

3 - Birthday Surprise

After a quick shower, I slipped on the floor-length silver dress that hugged my body perfectly. It was Nolan's favorite color and something I went back and forth deciding on wearing. I kept a few others from the rack that Luna Natalie sent me for this event, but I wanted to be seen tonight. The straps were thin and the back dipped down. It seemed like too much almost, and I struggled with who I was and who I wanted to be.

A soft knock came on the door and my heart thumped, I reached for the black gift box where I put the pregnancy results.

"May I come in?" A voice even more familiar than Nolan's came on the other side and I opened the door for my mother.

"Oh Willa," She looked up at me, "You are stunning,"

"Come in," I closed the door behind her.

"I figured you might want some help since Lola is out of town," She offered, motioning for me to sit in front of my vanity.

Lola was my closest friend since we met in middle school and we were inseparable since. Her family went on a trip every summer and as much as I wished she was here for this, I knew how much her family vacations meant to her. She would be back in a few weeks anyways and I would tell her in with all of my news. I smiled down at my stomach. But Nolan would be the one I told first, even before my mom, though I wanted to scream it with each passing second.

"Thank you," I sat down as my mom went to work on my hair while I tried to stay still and line my eyes and apply some shimmering eye shadow that matched my dress. I could never do it as well as Lola could, but tonight was about Nolan anyways, I doubt anyone would be looking at my eyeshadow.

"There," My mom brushed out my curls, my hair had a slight wave to it naturally but the soft curls added something to my look.

"One last thing," She opened up a velvet box she held, "I know you said this was about Nolan tonight but you're so close to becoming the Luna, I just, your dad and I are so proud of you."

She opened the box and took out a white gold hair comb strewn with diamonds and sapphires.

"Grandma's," I reached out to touch it but stopped.

"Yes," She nodded, "And now it's yours,"

I looked in the mirror, as she pinned some of my curls back behind my ear.

"Absolutely beautiful," She leaned her head on my shoulder before kissing the side of my head.

"Thank you," I leaned into her.

"Now, we are going to be late, and we can't have the honored guest's mate show up after it starts," She said, sounding more like Luna Natalia.

I stood up grabbing a fur shawl from the closet, it covered my bare arms and the part of my back that was exposed, making this dress more comfortable for me to wear.

"I'll see you in there," She left to go to the dining room while I met Nolan and his parents in his dad's office.

"You look beautiful," Nolan wrapped my hand around his arm, "Showing a bit too much skin for a future Luna though," He murmured but it wasn't sexy. It seemed like he was chastising me for a dress that I didn't even buy for myself.

"I thought," I didn't even know, I thought I was playing the pretty Luna, but apparently I chose the wrong one.

"There is a line between slutty and classy," He brushed his lips across my ear and I shuddered at the contact, drowning out the hurt and confusion I felt.

We walked in followed by his parents, everyone in the dining hall stood up and clapped for their future Alpha.

I felt the swell of pride being on his arm as we walked past the rows of round tables up to the long table for the ranked members and honored guests.

I went to sit to his right.

"Scoot down one," He whispered.

"What?" This was always the place that I sat at.

"The prince is coming," He pulled the chair out and I stood moving one down.

I reached for the glass of champagne but pulled back reminding myself that a baby was in me, our baby.

Speeches were made and still the space between us was empty, but he didn't ask me to move back down next to him. I was lost in thought as everyone rose, I didn't even notice until Luna Natalie glared at me whispering my name.

Oh.

I stood a moment before a man sat in the seat between us. He looked at me and I nodded, looking past him to where Nolan sat.

Camilla was walking up to the head table and all eyes were on her.

Including his.

The man next to me might have said something but I didn't hear it. All I could see was her walking up in a skin-tight black dress that arched out. It was strapless and her lips were lined in the deepest red.

She addressed the man next to me before smiling at me, her teeth pulling back over her blinding white teeth. I gave her a smirk that looked like a smile, knowing what I had laid out on the table in front of me, what was in that little black gift box that would wipe that smile from her face.

"The future Luna is a sight," The man next to me nodded at Camilla as she passed.

"She's not the future Luna," I grasped my fork too tight.

"Oh, I-"

"I am," I glared at him. His light blue eyes widened for a moment before they settled on me, studying my face.

"I meant no disrespect."

I didn't hear him after that, my attention turned to where Camilla leaned over the table to whisper to my mate. Nolan's eyes went wide as he pulled back but a smile graced his lips.

What the f.uck was he doing? He knew how this would make me feel, I was going to link him when the stranger spoke next to me.

"I always, hated these things they seem so formal, so forced."

"Then what would you prefer?" I asked him not taking my eyes off Nolan's.

"Something small, intimate, with people I actually enjoyed being around."

I nodded, "That sounds like a hell of an idea, just one not suited to tank members and their air for showing off. Also, what would the Lunas do then? Die from boredom most likely," I mused and the man next to me laughed, it boomed and it caught Nolan's attention along with his mother and father.

I stared at them all with a smile on my face.

Camilla moved away from the table naturally, only to come around to sit next to Nolan on his other side. People actually moved so that Nolan could pull up a chair for her.

Anger surged a real thing that I could hold onto. How dare she?

What was Nolan thinking? I know he was being polite but this crossed a line.

I scooted next to him as soon as the man left with his apologies to Nolan and his parents. After he left, most others left leaving the ranked members and a few stragglers including my parents behind.

Camilla smiled at Nolan so genuinely that I wanted nothing more than to wipe it off of her mouth. I knew that I should share this with him out of joy but this was too perfect of an opportunity to pass up.

My spite and joy were keeping the same company this evening.

"Your gift," I slid it to him smiling, "I wanted to give it to you earlier, but." I shrugged, chewing on my bottom lip.

He looked at me curiosity evident on his face as he opened the box and pulled out the paper. My stomach flled with butterflies as he read it, I couldn't wait for his reaction.

This is something we both wanted but it hadn't happened until now. It felt like perfect timing. The Moon Goddess blessed us with a baby months before we would take over the pack, ensuring the Alpha's line.

"Willa?" He looked at me, hurt flashed in his eyes momentarily before he locked his jaw, "I wish we could have done this privately."

My stomach clenched, did it matter? No one else knew, he didn't even announce it.

"I Nolan Hemming future Alpha of the Blue Ridge Pack Reject you, Willa, er, Wilhelmina Balfour as my mate and future Luna."

I didn't understand his words but my body did.

Pain rippled through me as I felt our bond start to snap. I couldn't breathe. Fire sparked through me replacing my blood.

I swear this was the end. I would die from this. My vision blurred and went black.

Angry shouts and warm familiar hands lifted me up. My eyes blinked open as I was drawn away from the table.

The last thing I saw before I drifted back into agonizing darkness was Camilla comforting my mate through the pain.