
But I can't let someone who doesn't
know how to hide her cards leave
knowing about my family.

EILHART
(looks so sad)
I'm really, really sorry.

EILHART
Come, Serach. Let's hide her with
the others...

[[Ending #1]]

]]

EILHART
(clears his throat)
You were leaving?

[[Show choices

7A - "Was." (Stay.)

7B - "Uhm... Yes." (Leave.)

]]

7B -

LUNA
Uhm... Yes. See you later.

[[Skip to Amarov house]]

7A -

LUNA
Was.

LUNA (V.O.)
But now I have some questions for
you.

LUNA
I wasn't aware you had a son... not
that I've ever delved into your
personal life. He seems rather...
under the weather. I don't suppose
(MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)
 there's a reason for that, is
 there?

EILHART
 (pointedly)
 Well, yes, people not being aware
 of it was kind of the point.

EILHART
 Children get colds. Which is why I
 wanted him in bed, not wandering
 around.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Really now.

[[Show choices:

8A - "Alright. I'll see you at work then." (Leave.)

[if "told Eilhart about Dmitri" is TRUE] 8B - "Come on, I
 told you my secret."

[else] 8C - "How about a deal?"]]

8A -

LUNA (V.O.)
 (sighs)
 If he doesn't want to tell me,
 there's nothing I can do.

LUNA
 Alright. I'll see you at work then.

[[Skip to Amarov house]]

8B -

LUNA
 Come on, I told you my secret.

EILHART
 (sighs)
 I guess you did.

[[Skip to 8-CONTINUE]]

8C -

[[Set "heard Eilhart's story" to TRUE]]

LUNA
 I'm not a sell out, Eilhart, you
 (MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)

know that. Neither is my grandfather. Rather, he's feared this the whole time he's been on council.

LUNA

I'm not saying we can save anyone... hell, I'm not even saying we can change it. But we can try, right? So I'll make you a deal.

LUNA

(nods at the door)

You tell me what's up with him...

LUNA

And I'll tell you what I'm looking for, or who asked me to dig.

8-CONTINUE -

Eilhart is silent for a long time.

LUNA (V.O.)

He's really thinking it through, isn't he? This has to be something big...

EILHART

It was years ago. Back then, I didn't have the faintest how magic worked and I honestly didn't care. I just worked here and I was happy with it. It's been my family's business for as long as any of us can remember.

LUNA (V.O.)

He looks wistful... Better days, I take it.

EILHART

There was some High Mage who was under investigation by the council. He was under fire for a great count of murders.

LUNA (V.O.)

Murder? Years ago... I think Grandfather mentioned it. Was it Korone?

EILHART

(nods)

When the investigation started closing in, he panicked and fled... He came into the city, and into our shop, and demanded that we hide him from the Guild or else he would kill us.

EILHART

We spent about three weeks like that. Then our food ran out, and he gave me permission to leave and go buy supplies. I had no intention of risking my family, but my wife... She was always so honest, so scrupulous.

EILHART

(smiles sadly)

While he wasn't listening, she insisted that I tell the Guild. So when I left, I went and warned them... They didn't really believe me, so they only sent a few mages back with me.

LUNA

(shocked)

They didn't send any High Mages? That's ridiculous. Even if they didn't believe you, they should have played it safe anyway.

EILHART

(his gaze falls)

He killed them so easily. Then he turned on us... He cursed us. But I wasn't affected... You could say that was how I discovered my gift for magic.

EILHART

(motions towards a long,
thin metal tool leaning
against the wall)

He didn't expect it. While he was still recovering, I put that thing over there... Right through his heart.

EILHART

But it wasn't enough to dispell the curse. I went to the Guild for help. I begged the Council to help find a cure... But do you think they did anything?

EILHART

(angrily)

No, they didn't want to admit one of their own did that. So that they could keep up appearances, they even threatened us to shut us up. I'm fairly sure if I hadn't changed my identity after that, I wouldn't even be here now.

LUNA

(honestly upset)

I'm sorry... I had no idea.

EILHART

(crosses his arms)

Do you see now why I have some trouble believing you when you say not all High Mages are sell outs?

LUNA

(sadly)

I can't blame you.

EILHART

Maybe if you had been there back then, things would have been different.

EILHART

Or maybe you would have done nothing all the same, which makes you really no different from Lycioe or Victoria or any of them. 'Atoning' now won't make up for what not only me, but so many others have gone through.

EILHART

In any case, I joined the Guild hoping I could gain enough influence to force them to dispell the curse...

EILHART

(laughs dryly)

I must have set some kind of record for blazing through the ranks like that, I was so desperate. When time is your enemy, nothing else matters, you know?

EILHART

(looks away)

But I still wasn't fast enough. By the time I got to my post, it was too late. The curse has progressed too far, there is... There is no annulling it now.

LUNA

Eilhart...

EILHART

(pained)

My wife has been bedridden for the past few months, she doesn't have much long left. Erik isn't far behind, as you just saw... And our little Emma hasn't woken up since that day. Even if she did wake up, what's left of her body to live in? I just...

Eilhart takes a deep breath, trying to calm himself

EILHART

Needless to say, that is far, far more than I've told any of our colleagues, so I would appreciate some discretion.

EILHART

I went to insane lengths to keep my family's existence secret and keep them out of Council matters. So if you ever even think about threatening them or using them as leverage, I'm sticking that same tool through your heart too. Are we clear?

LUNA (V.O.)

He doesn't even look like he's kidding.

EILHART

Now tell me what it is you're
looking for.

LUNA

(pauses)

I'm looking for the evidence used
against Nikolai. I had started when
his integrity was called into
question, but stopped after I was
too late. Now I'm looking again to
see if I can trace it back.

LUNA

I want to know who framed him...
and why. Nikolai didn't step on any
toes that I was aware of. It
doesn't add up.

EILHART

Are you that sure he really was
framed? He could have had a life
you didn't know of... Like I have a
son, and not one of our colleagues
ever imagined that.

[[if "told Eilhart about Dmitri" is TRUE

LUNA

Dmitri himself told me. Sure, you
could say he was lying... But why
ask me to look into it at all if he
was?

]]

[[else

LUNA

That's different. I didn't think he
was a necromancer back then... And
I still don't, even now.

LUNA (V.O)

I can't really tell him Dmitri told
me he was innocent...

]]

EILHART

(sighs)

Given my story, I should be glad
(MORE)

EILHART (CONT'D)

you're investigating... But even if some of the evidence might have looked shady, I thought a lot of it seemed genuine.

EILHART

If someone took it from our evidence vaults from previous cases, someone would have noticed, with all the noise surrounding the trial. Wouldn't only a real necromancer have access to the kind of equipment we found in his house?

EILHART

Unless... Are you suggesting the one who framed Nikolai was the real necromancer?

LUNA

The real necromancer perhaps, or someone who had access to alternate evidence. I don't really know, I haven't been able to dig that far.

EILHART

Well, it looks like you're going to have your work cut out for you. No one is exactly going to confess to being a necromancer.

EILHART

Good luck, Luna. And do watch your back, I'd really rather not be left alone with the rest of our "esteemed colleagues".

LUNA

(laughs)

Indeed, the last thing you need is to be left to the hounds. I'll do my best to be careful.

LUNA (V.O.)

Well, this is a.... weird situation, to say the least. But now that we both have leverage against the other, it keeps both our secrets safe.

LUNA (V.O.)

Unless one of us can strike faster

(MORE)

LUNA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 than the other, my investigation
 should be safe with him...

LUNA
 I'll see you at council then.

EILHART
 See you.

EXT. OLD AMAROV HOUSE

LUNA is standing outside the decrepit house, hiding in the shadows with her hood drawn up.

[[Play the sound of wind howling]]

LUNA (V.O.)
 (looks behind her)
 Looks I lost my tail... Good.

LUNA (V.O.)
 (turns back to the house)
 It's been abandoned for so long...
 Dmitri was too young to live here
 and no one wanted to live in a
 necromancer's house. If there's
 anything left from all those years
 ago, this is the place to find
 it...

INT. OLD AMAROV HOUSE

The furniture and everything it once held have been left to rot in the empty house. Its inhabitants are insects and a pack of rats, and one stops and stands up on its hind legs, sniffing at LUNA. It scampers off and squeaks as it slips on a thin layer of ice, then quickly gets back up and scurries off somewhere unseen.

LUNA
 I still remember this house... Oh
 Dmitri, do you remember it the same
 way?

LUNA (V.O.)
 Did you, too, wish you could stay
 in this house forever...?

Luna almost slips on the same patch of ice.

LUNA
 (scowls, then looks
 confused)
 (MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)

Wait... How did ice get here?

A loud creak from farther away makes Luna jump. She turns and sees boot marks on the dusty floor.

[[Play loud creaking sound]]

LUNA

(hair stands on end,
laughs nervously)

Oh dear. This is the stuff horror stories are made of.

LUNA

Of course dark magic exists... It's what our Guild is supposed to protect people against.

LUNA

But there would be no such magic in your house, right, Nikolai...?

Luna takes a deep breath to steel herself, then slowly moves to the source of the noise, hands swirling with magic.

INT. NIKOLAI'S STUDY

A hooded figure slowly stands up from where it was crouched behind the desk and faces Luna.

[[Increase howling wind sound]]

LUNA

Wha--

One of the windows shatters and the wind sends papers fluttering all across the room. An inkwell falls and shatters loudly.

LUNA

(yelps)

Gyaah!

LUNA

(holds up her hands)

What... Who are you?

LUNA (V.O.)

It doesn't feel human. It can't be one of Eilhart's automatons... They're not that lifelike yet... Are they?

LUNA (V.O.)
Is that... Frost near its feet?

LUNA (V.O.)
Wait... Snow inside the house?! How
can it be?

[[The wind howls deafeningly]]

NIKOLAI
Why are you here?

NIKOLAI
Why now?

LUNA
(flinches, shouts trying
to be heard above the
wind)
I... I'm not here simply for my own
sake!

LUNA
I come as much for Dmitri Amarov as
I do for myself! I'm just looking
for answers as to what happened
here... I don't feel that Nikolai's
case was examined enough. I want to
know if he was innocent... and if
he was, why he was framed!

LUNA (V.O.)
I don't know what this is about...
But what else can I say?!

The wind dies a little.

NIKOLAI
You had years for that! Why only
now?

LUNA
(flinches again)
I'm finishing what I started.

LUNA
I started investigating Nikolai's
case when he was charged, but
everything I came across either
disappeared or led me to a dead
end.

LUNA

I didn't try hard enough and he
died because of that. So when
Dmitri asked if I would look
again... I agreed.

LUNA

I want to put this to rest once and
for all. I want to know the truth.
People need to know if the Guild
condemned an innocent man.

LUNA (V.O.)

And I'm almost certain that's the
case...

The wind stops, but the room is still freezing.

NIKOLAI

And what if that is the case? What
will you do if the
Guild murdered an innocent man...?

NIKOLAI

How far are you willing to go for
this, Luna?

LUNA (V.O.)

(startled)

How does it know my name?

LUNA

(with conviction)

I'm willing to go as far as it
takes. I failed the Amarov family
once... I refuse to do it again.

NIKOLAI

(is silent for a while,
then motions to the floor
where he'd been crouched)

Break the seal. It was not made for
a dead man to open.

LUNA

(hesitates and moves over
to the desk)

A rune...?

Nikolai takes down his hood, revealing a face made entirely
of ice.

NIKOLAI

(softly)

You didn't fail us... I know you
kept fighting until the end.

Luna breaks the seal and straightens back up.

LUNA

(looks back and sees him)

Nikolai... So it is you. How...?

NIKOLAI

I don't know. I just... Woke up,
and I was there. It was only a few
years ago. I'd been dead for at
least a decade. I can't even begin
to explain it...

LUNA

(tears up)

I missed you. I missed you so much.

NIKOLAI

(looks away)

I know.

NIKOLAI

(doesn't really know how
to react, and motions
awkwardly at the seal)

I can imagine why someone would
want me dead, but I have no idea
who.

Nikolai moves over to the hidden cache and pulls out a few
glass spheres from behind a stack of papers.

LUNA

Recording spheres...?

Nikolai holds up a sphere and it glows as it reproduces his
voice and another familiar one.

CROWE (RECORDING)

Why are you recording this,
Nikolai?

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)

For security. In case anything
happens. You should, too.

CROWE (RECORDING)

Do you really think something will
(MORE)

CROWE (RECORDING) (CONT'D)
happen?

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)
I don't know, but I'm not taking
the chance. You know the company we
keep can be... dangerous.

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)
I owe it to Dmitri to be careful...
And if that's not enough, to at
least leave him something to
understand why.

CROWE (RECORDING)
You do realize I'm a time mage?

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)
Yes, but so do the people we're
investigating. Now...

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)
(clears his throat)
This is week 10 of our
investigation. So far, we've found
24 possible victims among the
people who went missing in the town
of Ayla and surroundings.

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)
They were always people who left
town alone, and always very
healthy. There seems to be a
predominance of light hair and
eyes, although the last ones were
more varied. Ages vary as well,
although most were 26 and younger.
Of these 24 people, 18 had magical
blood and 11 were affiliated to the
Guild in some way.

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)
Though there is nothing physical to
suggest the same person is
responsible, kidnappings of
magically inclined people are
relatively rare and this represents
a considerable increase in
statistics.

LUNA
What...? What is this?

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)

Furthermore, one of these was a Senior Spellcaster, and although retired, he was believed to be still very powerful. In order to subdue him, one would have to be just as powerful and thus likely in the higher ranks of our Guild. The 15 missing corpses from the same area would also suggest Necromancy might be involved, although we cannot be sure at this time if it was the same person.

NIKOLAI (RECORDING)

This covert investigation was requested by the Aylan branch of the Guild. Any clues the local investigators have found either led nowhere or were disposed of with suspicious readiness. Whether it is a powerful necromancer out there, or a high-ranked mage in our own midst, our purpose is to determine whether someone within the Council would have means and motive to do this...

LUNA

What... I never heard of any of this. A covert investigation into the Council itself...?

LUNA (V.O.)

No wonder someone would want to frame him. But why didn't Crowe come forward with this if he was investigating it too? Wait...

LUNA (V.O.)

Oh, crap.

LUNA

Nikolai... Crowe is a necromancer. We found that out the hard way in our expedition.

LUNA (V.O.)

Though he did help us with the vampires...

LUNA

He would have had the means to frame you. He had access to the materials that would have been needed.

LUNA

It was all so meticulously planned... Almost none of the artifacts are out of place or traceable. It's very, very possible some of the relics were created by whoever planted the evidence.

NIKOLAI

(angrily)

He what?!

Another window shatters, making Luna jump.

NIKOLAI

Wonderful. I've been working with the biggest hypocrite in this world, and in the next realm as well. Helping chase a potential necromancer... Keeping quiet while I was accused. Or, if what you say is right, framing me in the first place.

The room temperature has dropped considerably, and Luna shivers in the cold.

LUNA

Well he would have had access to the right kind of materials. I've been hunting down similar pieces and some of them weren't easy to come by. I think it's safe to assume that whoever did this practiced the art, or knew someone who did.

[[if "heard Eilhart's story" is TRUE

LUNA

But...

LUNA (V.O.)

Light hair and eyes? And the culprit had to have immense magic...

LUNA
 Could it be...? Eilhart?

NIKOLAI
 (snappishly)
 What about him?

LUNA
 Well... Before he became a High Mage, his family fell victim to Korone. All of them were stricken with powerful ailments, and by the time he made it high enough to break the curse, there was no going back on it.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Sorry, Eilhart. But if you're involved in this, I can't really keep your secret from him...

LUNA
 It's not... impossible to assume he's been using his automatons to try and bring his family back, and there's a good chance he'd need to know necromancy to do so.

NIKOLAI
 (looks surprised)
 Eilhart... Really? I never would have guessed. Still... You may be right. When I got here a few weeks ago, it was clear someone was in the house before. It could have been him.

NIKOLAI
 I'm not sure how the automatons would help, but if he can animate matter and give it will, I suppose he might think he could animate bodies as well... And that, indeed, is Necromancy.

NIKOLAI
 But then why kidnap all those people? You think they were sacrifices, or practice? He could have just stuck to the corpses he was stealing from the graveyards... No need to kill, unless it was part
 (MORE)

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
of some ritual.

NIKOLAI
(wryly)
Contrary to popular belief, I
really wouldn't know.

LUNA
Sadly I know about as much as you.
Perhaps Dmitri would have a better
idea. I know he's been struggling
with this puzzle just as much as I
have...

]]

[[ELSE

NIKOLAI
We need answers. What became of
Crowe?

LUNA
He was one of those that joined the
demon High King. The vampires
Dmitri is living with can likely
summon him, but it doesn't mean
we'll get any answers.

NIKOLAI
(angrily)
He's not in the Guild anymore. He's
got nothing to lose. The least he
could do is come clean.

LUNA
I know. And I will badger him until
he does, I promise. But honestly...

NIKOLAI
What?

LUNA
I'm not sure about this, Nikolai.
By "exposing" you as a necromancer,
he would just be making the Council
be even more careful about
necromancers hidden in our midst.
This would be bad for him.

NIKOLAI
You think he didn't do it?

LUNA

He's the most obvious suspect, yes,
but as far as the Council is
concerned, so were you.

LUNA

Maybe this isn't as straightforward
as we'd like to think. He could
have had an accomplice, if it was
him at all... The Council DOES seem
a little too concerned with where I
stick my nose.

LUNA

(hesitates, then looks at
Nikolai again)
I could send word to Dmitri, see if
he can contact Crowe in the
meantime. I know he's been
struggling with this puzzle as much
as I have...

NIKOLAI

(looks sad at the mention
of his son)
Dmitri...

LUNA

(smiles a little)
He found himself a vampire woman
and settled down, would you believe
it? He has a little one of his own
now.

LUNA

A sweet four year old by the name
of Lucille. She's very
articulate... It makes me think of
you.

Nikolai smiles at the news, but still looks so very sad.

LUNA

What is it? You look troubled.

NIKOLAI

Send him the recordings if you
wish. But... Please don't tell him
how you got them.

LUNA

What? Why?

NIKOLAI

You said it yourself. He has a family of his own now... I was never much of a father in life, how fair would it be to disrupt his life now that I'm dead?

NIKOLAI

I don't even know how I came back. That also means I don't know how long this will last. For all I know, I could just disappear tomorrow, for good this time.

NIKOLAI

(sadly)

I don't want to put him through that once again.

LUNA

Nikolai...

[[Show choices:

9A - "I will respect your wishes."

9B - "Stop being a coward."]]

9A -

LUNA

I can see why you would want that. I wish you would come back to him, but... I will respect your wishes.

NIKOLAI

(smiling sadly)

Thank you, Luna. Believe me, I wish I could...

[[Jump to 9-CONTINUE]]

9B -

LUNA

Stop being a coward.

NIKOLAI

(surprised)

What?

LUNA

He's your son. He might not be a
(MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)

little boy half your size anymore,
but he still needs you.

LUNA

If you weren't enough of a father
in life.. Then now is the time to
try again.

LUNA

You were given a second chance,
Nikolai. Not many get that
opportunity. Don't waste it...
Please.

NIKOLAI

(still surprised, a
little flustered)
I... I see. I will... Think about
it.

NIKOLAI

(recomposing himself)
I'm sorry if I upset you. Maybe you
do have a point. I just... I guess
I'm afraid.

9-CONTINUE

Luna pauses for a moment, then hugs Nikolai tightly despite
shivering with the cold.

LUNA

I won't let you down... Not after
you've lost so much already. I
won't let them take more from you.

Nikolai opens his mouth to say something, but stops.
Flustered, he pulls away from Luna.

NIKOLAI

I... Thank you.
Nobody else should have to go
through this. To make sure it never
happens again... That is the best I
could hope for.

Nikolai suddenly pauses and frowns, looking around.

NIKOLAI

Do you feel it?

LUNA (V.O.)

Wow, Nikolai. Talk about a smooth
(MORE)

LUNA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
way to change the subject.

NIKOLAI
(catches the way she's
looking at him and
scowls, still flustered)
I mean it. Over there.

Giving in, Luna goes over to the bookshelf he's pointing at and pushes the books aside. She gasps at the sight of a small, softly glowing glass sphere.

LUNA
A recording sphere?!

NIKOLAI
What?! Let me see!

NIKOLAI
This doesn't make sense. Who...?
Wait.

LUNA
It's so smooth... Too smooth. You
could almost say it's impossibly
perfect.

Nikolai frowns, suddenly understanding where she's going.

NIKOLAI
An object not of this world. Not
naturally in it, in any case. Are
you thinking...?

LUNA
(nods, completing his
sentence)
There's only one man that could
make something like this. A
creation mage... The most skilled
one that we know of.

NIKOLAI
Albert Lycioe.

LUNA
But why would he hide a recording
sphere here? It doesn't make sense.

NIKOLAI
Unless he figured out what you were
investigating and was afraid of
what you might find out.

Luna is quiet for a moment, fiddling with the sphere as she tries to get it to play its recording.

LUNA

Damn, I can't get it to play. It's warded against outside interference. It would take a better enchanter than I to break Albert's charm.

LUNA

Maybe I should just go confront him. He can't really deny it's his work, I doubt his ego could take people thinking there's someone as skilled as him out there.

LUNA (V.O.)

Wait. I do know an enchanter that's more than powerful enough to break through this...

LUNA (V.O.)

Should I go to Eilhart? At least I could find out what this sphere recorded before I do anything about it...

[[Player choices:

10-A: Confront Albert about the sphere.

10-B: Ask Eilhart for help viewing the recording.]]

10-A:

[[If "heard Eilhart's story" is TRUE

LUNA (V.O.)

Eilhart is starting to look like a really good suspect... I don't know what Albert is up to, but going straight to our prime suspect sounds like a terrible idea.

LUNA (V.O.)

Besides, if he sees the recording he'll know Nikolai is around. I'd better go to the source instead...

LUNA

Looks like it's time to pay one pompous redhead a visit.

[[Skip to Albert's study]]

]]

[[Else

LUNA (V.O.)

Eilhart is too unpredictable. I don't know what he'd do if he saw Nikolai on the recording. I'd better go to the source instead...

LUNA

Looks like it's time to pay one pompous redhead a visit.

[[Skip to Albert's study]]

]]

INT. ALBERT'S STUDY

ALBERT sits smugly at his overly ornate desk, toying with his latest creation, a glass bird with so much detail no artisan could ever have crafted it.

ALBERT

Now here's a visit I wasn't expecting. To what do I owe the pleasure?

LUNA (V.O.)

If I leave it up to him, this conversation will last forever and go nowhere... I'll cut to the chase. If anything, that just might unsettle him enough that he'll let something slip.

Luna holds up the recording sphere.

LUNA

This.

Surprise flashes across Albert's face, but he swiftly recomposes himself.

ALBERT

Might I ask what you were doing there?

LUNA (V.O.)

I can't tell if he's not denying
(MORE)

LUNA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 it, or if he's fishing for
 information by being purposely
 vague...

LUNA
 I could ask you the same thing.
 Ladies first, isn't that what you
 always said?

ALBERT
 (gives a fake smile)
 Let's compare notes then. Where did
 you find it?

LUNA (V.O.)
 Ugh. Really? We're going nowhere
 fast like this, are we? Fine.

LUNA
 Nikolai's house. Your turn.

ALBERT
 I've always had an interest in the
 case. How about you?

LUNA (V.O.)
 Looks like I can't avoid being
 blunt here...

LUNA
 I have reason to believe Nikolai
 was framed. But I was friends with
 him. Why would you care?

ALBERT
 Why Luna, he and I worked together
 for years. Isn't it only to be
 expected that I would care?

LUNA
 I don't recall you standing up for
 him much back then... Stop playing
 games, Albert.

ALBERT
 (watching her carefully,
 then sighs)
 I am not playing games, Luna. You
 may not know this, but at the time
 of his death, Amarov was
 investigating the Council for a
 series of murders at the request of
 (MORE)

ALBERT (CONT'D)
the Aylan branch.

LUNA (V.O.)
(trying hard to hide her
surprise)
What?! Wasn't it supposed to be a
secret?

ALBERT
The truth is, House Lycioe was
originally supposed to run the
investigation. A neutral outside
party, you understand.

LUNA (V.O.)
As neutral as they can be with you
in the Council.

ALBERT
But we were spread too thin at the
time. Instead, we passed it on to
two members who were known to be
neutral in Council politics. Amarov
and Crowe.

ALBERT
Long story short... It has always
seemed like too much of a
coincidence that one of them was
executed and the other failed to
make any progress in the
investigation.

LUNA
That's funny. Did you manage to fit
all your protests at the trial
while I was off on a bathroom
break? Because I don't remember you
saying a word of that.

ALBERT
(grimaces)
I have a reputation to uphold,
Luna. If I made any comments and
turned out to be wrong, it would be
a stain on the Lycioe name.

LUNA
And it's not a stain to let an
innocent man die?!

ALBERT

(exasperated)

I didn't know he was an innocent man! I still don't. That's why I was looking into it, alright?

ALBERT

I need to know that we didn't inadvertently cause his death by giving him the case.

LUNA

What a load of bullshit.

LUNA

You really expect me to believe that?

LUNA (V.O.)

A powerful family like his, siding with Nikolai? If there was ever a definition of too good to be true...

ALBERT

Believe me or not, that's your prerogative. But I need the sphere back, Luna. It's evidence. I can show you the recording if you want, but I need you to return it now.

LUNA (V.O.)

So that's what it's about, is it? Getting your hands on it?

Albert reaches for the sphere, but Luna backs away.

LUNA (V.O.)

(tries not to look
alarmed)

It's got me talking to Nikolai in it! No one is ever going to believe he's not a necromancer if they see him back as a ghost... And that's just asking to get myself accused too!

ALBERT

Luna, give it back!

Albert summons the sphere to himself with his magic. In a panic, Luna shatters it in midair.

LUNA (V.O.)
Oh crap. Now I've done it.

LUNA (V.O.)
But I didn't have a choice. I
couldn't let the Lycioes have it!

ALBERT
(stares in shock)
Luna...

LUNA
I, uh... I need to go.

Luna runs out before Albert can stop her.

LUNA (V.O.)
I need to make sure the
preparations are ready to go back
to the demon realm... There's no
telling what the Lycioes might do
as payback. Divines damn it!

FADE OUT

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NEXT DAY

The High Mages are gathered around the large, circular meeting table. EILHART is leaning back on his chair with his feet propped up on it. ALBERT is conspicuously absent: everyone half expects him to start shouting at Eilhart, and the silence is unsettling.

EILHART
Where is that pompous redhead? He
should've been here already. In all
of my tenure, I've never seen him
be late for council.

CAERS
(yawns)
Mmmhh. You, on the other hand, are
always late.

EILHART
And you oversleep more often than
not, dearest Pot.

VICTORIA
What a waste of time.

A knock interrupts them. SERACH pokes his head in, looks around and shakes his head.

EILHART

What is it, Serach?

SERACH

High Mage Lycioe's apprentice asked me to check if he was here... He was supposed to meet him before the council meeting to give him his tasks for the day, but he never showed himself.

LUNA (V.O.)

That's not like him...

SERACH

His family has been asking about his whereabouts as well. I'll have to inform them that he's not here.

EILHART

Feh. He's probably gone to meet some lover or something. No need to make such a fuss.

CAERS

He wouldn't. Not with the fiancée he has. He's been pestering me for weeks for a reading on when best to marry her...

EILHART

Then maybe he's looking for a ring or something equally expensive and yet worthless.

EILHART

He's a big kid. The pride of the family. He can take care of himself.

VICTORIA

I have my doubts.

VANESSA

It is unusual that he would be so late.

READAK

Ah, give the boy a break. It would be good if he finally decided to loosen up. He's so stuffy I'm amazed his shirt collar hasn't

(MORE)

READAK (CONT'D)
strangled him yet.

LUNA (V.O.)
(laugh quietly)
That's my Grandfather. But still...

EILHART
Do we postpone the session or go on
without Mr Truantyoe?

LUNA (V.O.)
Please tell me you didn't make that
pun.

LUNA
Regardless of whether we continue
or not... We should send out people
to look for him.

VICTORIA
I bet we'll discover he was asleep
at his desk... or better yet,
trying to find Eilhart to make sure
he isn't late.

VICTORIA
And it would be ironic because
today you were almost on time.

EILHART
Yeah, yeah. Blame the blonde, won't
you. Alright, let's just send some
mooks.

FADE OUT

But as the day wore on and no word came of Albert Lycioe,
the atmosphere grew heavy. Caers muttered of ill omens in
the stars, warning him for days on end, Victoria was
snappier than ever, and even Readak and Eilhart's jokes grew
rare. Luna couldn't help this heavy feeling...

FADE IN

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NEXT DAY

The High Mages are standing in the graveyard of a small
neighboring town. A green-faced CAERS is emptying his
breakfast on a nearby tree. The sound of metallic hooves
signal EILHART's approach as he rides one of his automatons.

EILHART
What happened here? I came as fast
(MORE)

EILHART (CONT'D)
as I could.

CAERS
They f-found him...

EILHART
What do you mean, 'found' him?

Eilhart pushes past a crowd of many redheaded Lycioes to get to the hole they were all gathered around. Readak is holding Luna as she shakes uncontrollably.

EILHART
...Oh.

EILHART
(covers his mouth)
Caers, any room left near your tree?

Albert's hair pales in face of the blood coating all over his robes. It has pooled under his chest, where countless stab wounds have torn fabric and flesh alike. Two black candles burn over each of his hands, and countless necromantic runes have been drawn all over his too-white skin.

LUNA (V.O.)
Albert... Oh Divines. How...?

READAK
Luna, it's okay. There wasn't anything we could do.

LUNA (V.O.)
Wasn't there? What if I caused this somehow? What if...

LUNA (V.O.)
Oh no. The broken sphere. There's only one person he could get help from to fix the enchantment...

LUNA (V.O.)
Could it be... Eilhart...?

Luna looks back at Eilhart warily. Too late, she realizes he isn't the one that is being watched with suspicion.

LUNA (V.O.)
No... Did the tail they set on me see me studying necromantic artifacts? They can't possibly
(MORE)

LUNA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 think I did this...

EILHART
 (looking back at the
 entrance)
 News travel fast, don't they?

A redhaired woman whose features are strikingly similar to Albert's walks in, accompanied by some of her family.

EILHART
 (bows his head)
 Vera. I'm really sorry.

LUNA
 We all are... Please, let us know
 if you need--

But VERA brushes past them, too anguished to reply. She rushes to her brother's side, kneeling near the shallow grave in horror.

VERA
 Albert... No...

They all watch as the grieving Vera places her hand over Albert's eyes. Closing her own, her body shakes with silent sobs as magic builds around her hand.

LUNA (V.O.)
 Right, she's a diviner... At least
 we'll know who did this.

VICTORIA
 What did you see?

VERA
 (quickly)
 I would speak of it privately.

But the damage is already done. Grief-stricken, angry eyes sought their target faster than she could restrain herself. Luna feels her stomach twist.

LUNA
 W-What? Why are you looking at me
 like that?

LUNA
 I-I didn't--

LUNA (V.O.)
 Oh no...

VICTORIA

Eilhart, won't you escort Luna back to headquarters?

LUNA

No!

LUNA (V.O.)

This can't be happening! How... Are the Lycioes in on this? How could Vera be fooled? Why...?

LUNA (V.O.)

I can't... Oh Divines, any trial at this point is going to be even more of a farce than Nikolai's was.

Eilhart motions to one of his automatons and it follows him closer to Luna as he approaches her.

EILHART

Come on, Luna. Let's talk about this back in the Guild.

But Luna shakes her head and releases the spell she'd been casting. Dark tendrils snake up from the tombstones' shadows and wrap themselves around Eilhart's legs and then the automaton's, holding them in place. Luna takes off running desperately.

LUNA (V.O.)

I have to get to Sola and Alice...!

FADE OUT

EXT. SOLA'S HOUSE

LUNA is holding SOLA's hand while they both run into the woods nearby, little Alice holding on tightly as Sola carries her as well as she can.

LUNA

Quick! Through here! Oh Divines, they're here, we've got to get them off our trail!

ALICE

Mama, what's going on?

SOLA

Shhh! I'll explain later!

Luna conjures up a shadow mist to try and shake their

pursuers, but they can still hear them coming closer.

LUNA

Come on! We're almost there. We
just need to get to the anchor
point and it'll take us right to
the portal!

Luna takes Alice from Sola so they can run faster. Just as they start losing their pursuers, the sound of crackling and whistling air is the only warning before one of Victoria's fireballs comes hurtling their way.

LUNA

SOLA!!!

[[Play a high pitched scream and explosion]]

Luna stands there in shock, wide eyed and clutching Alice tight to her chest. Sola lies fallen on the ground, the smell of charred flesh overwhelming as smoke rises off her back.

LUNA

So...la.... No, this can't...

ALICE

Mama...?

Luna falls to her knees.

LUNA

My twin. No. No. She's always been
here. She can't be... No. No!!

ALICE

Mama!

Alice tries to squirm out of her aunt's arms, reaching out for Sola. Luna wails and holds on tightly.

The sudden sound of footsteps makes her head snap up just as her hands light up with an angry, purple glow.

She stops when she recognizes EMIL.

LUNA

E... Emil... Sola, she...

LUNA

She's alright... Right? She
can't... She can't be...

Emil takes one look at Sola and winces. He reaches for Luna instead, trying to help her up.

EMIL
There's nothing you can do. You
have to go now!

LUNA
(crying)
I can't leave her!!

EMIL
Luna!

LUNA
She's my twin! She's half of me!

EMIL
Just go!

LUNA
SOLA!

Emil hugs Luna tightly, so much Alice has to whine and protest. He then shoves Luna back hard.

EMIL
You have to do this, Luna. For
Sola's sake. She wouldn't want you
to get caught. You can't let Alice
get hurt!

LUNA
B-But... I...

EMIL
I'll point them the wrong way. Save
her daughter! Go!

FADE OUT

Luna safely escaped to the demon realm with her niece and settled where she could keep Dmitri company. But part of her was left behind that day: without Sola, she was never the same. And though she did her best to raise Alice as her sister would have wanted, she looked to the future with a singular, dark determination. For she vowed this to Dmitri the day she got back: once he and her niece had no longer need of her, she would go back, and she would avenge Nikolai and Sola. One day...

[[Ending #2]]