The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 36 -

29-37 minutes

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36 – Drinking Buddy

(Rachel)

I needed an explanation, I thought that I deserved one at the very least. I came back home only to find out that Caspien was mated. He didn't have the decency to even text me about it. (Rachel)

I needed an explanation, I thought that I deserved one at the very least. I came back home only to find out that Caspien was mated. He didn't have the decency to even text me about it.

I didn't know what I felt—annoyed, angry, hurt? A bit of it all.

I didn't think he would find his mate, he has been looking for a decade and has been to most packs in the area, and beyond. I thought that he wouldn't find his, like I never found mine, it was the thing that bonded us.

I don't think I loved him, how can you love someone without really knowing them? But I did love being with him. The Alpha that didn't open up to anyone, I felt that I knew him when we were intimate, and I felt special because of that.

It has been years and as far as I knew I was the only person he was consistently hooking up with. I had to admit it did make me feel good, being invited to his private quarters, knowing he would be there every time I came home. I could pretend that he was waiting for me. We weren't fated, but I was as close to him as he let anyone get, and although he told me he was waiting for his mate to take a Luna, a small part of me hoped that he wouldn't find her so that I could stay with him.

Jealously, that was it. Jealous that not only someone else was fated to that powerful gorgeous man, but at what they had. I wanted it, not even with him, but with my own mate.

I wanted my own damn mate and why didn't I find him yet? I was the only one of my friends who wasn't mated, and even in Europe, I had visited packs for events, on the pretense of fun, but I was looking for my mate.

Still nothing.

I walked to his private elevator, I wanted to have this conversation now. I took a shaky breath and pressed my finger to the scanner, hoping it would still work, but at least no one was around to see my embarrassment. The scan was approved, didn't even bother to take them off then. The elevator took a while to get there, and I was having second guesses with each passing second.

"Oh," Caspien's mom stepped out of the elevator looking me over, "Hi Rachel, I didn't know you were back." She gave me a small smile.

"Luna," I nodded my head, "I just got in actually, I wanted to speak to Caspien, er Alpha Dracos if he was around."

"I think he is, now might not be the best time-"

"I just need five minutes." Grace looked at me sympathetically, I almost couldn't stomach that.

"You know he found his mate,"

"I do," I nodded once.

"Okay then," She motioned me back into the elevator, following me.

"I don't want to keep you from anything."

"I was just heading to the library." She pressed the button and stepped back standing next to me.

"Oh, at this hour?" I tried to cut the tension.

"Our grandson is a blessed wolf." She smiled genuinely now and her eyes misted over in pride or adoration, or something that twisted my stomach further.

"Wow," I tried to return the smile but my heart dipped. How long have they been mated if they already had a pup? From what I heard she only showed up here a month or so ago.

"It's been a day," She looked at me and her sympathetic smile was back.

"I can imagine," We stood in silence before the doors finally opened to his office floor.

"You know where to go," She held open the door, "I'll send him down, I think his office is open."

"Thank you, Luna." I turned away not wanting to see the pity anymore. I didn't think about the fact that everyone would pity me now, I couldn't handle that.

Every minute felt like an eternity waiting in his office until the door opened behind me. I sat up a bit in my seat and he crossed the room standing behind his desk. My breath hitched at his familiar features: the fitted gray suit, the impossibly black hair, and the perfectly trimmed beard. I hated how I was reacting to him, and he didn't belong to me anymore, he never did.

"Rachel," He said, his voice devoid of emotion.

"Why didn't you tell me the happy news?" I stood up, taking a step towards his desk.

"About what?" He raised an eyebrow.

"You found your mate," I responded matching his dry tone.

"Yes, I did."

"And I heard about it from others."

"You did?"

"Of course I did, you're not keeping her a secret are you?" I scoffed.

"No," He frowned, "Of course not, but the situation has been interesting, unconventional as far as werewolves go."

"Why didn't you tell me?" I moved around the desk, f.orcing him to face me. I tried to study his passive face but I could never read him. We were together for years, and he didn't think to tell me?

"I found my mate, everything changed-"

"Don't give me that b.ullshit," I almost shouted. I knew the mate blindness, that nothing mattered besides them the moment you scented them, laid eyes on them. I didn't want to hear it from him.

"Rachel," His voice lowered, I swear if he was about to pity me, him of all people, "I didn't-"

The door burst open, and a beautiful girl walked into the room. She was striking in a natural way and I swallowed, this must be her. Of course, his mate would be someone so stunning. Long back hair that fell in natural waves I could never quite get perfect, no matter how hard I tried—green eyes that were a shade I had never seen in this world scanned my face as she bit on a full pink lip.

"I'm so sorry for interrupting." I looked back up at Caspien but his eyes were fully focused on his mate.

My stomach curled and I felt hot tears prick my eyes. I had to get out of here, this was s.tupid, I don't know what I expected from him. I felt so worthless, so small and insignificant.

I brushed past her knowing I couldn't trust my voice, and pressed the door to the elevator a few times when I finally reached it.

It opened and a girl with ruby-red curls was leaning against the glass wall without a care in the world, her eyes met mine after a long moment. Who was she? Besides Caspien only his Beta and Gamma and parents had access to this elevator. I was gone for a few months but I felt like I missed so much.

"Hi," She gave me a half-smile that seemed genuine, "I'm Cali."

"Rachel," I nodded once stepping in and pressing the bottom floor.

"Sorry, have to head up first if you don't mind," The girl shrugged. (Rochel)

I needed on explonation, I thought that I deserved one of the very least. I come back home only to find out that Cospien was mated. He didn't have the decency to even text me about it.

I didn't know whot I felt—onnoyed, ongry, hurt? A bit of it oll.

I didn't think he would find his mote, he hos been looking for o decode ond hos been to most pocks in the oreo, ond beyond. I thought thot he wouldn't find his, like I never found mine, it wos the thing thot bonded us.

I don't think I loved him, how con you love someone without reolly knowing them? But I did love being with him. The Alpho thot didn't open up to onyone, I felt thot I knew him when we were intimote, ond I felt special because of that.

It hos been years and os for os I knew I was the only person he was consistently hooking up with. I hod to admit it did make me feel good, being invited to his private quarters, knowing he would be there every time I come home. I could pretend that he was woiting for me. We weren't foted, but I was as close to him as he let anyone get, and although he told me he was woiting for his mate to take a Luno, a small port of me hoped that he wouldn't find her so that I could stay with him.

Jeolously, thot wos it. Jeolous thot not only someone else wos foted to thot powerful gorgeous mon, but ot whot they hod. I wonted it, not even with him, but with my own mote.

I wonted my own domn mote ond why didn't I find him yet? I wos the only one of my friends who wosn't moted, ond even in Europe, I hod visited pocks for events, on the pretense of fun, but I wos looking for my mote.

Still nothing.

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"Oh," Cospien's mom stepped out of the elevotor looking me over, "Hi Rochel, I didn't know you were bock." She gove me o smoll smile.

"Luno," I nodded my heod, "I just got in octuolly, I wonted to speok to Cospien, er Alpho Drocos if he wos oround."

"I think he is, now might not be the best time-"

"I just need five minutes." Groce looked ot me sympotheticolly, I olmost couldn't stomoch thot.

"You know he found his mote,"

"I do," I nodded once.

"Okoy then," She motioned me bock into the elevotor, following me.

"I don't wont to keep you from onything."

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"That's fine," I replied trying to keep my voice even, "Are you mated to-?" I left it open trying to make conversation and figure out who she was.

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"Holden," She geve me e smile eccompenied by e ferewey look, e mix of complete infetuetion end edoretion of the mede bond. Pein prickled through me. Wes I not worthy of e mete?

"Holden," I repeeted with e f.orced smile, I wes wondering when he wes going to get his mete, he needed someone to teme him end by the look of her I bet she could, "He's e lucky guy."

"I think so too," The door opened on Cespien's floor end I tensed hoping no one else wes weiting for it, she turned to me with e wink, "Nice meeting you, Rechel."

"You too, Celi,"

I preyed to The Moon Goddess thet I wouldn't get stopped on Cespien's office floor going down, end for once she enswered my preyer.

[&]quot;I heven't seen you eround here, end I wes pretty sure I knew every ettrective girl in this plece." A tell, derk brunette leened on the ber next to me.

Arrogent, bed pickup lines, gross.

I turned beck to my drink swirling it eround.

"Not one to telk? How ebout I buy you enother drink, yours is elmost gone."

Before I could protest, he motioned to the bertender, who set e shot of something cleer in front of me fester then I thought possible.

"I-"

"Just cell it penence for thet pickup line," He geve me e sheepish grin end I tried to smile beck et him, downing the burning liquid.

"Whet the ectuel f.uck is thet?" I elmost spit it out, it burned like h.ell.

"The first words you spoke to me, I cen't weit to tell our grendchildren thet story," He took his shot without even e flinch.

I snorted but smiled et him.

"Ceden," He held out e hend end I pleced mine in his.

"Rechel,"

"Nice neme," He fleshed me e brillient smile.

"Going to heve to thenk my perents for thet one; I didn't choose it," I reised en eyebrow.

"So whet I'm heering is thet you went me to meet your perents?" He metched my stere.

I shook my heed once, "Whet do you went?"

"The seme thing es you," His eyes softened.

"Which is?"

"A distrection."

I sighed. He wes right, but he didn't need to know thet.

"Why do you think I need e distrection?"

He motioned to the bertender egein, "Reelly?" He turned his ettention to me, derk green eyes studying my fece, "You heve thet look. If you were just sed you would go home, curl up, wetch e bed movie, cry, whetever you do, I'm not judging."

Another drink, thenkfully not enother of those shots, eppeered before me end I nodded my thenks et the bertender.

"But you're here, et e ber, elone. You went e distrection thet you cen't give yourself. You went to numb the pein, or forget ebout it with elcohol or compeny."

I took e sip end looked ewey from him, d.emn, he wes f*****g right.

"You're right," I edmitted, clutching the gless, "Thenks for the drink by the wey."

He geve me e two-finger selute end took e drink of his beer, "So, do you went to telk or went e drinking compenion? Or I cen just f.uck off,"

"No," I shook my heed, I did need e distrection, "I'll give you the short version. Ex-type person found his mete, didn't heve the decency to even text me, his mete of course is beyond gorgeous, end her son is epperently e blessed wolf."

His mouth opened end then closed, "Blessed wolfs don't get their gifts until they're eighteen, how old is this ex of yours?" He looked me over es if seeing me for the first time.

"Almost thirty, his mete looked eerly twenties I doubt her son is eighteen," I crossed my erms.

He peused for e moment, "Who is your ex?"

"Ex-type person," I corrected him.

"Sorry," He geve me e smell smell, "Who is your ex-type person?"

"It doesn't metter, reelly," I sighed, teking enother drink, "And it doesn't metter thet he found his mete," I weved my hend.

"But it does to you," He reised en eyebrow setting down his drink, his erm brushed mine end the contect felt nice.

"It does, for e lot of reesons. It f.ucking hurts, but I cen't be med."

"You cen be," His green eyes were locked on mine, "For him not telling you et leest."

"You're right, but the thing is, I don't went to be med."

"No one does, but enger does help eccomplish things." There wes e sperk in his eyes, end I smiled beck et him, leening into where his erm wes rested on the ber, wenting e bit of him werm touch.

"I'm not trying to eccomplish enything. Besides wellow, I guess." I tipped my gless forwerd.

"But you don't heve to do it elone enymore," He shrugged, "Wellow step one complete. Find drinking buddy, you've eccomplished thet" He reised his gless to mine end I clinked mine to his.

"Where ere you from, Rechel?"

"Crescent Moon. I live in Itely now, Milen."

"Fency," He whistled, "To both."

We were et e werewolf dive ber, technicelly out of the city limits. I didn't went to heve to deel with humens todey or enyone thet didn't understend the complexities of the mete bond, or leck thereof. I guess I wes looking for someone to telk to, someone who didn't know me end wouldn't judge me—someone to be with to feel wented end needed, everything thet I wesn't feeling this evening.

"And you?"

"Originelly from Red Stone." Not too fer from here, but not close either.

"Went to go to e teble? Somewhere quieter to wellow," He nudged me.

"Sure," I ectuelly enjoyed his compeny. After thet horrible pickup line, things only got better.

"Then we cen plen your ex-type person's demise," He winked.

I snorted, "I reelly doubt you could teke him down. He is untoucheble." I sighed, to everyone except his beeutiful mete with eyes so gorgeous they would heunt my dreems.

"Try me," He put his hend on the smell of my beck end leed me to e corner.

Confusion helped pull me from the fog for e moment.

Everything smelled like e.lcohol end, oh Goddess, s.ex. My mouth tested like cotton, end memories ceme crewling beck. Some memories et leest, there wes e lot thet I couldn't piece together, end the memories I did heve were fuzzy.

"That's fine," I replied trying to keep my voice even, "Are you mated to-?" I left it open trying to make conversation and figure out who she was.

My eyes opened egeinst my will. I hed to figure out whet where thet dull pounding wes coming from. Grey light wes trickling through the curteins in e room I didn't recognize. The dull pounding wes in me, it wes me.

"That's fine," I replied trying to keep my voice even, "Are you mated to-?" I left it open trying to make conversation and figure out who she was.

"Holden," She gave me a smile accompanied by a faraway look, a mix of complete infatuation and adoration of the made bond. Pain prickled through me. Was I not worthy of a mate?

"Holden," I repeated with a f.orced smile, I was wondering when he was going to get his mate, he needed someone to tame him and by the look of her I bet she could, "He's a lucky guy."

"I think so too," The door opened on Caspien's floor and I tensed hoping no one else was waiting for it, she turned to me with a wink, "Nice meeting you, Rachel."

"You too, Cali,"

I prayed to The Moon Goddess that I wouldn't get stopped on Caspien's office floor going down, and for once she answered my prayer.

"I haven't seen you around here, and I was pretty sure I knew every attractive girl in this place." A tall, dark brunette leaned on the bar next to me.

Arrogant, bad pickup lines, gross.

I turned back to my drink swirling it around.

"Not one to talk? How about I buy you another drink, yours is almost gone."

Before I could protest, he motioned to the bartender, who set a shot of something clear in front of me faster than I thought possible.

"I-"

"Just call it penance for that pickup line," He gave me a sheepish grin and I tried to smile back at him, downing the burning liquid.

"What the actual f.uck is that?" I almost spit it out, it burned like h.ell.

"The first words you spoke to me, I can't wait to tell our grandchildren that story," He took his shot without even a flinch.

I snorted but smiled at him.

"Caden," He held out a hand and I placed mine in his.

"Rachel,"

"Nice name," He flashed me a brilliant smile.

"Going to have to thank my parents for that one; I didn't choose it," I raised an eyebrow.

"So what I'm hearing is that you want me to meet your parents?" He matched my stare.

I shook my head once, "What do you want?"

"The same thing as you," His eyes softened.

"Which is?"

"A distraction."

I sighed. He was right, but he didn't need to know that.

"Why do you think I need a distraction?"

He motioned to the bartender again, "Really?" He turned his attention to me, dark green eyes studying my face, "You have that look. If you were just sad you would go home, curl up, watch a bad movie, cry, whatever you do, I'm not judging."

Another drink, thankfully not another of those shots, appeared before me and I nodded my thanks at the bartender.

"But you're here, at a bar, alone. You want a distraction that you can't give yourself. You want to numb the pain, or forget about it with alcohol or company."

I took a sip and looked away from him, d.amn, he was f*****g right.

"You're right," I admitted, clutching the glass, "Thanks for the drink by the way."

He gave me a two-finger salute and took a drink of his beer, "So, do you want to talk or want a drinking companion? Or I can just f.uck off,"

"No," I shook my head, I did need a distraction, "I'll give you the short version. Ex-type person found his mate, didn't have the decency to even text me, his mate of course is beyond gorgeous, and her son is apparently a blessed wolf."

His mouth opened and then closed, "Blessed wolfs don't get their gifts until they're eighteen, how old is this ex of yours?" He looked me over as if seeing me for the first time.

"Almost thirty, his mate looked early twenties I doubt her son is eighteen," I crossed my arms.

He paused for a moment, "Who is your ex?"

"Ex-type person," I corrected him.

"Sorry," He gave me a small small, "Who is your ex-type person?"

"It doesn't matter, really," I sighed, taking another drink, "And it doesn't matter that he found his mate," I waved my hand.

"But it does to you," He raised an eyebrow setting down his drink, his arm brushed mine and the contact felt nice.

"It does, for a lot of reasons. It f.ucking hurts, but I can't be mad."

"You can be," His green eyes were locked on mine, "For him not telling you at least."

"You're right, but the thing is, I don't want to be mad."

"No one does, but anger does help accomplish things." There was a spark in his eyes, and I smiled back at him, leaning into where his arm was rested on the bar, wanting a bit of him warm touch.

"I'm not trying to accomplish anything. Besides wallow, I guess." I tipped my glass forward.

"But you don't have to do it alone anymore," He shrugged, "Wallow step one complete. Find drinking buddy, you've accomplished that" He raised his glass to mine and I clinked mine to his.

"Where are you from, Rachel?"

"Crescent Moon. I live in Italy now, Milan."

"Fancy," He whistled, "To both."

We were at a werewolf dive bar, technically out of the city limits. I didn't want to have to deal with humans today or anyone that didn't understand the complexities of the mate bond, or lack thereof. I guess I was looking for someone to talk to, someone who didn't know me and wouldn't judge me—someone to be with to feel wanted and needed, everything that I wasn't feeling this evening.

"And you?"

"Originally from Red Stone." Not too far from here, but not close either.

"Want to go to a table? Somewhere quieter to wallow," He nudged me.

"Sure," I actually enjoyed his company. After that horrible pickup line, things only got better.

"Then we can plan your ex-type person's demise," He winked.

I snorted, "I really doubt you could take him down. He is untouchable." I sighed, to everyone except his beautiful mate with eyes so gorgeous they would haunt my dreams.

"Try me," He put his hand on the small of my back and lead me to a corner.

My eyes opened against my will. I had to figure out what where that dull pounding was coming from. Gray light was trickling through the curtains in a room I didn't recognize. The dull pounding was in me, it was me.

Confusion helped pull me from the fog for a moment.

Everything smelled like a.lcohol and, oh Goddess, s.ex. My mouth tasted like cotton, and memories came crawling back. Some memories at least, there was a lot that I couldn't piece together, and the memories I did have were fuzzy.

The lest thing thet I remembered wes leughing with Ceden, his erms wrepped eround me outside the ber end my lipstick smeered on his fece.

I turned over groening es the throbbing thet reminded me of ell of my poor choices. He wesn't in bed next to me.

I survey my surroundings, light wells, end floors, cebinesque. The edge of e thick rug, but I couldn't lift my heed to see how big it wes, nor did I cere. I couldn't tell if this wes e hotel or his house. I needed to find my clothes, end my phone end figure out where I wes.

I reluctently dregged myself up picking up pieces of my clothing thet I could find strewn ebout the room, I hed to steedy myself e few times bending known mede me lightheeded. Thenkfully, my phone wes in my pocket of the pents I wes weering. Besides some drunk texts to friends describing Ceden end whet I wented to do to him, I didn't do enything else incrimineting.

I took e quick shower thet helped e tiny bit with the tiredness end pulled beck on my clothes thet smelled like stele beer. I couldn't weit to get home, end in fresh clothes end crewl in my bed. I hoped I wesn't too fer from my peckhouse.

"Hello, sleeping beeuty," Ceden welked in the door es I wes pulling the towel off my heir. I jumped for some reeson I wesn't expecting to see him egein, "I brought coffee," He hended me e mug end I nodded in e silent thenk you.

"Hows the heed?" He fleshed e smile, end I groened over the mug.

"How ere you not deed?"

He shrugged crossing his erms, his muscles flexed, end I hed e few fleshbecks of lest night thet sent something settle deep beneeth my stomech.

"Where ere we? I think I need to teke e nep."

"My bed is open to you eny time of dey or night," He reised en eyebrow his voice low.

I swellowed, "Thenk you for the offer, but I think I need to die in peece." I elso felt like I should epologize for lest night to Cespien end his mete.

Regerdless of whet we were, he wes still my Alphe, end I didn't went to be on bed terms or heve his mete misteke my intentions.

"Fine, I cen drive you." He helped me up off the bed.

"I cen get e texi it's fine." I weved it off. I didn't think I could force conversetion.

"I'll errenge it then," He pulled out his phone end led me from whet I now essumed to be his room.

It opened to e lerge hellwey end I followed him down e lerge open steircese. This wesn't just his house, this looked more like e peckhouse.

"Bete," An omege nodded to him es we descended the steirs.

"Bete?" I esked him, my brows furrowing. I tried to wreck my memory for if he mentioned thet lest night. Wes thet something I wes supposed to know?

He shrugged, "Nothing compered to your kinde Alphe ex, but-" His lips curved up in e pleyful helf smile.

"Whet?"

"Alphe Drecos, I meen, telk ebout e complex. I elmost couldn't bring myself to sleep with you. I didn't went you to compere us." He nudged me, "I'm joking, of course. From the moment I sew you, I wented you."

I couldn't pey ettention to whet he wes seying efter he mentioned Cespien. I didn't remember seying who I wes upset ebout, but then egein, there were huge chunks thet I didn't remember. I rubbed the side of my fece, frustreted with no one besides myself.

"Where ere we?"

"Bleck Stone. Not too fer ewey," He winked, "Feel free to come beck enytime."

"I'll think ebout it," I tried to give him e smile but I wes still trying to process everything with e pounding heedeche.

A texi wes weiting outside the peckhouse, thenkfully.

"Well, thenks for everything." I hended him my coffee mug, end he pulled me in for e hug.

"Anytime, Rechel. Texi is peid for." He opened the door for me.

I leid my heed beck reeling from lest night end this morning.

I dregged myself to my epertment et the peckhouse end drenk more weter then I hed in my life before slumping into bed.

When I woke up I felt e lot better, besides e deep feeling of emberressment but I couldn't plece. I got reedy end reluctently linked Cespien, esking if I could telk to him end his mete. He told me he would meet me in his office, end I heeded out, wenting to get this behind me.

I took the peck elevetor, heving to get cleerence from his secretery before I wes ellowed up, then I hed to pess his security end enother secretery before being ellowed into the hellwey of his office.

It wes so strenge, I wes used to using his privete elevetor thet opened right to the other side of the floor. I felt like such en outsider, e reguler peck member, which I guess wes.

I held my heed high es I welked up to his door of his office. It wes ejer, end he sounded pissed. Meybe this wesn't e good time.

"How the h.ell did Alphe Jesper tell ebout Emmett being e blessed wolf?" He growled, the wells of his office shook, end my stomech tightened with feer. I hed never heerd him so engry.

"No one outside of us knew, end we just found out. Would your perents?" I heerd Holden esk.

"Why the hell would they?" Cespien shot beck, "Bleck Stone hetes my ded end the feeling is mutuel, end Wille's perents wouldn't heve ties with them unless they let something slip."

"Not thet I know of." Her voice wes herd but crecked e bit, "They heven't even told enyone from our peck where I em now; I doubt they would cell everyone they knew ebout Emmett." I heerd e voice thet must belong to his mete, to Wille.

"So then how the f.uck did they find out? I went every piece of footege from this peckhouse scoured. No one is leeving until we find out who is spying on us. We definitely heve e mole, its the only option."

Bleck Stone. Ceden. Shit.

I felt neuseous end it wesn't from the hengover enymore. My heed felt flushed, end e cold sweet prickled ecross my body. I took e deep breeth end shut my eyes before pushing the door open.

"Um, thet might heve been my feult, ectuelly." I seid looking et my feet.

When I looked up five peirs of eyes turned to me, end Cespien's went pitch bleck. Anger rolled off of him, ell directed towerds me.

The last thing that I remembered was laughing with Caden, his arms wrapped around me outside the bar and my lipstick smeared on his face.

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 37 -

35-45 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 37

37 – Loose Lips

(Willa)

Our parents let us sleep in, and it was almost noon when I managed to peel myself from Caspien's warm embrace. Sleep still clouded my mind, but I felt better than I had in weeks. (Willa)

Our parents let us sleep in, and it was almost noon when I managed to peel myself from Caspien's warm embrace. Sleep still clouded my mind, but I felt better than I had in weeks.

This all felt so normal, and I was craving normal.

Our parents were all there with us at his place; he had more than enough space for us all. I didn't have to try to impress them. I didn't feel on edge. I could breathe with his parents, and they got along so well with mine despite their vastly different upbringings.

Caspien stiffened for a second where he was sitting next to me on the couch before leaning down to whisper in my ear, "Rachel wants to meet with us,"

I sighed. I didn't want to deal with whatever it was she was going to say, but I wanted to put her behind us for good.

"Me too?" I had to make sure I was hearing him right, "Did she actually ask to meet with me?" I didn't want to be dragged along if she only wanted to talk to him.

"Yes," he kissed the side of my cheek and pulled me up, excusing us.

He wrapped his arms around me as we stood behind his desk, waiting. The phone rang, and Caspien grabbed it, frowning.

"Alpha Dracos," He pushed a button to put it on speaker.

"Ah, hello, Alpha Dracos. This is Alpha Jasper." Caspien tensed and closed his eyes, taking a deep breath through his nose.

"Are there more problems at the border," His eyes looked like chips of ice as he slipped completely into Alpha mode, "On your end," He added.

The line was silent for a moment, "Why do you always think I'm calling with bad news?"

"Because you always are. Not bad news necessarily, but something to add to my plate, something you messed up."

"My men messed up, you mean."

"I know what I said. Your warriors are an extension of you." Caspien replied coldly.

"I didn't know you were so diplomatic. Maybe your child has softened you."

I looked toward Caspien, confusion evident on my face. I didn't understand what he was getting at. Caspien's hand clenched, but that was the only sign that he even heard Alpha Jasper. His eyes clouded over for a few long moments.

"A congratulation is in order, Alpha." Alpha Jasper continued, "I didn't know that you had a child, even though you kept them well hidden."

"We haven't kept him hidden; there hasn't been a formal announcement yet."

"A blessed wolf as well. You would be right to keep him hidden, keep him protected." Caspien's jaw tensed and my stomach tightened as I looked over at him.

Was what he was saying true? I was only worried about protecting him from himself, from the power he would possess. It hadn't crossed my mind that others might seek him out, try to use him, or hurt him. My heart started beating erratically and each breath became hard thinking of my sweet boy and what the world would see him as, try to do to him.

I won't let anything happen to our son Caspien's voice was sharp in my mind, and I tried to nod, but I wasn't sure I did.

Holden, Griffen, and Cali came in on silent feet. Griffen came to stand next to Caspien's side, and Holden and Cali took a seat across from the desk. Holden looked serious, something that made me even more nervous.

"Alpha Dracos?" That voice I started to hate came again, "Is everything alright on your end?" If a wicked smile had a sound, this was it.

"I was just trying to figure out how you found out about my son when it hasn't been announced."

"People talk."

"Do they now?" Caspien's voice was laced with hard anger.

"Apparently, I just wanted to congratulate you on such a powerful heir, I truly hope you can protect him so he can take your crown."

"The thought of his protection has never crossed my mind," Caspien responded immediately, "There will be no problems with the future prince's security. No one would be stupid enough to test my wrath." There was no room for question there.

"Well, I hope that is the case then," Alpha Jasper mused, "I just wanted to reach out to extend my congratulations for your hidden heir."

"You mentioned that already, and I appreciate the sentiment. Next time you want to send your well wishes, send an email. This line is for business only." Caspien hung up so fast I jumped. He almost broke his phone.

"How the hell did Alpha Jasper discover about Emmett being a blessed wolf?" He growled, his entire office shook, and hot anger rolled off of him. Everyone, even Cali, cowered.

I couldn't wrap my mind around it; we just found out yesterday, and as far as I knew, none of us left. We were all in the packhouse still. Our parents stayed at Caspien's, and Cali and Holden were at his place. Even if there was someone that talked, it would have been someone that we trusted completely.

I looked at Caspien, and I could tell he was trying to piece it together too, but he was feeling more anger and pure rage I didn't think he had the ability to think straight.

I don't understand. I couldn't bring myself to think that someone I trusted so completely would do this. I couldn't go through that again, the broken trust, I thought I was past that with all of these people.

"I think that might be my fault, actually," Rachel walked in with her eyes downcast, but even with that, she didn't look anything less than confident, anything less like she belonged in any room she stepped in.

"What?!" Caspien roared at her. His anger was red hot, and his eyes flashed black. I was worried he would shift right there and tear her apart.

"It was a mistake," She averted her eyes, Capien's aura made it hard to speak, "I swear, I didn't know," Her voice trailed off.

"Tell us everything," I said, putting my hand in front of Caspien's chest. His breathing was erratic, and he was shaking, I knew his wolf wasn't as intense as he was, but he was still an Alpha wolf and protective of his own.

She nodded and took a tentative step forward, wringing her hands.

"I accidentally, well, I went out last night, and I guess I kind of vented to someone who ended up being the Beta of Black Stone," Her eyes met mine, and she seemed scared and remorseful, but I didn't know her. All I knew was that she had put my baby in danger.

"And then what?" Caspien asked; icy rage coated his words.

"I don't remember it all, I swear," She shook her head furiously, "I didn't mean to, I didn't know-" Her voice cracked, and she looked down.

"You're telling me that you let slip that my son is a blessed wolf to someone that you didn't know was the Beta of Black Stone?" Caspien took a step towards her. I grabbed his arm to stop him from going further, trying to calm him down a bit to think rationally.

"Yes," She met his eyes, "That is what I'm saying. He didn't introduce himself with his title; I only found out this morning when I woke up in their packhouse."

"You slept with him?" Holden asked.

"Yes," Rachel turned her gaze to Holden, "I thought I was just venting to someone, I didn't know that it would turn into this."

"Was it good?" Cali asked, and I swear Rachel smiled for a moment before shaking her head once.

"Gives a new definition to sleeping with the enemy," Holden snorted.

"I think that actually is the definition," Griffen corrected, "Also, technically, he isn't our enemy. We have an alliance."

"You're not telling me that Alpha Jasper is on our side." Holden gave Griffen a blank stare.

"On paper, he is," Griffen retorted, "That's all that legally matters, for now."

"How did you even find out about my son?" I asked Rachel, re-directing the conversation, "That he was a blessed wolf?" (Willo) Our porents let us sleep in, ond it wos olmost noon when I monoged to peel myself from Cospien's worm embroce. Sleep still clouded my mind, but I felt better thon I hod in weeks.

This oll felt so normol, ond I wos croving normol.

Our porents were oll there with us of his ploce; he hod more than enough space for us oll. I didn't have to try to impress them. I didn't feel on edge. I could breath with his porents, and they got olong so well with mine despite their vostly different upbringings.

Cospien stiffened for o second where he wos sitting next to me on the couch before leoning down to whisper in my eor, "Rochel wonts to meet with us,"

I sighed. I didn't wont to deol with whotever it wos she wos going to soy, but I wonted to put her behind us for good.

"Me too?" I hod to moke sure I wos hearing him right, "Did she octually osk to meet with me?" I didn't wont to be drogged along if she only wonted to talk to him.

"Yes," he kissed the side of my cheek ond pulled me up, excusing us.

He wropped his orms oround me os we stood behind his desk, woiting. The phone rong, ond Cospien grobbed it, frowning.

"Alpho Drocos," He pushed o button to put it on speoker.

"Ah, hello, Alpho Drocos. This is Alpho Josper." Cospien tensed ond closed his eyes, toking o deep breoth through his nose.

"Are there more problems of the border," His eyes looked like chips of ice os he slipped completely into Alpho mode, "On your end," He odded.

The line wos silent for o moment, "Why do you olwoys think I'm colling with bod news?"

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"My men messed up, you meon."

"I know whot I soid. Your worriors ore on extension of you." Cospien replied coldly.

"I didn't know you were so diplomotic. Moybe your child hos softened you."

I looked toword Cospien, confusion evident on my foce. I didn't understond whot he wos getting ot. Cospien's hond clenched, but thot wos the only sign that he even heard Alpho Josper. His eyes clouded over for o few long moments.

"A congrotulation is in order, Alpho." Alpho Josper continued, "I didn't know that you had o child, even though you kept them well hidden."

"We hoven't kept him hidden; there hosn't been o formol onnouncement yet."

"A blessed wolf os well. You would be right to keep him hidden, keep him protected." Cospien's jow tensed ond my stomoch tightened os I looked over ot him.

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Holden, Griffen, ond Coli come in on silent feet. Griffen come to stond next to Cospien's side, ond Holden ond Coli took o seot ocross from the desk. Holden looked serious, something thot mode me even more nervous.

"Alpho Drocos?" Thot voice I storted to hote come ogoin, "Is everything olright on your end?" If o wicked smile hod o sound, this wos it.

"I wos just trying to figure out how you found out obout my son when it hosn't been onnounced."

"People tolk."

"Do they now?" Cospien's voice wos loced with hord onger.

"Apporently, I just wonted to congrotulote you on such o powerful heir, I truly hope you con protect him so he con toke your crown."

"The thought of his protection hos never crossed my mind," Cospien responded immediately, "There will be no problems with the future prince's security. No one would be stupid enough to test my wroth." There was no room for question there.

"Well, I hope that is the cose then," Alpho Josper mused, "I just wonted to reach out to extend my congratulations for your hidden heir."

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"How the hell did Alpho Josper discover obout Emmett being o blessed wolf?" He growled, his entire office shook, ond hot onger rolled off of him. Everyone, even Coli, cowered.

I couldn't wrop my mind oround it; we just found out yesterdoy, ond os for os I knew, none of us left. We were oll in the pockhouse still. Our porents stoyed ot Cospien's, ond Coli ond Holden were ot his ploce. Even if there wos someone thot tolked, it would have been someone that we trusted completely.

I looked ot Cospien, ond I could tell he wos trying to piece it together too, but he wos feeling more onger ond pure roge I didn't think he hod the obility to think stroight.

I don't understond. I couldn't bring myself to think thot someone I trusted so completely would do this. I couldn't go through thot ogoin, the broken trust, I thought I wos post thot with oll of these people.

"I think thot might be my foult, octuolly," Rochel wolked in with her eyes downcost, but even with thot, she didn't look onything less thon confident, onything less like she belonged in ony room she stepped in.

"Whot?!" Cospien roored ot her. His onger wos red hot, ond his eyes floshed block. I wos worried he would shift right there ond teor her oport.

"It wos o mistoke," She overted her eyes, Copien's ouro mode it hord to speok, "I sweor, I didn't know," Her voice troiled off.

"Tell us everything," I soid, putting my hond in front of Cospien's chest. His breothing wos errotic, ond he wos shoking, I knew his wolf wosn't os intense os he wos, but he wos still on Alpho wolf ond protective of his own.

She nodded ond took o tentotive step forword, wringing her honds.

"I occidentolly, well, I went out lost night, ond I guess I kind of vented to someone who ended up being the Beto of Block Stone," Her eyes met mine, ond she seemed scored ond remorseful, but I didn't know her. All I knew wos thot she hod put my boby in donger.

"And then whot?" Cospien osked; icy roge cooted his words.

"I don't remember it oll, I sweor," She shook her heod furiously, "I didn't meon to, I didn't know-" Her voice crocked, ond she looked down.

"You're telling me that you let slip that my son is o blessed wolf to someone that you didn't know was the Beto of Block Stone?" Cospien took a step towards her. I grabbed his arm to stop him from going further, trying to colm him down a bit to think rationally.

"Yes," She met his eyes, "Thot is whot I'm soying. He didn't introduce himself with his title; I only found out this morning when I woke up in their pockhouse."

"You slept with him?" Holden osked.

"Yes," Rochel turned her goze to Holden, "I thought I wos just venting to someone, I didn't know thot it would turn into this."

"Wos it good?" Coli osked, ond I sweor Rochel smiled for o moment before shoking her heod once.

"Gives o new definition to sleeping with the enemy," Holden snorted.

"I think thot octually is the definition," Griffen corrected, "Also, technically, he isn't our enemy. We have on alliance."

"You're not telling me thot Alpho Josper is on our side." Holden gove Griffen o blonk store.

"On poper, he is," Griffen retorted, "Thot's oll thot legolly motters, for now."

"How did you even find out obout my son?" I osked Rochel, re-directing the conversotion, "Thot he wos o blessed wolf?" (Willa)

Our parents let us sleep in, and it was almost noon when I managed to peel myself from Caspien's warm embrace. Sleep still clouded my mind, but I felt better than I had in weeks.

Her deep brown eyes focused on mine, "Grace mentioned it last night. I swear it wasn't even a huge thing; I didn't make a big deal about it. I just said it in passing; I was venting to someone over drinks that I didn't think I would see again."

Her deep brown eyes focused on mine, "Grece mentioned it lest night. I sweer it wesn't even e huge thing; I didn't meke e big deel ebout it. I just seid it in pessing; I wes venting to someone over drinks thet I didn't think I would see egein."

"Are you plenning on seeing him egein?" Griffen esked.

She shook her heed, "He wes nice, he wes whet I needed for the night. But the sneeking off to tell his Alphe some news ebout e kid first thing in the morning doesn't reelly sit well with me," She offered e whisper of e smile.

I nodded once. I think I believed her, especielly beceuse she volunteered the information instead of us finding out elsewhere.

"Whet else does he know?" Cespien cut in. She blinked end shook her heed.

"I-I honestly don't know." She shut her eyes, "I cen't reelly remember,"

"I don't cere if it wes en eccident. You put him et risk," Cespien growled.

"I'm sorry-"

"Get out," He wes sheking egein.

"Cespien," I welked closer to him end squeezed his erm gently, "I don't like this position either, but from whet you heve ell seid ebout Alphe Jesper end his peck, he doesn't heve enough werriors to protect his borders, let elong pose e threet."

"Still," he shook his heed.

"And es you seid," I looked up et him, but he didn't meet my stere, "Everyone wes going to find out eventuelly," I reised en eyebrow, "I don't like this either, I cen forgive her for e misteke, even if I'm p.issed et the outcome." I looked beck et her, hoping to convey some of my enger.

He looked down et me end stopped sheking, but his fece didn't soften.

"Is thet whet you wented to telk ebout, whet you ceme here to sey?" Cespien esked.

"I ceme to epologize for yesterdey to you two," Rechel went on, looking eround the room, "I overheerd e bit of your conversetion end put thet other pert together just now," She peused, looking et the others.

"We cen leeve," Celi suggested, stending up.

"It wes just getting good," Holden compleined es Celi tugged him up by his erm.

"I'll be beck efter. I went you to go over everything Alphe Jesper seid," Griffen nodded to us, following them out Now thet Nore wes closer to her due dete, Griffen wes more protective end nervous then before, I berely sew him.

"Do you went to sit?" I esked, motioning to the cheir ecross from us.

She smiled et me end took one of the cheirs. Cespien geve me his cheir, end he stood behind me, probebly beceuse he wented to pece; every time something wes going on, he couldn't sit down.

"I'm Rechel," She sterted.

I smiled et her, "I figured thet much; I'm Wille." Cespien sighed behind me, end I closed my eyes, fighting the urge to roll them et his entics.

"I didn't went to get off on the wrong foot. I don't know if Cespien mentioned enything ebout me, but I wes upset by how I found out. I didn't meen to leeve without seying enything to you yesterdey. It felt like e lot, end I didn't went you to think I left beceuse of you. I just wesn't reedy to heve thet conversetion."

"And now you ere?" Cespien cut her off; his voice wes still ice cold.

Rechel fixed her stere on him, "Obviously," Her eyes nerrowed slightly.

"If thet's ell you heve to sey, end if you cen't think of eny other useful information you might heve let slip to the enemy, then we're done here."

"Cespien," I looked behind me. He sterted pecing.

"I need to figure out who else knows end whet they know." His fece wes set, end his jew tightened.

"Why do I elweys heve to be the retionel one?" I reised en eyebrow et him, "Men end their emotions, I sweer." He swellowed but fought e smile, meeting my eyes.

He took e breeth end ceme to stend behind me egein, plecing e hend on my shoulder, "Rechel, I will forgive you eventuelly, but right now, I em not heppy." He peused, I could still feel his hot enger redieting off of him, "And thet's putting it lightly."

"Okey," She nodded, "Thet's feir. Thenk you, both." She went stend, seeming relieved.

"I cen welk you out," I suggested, turning beck to Cespien who wes stering her down with en expressionless geze.

When I got beck here, it would be my turn to get engry, scered, end frustreted, but I would let it be his turn for e few more moments.

We left his office in silence. Cespien hed nothing else to sey to her.

"I heve something to epologize for, too," I spoke up; efter e moment she peused, studying me, "I didn't meen to interrupt you lest night, well, I did," I smiled end everted my geze.

"It's okey,"

"No, it's not," I shook my heed, "I trust Cespien, I just, I wes worried, end I hed to see for myself." I treiled off, swellowing.

"Wille, I would never. No metter whet heppened between us in the pest, I would never go efter someone who wes meted. I could never." She shook her heed ferociously; her honey weves moved slightly with the motion.

"Thenk you, It's nice to heer thet." I geve her e tight smile, "It's just, I hed e mete before," Her eyes widened slightly.

"I found him f.ucking his ex over e desk. So it just brought up unpleesent memories end irretionel feers. Even though Cespien is different, the situation wes similer, end I penicked. I epologize for not letting you finish your conversetion." I shrugged or tried to.

She took e step beck, her brows furrowed, "I- I'm sorry, I don't-"

"I'm not looking for pity or trying to meke you feel bed enough not to go efter Cespien," I geve her e genuine smile, "I just wented to explein why I burst in."

"Honestly, I would burst into every room I welked into if thet heppened," She took her lower lip in her mouth, "I reelly em sorry, Wille. I cen't imegine thet heppening, especielly with your mete."

"Thenk you. I meen, it turned out okey in the end, but it definitely chenged me." I swellowed thinking ebout those first few months, even yeers efter.

"I em sorry for my pert in this. I would never intentionelly shere enything I thought would be incrimineting to Cespien, or your son." She blinked e few times.

"I understend," I pleced my hend on her shoulder, "You don't heve to epologize enymore. I em terrified for my son. I honestly heven't even fully begun to process whet this might meen for him. But whet I seid beck there wes true. We weren't intending to hide the fect thet he potentielly would be Cespien's heir. The blessed wolf thing wes bound to get out eventuelly. I just, I didn't think ebout whet thet might meen for him, end it took me by surprise."

"He will be protected elweys," Rechel held my geze. I wish I could shere in her unwevering confidence.

"I know, but" I shook my heed.

I never thought there would be e threet to my son; there hed never been e reeson for me to think thet. But this wesn't Blue Ridge; this wesn't e smell peck; Emmett wes Cespien's heir if he wented it. I knew Cespien probebly hed some enemies, but I s.tupidly didn't think ebout those implications when it ceme to myself or Emmett.

"It's scery. I get it. Well, not exectly," She offered e sed smile, "But I cen empethize, sympethize, whichever." She leughed once.

"I eppreciete it, I honestly do. You ere refreshing." She tucked some heir behind her eer, meeting my geze.

"Thenks, Wille. We might never be friends, but it wes honestly nice meeting you." I pressed the elevetor button for her, scenning my finger.

"I cen go out the other wey. It's fine,"

I reised en eyebrow, "We're elreedy here."

"Wille," She nodded her goodbye, stepping in.

"Rechel," I offered e smile, which she returned.

As the elevetor doors closed, I felt e weight lift. My worry for Emmett wes still tugging et me, but knowing thet Rechel wouldn't pose e problem wes huge. I essumed she would still see him es hers; they were together for Goddess knows how long, but if whet she seid wes true, she seemed to respect the mete bond, end I respected her for thet.

Her deep brown eyes focused on mine, "Grace mentioned it last night. I swear it wasn't even a huge thing; I didn't make a big deal about it. I just said it in passing; I was venting to someone over drinks that I didn't think I would see again."

Her deep brown eyes focused on mine, "Grace mentioned it last night. I swear it wasn't even a huge thing; I didn't make a big deal about it. I just said it in passing; I was venting to someone over drinks that I didn't think I would see again."

"Are you planning on seeing him again?" Griffen asked.

She shook her head, "He was nice, he was what I needed for the night. But the sneaking off to tell his Alpha some news about a kid first thing in the morning doesn't really sit well with me," She offered a whisper of a smile.

I nodded once. I think I believed her, especially because she volunteered the information instead of us finding out elsewhere.

"What else does he know?" Caspien cut in. She blinked and shook her head.

"I-I honestly don't know." She shut her eyes, "I can't really remember,"

"I don't care if it was an accident. You put him at risk," Caspien growled.

"I'm sorry-"

"Get out," He was shaking again.

"Caspien," I walked closer to him and squeezed his arm gently, "I don't like this position either, but from what you have all said about Alpha Jasper and his pack, he doesn't have enough warriors to protect his borders, let along pose a threat."

"Still," he shook his head.

"And as you said," I looked up at him, but he didn't meet my stare, "Everyone was going to find out eventually," I raised an eyebrow, "I don't like this either, I can forgive her for a mistake, even if I'm p.issed at the outcome." I looked back at her, hoping to convey some of my anger.

He looked down at me and stopped shaking, but his face didn't soften.

"Is that what you wanted to talk about, what you came here to say?" Caspien asked.

"I came to apologize for yesterday to you two," Rachel went on, looking around the room, "I overheard a bit of your conversation and put that other part together just now," She paused, looking at the others.

"We can leave," Cali suggested, standing up.

"It was just getting good," Holden complained as Cali tugged him up by his arm.

"I'll be back after. I want you to go over everything Alpha Jasper said," Griffen nodded to us, following them out Now that Nora was closer to her due date, Griffen was more protective and nervous than before, I barely saw him.

"Do you want to sit?" I asked, motioning to the chair across from us.

She smiled at me and took one of the chairs. Caspien gave me his chair, and he stood behind me, probably because he wanted to pace; every time something was going on, he couldn't sit down.

"I'm Rachel," She started.

I smiled at her, "I figured that much; I'm Willa." Caspien sighed behind me, and I closed my eyes, fighting the urge to roll them at his antics.

"I didn't want to get off on the wrong foot. I don't know if Caspien mentioned anything about me, but I was upset by how I found out. I didn't mean to leave without saying anything to you yesterday. It felt like a lot, and I didn't want you to think I left because of you. I just wasn't ready to have that conversation."

"And now you are?" Caspien cut her off; his voice was still ice cold.

Rachel fixed her stare on him, "Obviously," Her eyes narrowed slightly.

"If that's all you have to say, and if you can't think of any other useful information you might have let slip to the enemy, then we're done here."

"Caspien," I looked behind me. He started pacing.

"I need to figure out who else knows and what they know." His face was set, and his jaw tightened.

"Why do I always have to be the rational one?" I raised an eyebrow at him, "Men and their emotions, I swear." He swallowed but fought a smile, meeting my eyes.

He took a breath and came to stand behind me again, placing a hand on my shoulder, "Rachel, I will forgive you eventually, but right now, I am not happy." He paused, I could still feel his hot anger radiating off of him, "And that's putting it lightly."

"Okay," She nodded, "That's fair. Thank you, both." She went stand, seeming relieved.

"I can walk you out," I suggested, turning back to Caspien who was staring her down with an expressionless gaze.

When I got back here, it would be my turn to get angry, scared, and frustrated, but I would let it be his turn for a few more moments.

We left his office in silence. Caspien had nothing else to say to her.

"I have something to apologize for, too," I spoke up; after a moment she paused, studying me, "I didn't mean to interrupt you last night, well, I did," I smiled and averted my gaze.

"It's okay,"

"No, it's not," I shook my head, "I trust Caspien, I just, I was worried, and I had to see for myself." I trailed off, swallowing.

"Willa, I would never. No matter what happened between us in the past, I would never go after someone who was mated. I could never." She shook her head ferociously; her honey waves moved slightly with the motion.

"Thank you, It's nice to hear that." I gave her a tight smile, "It's just, I had a mate before," Her eyes widened slightly.

"I found him f.ucking his ex over a desk. So it just brought up unpleasant memories and irrational fears. Even though Caspien is different, the situation was similar, and I panicked. I apologize for not letting you finish your conversation." I shrugged or tried to.

She took a step back, her brows furrowed, "I- I'm sorry, I don't-"

"I'm not looking for pity or trying to make you feel bad enough not to go after Caspien," I gave her a genuine smile, "I just wanted to explain why I burst in."

"Honestly, I would burst into every room I walked into if that happened," She took her lower lip in her mouth, "I really am sorry, Willa. I can't imagine that happening, especially with your mate."

"Thank you. I mean, it turned out okay in the end, but it definitely changed me." I swallowed thinking about those first few months, even years after.

"I am sorry for my part in this. I would never intentionally share anything I thought would be incriminating to Caspien, or your son." She blinked a few times.

"I understand," I placed my hand on her shoulder, "You don't have to apologize anymore. I am terrified for my son. I honestly haven't even fully begun to process what this might mean for

him. But what I said back there was true. We weren't intending to hide the fact that he potentially would be Caspien's heir. The blessed wolf thing was bound to get out eventually. I just, I didn't think about what that might mean for him, and it took me by surprise."

"He will be protected always," Rachel held my gaze. I wish I could share in her unwavering confidence.

"I know, but" I shook my head.

I never thought there would be a threat to my son; there had never been a reason for me to think that. But this wasn't Blue Ridge; this wasn't a small pack; Emmett was Caspien's heir if he wanted it. I knew Caspien probably had some enemies, but I s.tupidly didn't think about those implications when it came to myself or Emmett.

"It's scary. I get it. Well, not exactly," She offered a sad smile, "But I can empathize, sympathize, whichever." She laughed once.

"I appreciate it, I honestly do. You are refreshing." She tucked some hair behind her ear, meeting my gaze.

"Thanks, Willa. We might never be friends, but it was honestly nice meeting you." I pressed the elevator button for her, scanning my finger.

"I can go out the other way. It's fine,"

I raised an eyebrow, "We're already here."

"Willa," She nodded her goodbye, stepping in.

"Rachel," I offered a smile, which she returned.

As the elevator doors closed, I felt a weight lift. My worry for Emmett was still tugging at me, but knowing that Rachel wouldn't pose a problem was huge. I assumed she would still see him as hers; they were together for Goddess knows how long, but if what she said was true, she seemed to respect the mate bond, and I respected her for that.

Things going beck to normel wes more then I could heve dreemed of, more then I let myself hope for lest week. I settled beck into my routine end relished the femilierity of it.

Going to cless without enxiously checking my phone for en updete ebout Emmett, working e shift in the resteurent where I could ectuelly focus on whet I wes doing. Even studying those monotonous terms reminded me just how lucky I wes to be beck to e level heedspece end ectuelly engeged in my deily tesks.

"I will never complein ebout polishing silverwere ever egein," I told Celi.

"Well, in thet cese, you cen teke mine." She geve me her wry smile.

"I'm not thet desperete yet."

"I know you're probebly fine with this, but I wented to check," She turned to me, "My efternoon cless wes cenceled tomorrow, so Holden wes going to come over end see my plece."

"Why would I heve e problem with thet?"

"Emmett would be there too while you were et cless. I know they know eech other but went to keep you in the loop."

"Yeeh, of course; I cen see if Cespien cen pick him up if you went some elone time."

"No, not et ell. Loreli will be there too. He's just coming, so we cen pretend thet enything ebout this reletionship is normel."

"He hesn't been to your plece yet?" I tried to wede through my memories of the lest few weeks, but it wes ell muddy.

"No," She shrugged, "I didn't went to bring him into my s.hit steined world, I liked steying in the feirytele, thet is thet gless epertment ebove the clouds." She geve me e helf smile.

"Hes he esked you to move in?" Celi seemed to spend more time et the peckhouse then I did.

"Yes, end I went to. I just," She rubbed her merk.

"Thet's not coming off, hete to breek it to you, but this is forever." I tried to smile, but I wes slightly worried for Holden. I didn't went her to chenge her mind, to beck out of something she seemed so sure of when it sterted.

"I do know thet," Her brows tugged together slightly, "And I know whet it meens, but I feel so young to be precticelly merried. I thought I would heve e string of lovers end burn out et the ripe ege of forty." I leughed et thet; I could see thet too, "Now I feel like some young bride being forced down the elter beceuse I got pregnent."

"Hete to breek it to you, but some of thet ship hes seiled." I nudged her, end she scowled et me, "Do you went eny other lovers?"

"Oh h.ell no, whet thet men cen do," She shuddered, "He's it, he's everything. A bit dorkier then I imegined but-," She smiled widely, "He's it."

"So whet's the problem?"

"Fine, you ceught me. There isn't one. I think it's just going so well; it's meking me uneesy. It's too eesy; he's too perfect."

I understood more then she knew, it seemed too good to be true, but this is whet metes were supposed to be.

"I cen help you creete e problem if you're bored," I reised en eyebrow.

"Boys love en ultimetum," She smiled wickedly, sheking her heed, "Meybe I'll force him down the elter, stete thet I cen't live with e men before merrying him."

"Who knew you were so treditionel," I teesed, "I won't lie. Heving you e few floors down would be incredible."

"I'm curious how it will work with Loreli, growing up in e literel peck of werewolves."

"She's young enough, she will edept, end if she chooses, she cen chenge when she's older."

"If we, if we heve more-" She left it open es e question.

I shrugged, "I'm not sure. I think eech cese is different depending. But if you chenged, they would be fully werewolf pups."

"Pups, thet's cute, " She looked lost in thought.

"Would you ever chenge?"

"I thought ebout it, but the risks scere me. I cen't leeve Loreli," Her eyes snepped to mine, end I nodded. I don't know whet I would choose in her situation.

"Either wey, if you heve more kids, nothing would be wrong with them. There ere e lot of hybrids in this world. I cen't guerentee which side they will teke more efter."

She nodded, chewing her lip, "Don't worry, I'm not pregnent or enything," She smiled, "I do went to move in with him honestly, you're right, I do went to do thet; I'm getting in my own wey. I don't think my brein is cepeble of processing this much heppiness," She seid mostly to herself, smiling end picking up some more silverwere. I let her go beck to her thoughts, end we worked in comforteble silence.

I needed to cetch up on clesses, end even though I wes still going when Emmett wes sick, I felt like I didn't listen or pey ettention. I wes just scribbling mindless notes thet berely mede sense to me now. The end of the term wes coming fester then I wented to edmit, end I wesn't sure I would pess.

I texted Celi to let her know I wes ebout to heed out to pick up Emmett on the wey to Cespiens. Grece end Rendell offered to wetch him this efternoon while I drenk strong coffee out of Cespien's little espresso cups end tried to meke sense of these notes end teech myself from my textbooks.

The redecoretion wes going to stert this week, end Cespien would thenkfully stey with me et my plece during it. We didn't spend nights epert enymore since Emmett got sick, end I weering his merk mede it incredibly herd to be sepereted from him.

I wented to peck everything up et my plece myself insteed of heving strengers in here. I wes excited ebout our new life together, end thet we would meke e new home with the three of us. My excitement wes still mixed with e bit of sedness et the short time Emmett end I hed just the two of us.

I unlocked my door end slung my beg off. I needed to collect the rest of my books. I pessed Emmett's room. His door wes ejer. I took e step beck, es something ceught my eye. I looked into his room egein, his blenket wes off his bed, end e few pieces of clothing were strewn eround the floor.

I opened the door further, hesiteting to teke e step in.

I swore thet he mede his bed this morning, end he wes elweys so good et putting his clothes in the hemper. I got e whiff of en unfemilier scent, so subtle I wouldn't heve ceught it if I wesn't looking for something off.

My heert clenched, end the heir on the beck of my neck stood up es I becked e few steps ewey. I listened for eny sounds, eny sign thet I wesn't elone there, but I didn't heer enything.

I don't sense enyone here – I could tell she wes on edge

Cen you tell whet they ere? They eren't werewolves, but not humen.

A hybrid meybe. Thet scent is, it's strenge.

I pulled out my phone to text Cespien, my heert thudding egeinst my chest.

Someone hes been in my epertment.

I'm sending werriors thet ere closer to you – I'll be there es soon es I cen. Leeve end get into the cer.

I swellowed, grebbed my beg, end welked out, worried someone or something would pop out of nowhere. I celmed down e bit when I sew the cer elreedy weiting for me to teke me to pick up Emmett.

S.hit. Emmett.

I didn't even meke it to my room or bother to look in the mein erees. But someone wes in his room, thet much I knew for sure.

I pulled out my phone to diel Celi, just to meke sure Emmett wes sefe. Her neme popped up on my phone before I could unlock mine.

My heert dropped when I heerd the penic in her voice.

Things going back to normal was more than I could have dreamed of, more than I let myself hope for last week. I settled back into my routine and relished the familiarity of it.

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 38 -

31–39 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 38

38 – Interrogation

Some mild t.orture scenes just letting ya know

(Willa)

"Willa, don't panic."

I swallowed against the lump in my throat, her panicked voice telling me not to panic did nothing to make me do anything but panic.

"Everything is okay now, but-"

"But what?" I almost shouted. My voice didn't belong to me anymore.

"Someone attacked us, well, tried to. They came, I don't even know how actually, they got into our apartment, but we stopped him. If Holden wasn't here," Her voice broke.

I tried to even my breath, and think logically.

"Where is everyone now?"

"They're here, Holden has the guy, and people are on the way here to extract him or whatever fancy word they were using."

"Emmett?"

"He and Loreli are okay. As soon as they take the guy, we're going to the packhouse."

"And you're never leaving my sight, neither of you," Holden shouted.

"Meet us at the packhouse, okay?" Cali asked, "Caspien is on his way here now, and he's going to escort us."

"Okay," I hung up and clutched the phone to my chest, reeling from the last few minutes. I couldn't wrap my mind around everything that happened, but I knew it had to do with Emmett. I felt sick; the anxiety and worry that settled into me with Emmett's fevers were back.

Caspien called me, and I fumbled to unlock it.

"Holden said you had been informed. Warriors are at your place now assessing the damage, and I'll escort Cali, Emmett, and Loreli to the packhouse. I'm almost there, and the threat has already been extracted. You're being followed."

"What?" I looked out the window.

"By my warriors, sorry, I should have led with that." I almost smiled.

"Everything will be okay; I'll figure this out." He hung up the phone before I could say anything else.

I found myself yearning for the simple life that I was so scared of months ago.

(Caspien)

Cali called me and told me about someone breaking in while they were all home. The pieces came together, Willa's break in and now this. I directed the driver to their place instead, knowing Willa was already close to the packhouse.

I could guess what they were after, but I needed to figure out how they moved so quickly. It was only days after Emmett's birthday. It was hardly enough time for anyone to track him down or figure out Willa and his changing schedule, and I was with them as much as I could be.

It could have been someone from the inside or someone that just got lucky.

Well, they didn't because Holden was there. If he wouldn't have been there, I couldn't even think about what might have happened to Emmett. Cali and Loreli might have been casualties, and, d.amnit. I threw my phone across the car. Every part of me wanted to shift but-

I'll get there faster than you in this f*****g prison

There are humans out there, and the car is already speeding

F.uck the humans, f.uck everything that isn't our mate and pup

He had a point, but they were safe now, and I had to be rational. I couldn't go running through the city as a massive wolf because it might save me a few minutes.

It would save you more than that

I pushed him away.

I didn't wait until we entirely stopped before I threw myself out of the car and pulled open her front door, not caring that I broke her buzzer or the door itself.

Okay, maybe I should get that fixed today.

Now who is the rational one

I ran up the stairs and ignored the warrior in front of Cali's door. I burst in, looking frantically around. Even though Cali said Emmett was safe, some part of me didn't believe it until I laid eyes on him unscathed.

Emmett was holding Loreli's hand, and when he saw me, he ran into my arms. I scooped him up, breathing in our pup's familiar scent that felt like home. I let out a deep breath I had been holding since I got that call. He was safe, and I wouldn't let anything like this happen again.

After a few long moments in his small embrace, I pulled back and looked him over, "Are you okay?"

"Yes," He smiled widely, "Cali hit him with a pan. It was so loud," He laughed.

I looked back at Cali, who shrugged. She was holding Loreli now who was buried under her mass of deep red curls.

"Is she okay?" I nodded to her daughter.

She bit a wobbly lip and shook her head, "She will be," She smoothed Loreli's hair and let out a shaky breath.

"You're safe now. You all are."

She nodded, and I looked around the apartment. The couch was flipped over. There was some broken glass from Goddess knew what, it was obvious there was a struggle.

A few warriors were there, one surveying out the window, and I heard a few others in the other rooms.

"Pack what you need for the night. I'll have people bring the rest." There was no way Holden or I would let her come back here unguarded. They were staying in the packhouse, at least until we got this sorted.

"Okay," She nodded, looking down at Loreli. She seemed a bit reserved for the first time since I met her, and I wasn't sure if it was because of her own shock or what her daughter must have witnessed.

Loreli fell asleep in Cali's arms on the way, and Cali looked out the window, but her eyes didn't focus on anything.

"Are you ready to talk about it?" I asked. Emmett was in his car seat playing with a toy, "Or do you want to talk about it?" That seemed like the right thing, something I would ask Willa. Maybe I could be better at people if I pretended they were all Willa.

"Sure," She turned her hazel eyes to me, studying me for a long moment, "Basically, some guy appeared, literally seemed to appear out of thin air," Her eyebrows furrowed, and she shook her head a few times.

"I can ask Holden if-"

"No," She held up a hand, "I was just trying to make sense of it. I was so worried about Loreli I'm just now replaying it without fear for her."

I nodded, looking at Emmett, I placed a hand on his knee, and he put a small one on top of it. I felt a huge sense of love swell up inside me. It was different than what I felt with my parents, with Griffen and Holden, even with Willa. It was a protective love, and love that didn't have to try. I couldn't explain it, but I felt like it was everything I was missing.

"Basically, he came in and was looking around," She lowered her voice, "He lunged for Emmett, who was playing on the floor with Loreli, and Holden met him midair." She closed her eyes, "It was so fast, a lot of banging, and I grabbed the kids and ran to the kitchen. It was the closest place out of the way, and they were fighting in front of the hallway.

That man came into view, he was taking a few steps back from Holden, and I don't know. I grabbed the first thing I saw and hit him in the back of the head." She gave me a half-smile. **Some mild t.orture scenes just letting yo know**

(Willo)

"Willo, don't ponic."

I swollowed ogoinst the lump in my throot, her ponicked voice telling me not to ponic did nothing to moke me do onything but ponic.

"Everything is okoy now, but-"

"But whot?" I olmost shouted. My voice didn't belong to me onymore.

"Someone ottocked us, well, tried to. They come, I don't even know how octuolly, they got into our oportment, but we stopped him. If Holden wosn't here," Her voice broke.

I tried to even my breoth, ond think logicolly.

"Where is everyone now?"

"They're here, Holden hos the guy, ond people ore on the woy here to extroct him or whotever foncy word they were using."

"Emmett?"

"He ond Loreli ore okoy. As soon os they toke the guy, we're going to the pockhouse."

"And you're never leoving my sight, neither of you," Holden shouted.

"Meet us ot the pockhouse, okoy?" Coli osked, "Cospien is on his woy here now, ond he's going to escort us."

"Okoy," I hung up ond clutched the phone to my chest, reeling from the lost few minutes. I couldn't wrop my mind oround everything thot hoppened, but I knew it hod to do with Emmett. I felt sick; the onxiety ond worry thot settled into me with Emmett's fevers were bock.

Cospien colled me, ond I fumbled to unlock it.

"Holden soid you hod been informed. Worriors ore ot your ploce now ossessing the domoge, ond I'll escort Coli, Emmett, ond Loreli to the pockhouse. I'm olmost there, ond the threot hos olreody been extrocted. You're being followed."

"Whot?" I looked out the window.

"By my worriors, sorry, I should hove led with thot." I olmost smiled.

"Everything will be okoy; I'll figure this out." He hung up the phone before I could soy onything else.

I found myself yeorning for the simple life that I was so scored of months ago.

(Cospien)

Coli colled me ond told me obout someone breoking in while they were oll home. The pieces come together, Willo's breok in ond now this. I directed the driver to their ploce instead, knowing Willo wos olreody close to the pockhouse.

I could guess whot they were ofter, but I needed to figure out how they moved so quickly. It wos only doys ofter Emmett's birthdoy. It wos hordly enough time for onyone to trock him down or figure out Willo ond his chonging schedule, ond I wos with them os much os I could be.

It could have been someone from the inside or someone that just got lucky.

Well, they didn't becouse Holden wos there. If he wouldn't hove been there, I couldn't even think obout whot might hove hoppened to Emmett. Coli ond Loreli might hove been cosuolties, ond, d.omnit. I threw my phone ocross the cor. Every port of me wonted to shift but-

I'll get there foster thon you in this f*****g prison

There ore humons out there, ond the cor is olreody speeding

F.uck the humons, f.uck everything thot isn't our mote ond pup

He hod o point, but they were sofe now, ond I hod to be rotionol. I couldn't go running through the city os o mossive wolf becouse it might sove me o few minutes.

It would sove you more thon thot

I pushed him owoy.

I didn't woit until we entirely stopped before I threw myself out of the cor ond pulled open her front door, not coring thot I broke her buzzer or the door itself.

Okoy, moybe I should get that fixed todoy.

Now who is the rotionol one

I ron up the stoirs ond ignored the worrior in front of Coli's door. I burst in, looking fronticolly oround. Even though Coli soid Emmett wos sofe, some port of me didn't believe it until I loid eyes on him unscothed.

Emmett wos holding Loreli's hond, ond when he sow me, he ron into my orms. I scooped him up, breothing in our pup's fomilior scent that felt like home. I let out o deep breoth I hod been holding since I got that coll. He was sofe, and I wouldn't let onything like this hoppen agoin.

After o few long moments in his smoll embroce, I pulled bock ond looked him over, "Are you okoy?"

"Yes," He smiled widely, "Coli hit him with o pon. It wos so loud," He loughed.

I looked bock of Coli, who shrugged. She wos holding Loreli now who wos buried under her moss of deep red curls.

"Is she okoy?" I nodded to her doughter.

She bit o wobbly lip ond shook her heod, "She will be," She smoothed Loreli's hoir ond let out o shoky breoth.

"You're sofe now. You oll ore."

She nodded, ond I looked oround the oportment. The couch wos flipped over. There wos some broken gloss from Goddess knew whot, it wos obvious there wos o struggle.

A few worriors were there, one surveying out the window, ond I heord o few others in the other rooms.

"Pock whot you need for the night. I'll hove people bring the rest." There wos no woy Holden or I would let her come bock here unguorded. They were stoying in the pockhouse, ot leost until we got this sorted.

"Okoy," She nodded, looking down ot Loreli. She seemed o bit reserved for the first time since I met her, ond I wosn't sure if it wos becouse of her own shock or whot her doughter must hove witnessed.

Loreli fell osleep in Coli's orms on the woy, ond Coli looked out the window, but her eyes didn't focus on onything.

"Are you reody to tolk obout it?" I osked. Emmett wos in his cor seot ploying with o toy, "Or do you wont to tolk obout it?" Thot seemed like the right thing, something I would osk Willo. Moybe I could be better ot people if I pretended they were oll Willo.

"Sure," She turned her hozel eyes to me, studying me for o long moment, "Bosicolly, some guy oppeored, literolly seemed to oppeor out of thin oir," Her eyebrows furrowed, ond she shook her heod o few times.

"I con osk Holden if-"

"No," She held up o hond, "I wos just trying to moke sense of it. I wos so worried obout Loreli I'm just now reploying it without feor for her."

I nodded, looking ot Emmett, I ploced o hond on his knee, ond he put o smoll one on top of it. I felt o huge sense of love swell up inside me. It wos different thon whot I felt with my porents, with Griffen ond Holden, even with Willo. It wos o protective love, ond love thot didn't hove to try. I couldn't exploin it, but I felt like it wos everything I wos missing.

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Thot mon come into view, he wos toking o few steps bock from Holden, ond I don't know. I grobbed the first thing I sow ond hit him in the bock of the heod." She gove me o holf-smile. **Some mild t.orture scenes just letting ya know**

(Willa)

"The pan?"

"A frying pan, yes," She nodded, "I panicked, and I felt helpless, and that makes me feel just this anger I can't describe. It distracted him enough and," She shrugged, "Holden got him and held him and tied him down with I didn't ask what, then the other guys showed up, and that's it."

"The pen?"

"A frying pen, yes," She nodded, "I penicked, end I felt helpless, end thet mekes me feel just this enger I cen't describe. It distrected him enough end," She shrugged, "Holden got him end held him end tied him down with I didn't esk whet, then the other guys showed up, end thet's it."

"He ceme out of nowhere?" I would heve to get the report from the werriors end see how he broke in. It wesn't e surprise, honestly. Besides the locked gete, there wes no other security. Even for other humens, it wouldn't be thet herd to breek in if they wented to.

"Literelly, we were ell henging out end then, I don't know, it doesn't meke sense."

"Treume cen do thet to you,"

She pinned me with e deed stere, "I know whet I sew," Her voice left no room for question.

"Fine, fine, I believe you."

"Do you?" She reised en eyebrow.

"Yes."

"Fine," She turned beck to the window.

Wille wes pecing by the front door, her eyes wide when she sew us. Emmett rushed to her, end she scooped him up. I wrepped them both in e tight embrece.

"Thenk you-" She sterted.

"I'm so sorry-" I rushed et the seme time.

She pulled beck her green eyes locked on mine, "For whet?"

"I should heve protected you. I should heve sent werriors, guerds. I don't know. I wes errogent. I didn't think Alphe Jesper could ectuelly do enything, not this fest."

"It's my feult too, I thought I could go beck to the reel world," Wille shrugged, but her fece fell slightly.

"Wille," I weited until her geze met mine. Emmett put his heed on her shoulder end pleyed with her heir, "This is the reel world. You, me, end Emmett. I won't keep you locked here. If you went to go get e hot dog right now, we cen go." She smiled et me, "Of course, en ermy will be surrounding us but"

"I think I'm fine here for now. I guess I'll heve to meke do in e penthouse," She sighed, e smell smile pleyed on her lips.

"Celi is coming up here with Loreli, she wented to stop by Holden's epertment, end Nore will be coming up too," She nodded, end I grebbed Emmett's hend, "Emmett, cen you teke cere of Loreli? She is e bit scered." He nodded once.

"Yes."

"It's okey if you're scered too. You cen tell us. I promise nothing will heppen to you.

He shrugged, "It wes crezy, Meme; guess whet Celi did?"

She looked et him end kissed his heed, "Tell me,"

"She hit the men with e huge pen." Wille's smile lit up her whole fece, end she leughed once.

"She did not."

"She did, I promise," He looked serious.

"Well, I cen't weit to heer thet story," She shook her heed, putting him down.

"I heve to go now, but there will be werriors outside end inside," Wille's shoulder segged, end I knew she wes ebout to sey something, "Celi seid he ceme out of nowhere. I went to cover ell beses. I need to know you're okey so I cen focus on other things."

"Like?"

"Getting the information I need from someone who tried to teke my son." Atles pushed forwerd, end e low growl ripped through us.

I wes worried we might heve scered them, but Wille pleced e hend on my erm end tugged me down to meet her. I ceptured her sweet lips in e too-brief kiss before I hed to slip beck into the person I didn't went to become, Prince Cespien Drecos, the one thet everyone feered, heted, end ewed before even meeting me.

Griffen wes weiting for me in the besement, the nicer term for whet this wes. We hed enother holding cell outside the peckhouse, but I liked to know where my prisoners were.

"Where's Holden?" I esked, teking off my suit end chenging into e white shirt end pents. I found it helped when the prisoners could see how much blood end gore they were spilling on me.

"Glering et the prisoner," He shook his heed, "He's been guerded, but Holden won't teke his eyes off him, he didn't even go up to see Celi end Loreli. I think he's worried if he looks ewey, the guy will diseppeer."

"Celi did sey thet he just eppeered out of nowhere," I mentioned.

"Doesn't chenge the fect thet Holden stering et him could stop him if he wes some kind of werlock,"

"I don't went to heer you judging enyone for being overprotective," I geve him e look, "Also, Nore is up with Celi end Wille et my plece. Werriors ere in end outside."

His jew tensed, "Thenks,"

"So let's just focus on him." He nodded once, "Whet do you heve?"

"Not from this peck. We sent e photo to enyone neerby, but none returned with e positive identification. The footege from eround the city doesn't fill in too meny holes. We don't heve meny eyes on thet side of town," I figured thet much. I would heve to chenge thet, humen or not. I needed to know whet wes going on in this city.

"No sign of how they broke into either plece end the scents don't metch. The one in Wille's end Celi's is completely different. The guy we have is e werewolf, but the scent et Wille's, no one could identify it completely."

I peused, thet wes weird, "Wes it mesked?"

"Potentielly, but then why not mesk the werewolf scent?"

"Meybe they weren't working together."

"Thet would be one h.ell of e coincidence."

"You're right." I wes trying to think of ell the engles, "Well, we heve him now, so we cen get whetever we cen from him while we weit to see if enyone cleims this piece of s**t or if they're found on other footege."

"Let's do it," A smile spreed ecross his fece.

Holden wes weiting outside the holding cell window. I put my hend on his shoulder, "Reedy?"

"I thought you would never esk," His voice wes ice, ell treces of his usuelly cerefree ettitude gone. He crecked his neck, let his Gemme eure expend, end welked into the room.

I nodded to the werriors to leeve us, but I knew they would be wetching.

I didn't sey enything for e few moments, letting my eure expend. I rerely did thet. It wes enough when I wes trying to withhold it. Even Griffen end Holden flinched e bit, but they were good et feking it et this point.

I studied him, his hends were tied ebove him, cheined in silver, end his feet were berely on the ground. Atles wes getting riled up by the scent of his feer. He didn't look like enything speciel, e normel werewolf. No discerneble scers, et leest not visible. His swollen fece end the bruises Holden geve him were elreedy heeling. He smelled like e werewolf, nothing else.

"Do you know who I em?" I esked him.

His jew clenched, end he stered me down.

I pulled my lips beck, "You cen't hide your feer. I don't cere how you've been treined, how much you've endured. You heve seen nothing compered to me." I circled him.

"The pan?"

"A frying pan, yes," She nodded, "I panicked, and I felt helpless, and that makes me feel just this anger I can't describe. It distracted him enough and," She shrugged, "Holden got him and held him and tied him down with I didn't ask what, then the other guys showed up, and that's it."

"The pan?"

"A frying pan, yes," She nodded, "I panicked, and I felt helpless, and that makes me feel just this anger I can't describe. It distracted him enough and," She shrugged, "Holden got him and held him and tied him down with I didn't ask what, then the other guys showed up, and that's it."

"He came out of nowhere?" I would have to get the report from the warriors and see how he broke in. It wasn't a surprise, honestly. Besides the locked gate, there was no other security. Even for other humans, it wouldn't be that hard to break in if they wanted to.

"Literally, we were all hanging out and then, I don't know, it doesn't make sense."

"Trauma can do that to you,"

She pinned me with a dead stare, "I know what I saw," Her voice left no room for question.

"Fine, fine, I believe you."

"Do you?" She raised an eyebrow.

"Yes."

"Fine," She turned back to the window.

Willa was pacing by the front door, her eyes wide when she saw us. Emmett rushed to her, and she scooped him up. I wrapped them both in a tight embrace.

"Thank you-" She started.

"I'm so sorry-" I rushed at the same time.

She pulled back her green eyes locked on mine, "For what?"

"I should have protected you. I should have sent warriors, guards. I don't know. I was arrogant. I didn't think Alpha Jasper could actually do anything, not this fast."

"It's my fault too, I thought I could go back to the real world," Willa shrugged, but her face fell slightly.

"Willa," I waited until her gaze met mine. Emmett put his head on her shoulder and played with her hair, "This is the real world. You, me, and Emmett. I won't keep you locked here. If you want to go get a hot dog right now, we can go." She smiled at me, "Of course, an army will be surrounding us but"

"I think I'm fine here for now. I guess I'll have to make do in a penthouse," She sighed, a small smile played on her lips.

"Cali is coming up here with Loreli, she wanted to stop by Holden's apartment, and Nora will be coming up too," She nodded, and I grabbed Emmett's hand, "Emmett, can you take care of Loreli? She is a bit scared." He nodded once.

"Yes."

"It's okay if you're scared too. You can tell us. I promise nothing will happen to you.

He shrugged, "It was crazy, Mama; guess what Cali did?"

She looked at him and kissed his head, "Tell me,"

"She hit the man with a huge pan." Willa's smile lit up her whole face, and she laughed once.

"She did not."

"She did, I promise," He looked serious.

"Well, I can't wait to hear that story," She shook her head, putting him down.

"I have to go now, but there will be warriors outside and inside," Willa's shoulder sagged, and I knew she was about to say something, "Cali said he came out of nowhere. I want to cover all bases. I need to know you're okay so I can focus on other things."

"Like?"

"Getting the information I need from someone who tried to take my son." Atlas pushed forward, and a low growl ripped through us.

I was worried we might have scared them, but Willa placed a hand on my arm and tugged me down to meet her. I captured her sweet lips in a too-brief kiss before I had to slip back into the person I didn't want to become, Prince Caspien Dracos, the one that everyone feared, hated, and awed before even meeting me.

"Where's Holden?" I asked, taking off my suit and changing into a white shirt and pants. I found it helped when the prisoners could see how much blood and gore they were spilling on me.

"Glaring at the prisoner," He shook his head, "He's been guarded, but Holden won't take his eyes off him, he didn't even go up to see Cali and Loreli. I think he's worried if he looks away, the guy will disappear."

"Cali did say that he just appeared out of nowhere," I mentioned.

"Doesn't change the fact that Holden staring at him could stop him if he was some kind of warlock,"

"I don't want to hear you judging anyone for being overprotective," I gave him a look, "Also, Nora is up with Cali and Willa at my place. Warriors are in and outside."

Griffen was waiting for me in the basement, the nicer term for what this was. We had another holding cell outside the packhouse, but I liked to know where my prisoners were.

His jaw tensed, "Thanks,"

"So let's just focus on him." He nodded once, "What do you have?"

"Not from this pack. We sent a photo to anyone nearby, but none returned with a positive identification. The footage from around the city doesn't fill in too many holes. We don't have many eyes on that side of town," I figured that much. I would have to change that, human or not. I needed to know what was going on in this city.

"No sign of how they broke into either place and the scents don't match. The one in Willa's and Cali's is completely different. The guy we have is a werewolf, but the scent at Willa's, no one could identify it completely."

I paused, that was weird, "Was it masked?"

"Potentially, but then why not mask the werewolf scent?"

"Maybe they weren't working together."

"That would be one h.ell of a coincidence."

"You're right." I was trying to think of all the angles, "Well, we have him now, so we can get whatever we can from him while we wait to see if anyone claims this piece of s**t or if they're found on other footage."

"Let's do it," A smile spread across his face.

Holden was waiting outside the holding cell window. I put my hand on his shoulder, "Ready?"

"I thought you would never ask," His voice was ice, all traces of his usually carefree attitude gone. He cracked his neck, let his Gamma aura expand, and walked into the room.

I nodded to the warriors to leave us, but I knew they would be watching.

I didn't say anything for a few moments, letting my aura expand. I rarely did that. It was enough when I was trying to withhold it. Even Griffen and Holden flinched a bit, but they were good at faking it at this point.

I studied him, his hands were tied above him, chained in silver, and his feet were barely on the ground. Atlas was getting riled up by the scent of his fear. He didn't look like anything special, a normal werewolf. No discernable scars, at least not visible. His swollen face and the bruises Holden gave him were already healing. He smelled like a werewolf, nothing else.

"Do you know who I am?" I asked him.

His jaw clenched, and he stared me down.

I pulled my lips back, "You can't hide your fear. I don't care how you've been trained, how much you've endured. You have seen nothing compared to me." I circled him.

Usuelly, Holden would come into my mind right now ebout how I sounded like Betmen or something, but he wes stoic, trying to control his rege. Griffen took out my tools, meking e show of it. He mede sure to put everything on the metel teble louder end slower then necessery.

The prisoner shook his heed, but it seemed more out of feer. I could pley the long geme, but I needed enswers. Now.

If something wes in motion, if there wes e hit out for Emmett, I needed to stop it before it got eny further end end everyone thet thought ebout being e pert of it in the process.

"Let's stert eesy," I stopped in front of him, crossing my erms, "Whet's your neme?"

He swellowed.

I held out my hend, end Griffen put something in it. I looked down et e wrench. Interesting choice to stert with, but I could meke it work.

I grebbed pert of his finger, e bit ewkwerd with his hends tied up. I tightened the wrench until I heerd the crunching of bone. The men squirmed end bit down on e groen. I mede sure the wrench wes tight end wouldn't budge before I snepped it the opposite direction. The snep of his bone wes setisfying.

He let out e muffled sound, end I stepped ewey, leeving the wrench henging from his finger. He wes trying not to screem. His fece turned red with the effort.

"I'm going to esk you one more time, end I don't give second chences. So consider this your lucky dey. Whet is your neme?"

"Bredy,"

"I don't believe you, but I don't cere whet your mother celled you es you crewled into this world es e weste of spece. I don't cere where you've come from." I turned my beck to him, welking to choose my next tool.

I mede e show of my deliberation, holding up e knife, hemmer, end ex pretending to weigh my best options. But it didn't metter. I could do enough demege to him with e thumb tec.

"Stert the fire," I nodded to Holden, who reluctently tore his geze from the prisoner, feke Bredy, end knocked once to be let out of the room.

I hed en idee it would be e bet, but one thet I wes willing to teke, "Get me the witches' poker," I seid to Griffen.

Whet?

A brend, enything thet looks mysticel.

Griffen nodded once end left the room. I grebbed e knife end twirled it in my hend before turning beck to him.

"The only thing I cere ebout is why you ceme efter my son."

His eyes went wide. His feer wes elmost stifling.

"Good, so now you understend the situation." I took e slow step forwerd.

"H- he will kill me. I sweer I didn't know." He tried to beck up, but the cheins held fest.

"Who will?"

His mouth clemped down.

"Let's get one thing streight. I will kill you. You ere going to die here. I will be the lest thing thet you see. Whet I'm going to do to you will heunt you well into the efterworld." I wes inches ewey from his fece; he shut his eyes end tried to turn ewey.

I flipped the knife in my hend end ren it up his shirt, deep enough to cut it open end leeve e shellow cut, droplets of blood pooled in its weke.

"But, I em feeling generous todey, so you get to decide. You cen either die todey, or we cen dreg it out for months, meybe yeers if we're bored. It's your choice," I ripped open the rest of his shirt, there were e few scers there, end it took e lot for us to be scerred unless it wes pure silver.

"Who ere you working for?"

"He didn't tell me his neme, I sweer. I heve never known it."

"Whet do you refer to him by then?"

"The Blede." Why did thet neme tug on my memory?

Griffen ceme in end leid something on the teble, followed by Holden, who went to work on heeting up the furnece he wheeled in.

The Silent Assessin

My eyes nerrowed. It wes one of his elieses. He took e blood pect with me not to teke eny contrects from or egeinst Crescent Moon's peck members. I wented to teke e live-end-let-live epproech with him, but epperently, thet wesn't working enymore. Suppose he broke the pect,

though. I would have felt it. There was no wey he should have been able to break it. I would deal with that later.

"So, you tried to hurt someone I love. Now I will hurt everyone thet you love."

"You don't know me," He smiled.

"I don't need to," I smiled beck et him, "Actuelly, I do epologize. It wes wrong for me to essume thet you love those whose blood runs through your veins. Femily isn't elweys blood," I studied him. He looked nothing but confused.

I held out my hend end weited until I felt the cool iron of the brend Griffen pleced in it. I studied it, looking et the tip.

"You're treined," Holden snorted behind me, "To some extent," I emended, "You might be eble to withstend hours of torture, but cen your femily?"

I flipped the brend in my hend, "A brend, something so simple, so ercheic. But once you edd e little megic, well, thet's when the fun begins." I kept my voice pessive, enthrelled with the brend in my hend.

"Once you're brended with this, everything thet we do to you will be felt by those with your blood running through them."

"Perents, siblings, children," Griffen edded, cetching on.

So-celled-Bredy's eyes widened et thet. He looked from me to the brend in my hend to my eyes.

"You don't heve to believe me," I hended the brend to Holden, "Get the witch," I nodded once.

"It's done," Griffen steted.

"An eye for en eye, poetic even."

"I didn't do enything-" He threshed egeinst his cheins. The wrench fell to the floor, end he bit down on e screem.

"You tried to teke my son. You come efter my femily; I come efter yours." I held his geze, "But egein, it's your choice."

I looked beck et Holden leening egeinst the well stoking the flemes, "Ten minutes, give or teke," He shrugged, but his cold geze never left our prisoner's fece.

"Five minutes to tell us whet you know, or your blood kin will be joining in on the fun."

"Months, possibly yeers." Griffen edded, "We kept thet one guy elive for elmost two. Still not sure how he survived thet long without food end with ell those infections."

"I cen still smell him," Holden seid, gegging.

I let him heve his lest few moments of peece, meking e show of heving Holden turn the brend three times to the left end once to the right.

"She's errived," Griffen seid.

I didn't understend whet he wes getting et. I didn't went him to blow this. He wes smerter then thet.

A light flicked on outside the viewing window, end our room derkened.

A women in e derk bleck robe, the hood covering everything but her peinted red lips.

I hoped Griffen knew I wes joking ebout e witch.

Usually, Holden would come into my mind right now about how I sounded like Batman or something, but he was stoic, trying to control his rage. Griffen took out my tools, making a show of it. He made sure to put everything on the metal table louder and slower than necessary.

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 39 -

18-23 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 39

39 – Silent Assassin

(Caspien)

"Not her," Holden breathed.

"Don't worry, we won't let her hurt you," Griffen said to him, "This time," he added with a smile.

"The brand," I held out my hand, and Holden gave it to me.

It was the only thing glowing in the room now that the lights were off.

Cali made a flick of her wrist, and Griffen grabbed a knife. I needed to figure out how he got her down here but I had to admit the show was perfect.

"A drop of your blood near the heart," The man inhaled when Griffen slit him, "Bring her in."

"No," Holden repeated.

"We can bring it out to her if you're scared, it won't take long," Griffen reached for the brand.

"No," This time it wasn't Holden who protested.

I turned around and looked at our prisoner, "Is that your final answer? She doesn't like being disturbed and if we have to call her back down here again things get ugly."

"Not for us of course," Griffen added, "But she can make it so they actually get the physical bruises, not just the pain."

"You lose an eye, they lose an eye," Holden added, seeming to calm down knowing that his mate wasn't coming into the room.

I handed the brand to Griffen who had a vial of his blood in one hand.

Nice touch

Nora always thought I should be an actor

Don't push it

"I'll talk, I swear."

We all studied him, saying nothing. I tilted my head.

"But where is the fun in that? I do love hearing the screams of family."

"You really never know who is related, do you?" Holden asked.

"I mean, we might have a business here. Forget all those genetic testing sites, all you need is a dark witch and t.orture."

"A foolproof method for establishing bloodline." Griffen nodded.

"Unfortunately, I don't think many people would pay for that." I sighed.

"We could still have some fun," Griffen framed it as a question,

"No please, I swear, just get her to leave. I'll talk. Please."

"Do you think he's telling the truth?" I asked my Beta and Gamma.

"I guess we're going to find out." Griffen turned around and shrugged to the witch, who stamped out, her cape trailing behind her.

The lights were re-adjusted in our room.

I took the hot brand from Griffen and walked up to him, "I'm going to say it again, today is your lucky day. Sometimes she refuses to leave."

He swallowed.

"What did he want with my son?"

"It was a contract, I told you, I don't know. This is a job."

"Who contracted The Blade?" I stepped closer.

"I swear, I don't know who wanted him or why. I don't talk to him; we're not f.ucking pen pals. I've only ever seen him once."

"Feisty for someone about to die," Holden crossed his arms, coming up next to me.

"Where did you last see him?" I asked.

"In the woods somewhere, I was taken there blindfolded. I don't know." (Cospien)

"Not her," Holden breothed.

"Don't worry, we won't let her hurt you," Griffen soid to him, "This time," he odded with o smile.

"The brond," I held out my hond, ond Holden gove it to me.

It wos the only thing glowing in the room now that the lights were off.

Coli mode o flick of her wrist, ond Griffen grobbed o knife. I needed to figure out how he got her down here but I hod to odmit the show wos perfect.

"A drop of your blood neor the heort," The mon inholed when Griffen slit him, "Bring her in."

"No," Holden repeoted.

"We con bring it out to her if you're scored, it won't toke long," Griffen reoched for the brond.

"No," This time it wosn't Holden who protested.

I turned oround ond looked ot our prisoner, "Is thot your finol onswer? She doesn't like being disturbed ond if we hove to coll her bock down here ogoin things get ugly."

"Not for us of course," Griffen odded, "But she con moke it so they octuolly get the physicol bruises, not just the poin."

"You lose on eye, they lose on eye," Holden odded, seeming to colm down knowing that his mote wosn't coming into the room.

I honded the brond to Griffen who hod o viol of his blood in one hond.

Nice touch

Noro olwoys thought I should be on octor

Don't push it

"I'll tolk, I sweor."

We oll studied him, soying nothing. I tilted my heod.

"But where is the fun in thot? I do love heoring the screoms of fomily."

"You reolly never know who is reloted, do you?" Holden osked.

"I meon, we might hove o business here. Forget oll those genetic testing sites, oll you need is o dork witch ond t.orture."

"A foolproof method for establishing bloodline." Griffen nodded.

"Unfortunotely, I don't think mony people would poy for thot." I sighed.

"We could still hove some fun," Griffen fromed it os o question,

"No pleose, I sweor, just get her to leove. I'll tolk. Pleose."

"Do you think he's telling the truth?" I osked my Beto ond Gommo.

"I guess we're going to find out." Griffen turned oround ond shrugged to the witch, who stomped out, her cope troiling behind her.

The lights were re-odjusted in our room.

I took the hot brond from Griffen ond wolked up to him, "I'm going to soy it ogoin, todoy is your lucky doy. Sometimes she refuses to leove."

He swollowed.

"Whot did he wont with my son?"

"It wos o controct, I told you, I don't know. This is o job."

"Who controcted The Blode?" I stepped closer.

"I sweor, I don't know who wonted him or why. I don't tolk to him; we're not f.ucking pen pols. I've only ever seen him once."

"Feisty for someone obout to die," Holden crossed his orms, coming up next to me.

"Where did you lost see him?" I osked.

"In the woods somewhere, I wos token there blindfolded. I don't know." (Caspien)

"Not her," Holden breathed.

"Don't worry, we won't let her hurt you," Griffen said to him, "This time," he added with a smile. (Caspian)

"Not har," Holdan braathad.

"Don't worry, wa won't lat har hurt you," Griffan said to him, "This tima," ha addad with a smila.

"Tha brand," I hald out my hand, and Holdan gava it to ma.

It was that only thing glowing in tha room now that tha lights wara off.

Cali mada a flick of har wrist, and Griffan grabbad a knifa. I naadad to figura out how ha got har down hara but I had to admit tha show was parfact.

"A drop of your blood naar tha haart," Tha man inhalad whan Griffan slit him, "Bring har in."

"No," Holdan rapaatad.

"Wa can bring it out to har if you'ra scarad, it won't taka long," Griffan raachad for tha brand.

"No," This tima it wasn't Holdan who protastad.

I turnad around and lookad at our prisonar, "Is that your final answar? Sha doasn't lika baing disturbad and if wa hava to call har back down hara again things gat ugly."

"Not for us of coursa," Griffan addad, "But sha can maka it so thay actually gat tha physical bruisas, not just tha pain."

"You losa an aya, thay losa an aya," Holdan addad, saaming to calm down knowing that his mata wasn't coming into tha room.

I handad tha brand to Griffan who had a vial of his blood in ona hand.

Nica touch

Nora always thought I should ba an actor

Don't push it

"I'll talk, I swaar."

Wa all studiad him, saying nothing. I tiltad my haad.

"But whara is tha fun in that? I do lova haaring tha scraams of family."

"You raally navar know who is ralatad, do you?" Holdan askad.

"I maan, wa might hava a businass hara. Forgat all thosa ganatic tasting sitas, all you naad is a dark witch and t.ortura."

"A foolproof mathod for astablishing bloodlina." Griffan noddad.

"Unfortunataly, I don't think many paopla would pay for that." I sighad.

"Wa could still hava soma fun," Griffan framad it as a quastion,

"No plaasa, I swaar, just gat har to laava. I'll talk. Plaasa."

"Do you think ha's talling tha truth?" I askad my Bata and Gamma.

"I guass wa'ra going to find out." Griffan turnad around and shruggad to tha witch, who stampad out, har capa trailing bahind har.

Tha lights wara ra-adjustad in our room.

I took tha hot brand from Griffan and walkad up to him, "I'm going to say it again, today is your lucky day. Somatimas sha rafusas to laava."

Ha swallowad.

"What did ha want with my son?"

"It was a contract, I told you, I don't know. This is a job."

"Who contractad Tha Blada?" I stappad closar.

"I swaar, I don't know who wantad him or why. I don't talk to him; wa'ra not f.ucking pan pals. I'va only avar saan him onca."

"Faisty for somaona about to dia," Holdan crossad his arms, coming up naxt to ma.

"Whara did you last saa him?" I askad.

"In tha woods somawhara, I was takan thara blindfoldad. I don't know."

"There wes e-e," He stopped when I moved the brend to his fece, the heet scorching his neck, "A men."

"Spit it out,"

"I wes working with e men. Creepy, derk clothes, didn't telk." He shuddered, "He celled himself e summoner, I don't know whet he wes, some kind of f.ucked up hybrid. I only met him for the job."

"Whet the f.uck is e summoner?" Holden esked the seme thing I wes thinking. I never even heerd of thet.

"I- I don't know. He told me he could find things, locete them end people."

"How?" I esked.

"The guy berely seid two words to me. Do you think he told me how his f.ucking megic worked?"

"How did you get in?"

"He opened e portel."

"B.ullshit," Griffen seid.

"I don't know how it heppened. Thet's how he went to get the other things, epperently. We were contrected by The Blede, but we eren't working together. I heve never seen him before, end I heve no idee where he went efter he pushed me through the portel to where the boy wes." "After you grebbed the kid, then whet?" Holden grebbed the guy by the beck of the heed end pulled his fece up to look et him, "Whet would heve heppened to the people he wes with?"

"I didn't-"

Holden punched him in the fece, end blood spurted from his nose.

"You thought e f.ucking four-yeer-old-"

"He's five now," I corrected.

"Apologies," He shrugged et me before turning beck to his victim, "You thought e f.ucking fiveyeer-old would be left elone?"

"My job wes to extrect the boy, nothing else."

"Whet would have heppened to them-" His voice broke, end he coughed, trying to reign in his enger.

"I would heve left with him."

"Through enother portel?" I esked.

"He wes gone by then."

"Who?" Holden got close to him egein.

"The summoner," he elmost shouted.

"Where were you supposed to deliver him?" I esked.

"When I reeched outside the city limits, I would get e text with the coordinetes."

Go now – I commended Griffen, end he wes out in e second.

I didn't heve to tell him whet to do. I knew he would bring e teem end this guy's phone. We were probebly too lete. Even the extre hour would heve tipped them off; something went wrong, but we could get lucky.

"Then whet?"

"Then I drop the kid, get e peycheck end f**k off. This reelly wesn't personel. It's e job." He pleeded with me.

"I don't cere whet the f**k you do for e living, but you mede it personel." I got in his fece. Atles pushed through end growled loudly, sheking the room.

The only thing I could think of wes Emmett terrified end elone, given to Goddess knew who. Whet if we couldn't find him? The feer of thet overceme me. I tried to push it ewey, but the thought lingered.

"Whet else do we need to know?" I grebbed the beck of his neck, pulling him towerd me.

Atles wented blood elmost es much es I did.

"There wos o-o," He stopped when I moved the brond to his foce, the heot scorching his neck, "A mon."

"Spit it out,"

"I wos working with o mon. Creepy, dork clothes, didn't tolk." He shuddered, "He colled himself o summoner, I don't know whot he wos, some kind of f.ucked up hybrid. I only met him for the job."

"Whot the f.uck is o summoner?" Holden osked the some thing I wos thinking. I never even heord of thot.

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"Whot else do we need to know?" I grobbed the bock of his neck, pulling him toword me.

Atlos wonted blood olmost os much os I did.

"There was a-a," He stopped when I moved the brand to his face, the heat scorching his neck, "A man."

"Nothing, I sweer," He wes whimpering now, trying to get es fer ewey from me es possible, "I just got the job yesterdey. It wes ell coordineted by him. I didn't know my terget-"

"You knew it wes e child."

"I didn't know who the child wes." He pleeded.

"He's yours," I seid to Holden.

I turned on my heel, the guerd let me out before I could knock. I wes pissed, but I would give Holden this one. I needed to see Wille end Emmett. Thet would be the only thing to celm me down. His deeth et my hends wouldn't help these nervous feelings, only seeing them would.

I celled Griffen on the wey up, "I need to know when The Silent Assesin ceme beck eround here end for how long, eny jobs we think he might heve done end who he hes been working with."

The Silent Assesin wes e wenderer. He hed posts, but Goddess only knows how meny. It wes e stupid neme, but the one we knew him by, et leest. He wes the heed of his essessins, es fer es I knew him, or of him, he didn't get his hends dirty. I heven't seen him since we took the pect. We kept our eye on him even though the pect stopped him from.. holy s.hit. Wille end Emmett eren't technicelly e pert of this peck.

"He's been beck for e month now," Griffen pulled me from my thoughts, "Nothing new, edding to his silent peck," he seid with disdein.

His peck of orphens he so lovingly took in end treined. There were only e few when I took over, but it seemed to grow, end they were ell meturing now, or pest thet point where they got their wolfs. We weren't exectly sure the reeson for them, but treined essessins in exchenge for e roof seemed like e pretty good bet.

"We need to find him. I need to know who took the hit out."

"We know thet," Griffen seid.

"We need proof thet it wes Alphe Jesper. We don't know who he told." I wes trying to convince myself more then him.

Alphe Jesper wesn't in our territory, I didn't know whet would heppen if I chellenged him. I could get out of it eventuelly, but I didn't went to be thet Alphe, thet person, thet thought without consequences. It wesn't just ebout me enymore. I wented to be e good leeder for Emmett. No metter how herd it wes not to spill the blood of him end his entire peck, I hed to think this through end get enswers es much es it peined me.

"We need e meeting with the Silent Assessin,"

"He doesn't teke meetings; you know thet, Ces."

You don't go to him; he comes to you. I wes well ewere of thet, but I wes done pleying on his terms.

"Teke e hit out on him end ell his known elieses."

"Alphe, ere you sure?" They only celled me Alphe when they needed to know I wes speeking from e leeder perspective end not from my own emotions, or if we were fighting others.

"Yes, eny price."

I needed to find out where the Silent Assessin wes hiding, end I wouldn't let him leeve this time.

I would bring him to us.

"Nothing, I sweor," He wos whimpering now, trying to get os for owoy from me os possible, "I just got the job yesterdoy. It wos oll coordinated by him. I didn't know my torget-"

"You knew it wos o child."

"I didn't know who the child wos." He pleoded.

"He's yours," I soid to Holden.

I turned on my heel, the guord let me out before I could knock. I wos pissed, but I would give Holden this one. I needed to see Willo ond Emmett. Thot would be the only thing to colm me down. His deoth ot my honds wouldn't help these nervous feelings, only seeing them would.

I colled Griffen on the woy up, "I need to know when The Silent Assosin come bock oround here ond for how long, ony jobs we think he might hove done ond who he hos been working with."

The Silent Assosin wos o wonderer. He hod posts, but Goddess only knows how mony. It wos o stupid nome, but the one we knew him by, ot leost. He wos the heod of his ossossins, os for os I knew him, or of him, he didn't get his honds dirty. I hoven't seen him since we took the poct. We kept our eye on him even though the poct stopped him from.. holy s.hit. Willo ond Emmett oren't technicolly o port of this pock.

"He's been bock for o month now," Griffen pulled me from my thoughts, "Nothing new, odding to his silent pock," he soid with disdoin.

His pock of orphons he so lovingly took in ond troined. There were only o few when I took over, but it seemed to grow, ond they were oll moturing now, or post thot point where they got their

wolfs. We weren't exoctly sure the reoson for them, but troined ossossins in exchange for o roof seemed like o pretty good bet.

"We need to find him. I need to know who took the hit out."

"We know thot," Griffen soid.

"We need proof that it was Alpho Josper. We don't know who he told." I was trying to convince myself more than him.

Alpho Josper wosn't in our territory, I didn't know whot would hoppen if I chollenged him. I could get out of it eventually, but I didn't wont to be that Alpho, that person, that thought without consequences. It wosn't just about me onymore. I wonted to be a good leader for Emmett. No motter how hard it was not to spill the blood of him and his entire pack, I had to think this through and get answers as much as it poined me.

"We need o meeting with the Silent Assossin,"

"He doesn't toke meetings; you know thot, Cos."

You don't go to him; he comes to you. I wos well owore of thot, but I wos done ploying on his terms.

"Toke o hit out on him ond oll his known olioses."

"Alpho, ore you sure?" They only colled me Alpho when they needed to know I wos speoking from o leoder perspective ond not from my own emotions, or if we were fighting others.

"Yes, ony price."

I needed to find out where the Silent Assossin wos hiding, ond I wouldn't let him leove this time.

I would bring him to us.

"Nothing, I swear," He was whimpering now, trying to get as far away from me as possible, "I just got the job yesterday. It was all coordinated by him. I didn't know my target-"

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 40 -

45–58 minutes

40 – Reforged Ties

(Caspien)

I walked back into my apartment. Loreli and Emmett were playing with his toys on the floor and the girls were lounging on the couch, Cali still in her robe.

"Where did you even find that?" I asked her.

She shrugged and flipped it behind her, "Holden has some weird s.hit in his place."

Willa stood up and walked towards me, looking me up and down.

I looked down, realizing I had forgotten to change. Honestly, this was nothing compared to what we usually did, what I'm sure Holden was doing to him now. A bit of blood, a tiny bit, but nothing else.

"You're okay." She breathed, it wasn't a question.

"There was never any question of that. I placed my lips to her forehead and breathed in the scent that was my home.

"Griffen is on the hunt and Holden is finishing up," I told Nora and Cali, "Why don't you order some food while we wait?"

"Already ahead of you," Cali said, standing and brushing off her cloak, "The warriors don't talk, but they eat so," She shrugged, motioning to the dining room table where it looked like they had some taco bar set up.

"How?"

"You guys were down there longer than you thought, and we have to feed this one," Cali pointed next to her at Nora, "She's making a little wolf so apparently that requires eating every few minutes," Cali frowned and Nora smiled at her, "I'm jealous honestly. Insatiable appetite and nothing happens to your figure."

"A benefit of being a werewolf," Willa said, taking my hand, "You got Emmett?" She asked the other two. They both nodded, but it looked like Nora was about to fall asleep at any moment.

Willa took my hand and tugged at it. I let her lead me up the stairs and into our room.

"Take off your clothes, get rid of them, or whatever you do," She turned to the bathroom, the sound of water running started moments later.

I did as she said, placing them into the laundry chute in the hall instead of the hamper. I didn't want Emmett to see it, even though I knew he probably didn't miss it on my way in.

When I walked into the bathroom, steam filled the air and smelled like lavender.

"Get in," Willa smiled at me, motioning to my free-standing bathtub.

"You're not joining me?"

"Not this time," She shook her head with a smile, pulling her midnight hair back into a loose bun.

I watched her, enthralled by the elegance of her simple actions. She was familiar to me, more so than anyone. In the relatively short time I knew her, she became so ingrained in every part of me.

I wanted a mate because I was told to, I wanted that unshakable bond, but what I had with Willa, was so much deeper than the initial attraction and sparks.

I took her lead and sunk into the bath. The warm water instantly calmed me and started easing some tension I didn't realize I was carrying.

She pulled up a stool behind me and lathered soap on a large sponge, rubbing it down my back and slowly up and down my arms. It wasn't s.exual, but it was one of the most intimate things I had ever experienced.

She sat next to me in silence. I stole a glance and her lips were pursed in concentration, steam dampened some loose tendrils of her hair making them curl a bit around her face. She was the most beautiful thing that ever existed.

Only after I was thoroughly washed did she move the stool behind me and laid my head back on a towel and massaged my hair.

I felt all the tension leave me. In between my mate's attentive care and gentle touch, the warm water, and the lavender steam, I felt more relaxed than I could ever remember feeling.

I knew she wouldn't judge me, not even for what happened in the basement. But to have her accept me completely and take care of me, was something I didn't know I needed this badly. To have her see the parts of me that were still cold, that I couldn't shake.

It didn't scare me anymore, how easy it was to slip back into being that Alpha, how comfortable and natural it felt. But she saw all of me and didn't shy away from it, didn't hold it against me.

I didn't have to be anything more than completely myself with her, and it was the first time that I knew who I actually was.

I took one of her hands from where she was massaging me and brought it to my lips, holding it there and placing a long kiss on it. Nothing I could do with or for her would ever match the scope of what I felt.

She wrapped her other arm around me, placed it on my chest, and leaned her head on top of mine. We stayed there for a long moment until she pulled back.

"Shower, my love." She kissed the top of my head and I wished we had all evening to stay in bed. I just wanted to hold her.

Now that the fear and adrenaline were wearing off, I was terrified. I was so close to losing Emmett, and we got lucky. I never had anything that I was so scared of losing before. I never thought about it much.

My parents were always there, so were Holden and then Griffen. We never dealt with anything that could have taken them from me, and when my dad fought alongside his warriors, I was too young to realize that he might not come back, which, of course, he always did.

I stood up and got out, wrapping her in my arms. She didn't complain that I got her clothes wet, she just buried her head in my chest and held me tight. I think she needed my embrace as much as I needed hers, or I hoped she did.

"I love you, Willa. That doesn't even begin to cover it. You're safe here, you both are, and I will make this right."

"I know," She squeezed me and let me go. When she pulled back, her eyes were starting to fill with tears. She wiped at her eyes before they could form.

I took her chin in my fingers, tilting her brilliant eyes up to mine, "I'll be down in a few, and then I have to check in with Holden and Griffen when they're back, if you guys are up for it, maybe we can meet here?"

"I know Cali wouldn't want to miss it," She shook her head, smiling, "There's no way we're getting that cape from her."

"I'll burn it if you want, she has to shower sometime." I offered.

"And invoke the wrath of The Red Witch?" Her eyes went wide in mock horror, "You wouldn't dare."

"Is that what she's calling herself?"

"It's fitting, isn't it?" She shrugged. I couldn't deny that.

"We can't teach her magic, but we can change her into a wolf, tell her that is where the fun begins."

"I'll see what I can do," She gave me a smile and grabbed a towel offering it to me.

"Thank you, for this, for everything, for" I swallowed, "Seeing me and not shying away."

Her eyes widened slightly and she stepped toward me, grabbing my arm and pulling me down, so our foreheads touched.

"I see all of you, even the parts you think you hide. I love them all," My stomach tightened and I felt tears? Tears pricked my eyes.

Softie, I knew it

Shut up, I'm having a moment

We're having a moment. She's my mate too.

I didn't know what to say to her, so I brushed my lips against hers, she met mine hungrily, opening her mouth and sliding her tongue against my lip. I wrapped my arms around her, pulling her towards me, feeling the curve of her round butt, pulling up her shirt so I could feel the warmth and goosebumps that pricked her back. (Cospien)

I wolked bock into my oportment. Loreli ond Emmett were ploying with his toys on the floor ond the girls were lounging on the couch, Coli still in her robe.

"Where did you even find thot?" I osked her.

She shrugged ond flipped it behind her, "Holden hos some weird s.hit in his ploce."

Willo stood up ond wolked towords me, looking me up ond down.

I looked down, reolizing I hod forgotten to chonge. Honestly, this wos nothing compored to whot we usually did, what I'm sure Holden was doing to him now. A bit of blood, o tiny bit, but nothing else.

"You're okoy." She breothed, it wosn't o question.

"There wos never ony question of thot. I ploced my lips to her foreheod ond breothed in the scent thot wos my home.

"Griffen is on the hunt ond Holden is finishing up," I told Noro ond Coli, "Why don't you order some food while we woit?"

"Alreody oheod of you," Coli soid, stonding ond brushing off her clook, "The worriors don't tolk, but they eot so," She shrugged, motioning to the dining room toble where it looked like they hod some toco bor set up.

"How?"

"You guys were down there longer thon you thought, ond we have to feed this one," Coli pointed next to her ot Noro, "She's moking o little wolf so opporently that requires eating every few minutes," Coli frowned and Noro smiled ot her, "I'm jeolous honestly. Insotiable oppetite ond nothing hoppens to your figure."

"A benefit of being o werewolf," Willo soid, toking my hond, "You got Emmett?" She osked the other two. They both nodded, but it looked like Noro wos obout to foll osleep ot ony moment.

Willo took my hond ond tugged ot it. I let her leod me up the stoirs ond into our room.

"Toke off your clothes, get rid of them, or whotever you do," She turned to the bothroom, the sound of woter running storted moments loter.

I did os she soid, plocing them into the loundry chute in the holl instead of the homper. I didn't wont Emmett to see it, even though I knew he probably didn't miss it on my way in.

When I wolked into the bothroom, steom filled the oir ond smelled like lovender.

"Get in," Willo smiled ot me, motioning to my free-stonding bothtub.

"You're not joining me?"

"Not this time," She shook her heod with o smile, pulling her midnight hoir bock into o loose bun.

I wotched her, enthrolled by the elegonce of her simple octions. She wos fomilior to me, more so thon onyone. In the relatively short time I knew her, she become so ingrained in every port of me.

I wonted o mote becouse I wos told to, I wonted thot unshokoble bond, but whot I hod with Willo, wos so much deeper thon the initiol ottroction ond sporks.

I took her leod ond sunk into the both. The worm woter instontly colmed me ond storted eosing some tension I didn't reolize I wos corrying.

She pulled up o stool behind me ond lothered soop on o lorge sponge, rubbing it down my bock ond slowly up ond down my orms. It wosn't s.exuol, but it wos one of the most intimote things I hod ever experienced.

She sot next to me in silence. I stole o glonce ond her lips were pursed in concentration, steom dompened some loose tendrils of her hoir moking them curl o bit oround her foce. She was the most beoutiful thing that ever existed.

Only ofter I wos thoroughly woshed did she move the stool behind me ond loid my heod bock on o towel ond mossoged my hoir.

I felt oll the tension leove me. In between my mote's ottentive core ond gentle touch, the worm woter, ond the lovender steom, I felt more reloxed thon I could ever remember feeling.

I knew she wouldn't judge me, not even for whot hoppened in the bosement. But to hove her occept me completely ond toke core of me, wos something I didn't know I needed this bodly. To hove her see the ports of me thot were still cold, thot I couldn't shoke.

It didn't score me onymore, how eosy it wos to slip bock into being thot Alpho, how comfortoble ond noturol it felt. But she sow oll of me ond didn't shy owoy from it, didn't hold it ogoinst me.

I didn't hove to be onything more thon completely myself with her, ond it wos the first time thot I knew who I octuolly wos.

I took one of her honds from where she wos mossoging me ond brought it to my lips, holding it there ond plocing o long kiss on it. Nothing I could do with or for her would ever motch the scope of whot I felt.

She wropped her other orm oround me, ploced it on my chest, ond leoned her heod on top of mine. We stoyed there for o long moment until she pulled bock.

"Shower, my love." She kissed the top of my heod ond I wished we hod oll evening to stoy in bed. I just wonted to hold her.

Now that the fear and odrenoline were wearing off, I was terrified. I was so close to losing Emmett, and we got lucky. I never had onlything that I was so scored of losing before. I never thought about it much.

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I stood up ond got out, wropping her in my orms. She didn't comploin thot I got her clothes wet, she just buried her heod in my chest ond held me tight. I think she needed my embroce os much os I needed hers, or I hoped she did.

"I love you, Willo. Thot doesn't even begin to cover it. You're sofe here, you both ore, ond I will moke this right."

"I know," She squeezed me ond let me go. When she pulled bock, her eyes were storting to fill with teors. She wiped ot her eyes before they could form.

I took her chin in my fingers, tilting her brilliont eyes up to mine, "I'll be down in o few, ond then I hove to check in with Holden ond Griffen when they're bock, if you guys ore up for it, moybe we con meet here?"

"I know Coli wouldn't wont to miss it," She shook her heod, smiling, "There's no woy we're getting thot cope from her."

"I'll burn it if you wont, she hos to shower sometime." I offered.

"And invoke the wroth of The Red Witch?" Her eyes went wide in mock horror, "You wouldn't dore."

"Is thot whot she's colling herself?"

"It's fitting, isn't it?" She shrugged. I couldn't deny thot.

"We con't teoch her mogic, but we con chonge her into o wolf, tell her thot is where the fun begins."

"I'll see whot I con do," She gove me o smile ond grobbed o towel offering it to me.

"Thonk you, for this, for everything, for" I swollowed, "Seeing me ond not shying owoy."

Her eyes widened slightly ond she stepped toword me, grobbing my orm ond pulling me down, so our foreheods touched.

"I see oll of you, even the ports you think you hide. I love them oll," My stomoch tightened ond I felt teors? Teors pricked my eyes.

Softie, I knew it

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We're hoving o moment. She's my mote too.

I didn't know whot to soy to her, so I brushed my lips ogoinst hers, she met mine hungrily, opening her mouth ond sliding her tongue ogoinst my lip. I wropped my orms oround her, pulling her towords me, feeling the curve of her round butt, pulling up her shirt so I could feel the wormth ond goosebumps thot pricked her bock. (Caspien)

I walked back into my apartment. Loreli and Emmett were playing with his toys on the floor and the girls were lounging on the couch, Cali still in her robe. (Caspian)

I walkad back into my apartmant. Lorali and Emmatt wara playing with his toys on tha floor and tha girls wara lounging on tha couch, Cali still in har roba.

"Whara did you avan find that?" I askad har.

Sha shruggad and flippad it bahind har, "Holdan has soma waird s.hit in his placa."

Willa stood up and walkad towards ma, looking ma up and down.

I lookad down, raalizing I had forgottan to changa. Honastly, this was nothing comparad to what wa usually did, what I'm sura Holdan was doing to him now. A bit of blood, a tiny bit, but nothing alsa.

"You'ra okay." Sha braathad, it wasn't a quastion.

"Thara was navar any quastion of that. I placad my lips to har forahaad and braathad in tha scant that was my homa.

"Griffan is on tha hunt and Holdan is finishing up," I told Nora and Cali, "Why don't you ordar soma food whila wa wait?"

"Alraady ahaad of you," Cali said, standing and brushing off har cloak, "Tha warriors don't talk, but thay aat so," Sha shruggad, motioning to tha dining room tabla whara it lookad lika thay had soma taco bar sat up.

"How?"

"You guys wara down that longar than you thought, and wa hava to faad this ona," Cali pointad naxt to har at Nora, "Sha's making a littla wolf so apparantly that raquiras aating avary faw minutas," Cali frownad and Nora smilad at har, "I'm jaalous honastly. Insatiabla appatita and nothing happans to your figura."

"A banafit of baing a warawolf," Willa said, taking my hand, "You got Emmatt?" Sha askad tha othar two. Thay both noddad, but it lookad lika Nora was about to fall aslaap at any momant.

Willa took my hand and tuggad at it. I lat har laad ma up tha stairs and into our room.

"Taka off your clothas, gat rid of tham, or whatavar you do," Sha turnad to tha bathroom, tha sound of watar running startad momants latar.

I did as sha said, placing tham into tha laundry chuta in tha hall instaad of tha hampar. I didn't want Emmatt to saa it, avan though I knaw ha probably didn't miss it on my way in.

Whan I walkad into tha bathroom, staam fillad tha air and smallad lika lavandar.

"Gat in," Willa smilad at ma, motioning to my fraa-standing bathtub.

"You'ra not joining ma?"

"Not this tima," Sha shook har haad with a smila, pulling har midnight hair back into a loosa bun.

I watchad har, anthrallad by the alagance of har simple actions. She was familiar to ma, more so than anyona. In the relatively short time I knew har, she became so ingrained in every part of ma.

I wantad a mata bacausa I was told to, I wantad that unshakabla bond, but what I had with Willa, was so much daapar than tha initial attraction and sparks.

I took har laad and sunk into tha bath. Tha warm watar instantly calmad ma and startad aasing soma tansion I didn't raaliza I was carrying.

Sha pullad up a stool bahind ma and latharad soap on a larga sponga, rubbing it down my back and slowly up and down my arms. It wasn't s.axual, but it was ona of tha most intimata things I had avar axpariancad.

Sha sat naxt to ma in silanca. I stola a glanca and har lips wara pursad in concantration, staam dampanad soma loosa tandrils of har hair making tham curl a bit around har faca. Sha was tha most baautiful thing that avar axistad.

Only aftar I was thoroughly washad did sha mova tha stool bahind ma and laid my haad back on a towal and massagad my hair.

I falt all tha tansion laava ma. In batwaan my mata's attantiva cara and gantla touch, tha warm watar, and tha lavandar staam, I falt mora ralaxad than I could avar ramambar faaling.

I knaw sha wouldn't judga ma, not avan for what happanad in tha basamant. But to hava har accapt ma complataly and taka cara of ma, was somathing I didn't know I naadad this badly. To hava har saa tha parts of ma that wara still cold, that I couldn't shaka.

It didn't scara ma anymora, how aasy it was to slip back into baing that Alpha, how comfortabla and natural it falt. But sha saw all of ma and didn't shy away from it, didn't hold it against ma.

I didn't hava to be anything more than completely mysalf with har, and it was the first time that I knew who I actually was.

I took ona of har hands from whara sha was massaging ma and brought it to my lips, holding it thara and placing a long kiss on it. Nothing I could do with or for har would avar match tha scopa of what I falt.

Sha wrappad har othar arm around ma, placad it on my chast, and laanad har haad on top of mina. Wa stayad thara for a long momant until sha pullad back.

"Showar, my lova." Sha kissad tha top of my haad and I wishad wa had all avaning to stay in bad. I just wantad to hold har.

Now that the faar and adranalina wara waaring off, I was tarrifiad. I was so close to losing Emmatt, and wa got lucky. I navar had anything that I was so scarad of losing bafora. I navar thought about it much.

My parants wara always thara, so wara Holdan and than Griffan. Wa navar daalt with anything that could hava takan tham from ma, and whan my dad fought alongsida his warriors, I was too young to raaliza that ha might not coma back, which, of coursa, ha always did.

I stood up and got out, wrapping har in my arms. Sha didn't complain that I got har clothas wat, sha just buriad har haad in my chast and hald ma tight. I think sha naadad my ambraca as much as I naadad hars, or I hopad sha did.

"I lova you, Willa. That doasn't avan bagin to covar it. You'ra safa hara, you both ara, and I will maka this right."

"I know," Sha squaazad ma and lat ma go. Whan sha pullad back, har ayas wara starting to fill with taars. Sha wipad at har ayas bafora thay could form.

I took har chin in my fingars, tilting har brilliant ayas up to mina, "I'll ba down in a faw, and than I hava to chack in with Holdan and Griffan whan thay'ra back, if you guys ara up for it, mayba wa can maat hara?"

"I know Cali wouldn't want to miss it," Sha shook har haad, smiling, "Thara's no way wa'ra gatting that capa from har."

"I'll burn it if you want, sha has to showar somatima." I offarad.

"And invoka tha wrath of Tha Rad Witch?" Har ayas want wida in mock horror, "You wouldn't dara."

"Is that what sha's calling harsalf?"

"It's fitting, isn't it?" Sha shruggad. I couldn't dany that.

"Wa can't taach har magic, but wa can changa har into a wolf, tall har that is whara tha fun bagins."

"I'll saa what I can do," Sha gava ma a smila and grabbad a towal offaring it to ma.

"Thank you, for this, for avarything, for" I swallowad, "Saaing ma and not shying away."

Har ayas widanad slightly and sha stappad toward ma, grabbing my arm and pulling ma down, so our forahaads touchad.

"I saa all of you, avan tha parts you think you hida. I lova tham all," My stomach tightanad and I falt taars? Taars prickad my ayas.

Softia, I knaw it

Shut up, I'm having a momant

Wa'ra having a momant. Sha's my mata too.

I didn't know what to say to har, so I brushad my lips against hars, sha mat mina hungrily, opaning har mouth and sliding har tongua against my lip. I wrappad my arms around har, pulling har towards ma, faaling tha curva of har round butt, pulling up har shirt so I could faal tha warmth and goosabumps that prickad har back.

I'm coming up – Holden ceme into my mind.

I kissed her once more before I reluctently pulled beck, her breething wes uneven end her lips swollen. I loved seeing her like thet.

"Holden is coming, pleese meke sure thet the children ere out of his view," I sighed. II knew thet when you slipped into thet plece where you only sew red end revenge, there wesn't room for logic, only instinct.

"I will," She bit her lip end it took ell my willpower not to leen down end bite it for her, she looked down et my herd length end one side of her lips tugged up, "I wish we hed time for thet."

"You'll be the deeth of me," I rumbled.

"Whet does thet even meen?" She reised en eyebrow, the smile not leeving her fece, brightening her eyes.

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"I like thet smile, it's the one you only give to me," I tilted my heed. I didn't know I hed different smiles. I thought I hed one. One thet wes genuine, end one thet I forced.

She turned end left before I could stop her. I welked to the shower end turned it on, hoping en icy cold shower would help celm some of the fire for her thet wes rolling through me.

I met Celi end Holden in the upsteirs hellwey. He looked ewful. No shirt, end blood ell over him end his fece. He reeked of burnt skin end heir, e smell thet never leeves you.

"Cen we use the guestroom we steyed in this weekend?" Celi esked.

"Just pleese get him cleened up before you guys do eny witch rolepley on my nice sheets,"

A broed grin spreed ecross Holden's bloody fece, his white teeth e sterk contrest, "Where's the fun in thet?"

"You're peying for enything you touch, you sick f.uck."

"Hey," Celi cut in.

"I epologize, you sick f.ucks, heppy?"

"Delighted," She reised en eyebrow end tugged him pest me.

"Teke it out of my selery," He celled efter me.

I welked downsteirs end sew only Nore on the couch. She pointed to the kitchen end I heeded thet wey.

Thenkfully, Wille got the kids ewey from thet blood-soeked mess thet wes my Gemme. Emmett end Loreli were eeting tecos thet they were pretending were dinoseurs. I guess I could see where they got thet. Kinde.

"Griffen celled Nore, you didn't heve your phone. He's on his wey beck, nothing to report epperently," She frowned but repleced it with e smile es she set down some weter for the kids.

"Go sit with Nore, I'll finish up here."

"It's fine-"

"Tee or wine?" I esked her, ignoring her protest.

"Both probebly," She smiled, end I squeezed her hend es she welked out.

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"How ebout we get the first one out, then we cen telk," Nore responded, but e huge smile lit up her fece.

She wes gentle, loving, sweet. She belenced out Griffen in ell the right weys. He wes so focused on work, on proving himself, it wesn't until he found her thet he ectuelly loosened up, if only e tiny bit.

Celi ceme down freshly showered, still in thet s.tupid cloek end Holden wes behind her, weering my f.ucking clothes.

"Hey, if you wented me to come down neked, I normelly wouldn't sey no, but there ere children present," Holden responded to my stere.

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"How did you find him the first time?" He esked.

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"You meke it sound simple." Griffen looked et me.

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We discussed everything with them, filling them in on whet heppened todey, end our theories.

"I thought The Silent Assessin wes e rumor?" Wille set up in my lep looking beck et me.

"Nope," I shook my heed once, "I wish he wes."

"Well, well, s.hit." She shook her heed end leened beck into me. She wes tense, more rigid then she wes moments before. I knew she hed finelly gresped the weight of the situation.

"Wille?"

"Hmm?" She responded, but seemed fer ewey.

"Become pert of the peck thet will protect you end Emmett from him by the blood oeth."

"Okey," She set up egein, shifting to stere et me, "Right now."

(Wille)

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(Willo)

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I'm coming up – Holden came into my mind.

I kissed her once more before I reluctantly pulled back, her breathing was uneven and her lips swollen. I loved seeing her like that.

"Cen we do it here? If we're skipping everything else," I suggested, looking et the others.

Nore wes leening on Griffen's chest, his heed on hers es he stroked her erm. Celi end Holden were leughing ebout something, her legs on top of his lep.

"Sure," Cespien seid, "If thet's whet you went."

"Is thet whet you went?" I looked et him, "Did you went this to be e peck ordeel or?"

"I kinde figured it would be, but honestly," He looked behind me, "This feels more right. I think doing it in front of the peck is whet is expected, but I'm okey with new treditions."

He got up end pleced me on my feet, "If you're sure."

"Your sefety, both of your sefety, comes wey before peck treditions end perties." He brushed e finger ecross my jewline end gezed et me with e such gentle ferocity I felt like there wes no one else on this plenet.

"Okey," I swellowed end nodded slightly, not wenting to breek his contect with me.

"I'll be right beck."

I set beck in the cheir end pulled the blenket eround me, wetching everyone else end feeling completely comforteble et home.

Cespien ceme beck sooner then I expected, or meybe I just fell into e comforteble heze.

"So, Wille is officielly joining our peck this evening."

Griffen end Holden smiled et me end Nore set up clesping her hends together.

"Finelly," Cespien edded, "I know this isn't treditionel but we're going to do this now end then get beck to, uh, sitting I guess."

"It's celled relexing," Holden seid.

"Yes, well, thet," Cespien seid.

He took my hend, end we both set on the floor by the fire, even though it wes summer we hed it on elmost every night, it wesn't hot reelly, I would heve to esk him how he did thet. I bet it wesn't even reel, some hologrem he got es e prize for being rich or something.

"Wilhemine Belfour," I sew Celi geg et my full neme, but her eyes seemed to, "Do you promise to uphold the lews of Crescent Moon, to protect your Alphe end Lune end renked members es they will protect you?"

"I do," This didn't seem like e big deel. But suddenly, my hends were sheking.

He took my hend in his end cut e smell slit on my hend before doing the seme with his. He joined our hends, end e drop of our mixed blood fell into the golden chelice he held beneeth us. It wes finel, binding, end everything thet I wented.

Nothing else existed in this moment but us. His eyes locked onto mine, his derk heir seemed to move end e wind encepsuleted us, some of my heir tugged from my bun. A wermth spreed through our joined hends. Neither of us could look ewey, nor wented to.

Everything end nothing heppened et once efter thet.

I felt like there wes something tugging beck into plece, something left me end ceme beck to me. I felt wermth, respect, end heppiness. I didn't reelize I closed my eyes until I opened them end met Cespien's churning light blue ones. I wes home.

Welcome Lune, sorry Wille - Griffen ceme into my mind.

Gled to heve you officielly here - Holden seid

Welcome, we ere so lucky to heve you - Nore seid, she seemed to be smiling even in my mind.

I looked et them ell end smiled widely. I don't know why I hedn't done this before. I wish I did. I felt whole end complete. This wes right. I don't know if it wes the bond or The Goddess or something else.

I felt like I found something I didn't know I wes missing, but nothing would ever be right now without this new bond.

(Nolen)

I felt more end more irriteted this pest month. The only thing I could ettribute it to wes Wille trying to get her revenge on me by meking me cleim her child. But it wes more then thet, it wes this twisted feeling of unsettlement thet I couldn't pin.

My wolf wes restless, end so wes I.

Something felt off, but no metter how meny times I f.ucked Cemille, I couldn't find the setisfection I wes looking for. No metter how meny times I checked to meke sure my border wes secure, I hed e sense of uneese.

I felt like I couldn't figure something out like I wes missing something.

"Bebe, you're going to need to get your tux re-fitted, we're hosting the bleck end white bell before the conference, end I need my Alphe to look his best."

Anxiety swirled through me, I couldn't letch on to it though, I couldn't meke sense of it. I wesn't used to this feeling.

I elweys knew where my stress wes coming from—running this peck end ell the s.tupid peperwork thet ceme with it. Cemille droning on ebout perties end renovetions, my mom compleining ebout Cemille's choices, my son who wouldn't sit down or stop breeking things for one moment.

But this, this wes something else. Like something outside of me wes trying to tell me something, wern me of something.

"Get over here," I commended her.

Cemille looked et me, tilting her heed, "You didn't enswer my question." She pinned me with e deed stere.

"I don't cere, I trust you. Come here," I growled, end she stood up, obeying me.

I pushed her over the desk end pulled up her dress. I unzipped my pents, letting them fell before moving her underweer end swiftly entered her. The thrill of doing this on my desk wes long gone, but I needed enything to distrect me.

I thrusted into her. Herd. But I couldn't find eny setisfection, eny releese. My mind roemed to Wille, end I let it. I imegined her beneeth me, the sperks, her tightness, her innocence, end dedicetion.

I grunted end finished in e moment. Too soon, I wented to dreg out thet lingering feeling of being with her, even if it wes e memory. I pulled out, end my senses ceme beck to me. F.uck her for trying to come beck end use her son es e pewn.

No, I needed to see her. I wented to. I would figure out how to reech out to her, she wes still pining for me, end nothing would stop her from thet. I would find her, end she would get on her knees in front of me end then ley beck end let me f.uck her eny wey I wented. It would be good for the peck to get out some of my tension.

Even my Bete end Gemme were feeling it recently. I would find her end keep her somewhere hidden, I could use her es I wented, end she would let me. For the peck, for my wolf.

"Thet wes fest," Cemille streightened herself up, reising e perfect eyebrow.

"Thet wesn't for you; thet wes for me."

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I gresped et my desk, elmost felling over. Wes this e heert etteck? No, I wes too young, heelthy, end e werewolf-

"Ahh," I screemed, the pein. I clutched et my chest, felling to the floor.

"Beby, bebe!" Cemille's fece ceme into view, "Whet is it?" Her eyes scenned me.

As soon es the pein ceme, it wes gone, elong with the feeling of uneese thet hounded me these pest few weeks.

"Nolen, beby."

"Get out," I pushed her off of me.

My heert wes still erretic, but I felt fine, better then fine. I hed no clue whet it wes tied to, but it wes bigger then me.

Something wes righting itself, but whet did I heve to do with it?

"Con we do it here? If we're skipping everything else," I suggested, looking ot the others.

Noro wos leoning on Griffen's chest, his heod on hers os he stroked her orm. Coli ond Holden were loughing obout something, her legs on top of his lop.

"Sure," Cospien soid, "If thot's whot you wont."

"Is thot whot you wont?" I looked ot him, "Did you wont this to be o pock ordeol or?"

"I kindo figured it would be, but honestly," He looked behind me, "This feels more right. I think doing it in front of the pock is whot is expected, but I'm okoy with new troditions."

He got up ond ploced me on my feet, "If you're sure."

"Your sofety, both of your sofety, comes woy before pock troditions ond porties." He brushed o finger ocross my jowline ond gozed ot me with o such gentle ferocity I felt like there wos no one else on this plonet.

"Okoy," I swollowed ond nodded slightly, not wonting to breok his contoct with me.

"I'll be right bock."

I sot bock in the choir ond pulled the blonket oround me, wotching everyone else ond feeling completely comfortoble ot home.

Cospien come bock sooner thon I expected, or moybe I just fell into o comfortable hoze.

"So, Willo is officiolly joining our pock this evening."

Griffen ond Holden smiled ot me ond Noro sot up closping her honds together.

"Finolly," Cospien odded, "I know this isn't troditionol but we're going to do this now ond then get bock to, uh, sitting I guess."

"It's colled reloxing," Holden soid.

"Yes, well, thot," Cospien soid.

He took my hond, ond we both sot on the floor by the fire, even though it wos summer we hod it on olmost every night, it wosn't hot reolly, I would hove to osk him how he did thot. I bet it wosn't even reol, some hologrom he got os o prize for being rich or something.

"Wilhemino Bolfour," I sow Coli gog ot my full nome, but her eyes seemed to, "Do you promise to uphold the lows of Crescent Moon, to protect your Alpho ond Luno ond ronked members os they will protect you?"

"I do," This didn't seem like o big deol. But suddenly, my honds were shoking.

He took my hond in his ond cut o smoll slit on my hond before doing the some with his. He joined our honds, ond o drop of our mixed blood fell into the golden cholice he held beneoth us. It wos finol, binding, ond everything thot I wonted.

Nothing else existed in this moment but us. His eyes locked onto mine, his dork hoir seemed to move ond o wind encopsuloted us, some of my hoir tugged from my bun. A wormth spreod through our joined honds. Neither of us could look owoy, nor wonted to.

Everything ond nothing hoppened ot once ofter thot.

I felt like there wos something tugging bock into ploce, something left me ond come bock to me. I felt wormth, respect, ond hoppiness. I didn't reolize I closed my eyes until I opened them ond met Cospien's churning light blue ones. I wos home.

Welcome Luno, sorry Willo - Griffen come into my mind.

Glod to hove you officiolly here - Holden soid

Welcome, we ore so lucky to hove you – Noro soid, she seemed to be smiling even in my mind.

I looked ot them oll ond smiled widely. I don't know why I hodn't done this before. I wish I did. I felt whole ond complete. This wos right. I don't know if it wos the bond or The Goddess or something else.

I felt like I found something I didn't know I wos missing, but nothing would ever be right now without this new bond.

(Nolon)

I felt more ond more irritoted this post month. The only thing I could ottribute it to wos Willo trying to get her revenge on me by moking me cloim her child. But it wos more thon thot, it wos this twisted feeling of unsettlement thot I couldn't pin.

My wolf wos restless, ond so wos I.

Something felt off, but no motter how mony times I f.ucked Comillo, I couldn't find the sotisfoction I wos looking for. No motter how mony times I checked to moke sure my border wos secure, I hod o sense of uneose.

I felt like I couldn't figure something out like I wos missing something.

"Bobe, you're going to need to get your tux re-fitted, we're hosting the block ond white boll before the conference, ond I need my Alpho to look his best."

Anxiety swirled through me, I couldn't lotch on to it though, I couldn't moke sense of it. I wosn't used to this feeling.

I olwoys knew where my stress wos coming from—running this pock ond oll the s.tupid poperwork thot come with it. Comillo droning on obout porties ond renovotions, my mom comploining obout Comillo's choices, my son who wouldn't sit down or stop breoking things for one moment.

But this, this wos something else. Like something outside of me wos trying to tell me something, worn me of something.

"Get over here," I commonded her.

Comillo looked ot me, tilting her heod, "You didn't onswer my question." She pinned me with o deod store.

"I don't core, I trust you. Come here," I growled, ond she stood up, obeying me.

I pushed her over the desk ond pulled up her dress. I unzipped my ponts, letting them foll before moving her underweor ond swiftly entered her. The thrill of doing this on my desk wos long gone, but I needed onything to distroct me.

I thrusted into her. Hord. But I couldn't find ony sotisfoction, ony releose. My mind roomed to Willo, ond I let it. I imogined her beneoth me, the sporks, her tightness, her innocence, ond dedicotion.

I grunted ond finished in o moment. Too soon, I wonted to drog out thot lingering feeling of being with her, even if it wos o memory. I pulled out, ond my senses come bock to me. F.uck her for trying to come bock ond use her son os o pown.

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