

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 63 -

10–12 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 63

Chapter 63 – The Prisoner

(Willa)

“She’s here,” Griffen came into Caspiens’s office without knocking, which seemed unnatural for him.

“How is she?” Caspien asked, not bothering to look up.

“P.issed,” A slow smile spread across Griffen’s face, “Already made a lot of enemies and threatened a few deaths.”

“I figured as much,” Caspien looked up towards where I was standing next to him, “Camilla is in the basement; you can decide her fate.” He said as if he were letting me decide what to order for lunch.

My mouth hung open, “Me?” I repeated.

“If you want,” Caspien shrugged, “Think of it as an early wedding present,” He smiled at me, but it was wicked.

“I don’t know if I want that.” I knew being Luna would be a big responsibility, but deciding someone’s fate didn’t feel right. I was too close to the situation I wanted to make sure that it was an unbiased and fair decision.

“Take your time, she can rot there for all I care,” Caspien said, going back to his work, “You don’t have to make the decision alone,”

“I’m sure Nolan will try to come back with some legal c.rap, but he has no leg to stand on,” Griffen said.

“How did he take it?” Caspien asked the question I was dying to know.

“Better than I expected,” Griffen said, rubbing his chin, “He fought it, of course, but didn’t try anything s.tupid. I was mildly impressed.”

“Maybe he’s finally maturing,” Caspien muttered.

“I want to see her,” I said, and Griffen’s dark eyes met mine before looking toward Caspien.

“You don’t have to ask me for permission; she’s the boss,” Caspien said, going back to his work.

“Allow me to escort you then, Luna.” Griffen nodded to me.

“Don’t start that,” I rolled my eyes, following him out.

I don’t know exactly what I wanted to see or what I didn’t. Call it instinct, curiosity, whatever. I just felt the need to see her, especially if her fate was in my hands.

Give her fate to me

Iris – I chided – We’re supposed to be fair

You can be fair; I can be your voice of reason

I shook my head. She held grudges like Caspien apparently.

Griffen didn’t say anything as we descended before leading me through a brightly lit concrete maze that was the cells.

“What do you usually do with these people?” My voice felt small. This felt too real.

The Silent Assassin and Alpha Jasper were different. I didn’t really know Camilla, but I felt close to the situation; it felt too real.

I think I built up the others in my mind as villains. Camilla was a villain in my story, but not the kill-a-kid kind of villain, just a vindictive ex-kind, and I didn’t think they held the same company.

“Depends on the severity of their transgressions, Caspien doesn’t do second chances.” He said, not needing to elaborate, I could guess their fate.

He scanned his finger and held another door open for me, “She’s the second on the right.” I glanced back at Griffen, who paused in the doorway, “You can go on alone. I’ll be waiting here when you’re done.”

I nodded my thanks and swallowed, nervous for some reason. I held my head high and focused on my steps.

I don’t know what I expected, but the word basement seemed more stone, damp, moldy. This place looked new-age, like I got lost on a spaceship.

I paused outside Camilla's cell, it was glass, but I knew better than to think it was anything even a dragon could penetrate through.

Her eyes shot to mine, widening for a moment before turning into slits. Mascara ran down her face, and her hair looked like she had been running her hand through it.
(Willa)

"She's here," Griffen came into Caspiens's office without knocking, which seemed unnatural for him.

"You," She seethed.

Yes? I didn't know what to say. We barely had a conversation before, and none were polite from her end. She didn't even try to pretend with me. This seemed like a mistake, I should have had a plan maybe even a single question, before I stood tall and proud before her.

"Camilla," I stated.

"What do you want with me?" She stepped towards the door, towering over me. I forgot how tall she was, but a quick glance down confirmed she was wearing heels.

"I just wanted to see how you were doing," It wasn't a lie. I still didn't know why I was down here.

"You wanted to revel in my misery more like it?" She scoffed.

"Actually, no," That was the truth. I was surprised to find I didn't take pleasure in this. Not because of what she did with Nolan, "Well, maybe a little," I amended, shrugging when it crossed my mind the danger she put Caspien in.

She glared at me, her lips puckered.

"Do you have a problem with me?" I asked.

"Obviously," She flipped her unruly hair over her shoulder.

"It's not that obvious," I genuinely couldn't understand what she had against me, "I don't even know you."

She rolled her eyes, "You were mated to my boyfriend," She said matter-of-factly.

"You broke up before we found out we were mates," At least from what I heard and Nolan told me they were broken up, not that I would put cheating past him.

"You didn't deserve him," She almost shouted. She was shaking now, "He chose you, you of all people."

“The Moon Goddess chose me for him. She thought that I did,” I corrected her, “Or do you think you know better than her?”

I didn't think that she always made the right choice, I don't know why I was mated to Nolan, but I was lucky that I was because I had Emmett. I was glad to be mated to him because of it, and that was a freeing thought.

Camilla rolled her eyes and crossed her arms, “I am better suited for him.”

“I don't disagree. You both are very good for each other.” I met her eyes, “You would have hated anyone that Nolan was mated to, don't make this about me personally.”

Was she really this obtuse?

“Maybe, and I would have taken him back. It was just easy to take him from you.” She seethed, her face was turning red.

“And now, why are you still mad at me? You have Nolan. I have my mate, my family. Why still go after Caspien? Now that is making it personal. I need to know why.” My voice was hard; my anger flared in each word.

“Because you have it all. You've always had it all.” She said through her teeth.

“Camilla,” I took a breath trying to explain something so basic to her it almost pained me, “I was mated to someone you dated, someone that you coveted; you can't truly blame me for that.” Her eyes told me that she could.

“You still want him,”

I laughed despite myself, “I have my true mate. Nolan isn't a thought; I have moved past that; why haven't you?”

“That's why you showed up in the dress you stole from me and paraded yourself around?” Her nostrils were flaring.

Stolen dress? I ignored that comment.

“I would hardly call that parading. I showed up to a conference I was invited to. You, like your chosen mate, are speaking from your own insecurities and projecting them on me.” I shook my head, “This conversation is going nowhere. I was just trying to make you seem like a person and see why you would go after my mate, your Prince. Are you really that stupid, or have you lived a life so devoid of all consequences that you don't even think of them anymore?”

“You deserved it, so did he.” She almost cut me off.

There was no talking to her.

I gave her a tight smile, “So be it,” I turned my back on her.

“Wait!”

“What?” I studied her with an impassive difference I borrowed from Griffen.

“What do you want me to say? That I’m sorry? Because I’m not.”

“I don’t care about your apology. It means nothing to me. It won’t change anything, even if it were true.” I shrugged.

That truth was almost as empowering as when I said it to Nolan. Their apologies meant nothing to me, they wouldn’t change anything, and I didn’t need the validation.

“He deserved to die,” She said, her lips pulled over her teeth.

I closed the space that I created between us. I looked up at her, not breaking eye contact. Now I was mad. Really mad, but it fueled me.

She glared smugly down at me.

“He didn’t die,” I whispered, the recent memory still piercing me, “I’m choosing your fate. Let’s call this a trial of sorts.” My voice was harder now, “I’m trying to be fair, wait. No, I was trying to be fair. But you made it really difficult.” I tilted my head and fixed her with a sick smile Cali would have been proud of.

Her eyes widened, “They can’t, you can’t.”

“We can,” I leaned forward as close to the door separating us, “Strike two, Camilla.” I turned on my heel and walked away.

There was so much I wanted to say, but I couldn’t get through to her. I wanted her to understand, to get it through her thick skull that what she did to Caspien wasn’t justified. But I understood now that there was no talking to people like that. We were just talking at each other, and it wasn’t worth my time.

Griffen held the door open, his face neutral.

“How did it go?”

“As expected,” I grumbled.

I wanted her to be human, apologetic, and show some sign of remorse for what she almost did to Caspien.

Not because her fate was because of it but to show that she wasn't a completely horrible person. But maybe some people weren't redeemable.

"She seems really dense," Griffen admitted, "The little I saw of her. No moral compass."

"Not that I've seen, at least." I unclenched my fist when I realized my nails were digging into my palm.

She wasn't making this easy. Now I needed to decide if she was enough of a threat to be able to walk out of here alive.

"It doesn't get easier. I wish I could say it does." Griffen said when we got back to the elevator. His voice was brittle, emotionless, and yet filled with bottled pain.

"What part of it?" I asked.

"All of it," He sighed, "But especially the decisions like this. Nothing is as black and white as you would hope for, and you will have death on your hands whether their blood actually stains you or not." He looked forward.

His words weighed on me, and I felt myself starting to crumble under them.

I wasn't even officially Luna yet, and the title felt heavy.

I wanted this, though. I didn't want to be in the other room party planning when my mate made decisions. I had to accept the raw, real parts of this, not just the conferences and parties. Before becoming Luna, I think I had my fair share of hardships at this pack and knew I would be well-equipped with all of them by my side.

"I'm lucky to have you," I nudged Griffen, and he smiled widely nudging me back.

"The feeling is mutual, Luna."

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 64 -

14–18 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 64

Chapter 64 – The Luna of Crescent Moon

(Willa)

“It’s not a big deal, Mom.” She wiped tears from her eyes with a handkerchief Grace produced for her from Goddess knew where.

“It is; my baby girl, is going to become a Luna.” I sighed and looked at my dad for support, but his eyes were misting too.

I was already supposed to be a Luna previously, and they never acted like this.

I really didn’t feel like I was doing anything different besides officially taking the title. As Caspien reminded me, I was already doing Luna duties and showing up as a leader of the pack.

“Thank you for putting this together so last minute,” I looked at Grace, and she waved a hand.

“I had a lot of help, and it’s just something simple.” She shook her head.

“Perfect,” I smiled at her.

Caspien came up and took my hand in his. He in a black suit and matching tie would never not take my breath away.

“Ready?” He asked, giving me a smile that reached his eyes.

“Ready,” I answered, and I was.

I chose a simple dress, long and white, that hugged me in a cool fabric. It had thick straps and a low back. I pinned my hair back in the comb that my mom produced, an heirloom that I last wore on Nolan’s birthday.

My hair was lightly curled and pulled back to one side, and I felt good. Comfortable, not overly showy, and myself. I presented myself how I wanted to, not once thinking about others, and that was a freeing thought.

“There is a small party afterward, but we don’t have to stay long.” Caspien leaned down and whispered into my ear. His hand came up and brushed my back where the fabric dipped low.

“We should stay. My first official duties as Luna, I could hardly leave.”

Caspien frowned slightly, “Maybe we should re-think this Luna thing if I have to share you.”

“Maybe we just take Emmett and run so I don’t have to share you.” I raised an eyebrow, a challenge.

“Now that I could get behind.”

“No one is taking my grandbaby.” Grace looked offended.

“How dare you suggest that,” My dad added.

I gave them a tight smile, completely forgetting that they were there.

Caspian had that effect on me when he looked at me as if I was the only person in the room – I believed it.

“Duty calls,” I signed.

“Doesn’t it always,” Caspian grumbled, leading us all to the elevator.

We picked up Griffen, Loreli, and Holden on their floor. Griffen looked agitated, shifting from foot to foot.

“You have to be there for maybe ten minutes,” Caspian told Griffen.

“I wish Nora could have come,” I said.

“Me too,” Griffen said, “She’s in a lot of pain. It’s hard for her even to walk.” He looked worried, almost pained.

“Just means she’s close,” I said to him, trying to make my voice soft but confident.

“Come on,” Caspian held the elevator door open.

“Wait for a second; we have a surprise.” Cali smiled at me and took a step to the right.

Emmett stood behind her, his hair slicked over, in a little black suit and matching tie. Tears pricked my eyes, and I clasped my hands, kneeling to his level.

“Emmett, oh my Goddess, you are incredible.”

Instead of coming into my open arms, he adjusted his suit and gave me a smug smile before looking at Caspian.

“I wanted to match Dad.”

Caspian swallowed and knelt down. Emmett walked into the elevator and gave us a spin.

“I am honored,” Caspian said, pulling him up into his arms and standing up. So much for my hug I guess.

I didn't have to look behind me to know that our parent's eyes were already misting over again. Emmett was showered with well-deserved praise as we descended to the main area of the packhouse.

This Luna ceremony was different than what I prepared for in the past. I wasn't prepared actually, at all. I didn't know the pack. I didn't even know the packhouse that well. It was different from when I was supposed to take over the pack I had known since birth. I wondered if I would be accepted not just as Caspien's mate but as everyone's Luna. I felt like an imposter for the first time in a while.

We are going to be a damn good Luna, no matter what pack it is. But Crescent City is home; it's where our family is.

I nodded at Iris' words.

Are you okay? – Caspien asked, I looked up at him, and his gaze was fixed on me. Emmett was touching his beard, ignoring us.

I nodded.

What is it?

I just realized I don't even know where the kitchen is in this pack. I haven't been part of it really, and I don't want to seem like an outsider.

You're not, you're their Luna, and you have been making decisions for them and protecting them for some time now. You were fated to lead this pack by my side.

Caspien's eyes shone with pride, and my heart swelled at his words.

I know, I want to do a good job more than anything. I want to make the pack proud.

Our pack. And you will. You are everything they need in a Luna and more – they will see that.

He reached for my hand and rubbed the back of it in circles.

The center of the packhouse common area was empty, leaving space for a small circular stage. (Willa)

"It's not a big deal, Mom." She wiped tears from her eyes with a handkerchief Grace produced for her from Goddess knew where.

Past that, pack members pressed in. They pushed into the railings of the balconies above. Their faces were illuminated by the light of more candles than I thought possible. No other lights were

on. In between the natural greenery of the plants crawling up the open hallways above, there were white flowers. The place smelled amazing.

“Is this a fire hazard?” I whispered to Caspien, trying to calm my nerves with some humor.

He laughed and looked around, shrugging, “We have a very good sprinkler system.”

It was tasteful, simple yet elegant, and even if we had more than a few days to plan it, this was everything that I wanted.

“Thank you, it’s perfect,” I looked back at Grace, and she beamed at me but still looked a little nervous.

“I didn’t have much-” She started.

“It’s perfect,” I cut her off. She nodded, her eyes welling up.

Caspien handed Emmett to my dad, and they went to wait by the foot of the stage while Caspien and his parents led me to the stage.

There was a microphone, and I was glad that I couldn’t see the faces around me. There were more eyes on me than I had ever had before, I wondered how Caspien got used to this, but he wasn’t one who even seemed to notice anyone around him. I wondered what part of that was learned and how much of it was truly him.

Caspien stood before me and took both my hands in his, enveloping mine in his steady warmth. He looked at me with a mix of shock, awe, and adoration.

I can’t believe this is happening – He linked me, blinking a few times.

Was he going to cry? He couldn’t because then I would just from sheer nerves alone.

The room slipped away as I studied him. His familiar face, his eyes that I saw every time I closed mine.

My perfect match, my counterpart, my Caspien.

He was the only thing that was real at this moment, and I slipped into a calming comfort despite the hundreds of curious eyes on me.

I knew I could do anything as long as it was with him.

“I know not many of you have had the pleasure of meeting your future Luna,” The King started, “But that will change soon. The person that you will meet is the most caring, strong, supportive, loving, and resilient person that I have ever met.”

My breath caught at Rendell's words. Did he really mean that? I tore my gaze from my mates and looked at him, and Rendell was staring at me with such fatherly affection it took everything in me not to spill the happy tears I was holding back.

"You will find no better leader for this pack and for the future of Crescent Moon. Your Queen and I are honored to have her by our son's side leading you."

He said some more formal words, but I was lost again in Caspien's gaze. It was so intense I had never experienced anything like it, even from him.

"Now, let us welcome your Luna officially." Caspien squeezed my hand to bring my attention back to the real world.

Since I was already part of the pack, this ceremony was slightly different than before, but still involved the chalice and my and Caspien's blood mixing.

"Wilhelmina Balfour, do you promise to protect your pack, lead with integrity, and obey your Alpha?-"

"Take out the last part." Caspien almost growled. His voice was low.

Rendell paled, "Sorry, habits, old words." He scrambled. Grace looked with pride at her son giving him a nod.

"Do you promise to protect your pack, lead with integrity, and lead alongside your Alpha?" He amended, looking a bit red.

"I do."

He asked a few other questions but no matter what he said I swore it on my blood. To stand beside my mate, to protect our family and our pack.

My blood seemed to awaken; it hummed inside me. This was right; this was where I was supposed to be all along.

I didn't feel the pain of the cut, I didn't look away from Caspien's icy eyes. Our blood mingled and pooled together and dripped slowly into the chalice.

A wind swept around us, blocking out everything else.

It was only us. It was only ever us.

This was destiny.

The wind died down after minutes, or maybe mere moments.

My hair settled on my back and I looked around.

The room was pitch black, all of the candles went out.

Everything was silent before cheers erupted, the only indication that anyone else was there. I smiled widely at the acceptance and thanked the Moon Goddess for the show, proving that we were a strong-fated pair.

“Okay everyone,” Grace’s voice came over the microphone, I could tell she was smiling, “Would you would all assist in re-lighting the candles, really it would be a shame to waste them. Then let’s let the party begin.”

I laughed as sheer excitement and relief overcame me.

Slowly the lights started around us like fallen stars lighting up our own constellation in this slice of the world.

“Wow,” I hear Emmett from the audience.

My heart swelled. Even if this wasn’t the path I thought we would take, even if it took a few twists and turns and a whole lot of bumps, he got to see me here. He got to witness this in my parent’s arms, watching me and his father figure, no, his father alongside me.

I always was the role model he deserved, I always did my best, but somehow this made it click for me. I was proud of the person I became, the person I always was but didn’t see it. Emmett looking up at me clapping and smiling made it seem more real than ever before.

Caspian and I surveyed the crowd, my pack, hand in hand. The lights flickered and illuminated the faces of my new pack member, my new family, in my new home.

Even though it was new, it felt right in a way I couldn’t put words to.

I basked in the warmth and another round of applause as the candles showed me, the new Luna of Crescent Moon.

I joined my parents and everyone at the foot of the stage on Caspian’s arm, feeling more confident and calm than ever before.

“Wow,” Cali gave me a real smile and grabbed my arms, “Wow,” She shook her head.

Cali speechless,- now that was a first. She even had more to say after I got practically n.aked and changed into a wolf in front of her.

I smiled at her, “We did it. We’re doing it.”

Her gold-flecked eyes met mine, “Not exactly my five-year plan but,” she shrugged.

“Better?” I asked.

“Better,” She agreed, a smile spread across her face and I embraced her.

She let me go so that my parents could pull me into an almost too-tight hug and I could hold Emmett close.

“Good job, Mama,” He squished my cheeks in his little hands, his green eyes met mine, “I’m proud of you.”

I smiled at him, “Thank you,” I buried my head in his hair and pulled him close, “My sweet beautiful boy you don’t know what that means to me. Thank you so much for being here.”

“Mama,” I pulled back, and he frowned.

“Don’t wrinkle my suit.” I fought an eye roll and smiled at him.

“How dare you try to crease my son’s suit,” Caspien came up and straightened his suit, “Do you know how long these creases take to get out?”

“Do you?” I countered.

“I mean, no-” He frowned a bit.

“We’re going to get the little mister to bed in a moment.” My dad said, “Proud of you, sweetheart.” He nodded once as me.

My mom opened her mouth and closed it, nodding vigorously, “I just, you have come into your own; this is who you are, who you are supposed to be.” She patted my cheek lovingly, tucking a loose strand of hair behind my ear and adjusting the comb she placed there hours ago.

“Thank you, Mom.” I grabbed her hand, holding it to my cheek, “I don’t know, I don’t know what I would have done without you.” I turned to my dad, “You both.” I almost choked on those words.

I never really spoke of it, but I hoped they knew just how lost I would have been without them. I don’t think anyone was meant to do it alone, especially with a child. I knew they felt that it was their duty to be with me, but they chose it; they committed to it.

“We will follow you anywhere.” My dad promised.

“But we also really like it here, so if this is the end goal, we’re good with that.” My mom smiled, and my dad wrapped his arm around her pulling her to his side.

“This is it.” I knew that. This was ingrained in me from before I knew Caspien, “This is it.” I repeated.

Finally settled for the first time maybe in my life.

“Shall we, Luna?” Caspien extended an arm after kissing Emmett’s cheek goodnight.

I wrapped my arm in his, and he led me through the throng of crowds, all smiling and wishing me well, congratulating me.

I was showered with warm wishes and genuine congratulations. I needed to learn more about the pack members and pack house. Now that things settled down, I made a note to come down here daily to interact with my pack.

I committed this feeling to memory, the warmth that flooded through me. The lightness I felt surrounded by those I cared about and loved as my own. Those that I knew I would come to care about once I got to know them.

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, and etched the feeling in my mind to draw on later.

This was bliss. This was contentment. This was right.

I caught Rachel’s eye in the crowd; she lifted her glass to me and smiled widely. I tilted my head in confirmation.

“Dance with me?” Caspien asked, but it was more of a request.

“Always,” I placed my hand in his as his broad hand encircled the small of my back, sending tingles through my body.

“My Luna.” He leaned forward, “I never dared to wish.”

“My Alpha.” His forehead touched mine as the music started.

He led me across the floor. This time I was ready for him. I knew his movements. We twirled around the room in each other’s arms, barely taking our eyes off each other.

He dipped me low and brushed his lips across mine. The sound of cheers was diminished by my beating heart.

Others joined us on the dance floor, and I took a step closer to him, not wanting any space between us.

“So, have you thought about actually taking a title?”

“I just did?” I pulled back, looking at him, “How much did you drink?”

“No,” He smiled, shaking his head, “A royal title. You a becoming my Princess and Emmett my heir and Prince officially.”

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 65 -

12–15 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 65

Chapter 65 – Labor

(Willa)

“Yes, I think, I think I am ready” I answered breathlessly.

I wanted this, everything he had to offer. All of him, I was all in.

“Oh, my Goddess.” Someone familiar said.

The room came back to focus and clapping and excited chatter filled the room. I smiled up at Caspien, his piercing eyes churning in response. I offered him a smile, but his dark brows tugged together and he broke our gaze looking past me.

I stood straight and turned around, surveying the room, a glass smashed, but the sound didn't unnerve me as much as Griffen's face did. His mouth was open, and it took me a moment to realize that he dropped the glass.

I had never seen him so flustered, even when he attended to Nora.

“She's in labor.” His face paled, and I looked at Caspien, “What do I do? I need a hospital bag. What if, oh Goddess, I packed three I don't know which one has the fuzzy socks she likes.”

I suppressed a smile. The cool calculated warrior that became Beta of the most prominent back in the area not because of bloodline but because of sheer skill alone looked like he would get sick because he didn't know where his mate's fuzzy socks were.

“Don't worry,” I took a few steps toward him, where he stood on the outskirts of the dance floor and placed a hand on his arm, “We will help you and get everything.”

Cali and Holden showed up next to us, and Caspein probably informed them.

“We got this,” Cali added, “You get Nora to the hospital, and we will bring everything you need and make sure your apartment is ready when you get back.”

“What if she doesn’t make it?” Griffen sounded hollow, and Caspien put his arm around his Beta leading him to the elevator.

“The pack clinic is maybe four minutes away. I think she can make the commute from your apartment to the clinic.” Caspien said, but there was a bit of humor in his voice.

“She’s not at the apartment.” Griffen stopped Caspien, “She’s with your and Willa’s parents, I didn’t want her to be alone. Oh Goddess, what if I had left her alone?”

“I think she can make the five-minute commute then,” Caspien countered.

“Believe it or not, you do know you’re in labor without someone else telling you,” Cali said, her voice full of wry playfulness.

Griffen’s dark eyes shot to mine for confirmation.

“She would know no matter where she was,” I gave him a soft smile. But I suppressed a wince thinking of those rippling contractions; I thought Emmett was clawing himself out of my stomach at some point, “Bring her to the clinic, and in a few hours, you’ll get to meet your baby.”

“The baby,” Griffen swallowed, “I forgot about that. The baby. There will be a baby.” I bit down on my smile, the other thing you don’t think about during labor... the outcome.

Caspien wrapped his arm around Griffed supporting his friend to the elevator but not before shooting a look over his shoulder.

his was going to be a long night.

“If you ever act like that when I’m in labor,” Cali shook her head at Holden, letting out a breath.

“You mean we can have another one?” Holden’s eyes lit up.

“Not now, but I mean.” She trailed off, her eyes met his.

I clasped my hands together, watching them.

“Okay let’s do this now,” Holden’s face lit up, “Are you ovulating?” He threw Cali over his shoulder and she made a noise that could have been classified as a squeal if anyone else did it.

“Do you even know what that means?” She shrieked laughing trying to wiggle away, but not actually wanting to.

I followed them out of the crowd. Some of the other pack members gave us smiles which I genuinely returned, but most of them were so absorbed in their own mates or friends to even notice us.

“No, but I think it has to do with babies,” Holden said.

Cali gave me a look over his shoulder that said ‘men’ and I shrugged agreeing.

“Not to be a wet blanket but we do have a baby on the way,” I mentioned when we got far enough away from the noise.

Holden sighed but didn’t put Cali down, “Rain check? Ovulating or not, we are trying.” Holden emphasized and Cali rolled her eyes but a smile played on her face.
(Willa)

“Yes, I think, I think I am ready” I answered breathlessly.

It melted me seeing my friend so perfectly happy, so content, and I was selfish enough to be happy that she would be staying here with me forever.

Our parents had her covered, she’s still apparently in the early stages but its definite labor - Caspien linked me – Griffen is taking her to the hospital with both our moms, they didn’t trust his energy apparently – I could almost hear him sigh in my mind and bit my smile.

Everything else okay? – I asked

Kids are asleep. I just checked on them. I’m going to follow them down with some for Griffen.

Let them know we’re grabbing the bags and all they don’t need to focus on anything else.

I’ll tell the message to Nora, Griffen is a nervous wreck, completely useless

We got this.

I relayed the information to Holden and Cali, “If you can hold off on you trying to make a baby for a few hours,” I raised my eyebrow at Cali.

Holden turned around, “Yes, Luna,” He smirked, “Anything for our fearless leader.”

His back was turned to me before I could reply. Instead, Cali was facing me over his shoulder.

“Do they need anything else? I have to admit my labor was a bit foggy, but I think I know the gist of what she needs.” She said frowning slightly and tugging on a curl seeming completely at ease over Holden’s shoulder, “Are werewolf labors different?”

“I wouldn’t know,” I replied honestly, “Mine was bad, but I guess they all were, I lost track of time but apparently it only lasted five or six hours.”

“Not too bad,” Cali took her bottom lip in her mouth, thinking something over before nodding once resolutely.

I stared at her, but she didn't offer what she thought so I let it go for the moment.

We collected all three hospital bags Griffen packed, one was in his office here, as if the twenty-second elevator ride would have been too long for him to retrieve the others. Apparently, he had another stashed at The Dracos' Group office, but this was already excessive.

Cali and I checked to make sure the essentials were packed, besides the fuzzy socks, which we also found loads of. I was impressed; he was more prepared than I would have been.

A dull pain tugged at me, thinking of how this was supposed to be how fathers acted. I shook that away, closing my eyes against the now unfamiliar dull ache.

I hated how I still was triggered by these things, even though I was far past that, years away, and completely and entirely happy. I guess I still had some deep-rooted trauma or anger that part of me needed to let go of. I knew Caspien would be different, but it still didn't erase what Emmett deserved in the past, what I deserved because Caspien wasn't there for that.

"You good?" Cali knelt next to me, where I was re-packing a bag, concern plastered on her face.

I shook my head, "Yeah, just bad memories." I offered her a smile, but I knew she saw through it.

Something dark marred her features for a moment before a wary smile returned.

"I understand." Her gold-flecked eyes met mine with such sincerity it made my throat constrict. I nodded, all I could bring myself to admit, and she squeezed my shoulder.

I knew she understood.

"Let's go help someone else have the perfect labor," Her smile returned, it was genuine this time.

She held a hand out, and I placed mine in hers. Her fingers grasped mine and helped me up in a way that brought me back to myself.

We exchanged a smile that only two people that had been in similar gut-wrenching situations could. We saw the end of that, we got past it, and we were okay now – better than okay. But it didn't erase our experiences, and I didn't want it to.

What I went through was real and valid, and I survived it, even though looking back I didn't understand how I did.

—

We met Griffen and Nora in the clinic. A sense of relief washed through me being able to come back down here and feel joy instead of the gut-wrenching pain that stained the last time I was here when Caspien almost died before me.

Griffen was a wreck. I had never seen him, or anyone for that matter, so nervous. But he made it through. They all did.

Caspian wrapped his arm around me still in his suit, I should have thought to bring changes of clothes, but this was all so sudden.

Holden, Cali, Caspian, and I waited in the waiting room alongside Griffen and Nora's parents who we had the pleasure of meeting. Nora's parents were as soft-spoken and rational as she was, and Griffen's parents seemed nothing like him, but in a way, it almost made sense how he turned out.

There was nothing but pride and anticipation on their faces as they waited.

Finally, a few hours later, the world was introduced to Olivia Rose Paterson, and the world was a better place for it.

We left after we were introduced to the little bundle. Griffen's color returned only when the baby was in his mate's arms. Nora was a natural, of course, and seeing them all together made me swell with love and affection.

We would visit them properly tomorrow, but tonight was their time, and we were just happy to have been a part of it, however small.

Caspian gripped my hand as we rode back up with Holden and Cali. Cali gave me a smile as Holden tugged her off at their floor.

"Good luck with the ovulating," I called after them. Cali snorted and Caspian looked at me confused but I brushed it off. I was too tired to explain.

"It's all so real now," Caspian murmured when we got back to our floor.

"What?"

"We're not kids anymore, and I haven't felt like one for a while, honestly far too long." He ran a hand through his dark locks, and I followed him into our place.

He poured himself a drink and offered me one, but I shook my head. My eyes were already heavy with exhaustion, even though we left my Luna ceremony early, we were well into the night after Nora's labor.

"It just seems so, I don't know." He paused, he was rarely at a loss for words, and I let him find them, "I've known Griffen for almost my entire life, even before I considered him for a Beta position. It seems surreal to go through this with him, his first child." He took a sip and met my gaze.

“You knew the pregnancy thing would result in a baby, though, right?” My mouth tugged up.

“Yes,” He softened, shaking his head, “It just feels grounding in a way. A moment where you really look back.” He shrugged, tossing back his drink and examining his empty glass as if he might find an answer there.

I walked up to him and took the glass, placing it back on the bar, and ran my hand along his arm, “I haven’t been in a similar position, but I can imagine it would feel surreal.” I offered, not wanting to diminish his experience.

“It’s not bad, I’m f.ucking delighted for them, it’s just-” He shook his head.

“One of those moments you realize that life is life?” I suggested.

“Yes,” He smiled at me, “Pretty much that.”

He put an arm around my shoulder, “Now, how about I get you to our bedroom, Luna?” His tone returned deeper, wanting, and it chased away any sleepiness I felt prior.

We walked in silence to the bedroom, and I reflected on all that happened on this long night. I had no idea what time it was, but it didn’t matter. I knew that Emmett was safe, taken care of, and protected, with two loving sets of grandparents that happened to both be staying on the same floor this weekend.

I was truly blessed. We were truly blessed, all of us to have found each other and fit so well together.

“What are you thinking,” Caspien brushed his lips to my temple before he opened the door for me.

“How crazy and perfect this night has been and how lucky I am.” Caspien came to stand in front of me after he closed the door.

“Me too,” His eyes were bright despite the darkness in the room, “I want to show you something,” He held out a hand, and I placed mine in his without a moment of hesitation.

He led me to his floor-length windows and the glittering lights beyond.

“This is your kingdom, Luna.” His hand came to the back of my neck, and he brushed it alongside my shoulder, “I intend to show you it all, but for tonight this will have to do.”