The Alpha's Contract Luna

<div align="center">Chapter 1: Her Fate</div>

~Alexia~

The howls were coming closer, making Alexia's heart drum against her ribcage.

"Leave me alone! Please! Just let me be!" Alexia screamed, sensing the thundering paws of her father's warriors gaining in on her. She ran as fast as she could, navigating through the forest in her worn-out dress and a pair of old rubber shoes.

The tree branches belt her arms and face, scratching her delicate and pearly white skin. Her long brown hair was falling from the messy bun she had made before sprinting into the woods.

Alexia's honey-colored eyes widened in horror, noticing the trees swaying behind her. She knew they were catching up, and her hopes of escaping crumbled.

She wished she could already shift into her wolf form so she could elude her wretched fate, but Alexia had not yet come of age. Most male wolves shift when they turn twenty while she-wolves shift at twenty-one.

Alexia could only rely on the strength and speed of her alpha blood.

"Come back here, Alexia! Don't you dare run away!" From a distance, she could hear her father's directives. "I order you! Stay put! Hear your alpha!"

Her body instantly recognized her father's alpha command, and her knees turned like noodles, weakening with her every step.

"No! Please!" Alexia begged. Tears welled in her eyes, admitting her plans had failed.

She fell, rolling into the damp ground that went downhill. When her body finally stopped sliding down, she frantically took her stand. Still, to her dismay, her father, Alpha Roland Reed, the leader of the Cross River Pack, was standing in front of her with her stepbrother and three other warriors.

Alexia broke down in tears, kneeling before her father. She begged, "Please, father. Do not give me away. I'll work harder for the pack. I will do everything you tell me. Just… just don't give me away!"

Wasn't it enough that her own family had taken her privileges and enslaved her? They turned her into a maid, cooking, cleaning, and running back and forth for whatever orders her father and stepfamily could think of. Now, her father did the worst thing by offering her to a ruthless alpha as a bride when she was only twenty years old!

Her dreams of finding her true mate have been crushed altogether.

"You don't understand, Alexia! Our pack will be in danger. This is the alpha king's order!" Her father revealed. "Do you want your family to suffer? Me? Your stepmother and your siblings? Your friends? What about their parents?"

Roland huffed and reminded her, "We both know the king's demands are definite. There is no defying him!"

With one loud snarl, her father summoned his men. "Take her!"

Minutes later, she was thrown back to the attic of their home, which had become her room for the past three years. Her stepbrother, Drake, had practically pushed her down on the floor like she was nothing but a rug.

Instantly, she noticed him heaving. Lust emitted around Drake at the sight of her helpless state, her long legs on display for him.

Alexia's body instantly jerked as a reaction, her eyes widening in fright. She taunted, "Go ahead! Take advantage of me so you will die!"

It wasn't the first time her stepbrother tried to get his hands on her. The last time, Drake suddenly felt a pang in his chest, halting him from assaulting her.

"What the fuck are you doing?! Haven't you learned your lesson?!" Her father arrived. Seeing the scene before him, he grabbed Drake by the throat and pushed him against the wall.

Choking Drake with his bare hand, Roland added, "You know she is cursed! Stay away from her! She will be Alpha Kieran's bride, and we don't want to hurt her now!"

After throwing Drake outside her room, Roland returned his attention to Alexia. He said, "Tomorrow, Alpha Kieran's Beta will be here to fetch you. You will marry Alpha Kieran whether you like it or not!"

Alexia was in anguish. While she remained down on the floor, her tears fell uncontrollably.

Memories of the past flashed before her; how her father kissed her forehead to sleep at night, how he taught her self-defense for the first time, how he used to call her his baby girl, and many more. She looked into her father's eyes and wondered where her father had gone to.

Her hands reached for him, hoping a small part of him still existed. She asked, "Dad, please. Don't you not care for me at all? Have sympathy for me. You used to be the father that once loved me. What did I do to change that? What have I done?! How could my father treat me this way?!"

Alexia gasped and added, "Since you turned cold towards me, how I longed to feel a father's love. Why, dad? Please make me understand! I am your daughter, your own flesh and blood! Yet, you treat my step-siblings better than me!"

Her father stilled. His hands clenched into fists. He appeared to consider, but soon, he replied, "Because of you, your mother left me. Because of you, my best friend died. Yet, I had to endure keeping you in this pack all these years because it was my promise to your mother - to keep you until she returned!"

Alpha Roland sighed annoyingly and resumed, "Your mother swore to come back, but she never did. She would have already returned if she loved you, but she never came. I hoped. Until last week, even as I remarried, a small part of me still hoped, but it would seem fate had another way of opening my eyes. You weren't meant to stay in this pack. And perhaps your mother never meant to come back for you."

He clenched his jaws and snarled, "By the order of King Balthasar, you will marry Alpha Kieran, and that is your fate."

Her father slammed the door shut behind her, leaving her in distress.

Tomorrow, she would be taken into another pack, and in a week's time, she would be married off to the most ruthless Alpha in the nation. Would she ever survive?

Alexia cried her heart out, feeling enraged and hopeless.

The words of her father ran through her mind throughout the night. Her mother left her. It was true. She thought, 'Was it my fault that my mother left? Did she not really love me? Did she think I was also cursed?'

Maybe it was true because eight years had passed since her mother disappeared, and she never came back for her. There was not a single word from her; not a letter, not even the feel of her spirit. Her mother had abandoned her, and that was reality.

Knowing how her father blamed her for his best friend's death, her jaws clenched, and her heart felt like it was being squeezed by a hand. Ever since that happened, he never explained to her the reason he turned colder than the last. This was the first time her father finally spoke of that day, that terrible day that made her awful state turn into something far worse.

Under her breath, she muttered, "Why would he put the blame on me? How was it my fault? I did not even know what had happened to Beta Edward! Did he never believe me?"

Alexia did not know how long she cried that night, but when her tears ran dry, she forced herself up and rested in front of the window. She gazed up into the skies and asked the Moon Goddess, "Goddess, have you forsaken me? Why are you delivering me to a man who is said to be fearsome and cruel? Is this my fate?"