

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 53 -

19–25 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 53

53 – Contrac

(Willa)

I woke up refreshed, Caspien must have sensed me because he pulled me back to him, and I didn't complain. My back was flush against his broad chest.

My mom texted me; it was weird not being able to link them since I joined Crescent Moon.

"Five more minutes," Caspien buried his head into my neck, and it took every part of me not to succumb to the comfort he was promising.

"My parents want us to come for brunch; if you think we can skip breakfast here? I doubt anyone will be up for a while." I'm sure the party lasted well into the night, but I was fast asleep in Caspien's arms.

"I would love that; we can help them pack," Caspien suggested into my neck.

It took everything in me to roll out of his embrace and shower.

After Facetiming Emmett we strolled hand-in-hand through the packhouse, I appreciated Cali basically packing for me, and also pretty much shopping for me, with Caspien's card.

I found a figure-hugging long olive green dress with thin straps and paired it with strappy wedge sandals. The dress was more comfortable than anything I had worn in my life.

What was it with rich people's fabrics? Even the most basic of clothes felt luxurious.

I let my hair air dry and fall in its natural waves, pulling back some pieces off my face. Caspien was walking next to me in dark gray slacks and a white shirt, and I couldn't take my eyes off him.

Honestly, I couldn't anyways, but he knew that.

Everyone we passed stopped and stared, but it didn't bother me. I was feeling great, being back here, being able to show Caspien where I grew up.

No matter that this place was so ingrained in my pain, it would always hold a piece of me.

"It is nice," Caspien admitted, we took a long walk towards the forest so I could show him around.

The day was bright, warm, and dry. A dry heat that wasn't suffocating. I welcomed it.

"It is," I sighed.

He stopped me and tilted my chin up to meet his gaze, "How are you doing, Willa?" He asked, his eyes scanning mine, "Honestly."

I gave him a smile, a genuine one. I wasn't sure if it was the weather, the familiarity of this place, or the fact that last night was behind us, but I felt good.

As normal as I thought, I could be here after all this time..

"Actually, better than I thought possible. The weekend is far from over, but I don't feel weird about being back anymore.."

I wasn't coming here as Blue Ridges scorned potential Luna. I came back with my true mate to stand by his side and partake in these decisions.

"I feel like I belong here, not at Blue Ridge, but by your side," I tried to put it into words.

"You do." He nodded once and took my hand again.

I led him to my parent's cottage. I could feel the eyes following us.

People stopped and gaped; I wondered what they thought was going on or how much gossip had already spread from last night. Caspien either didn't notice or didn't care; I admired how completely unaffected he was by it.

My mom threw open the door before we could knock, pulling me into a tight hug.

"She was watching by the window," My dad came shaking his head, coming up behind her.

Caspien and he clasped hands before my mom released me. She looked me up and down with a broad smile on her face.

"Goddess, you look good, Willa. I mean, you always do, but you seem really good." Her eyes lit up, and my dad placed a hand on her shoulder.

“I am,” I admitted, and Caspien grabbed my hand, squeezing it gently.

My mom had outdone herself—pancakes, bacon, sausage, scrambled eggs, fruit, and fresh juice.

“I didn’t want you to miss out on anything since you’re skipping breakfast at the pack house,” My mom beamed at us.

“This looks lovely, thank you.” I took a seat.

“And in much better company,” Caspien added, “Sparkling baseboards, Mrs. Balfour,” Caspien commented, and my dad choked on his coffee. I bit down on a smile, and my mom gave me a wry look I pretended not to see.

“Why thank you, Caspien.” She commented, “Such great manners; I’m not sure what went wrong with you,” My mom shook her head at me.

“My upbringing.” I shot back, joking, and my dad smiled at my mom’s scowl.

We fell into comfortable chatter. Caspien informed my parents that his mom was already putting together some design ideas for their apartment and cottage. I glanced around my first home and saw that things were already being sorted and some boxes laid out.

I helped clear the table with my dad while Caspien listened to my mom talk about how they wanted to pack and helped her decide what she should bring.

The front door slammed open, and I jumped. I was met with a familiar face under sandy-blonde hair cut short into a bob.

“Lola! You cut your hair,” I wasn’t expecting her back yet.

She bounded towards me and grasped me in a too-tight hug before pulling back and looking me over, breathing a sigh of relief, “I did, I was inspired. You look,” She paused, “Better,” She said carefully.

“I feel better.” I didn’t realize how bad I must have been; even though I had seen her months ago, my shadows must have still lingered.

“I have so much to tell you about you, of course.” She laughed and went to throw her long hair over her shoulder, frowning, “Oh, I keep forgetting I cut it,” I laughed at her and clasped her hand. It was so nice seeing her.

“When did you get back?” I asked.

“Barely home a day, but oh my Goddess,” She shook her head, looking around before finding Caspien, “That’s him.” She whispered.

“Yes,”

“Hi, Vincent, Heather.” Lola called to my parents, “I’m back.”

“We can see that,” My dad said, smiling, “Coffee?”

Lola nodded, “Please.” The familiarity tugged at me.

It made me feel both comfortable and sad at the same time, knowing my parents were giving this up.

Caspian came up to me, “This is my mate, Caspian.” He held out his hand to her, and her eyes widened.

“How do you not suffocate being around him?” She asked me, “Also, hi, I’m Lola.” She gave him a timid smile.

I shrugged, “I don’t feel it in the same way.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you. I’ve heard a lot about you,” Caspian said, his voice kind.

“Now, what is this gossip?” My mom asked, and we all took a seat with fresh cups of coffee.

“Where to start?” She tapped her mug with a finger, “Willa is back. Apparently, she’s a princess. I always knew you were too pretty to be a commoner,” Lola smirked at me.

“Too smart to be a commoner, you mean,” My dad cut in.

“Yes and that,” Lola amended, flashing my dad a smile, “Oh, and Nolan has a son who is the true heir to Blue Ridge. People are torn on that one, they aren’t sure if you ran away and kept the kid from him or if he knew. The timelines are a little fuzzy,” She shrugged, “Of course, I know the true story, but I didn’t know what you wanted me to say, so I just listened.” I nodded at her knowing she would go on without prompting.

“Some people think that you came back to claim the title for your son, others think that you’re here for some revenge, and the logical ones think that you’re here for the conference. But one thing everyone agreed on is that you stole the show yesterday.” She snapped her dark blue eyes to me, “I want photos by the way.”

“I’ll get you some,” I smiled at her trying to process this information, “How did this all get around before even noon?” I asked checking the time.

“It was starting to circulate last night,” Lola said.

“We heard some too,” My mom added, “People were talking about The Prince showing up with his mate, and then talking about how stunning she was,” My mom beamed at me, “And then they were talking about how it was you.”

“I knew there would be drama,” I muttered, and Caspien put his hand over mine on the table.

“Let them talk,” He said, “It gives them something to do, and they were right about one thing at least, you are stunning.” He smiled down at me.

Lola looked at Caspien with wide eyes, “That was so sweet,” She gushed.

“Yes, sometimes he can do that.” I added, throwing him a sideways glance, “Rarely.”

“So you’re with a Prince,” Lola smiled widely, “What great f.ucking payback showing up with The Prince back here for the first time. I wished I could have seen the look on Alpha A.sshats face,” She shook her head smiling.

“Tell me everything.” She turned to me, “About last night,”

So I did. Caspien filled in some parts better than I did. Lola was smirking the entire time, and my mom and dad seemed a bit taken aback at their ranked member’s actions.

“The nerve of that woman to insinuate that you,” My mom trailed off and started shaking. My dad put his hand over hers and rubbed it in soothing motions.

“I knew they didn’t always make the best decisions,” My dad put it lightly, “But that is uncalled for. After what Nolan, Alpha Nolan did,” He forced out, “Then to blame you? They are delusional.”

“I do feel for them, not Nolan, of course. His parents didn’t know that he had another son,”

“He doesn’t,” Caspien cut in, his power curled out of him, a protective thing. It was my turn to squeeze Caspien’s hand.

“You know what I mean,” I smiled at him, “His parents had no idea, and he basically made the decision for them, for all of us,” That familiar hurt tried to edge its way up, but it was quelled with Caspien steady touch, “They are probably shocked and now realizing they never got an option to be in his life.”

“Nolan is a p.rick,” Lola said, and none of us disagreed.

“We better get going,” Caspien glanced at his watch, “The conference is starting soon.”

I sighed and stood up. Lola came to give me another hug.

“Come visit?” I asked her.

“Try to keep me away.” A bright smile crossed her face.

I wondered how she and Cali would get along. I think they would like each other, but they were very different people, but I guess I was different than them, too, and loved them both so much.

“My warriors will stay behind on Sunday to bring your boxes,” Caspien said, “I insist,” He added when my mom started to say something, “You can stay in your new apartment at the packhouse while we update the cottage and then make your move there if that’s okay?”

My parents nodded, and my mom looked a bit anxious.

“You can always come back here, Mom.”

“I know, honey,” She swallowed, “I really want to move; we both do. It’s just a huge change.”

“I understand,” Caspien said, “Let us know how we can help ease you into it.”

“Thanks, son,” My dad grasped his shoulder, and we followed Lola out the door.

“If someone asks you feel free to tell them the true story,” I told her.

It was apparent enough that Nolan knew how to keep things hidden and I wanted the rightful story to get out. In all honesty, it did mean something to me to have the truth told after so long. The truth was a huge part of what ate at me during my pregnancy and beyond, not knowing what story people were told and what they believed of me.

“I will,” Her lips tugged into a wicked smile, and she hugged me again, “Great to meet you, your highness?”

“Caspien,” He gave her a smile, and she nodded, heading home.

“She’s very bubbly,” He noted, intertwining my fingers with his.

I nodded my agreement. She was always more positive and outgoing than I was, but we had a steady friendship, and I knew I could rely on her.

When we got back to our room, I loosely curled my hair and applied some light makeup. I pulled out a black suit that Caspien hung up yesterday, I frowned at it not sure it was my style. As soon as I put it on, I changed my mind completely.

I felt good.

Powerful, confident, s.exxy.

It was an all-black two-piece suit. The pants flared slightly at the bottom but hugged my legs everywhere else. Even after I slipped on heels, the pants almost touched the floor.

The top had two triangular cutouts on each side above the pockets that showed my skin. It might have been a bit too formal without them, and I liked the balance they created. The suit jacket covered enough where I didn't need to wear a shirt under it, but it still had a slight plunging cut.

"D.amn," Caspien breathed, coming into the bathroom where I was adjusting my hair. I looked at him in the suit that he wore on Emmett's birthday, matching gray with a white shirt underneath. A small curled my lips at the sight.

"You too,"

"Are you ready?" He asked, his voice turning serious. I nodded once, turning my head back to the mirror.

I grabbed a clip. It was made out of clear gems and looked like a starburst. I clipped some of my hair back on one side and tucked it in, a trail of gems intertwined in my hair from the tail.

"I like it," Caspien ran the back of his finger over the clip, "It's like a shooting star."

As soon as we left our room, he was back in scary alpha mode. He held two folders in his arms, one was mine with a copy of what he brought and a pen and paper.

Goddess, this was going to be a long day.

How do these things usually go? – I asked him

They're usually long and dull – He shrugged slightly, looking ahead – Basically starts with a rundown of the past year and talk through things that might arise, and then people bring forward issues.

Oh, I didn't want to wait until the end I wanted answers now.

I can bring it up earlier, they already know I'm here for a reason. We're here for a reason. – He squeezed my hand and I nodded once.

We walked in almost comfortable silence to the main conference room. Caspien opened it without knocking.

All eyes went to us, Nolan and Camilla were sitting at the head, and a few other Alpha's and their Luna's were standing finishing a light lunch.

Caspien nodded at them once in recognition and dismissal, and they went back to doing what they were before, only a bit tenser.

Caspien got us both a cup of coffee and went over to Nolan.

"Prince Dracos," Camilla said tightly, averting her eyes. Caspien nodded once at her.

“I hope the rest of your ball was uneventful,” He said, and I fought a smile. He was so composed, so dismissive, I found it hilarious.

“It was after you left,” Nolan said. I was almost taken aback by his confidence and complete rudeness.

“Ah, I expected it to be,” Caspien nodded once, “Willa was tired and wanted me to escort her to bed,” Caspien’s face curled into a tight smile, but his eyes were on fire.

“Yes, I know what that’s like,” Nolan fought to keep his stare, a smirk on his face. Camilla turned to her chosen mate in shock, anger plastered on her face, and I saw her hands bunch into fists.

“I doubt you do,” Caspien said, taking a sip of coffee.

“The party was gorgeous,” I added, looking at Camilla, “Beautiful decorations,” She met my gaze, but there was nothing but hatred in her stare. I was trying to be polite, and I was actually being serious. The place didn’t look bad.

“I think it’s time we get this started,” Nolan said, standing up. Behind us, the room was filling up, “Let’s bring this meeting to a start in five minutes,” He called out; his voice wasn’t very loud.

Caspien led me to a seat at the long rectangular table, Nolan was at the top and we took two chairs next to him on his left side.

“I’ll see you later,” Camilla placed a wet kiss on Nolan’s mouth and let out a soft m.oan. The display didn’t upset me at all but it was kinda f.ucking disgusting.

Pathetic – Caspien mentioned, and I smiled at him briefly.

Camilla gave me a smile that was more of a smirk, and I started back at her, confused, as she walked past me.

“We have a light lunch planned for the ladies,” Nolan said, “You can follow my Luna out,” Some of the Lunas moved to the door but most stayed next to their mates.

“What are you still doing here?” Nolan turned to me, exasperated.

“I’m here for the conference,” I stated.

“You’re a Luna or mate or whatever,” He scoffed.

“Yes,” Caspien answered, “Why wouldn’t she stay?”

Camilla was still standing at the door; her eyes shifted between us and Nolan. He shook his head at her and motioned for her to leave.

Nolan took a too-short breath. His anger at Goddess knew what was evident on his face. Caspien handed me my folder, and I opened it up towards me, looking through its contents as the other guests took their seats.

I glanced up to see Nolan glaring at me.

“I can’t believe you let her wear that.” Nolan scoffed, damn he was getting bold.

Caspien’s anger flared, his aura expanded with his rising annoyance, “Let me make something very clear,” He said, his voice white hot.

Everyone in the room was staring at us in complete silence.

“I do not give my mate permission to do anything.” His eyes locked with Nolan’s, “She is my equal in every way, and even that is me being kind to me. I am undeserving of her, but somehow she makes me feel worthy every damn day.”

Okay, not really where I expected that to go, but my stomach flipped, and tears pricked my eyes. I blinked them away, hoping no one saw that.

Strong front even though my mate was baring his soul to your ex and every other Alpha in the territory.

“My mate can wear whatever she sees fit. If she cares to ask for my opinion on something, I will gladly give it, but not on something as trivial as clothes or showing skin.” He was breathing deeply.

“Sorry, sir, just an honest question.” An Alpha almost raised his hand, and I fought back a laugh.

Caspien turned his stare to the interrupting Alpha, but his voice was calmer, “Go on,”

“You don’t, er, you wouldn’t get jealous?” The Alpha managed out, “Not saying that she isn’t wearing anything that is inappropriate, but if she were..” He trailed off.

Caspien laughed once, “If she decided to show up here in a napkin, that is up to her. As for jealousy? It’s a feeling I’m unfamiliar with, especially with Willa. She is my mate. She was made for me, she has accepted me, so no matter how she chooses to show off her incredibly sexy body, I know that I am the only one going to be touching it.” He loosened up a bit and grabbed my hand gently.

“Those who are jealous need to look and see where the misplaced trust is, and if there is no reason not to trust your mate, then the jealousy is all on you.” He added, meeting the eyes of the other Alphas.

The Luna's that stayed were nodding at Caspien appreciatively; some were eyeing their mates in an 'I told you so' way.

"So, if there are no more questions about my wife's clothing, I would like to get back to the business at hand." Caspien turned his hard gaze to Nolan, who looked to be cowering into himself.

No one said anything.

"Good," Caspien shifted to address the group, not taking my hand from where it rested on his lap, "And I will hear no one speak again, insinuating that I need to allow my mate to do anything. It makes me sound like an archaic prick and her some Luna who only plans parties." A direct jab at Nolan and Camilla, and Iris was howling with laughter and adoration in my mind.

"My mate has the same status and title as I do." That was a bit of a stretch, but I would take it. I squeezed his hand, and he relaxed a bit, if only I noticed.

Nolan reigned in his anger just enough to clear his throat and start the meeting.

The door opened up, and Natalie stormed in.

Great, another diversion.

"Before they say anything to you, we need to get the record straight. This woman here was pregnant with my son's heir and didn't tell us, instead leaving and hiding him from everyone here." Natalie pointed at me.

The Alpha's looked around, confused.

Are we in some soap opera? This must be a dream. – Iris sounded annoyed in my mind, but I knew she was enjoying this in some way.

"To clarify, I was mated to Alpha Nolan years ago." I took a deep breath looking around the room. They wouldn't have really known me, I was never in meetings, and I was never technically the Luna of Blue Ridge, "I was pregnant when I was rejected by him and chose not to share the pregnancy news further. I don't know if that was the right decision, and I might never know. I left after the rejection and raised my son elsewhere."

"Liar!" Natalie screamed.

She slammed her hands on the table; her face was an unearthly shade of red.

"He knew, and he chose his path. I chose mine. I understand this must be a shock. I was unaware if Nolan shared that information with you or anyone else. But again, at that time, it was his story to tell." I kept my voice even, I could see some of the Alphas mindlinking their Lunas.

“Mom, this really isn’t the time.” Nolan said, “We’re in the middle of a meeting. Why don’t you go join the girls for some food?” He said, not-so-politely dismissing her.

“I don’t want any of these Alphas to think that whatever threat against her son is a serious one. She is not to be trusted; how can we trust her about anything else?” She seethed, and I took a long breath settling back into my chair.

She was doing nothing but embarrassing herself.

“Is this not your signature on the paper signing away Nolan’s rights?” Caspien said, his voice piercing through the awkward silence, “You’ll see it under Nolan’s and above your pack lawyers.” His annoyance was evident in his voice as he slid a paper to Nolan’s mom.

Natalie snatched it up, and her eyes widened. Rage flashed over her face as she looked at her son.

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The Rejected Luna’s Prince Chapter 54

54 – The Vote

(Willa)

“This-” She shook the paper, her eyes widened, “That day,”

Nolan’s lips were in a hard line, and he couldn’t face his mother.

“Do you want to take a moment alone?” Caspien suggested.

“We’re done here,” Nolan said, looking at his mom; she shook her head tears filled her eyes as she turned from the room, clutching the paper against her.

A small, very small part of me felt bad for Nolan’s parents. I wondered what would have been different if he had told them I was pregnant. I don’t think they would have ever forced Nolan to stay with me, and I didn’t want that anyway. Even back then I wanted him to choose me. But I still wondered if they would have wanted to be in Emmett’s life.

I wouldn't lie to Emmett; he had another set of grandparents and a half-brother. I wondered where they hid the kid this weekend. There was no sign of him now that I thought about it.

I would let Emmet decide on his own if he wanted to have a relationship with them and what that looked like. He could reach out to them and let them have a connection if he saw fit. That is if Nolan's parents and their kid even wanted that. I shrugged that off. That was a conversation for another time.

"Let's get this over with," Caspien sounded annoyed.

"Let's start with last year's summary-" Nolan started.

"No," Caspien cut him off, "I have something that needs to be discussed. It's time-sensitive." Nolan looked like he was about to protest, "I'll make my case, you think it over, and then we can vote later." He went on.

I held my breath. I hoped we weren't doing this too soon, but waiting until the end would also have its downfalls. I chewed my lip and then stopped myself, trying steady my features.

"There is a threat against my heir," Caspien paused, "My son," Caspien stood up, and the room silenced again. I wasn't sure if it was Caspien or the shock of what he said, but I didn't care.

The room stayed quiet as Caspien explained what happened and what we found out. He didn't drag the story out, but I could tell everyone was on the edge of their seats by the end of it.

D.amn he was good.

Nolan scoffed, crossing his arms.

My jaw clenched, I didn't know why he was being such a d.ick, but this wasn't the time to take out whatever lingering misplaced hatred he had for me.

He humiliated me publicly, and now he had the nerve to try to get in the way of protecting my son?

I set my cold gaze on him. I hoped that my fierce protectiveness and unrelenting anger were evident. He glanced my way briefly before looking down.

Good.

"An assassin came after a child?" Nolan asked, sounding incredulous.

"Yes," Caspien said, "That is what I said."

"Do you have proof?" Nolan pressed on.

“Yes,” Caspien turned his gaze to him.

The other Alphas nodded; Caspien’s word seemed good enough for them.

“Well, where are these men? The ones who allegedly came after him?” Nolan folded his hands behind him, leaning back in his chair, “ I would like to speak to them.”

“Unfortunately for them, they won’t be able to attend.” Caspien’s voice was stern, but I could hear a slightly playful undertone.

“Well, why not bring them? I have time.” Nolan tried a smile.

“I don’t.” Caspien shot back, I could feel his anger pulsating, “And unless you want me to send you to the afterlife to meet them, I’m afraid they will be unavailable.”

Nolan paused for a moment. The other Alpha’s shifted uncomfortably.

“This is the original contract,” He slid it into the middle of the table, but no one dared reach for it, “An assassin came after my son,” He repeated, “Nothing else matters.”

“Why?” Nolan cut in. He just wouldn’t drop it, “That makes no sense. There has to be other ways to get to you.”

“Maybe,” Caspien agreed, “But we don’t know if he was trying to get to me. He might have wanted my son for,” He paused, “Other reasons.”

Caspien took a deep breath, and I grabbed his hand, reassuring him it was okay.

“What reason would an Alpha want with a child?” Nolan asked.

“He’s a blessed wolf,” The room went silent, “Sorry, that’s not what I meant. He is the wolf chosen by the Moon Goddess herself.”

I didn’t know if that was common knowledge between other packs, we didn’t know what Emmett was when we found out, but no one said anything.

I wondered how this was for the other ranked members attending. I wished I could have been in their shoes and enjoyed this chaotic weekend from an outsider’s perspective instead of being the one at the center of the drama.

“That’s a myth,” Nolan said after a too-long moment.

“It’s not,” Another Alpha cut in, “My grandfather met the last one. If what they’re saying is true, the timing does add up. No two chosen wolves are alive at the same time.

“Well, that’s on h.ell of a coincidence,” Nolan muttered, trying to regain the room.

“I don’t believe in coincidences,” Caspien shot him a look.

I spoke up, “It might be. Say that it is a coincidence; say he isn’t a blessed wolf, it doesn’t matter,” I waved a hand, “I have no way to prove it right now, so believe what you will. Regardless of the reason, an Alpha came after a child.” I crossed my arms leaning forward, and met the eyes of the Alphas and Lunas in the room.

Caspien retook his seat next to me.

“I’m not here to convince you of the reasons why Alpha Jasper took the hit out. You can see the contract if you’d like,” I motioned to the table where Caspien set it, “You can see the footage of the hired assassin admitting to it,” I shrugged, “But nothing that I show you or try to convince you of will make you believe something that you don’t want to.”

I took a studying breath, locking eyes with my mate to give me a surge of confidence, “I’m asking you to look past the small details and see that an Alpha on our borders willing to work with The Silent Assassin isn’t someone that should be leading a pack. We understand that his problems are with us personally, for now,” I added, pausing.

“But we aren’t ignorant enough to believe that he would stop with us. People like him don’t believe in right and wrong. I know that is subjective, but I hope everyone in this room follows some similar moral code. Those that don’t, people like Alpha Jasper, are unpredictable at best and dangerous at worst.”

I held my head, and thankfully, my voice was steady throughout that speech. Caspien squeezed my hand, it was grounding and warm, and I felt his love through the bond.

Well said – He linked me

“We are here to get the approval of other leaders in this territory.” Caspien explained, “Since Alpha Jasper borders us but is out of our territory, I need your help.” His voice was more humane now, “We spoke to The Elders, and they suggested that we get your approval before moving ahead. We don’t want to do anything that could have negative repercussions.”

“And you think this won’t?” Nolan snorted. He seemed so childish. I was almost embarrassed that I was ever attracted to him.

“I’m not going to guarantee any outcomes as I do not control that.” Caspien said, barely looking at Nolan, “I want this dealt with swiftly before anything else can come from it. Alpha Jasper took over and basically ran his pack into the ground. I’m usually a live and let live guy, but when you cross me, or my family,” His voice turned hard, and his eyes bore into Nolan, “That is something that I will not let go unpunished.”

I stroked the back of his hand, willing him to calm down a bit. We had to play this right. He turned to me and gave me a whisper of a smile before turning back to the others.

“I will not have my pack or this territory look weak.” Caspien’s voice was hard, his aura slipped through the cracks, “I will not have a threat go undealt with. This territory is strong and has a reputation for that. I intend on keeping it that way.”

I saw some of the other Alphas nod.

“Do you have any questions?” I added, trying to sound polite, but this was all too real; it was hard to keep my voice from catching. A few of the Luna’s looked at me with pity or something like that. Maybe that would work in our favor.

“What will happen to the pack after?” An Alpha asked me, and I let Caspien lead, explaining the backstory with Alpha Jaspers’s grudge against his father.

“Depending on how many want to stay, I’m okay with appointing a new Alpha. If they want to disband, I will welcome any members to Crescent Moon. If that is the case, I want to divide the lands, give them to surrounding packs as a gesture of goodwill, and show them that we do not intend to take any more land. Maybe keep a small piece adjacent to my borders to help strengthen patrols and deal with recent rogue sightings.” Caspien ran his hand through his beard; it was such an ordinary motion, he wasn’t acting anymore.

He went into a short description of what was happening with the borders and the contract with Alpha Jasper that he wasn’t even upholding.

“He’s not fit to lead anyways,” I closed my eyes and shook my head.

“That sounds good, though. Not the rogue problem of course, but offering most of the land back to other packs,” The Alpha that asked nodded once to Caspien, “A peace offering would be needed.”

“And if you lose?” Another Alpha asked; I tensed slightly; I hadn’t thought about that, not yet, at least.

Caspien gave them a cool smile, “I won’t.” That shut them up.

“You’re coming from a place of paranoia,” Nolan spoke up. He was clutching at straws now.

“And you’re coming from a place of ignorant complacency.” I cut in, holding his stare.

He seemed confused by my display. I had almost forgotten who I was with him, the timid complacent person who would take anything because of my desire for him.

But that wasn’t me anymore, and I don’t think it ever was truly me.

He looked away first, and I fought a satisfied smirk.

“Are there any questions? Would you like me to walk through anything else?” Caspien said, his voice calmer than I had heard it in these public settings.

The other Alphas and Lunas looked at each other, but no one spoke up. I didn’t know if that was a good or bad thing. I wanted them to ask more questions, but then again, maybe I didn’t.

“Alpha Nolan, do you want us to wait until the end of the conference to call a vote?” Caspien asked, almost sounding polite.

My stomach dropped. It was too soon; what if they said no?

“Get it over with so we can focus on real problems,” Nolan said, and my blood curdled.

This was my child’s safety.

I stood up, placing my hand on the table, taking a deep breath, but it did little to calm my anger, “I don’t care why you vote in our favor.” I looked at them all, making them meet my eyes, even Nolan, before I went on.

“Do it because you want to show anyone what happens when they f.uck with our territory; do it because you feel pity because you too have children; do it to take down an unfit leader; do it because you’re bored and want to witness a challenge. I don’t care what reason you have. I just ask that you find a reason to vote in our favor.” I almost pleaded.

I took a deep breath.

“He is our son,” My voice cracked, “And everyone deserves to feel safe in the pack they call home.”

I sat down, and Caspien placed a hand on my lower back, slipping it under my jacket and rubbing circles. I felt like I wanted to cry. We were in a business meeting discussing my son’s safety. It felt so incredibly wrong. I felt like I wasn’t doing enough.

I finally met Caspien’s stare after I don’t know how long. His eyes held promise and hope, or maybe it was what I felt through the bond.

I didn’t care about the act anymore. I succumbed to my emotions.

I leaned forward and put my head on his chest. His hand intertwined in my hair and rested at the base of my neck as I let out a long shuddering breath. His lips came to my head, and he placed a kiss on my hair.

“It will be okay, baby. Nothing is going to happen to him. I promise,” He whispered, and I wanted to believe him.

I did believe him.

I leaned back, and Caspien gave me a partial smile, kissing the back of my hand. He nodded once at me, and I tried to smile. I don't know what I would have done without him by my side.

"If you're ready, I would like to get this past us," Caspien said, his voice soft, tearing his gaze away from mine, "If we are in agreeance, those of you that are, I need you to sign something showing your support. I'll handle it from there."

My throat constricted, and I clutched onto Caspien's hand for dear life. It was my only anchor to this world. I knew Caspien would end him anyways, but I needed this. I needed the first thing I did as his public mate to be legitimate. I needed these votes.

We had to do this right to ensure no one would come after Emmett or Caspien. Even he wasn't immune to The Elders, and I didn't know what it would mean if he publicly went against them.

"I vote no," Nolan said.

It was expected, but it still dug at me.

"I'll call out the names of the Alphas to vote," Nolane went on.

"No," Caspien said, and I looked at him confused, "Caall out the packs' names. We didn't come here just to get the Alpha's opinions. I want it to be a mutual decision from the pack leaders, that includes the Lunas."

"Do you want Camilla to come back in?" I asked Nolan sweetly. I plastered an innocent look on my face.

"I speak for her and this pack. Our answer is a no." He said. I could tell I got to him, anger contorted his features, and his lip twitched.

"Shadow Pack?" Caspien asked.

"We vote in favor." I gave them a slight nod of gratitude.

"Red River?"

"No, we, uh, can't risk it," The Alpha looked down. I made note of his face.

"Silver Forest?"

"Yes, in favor."

In the end, there were three against it and six for it. We didn't get a vote on this because it was our problem be brought forward.

This last vote would decide our fate.

We needed seven yesses.

I tried to eye the last Alpha and Luna. I briefly remembered speaking to them last night. She was one of the Lunas that seemed moved by Caspien's anger after Nolan commented on my outfit.

I felt close to passing out from not breathing.

"We vote in favor," Luna said, and I met her eyes silently, thanking her. She nodded deeply to me, and my eyes filled with tears I tried to wipe away.

I could feel Caspien's relief.

We both looked at each other, exchanging smiles and clasping hands.

"Thank you," I breathed to everyone and no one.

"This won't be forgotten," Caspien added. There was a double meaning to that. Those that voted against us wouldn't be forgotten either.

I had to explain to him later that it might not have been out of malice but out of self-preservation. But I knew how he held grudges, so I wasn't expecting him to let this go.

The conference dragged on after that. I tried to participate, but I was so relieved it was hard to focus on anything but my happiness. I wouldn't think about what that meant, not yet. But I didn't think Caspien would lose. I just wanted to get this all behind us and have a slight sense of normalcy going forward.

With an Alpha Prince in his penthouse, I almost laughed.

Well, a varied version of normalcy, but I didn't care where I ended up with Emmett and Caspien. I just wanted them near me and safe.

The conference finally ended, and we thanked everyone. Caspien took the document and sent photos to The Elders before sending it back to Crescent City with a warrior. That was a bit excessive, but I didn't mention it to him.

"Let's go tell our parents the good news," I suggested.

(Nolan)

I could barely focus on anything during that conference after Willa and her mate pulled that horrendous display.

How did everything go so wrong? How did it get to this point?

Willa embarrassed me, she wanted her revenge, and she got it. I hated to admit that. I thought she would have just left it alone, I knew that I must have broken her, and a part of me felt for her because of that. But I didn't think she was this crazy to come back and put on a public show.

Coming back in that dress on the arm of a prince. Demanded she sit in on the conference and had the nerve to stand up to me, challenge me in front of other Alphas?

Willa changed. She was a raging b.itch now. The Prince turned her from something innocent and submissive and shaped her into something new.

If she was mine, Goddess, if she was mine, I could change her.

She was ours – Toby growled.

Despite my anger at her display, I wanted her.

She was stunning, and her confidence actually made her more attractive.

Goddess, how I wanted to tear her down a peg or two in bed. Shut her smart mouth up with my c.ock.

My d.ick twinged thinking about it.

I thought she was faking it with him, but it seemed real. How could it be real? Second-chance mates were rare. I wanted him to suffer, but he was untouchable. How dare he take her?

My parents burst into my office.

"I didn't invite you," I said, ignoring them.

"You rejected her after finding out she was pregnant," My dad was livid, "You made your mom bear witness to something she knew nothing about." He went on.

"Get out," I said, standing to pour myself a drink.

"No," My dad seethed, his cool anger radiating out of him, stifling the air in here, "You lied to us. Why? For Camilla?"

I shrugged.

"Did you know Camilla was pregnant before or after Willa told you she was?" He pressed on.

"Before," I said, "Camilla told me first. I couldn't have two pregnant women at once."

"So you chose the one who wasn't your fated mate?" My dad said, shock evident in his voice.

My mom was silent next to him, something she rarely, if ever, was.

“You commended me for it before.” I took a long drink.

“Hardly.” My dad said, “You chose to stand by a pregnant woman you cheated on your fated mate with. Not my proudest moment, son.” He spat, “I was proud of you for owning up to your responsibilities. I am not, and never was proud of your actions that caused those responsibilities.”

“It was my choice, my decision to make,” I said, not knowing what else to say.

“We know, that’s why we let you make it, but choices have consequences, and you f.ucked up. Real bad.” I downed my drink, ignoring him, “You made your mother embarrass herself today, she was trying to stand up for you in the conference, but she didn’t know all the facts.”

“She embarrassed herself on her own,” I met his angry stare.

“Why?” My mom asked.

“Why what?” I sighed.

“Why did you choose Camilla?” That was rich coming from her.

She was ecstatic when I told her at first. They used to get along so well, and finding out she was pregnant sent my mom over the moon. Willa pushed back on things that Camilla never did. Willa never got the hang of party planning; even if she tried, something about her seemed restless, as if she was never fully settled in her role here. I never asked why that was.

She got what she wanted now – Toby growled at me

“Camilla understood me more than Willa did. Willa was fun, but,” I shrugged, I didn’t think I needed to justify my actions of the past to my parents. “Camilla was Luna material. Even you said that, Mom.” I glared at her.

“I thought she was,” My mom whispered, looking away.

“Well, it seems that Willa is doing pretty f.ucking well as a Luna,” My dad was angry.

“I can’t take it back now,” I glared at him.

Even though every part of me wished I could. I wanted to have Willa here, waiting for me. Willa to take care of our children. I wouldn’t ever admit that, but I wanted her back, and seeing her this weekend solidified that. She was everything I wanted and needed, and I could have had her forever.

Toby was growling at me, making it hard to concentrate.

Did he come here just to lecture me? I wasn't a child. I was the Alpha, his Alpha.

"I'm your Alpha," I told them coolly, "Remember that."

"Then act like it," My dad snapped.

My mom finally met my stare, she wasn't angry but she seemed to turn inward, fighting back tears. It annoyed me, she was happy with my choice, these were her consequences too.

My dad shook his head, "You cost us a grandchild, and this pack a strong perfect Luna. Next time think with your head, not your d.ick." He stormed out, and my mom followed him.

This weekend was getting out of hand.

I wished I didn't sign my rights away. Then I would have had some hold over her. She could have come around again. She used to be so obsessed with me that it was almost annoying.

But now, I would give anything to have that look of pure adoration cross her face when she saw me. Now I was only met with anger and coldness from her.

She looked at Prince Caspien in a way that she never looked at me. It was something past simple lust, it felt raw and deeper and I wanted to wipe that look off of her face when she looked at him like that.

She's happier without you

I locked Toby away

My son was a blessed wolf, and some other man claimed him as his own.

I shook with rage and let out a loud growl that almost shook the office. It did nothing to quell the rage.

This is all your fault – Toby pushed back.

I didn't want to admit what I realized.

This was all my own doing.

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 55 -

13–16 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 55

55 – Insecurities

(Willa)

At dinner that night we were still seated at the head table but placed at the end, not in the place of honor. If it was meant to be a slight, it wasn't one we minded. I didn't want to have to make small talk with these people. We got what we came for; now, we just had to show face out of politeness for the other Alphas and Lunas.

After the last plate was cleared, Caspien went to get us a drink.

Nolan's Gamma, Jack, came up to our end of the table.

"Can we talk?" He asked, looking nervous. I nodded, and we took a few steps away from the head table. Nolan's gaze followed us.

He pulled me into an apprehensive hug, "I missed you, Willa. We all did." He whispered.

I hugged him back tighter. I missed him.

After a long moment, I let him go, "Well, not all." I said, and he laughed once.

I studied him; he seemed to have come into his own these past few years. Gone was the slightly lanky boy and a filled-out man stood in front of me. He ran a hand through his brown waves and gave me a timid smile.

"Me and Issac did, at least." He mentioned Nolan's Beta, "I wanted to talk to you last night, but everything was just so-"

"Hectic," I said, and he flashed me a smile nodding.

"One h.ell of an entrance," He shook his head, smiling, "It was f.ucking incredible. You showed back up with The Prince in that dress." He grabbed my arms and squeezed them, awe and pride on his face.

Caspien came up behind me, and Jack released me from his embrace, looking nervous again.

"Sorry," Jack said.

"You're allowed to touch my mate," Caspien said, "If she will allow it, that is," He added darkly and looked at me; I nodded once, telling him it was.

“Jack, meet my mate, Caspien,” I turned to Caspien, “This is Nolan’s Gamma Jack and my friend.” I smiled.

It felt good to know that at least he didn’t share in the misplaced anger Nolan and Camilla seemed to have for me.

“Nice to meet you,” Caspien said, shaking his hand, “I’m going to sit back down. Find me when you’re finished.” Caspien nodded to us both.

I was immensely grateful to be able to finish this conversation with Jack alone. I saw how people cowered in my mate’s presence, and I wanted to have an open conversation.

“Willa,” His voice lowered, and he looked sad, almost pained, “We didn’t know about your child with Nolan, we didn’t know you were pregnant. But even despite that, when he decided to choose Camilla because of the baby, we weren’t okay with it.”

“But you’re here,” I looked at him.

“I am,” He rubbed the back of his neck, “I couldn’t; we couldn’t leave. The title, the legacy,” He shrugged, “But I just want you to know it didn’t sit right with us, and even more so now.” He couldn’t meet my eyes.

“Thank you,” I breathed, “I don’t blame you, honestly, I don’t,” I shook my head, taking his hands in my mind forcing him to look at me, “I get it, you both were Nolan’s friends since birth. I know where loyalties lie.”

“But Willa-”

I shook my head once, “I get it. I understand.” I really did. Even at the time, I knew that logically people wouldn’t side against their Alpha, not because of a rejection at least.

“However,” I went on, “Just because I understood, it didn’t lessen the pain. I lost everything that I knew in that one moment, and I wanted him to feel a fraction of what he put me through,” I laughed once; it came out dry and as hollow as I felt saying that. I just wanted Nolan to feel a shadow of the sharp sting of betrayal. Or I used to; I realized now that I genuinely didn’t care.

“I know, well, I can’t imagine. I wanted to reach out, but no one knew where you were. Lola refused to tell us.”

I smiled at that. I told her not to give away my location, and she stayed true to what I wanted. She was the only person that knew where we were. I knew if I told anyone else or let her tell anyone, I would have waited and wished for someone, anyone, to reach out. Instead of subjecting myself to that hope and pain, I completely cut off any contact, for self-preservation.

“I just wanted to say I’m sorry, and I wish things were different,” He met my eyes, and I saw the sincerity in them.

“Thank you, but I don’t.” I was being honest, “I’m happy, so indescribably happy,” A smile crept onto my face.

“Good,” He smiled back, “I’m happy that you’re happy. That’s all I wanted,” He said, lowering his voice.

Goddess, I didn’t realize how much I missed him.

It felt good to know he was actually a friend despite it all. It helped sew up a bit of me that still held onto that confused anger that was so ingrained in my life before.

“Friends? Still friends?” He asked.

“Yes,” I nodded once. I would make an effort to keep in touch with him, “I’ll give you my address now,” He laughed once.

“No need, I’ll just look for a castle,” He smiled.

“Find me later?” I asked him. He nodded once, looking as relieved as I felt.

I fell into the chair next to Caspien. I couldn’t help smiling. We got the votes, and talking to Jack was just the cherry on top of it all.

“Good conversation?” Caspien grabbed my hand and placed it on his lap.

“Yes,” I beamed at him, “I just, I don’t know. I didn’t know what they thought after it all happened..” I trailed off, “It was nice to talk to him. I didn’t realize how much I missed him.” I shrugged.

“Good,” He leaned forward to place a kiss on my forehead, sending more warmth through me, “It’s over now, Willa.” He smiled at me, a genuine one I hadn’t seen all afternoon.

The drinks flowed, and we fell into conversation, letting the others start mingling before we would join them.

Hugo, Nolan’s dad, scooted closer to us, and I shut my eyes, breathing out of my nose.

Please don’t be a d.ick, please don’t be a d.ick.

“My grandson is the blessed wolf.” He said, it wasn’t quite a question, “Also, I have another grandson,” He said, frowning into his drink.

“Alpha Hugo,” I didn’t mean to use his title, but it was second nature. He was Alpha for the entirety of my time at this pack, “I didn’t intend to keep it from you. Honestly,” My voice caught as I was transported back to that time, that person that I was.

“I thought my son would grow up here with another set of loving grandparents.” I closed my eyes, Emmett got that anyways with Caspien’s parents, but back then, I would have never thought that would be possible.

“It was never my intention to hurt you or Natalie. Telling you would have caused more strain. Nolan knew, it was his decision whether to share the information.”

Hugo looked at me, his eyes widened slightly, but he nodded.

“You’re right. You’re right,” He nodded again, “I’m not mad at you. I understand. Just the situation. It’s s.hit.”

I laughed once, “Yes, it wasn’t the most fun time for me either, and I know this situation is muddy, to put it gently,” I tried to give him a smile, “I’m happy that I have him, I wouldn’t change a day of my life because it resulted in my son. I just,” I took a steadying breath, “I don’t think it had to be that difficult.” I swallowed.

Why were these memories still painful?

Even though I had Caspien by my side and a happy, healthy boy, it didn’t completely erase the pain of the past. I could still remember the hurt, the betrayal, the unrelenting anger.

Even if it was a whisper of the feelings I felt then, it was enough to tighten my stomach.

How did I get through that?

I had no idea, honestly.

How did I physically get through that amount of pain and anger? What would I have become if I didn’t pull myself out of it? Even after the years in the cabin, that pain still lingered deep inside.

If Cali and Caspien didn’t help me find and re-shape myself- I shook my head.

It didn’t matter. I didn’t succumb to that part of me. I clawed my way out.

This is who I was, and the pain shaped me but it didn’t become me.

“I know I don’t have a place to ask this, but if you ever wanted him to meet us, I would be open to that,” Hugo’s eyes shone, mirroring mine. Caspien rubbed circles on the back of my hand, it was a soothing reminder that he was there, that I had him.

“It’s up to Emmett,” I said.

“Emmett,” Hugo repeated his name.

I nodded once. It seemed like he had so much more to say but he got up and left after politely saying goodbye to Caspien and I.

I didn't know how I felt about it all, but overall I felt good. Getting everything out in the open felt so relieving. It felt even better knowing that Hugo at least didn't hate Emmett just because he could be competition for his other grandson's title.

"Can we go soon?" Caspien asked.

"You read my mind,"

We stood and walked around, speaking to the Alphas and Lunas. We personally thanked them for supporting us. We made polite small talk with the others that voted no, but by Caspien's tone, it was very obvious that they were not in our good graces.

I could see the unanswered questions in everyone's eyes about Nolan and my history. But that's all that it was, history. The truth has a way of showing itself. I didn't need to say anything negative about Nolan or Blue Ridge; they could form their opinions on their own.

"We did it," I breathed once we spoke to the last group of Alphas and Lunas.

He smiled at me, my smile, the one that met his eyes and brightened them, "Our son will be safe, and no one will think to cross us again." I felt his anger, but it actually comforted me.

Knowing that he claimed Emmett as his own, not just in words but in feelings, was something I never dreamed of.

I knew he didn't do it for me. He loved Emmett because of who Emmett was.

They accepted each other; loved each other on their own.

I couldn't put into words, even to myself, what that meant to me.

"I'm going to the bathroom, don't leave without me." I excused myself as he got pulled into another conversation.

I left the ballroom, and a flurry of emotions warred for my time.

But I felt relief primarily—a happy release.

I was back here, the place I built up so horribly in my mind. I came back as a new person. I came back as someone who commanded more respect than I did here as the future Luna.

The comparison between who I was here and who I was now was jarring. I couldn't put it together, but I could appreciate it.

I felt at ease, calm, and overwhelmingly happy to know that I could leave this place behind me in a different light than when I last did.

I turned the corner to the public restrooms as Nolan walked out of his office. He took a step back, looking at me, a large glass of whiskey in his hand.

Just the person I didn't want to see. I forced a polite smile.

"Willa," I didn't like his name in my mouth, he raked his gaze over me. I was still wearing the suit from this afternoon, not caring enough to change.

"Nolan," I responded curtly, walking past him.

He grabbed my arm, and anger coursed through me. I jerked out of his hand, fixing him with a steady, confident glare I didn't have to fake.

"Do not touch me," I said slowly, meeting his eyes.

The eyes that used to undo me, made me submit and accept anything he said. I didn't hate him for who I used to be. I didn't even hate my past self. But I regretted how he made me feel even when we were together and what I accepted from him in the name of what I thought was love.

He gave me a smile, more of a smirk, and took a sip of his drink.

"Revenge looks good on you."

"Revenge?" I scoffed.

To diminish everything he did to me, to reduce everything about my life now to one word..

Revenge.

I smiled despite myself, almost laughing, "Revenge?" I asked him, taking a lazy step towards him.

"None of this for you because of you." I shook my head but didn't drop his gaze.

I felt my anger flare up. I wanted to scream at him to tell him just how little I thought of him, but that would give him too much satisfaction.

I settled on the truth, "You aren't a thought to me anymore." I paused, "This is me accepting what I deserve and being happy with my family. You don't exist in my world," I looked him over, and his smirk fell only slightly, "If you think my happiness is revenge, well, you must have an inflated sense of self-importance." I shook my head,

"Willa," His voice softened, but my name sounded strained against his lips.

“There is nothing that I want nor need to hear from you. Whatever you are about to say is only for your benefit, not mine.” His mouth fell slightly open.

I waited for this moment for ages, and now that it was here, I realized I didn’t need to hear anything from him. I moved past it without anything from him, and nothing he could say would make me feel any better.

I used to want to ask him why. I would replay every scenario in my mind during those first long lonely months in the cabin.

I wanted him to grovel, apologize, to explain it in a way that made sense because none of it did. I needed to know how he could hurt me in such a way; I needed it to make sense.

I had wanted this moment for so long, but now that it was here, I realized I didn’t need his validation. I didn’t need any explanation or apology. I didn’t need anything from him.

“You’ve changed.” He muttered.

“And you haven’t.” I shot back.

He clenched his fist, and anger and sadness seemed to war on his face.

“I liked you better when you weren’t such a b.itch,” He spat, and I smiled.

“I almost forgot that you don’t understand confidence in women,” I frowned once, shaking my head, “Little advice from one ruler to another? Shut your mouth before any more of your insecurities show.” I brushed past him and back to the dining room, not giving him a backward glance or a second thought.