

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 31 -

19–24 minutes

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 31

31 – Red Eye

(Willa)

That s.ex changed me. Completely and irrevocably.

Caspien knew it as he propped himself on his side.

“That was nice,” I shrugged, drawing circles in the cool sheets, “Someone promised me anything but-”

He flipped me over with a growl. I knew I wouldn't get any sleep tonight, but I don't think I had ever felt more awake or alive in my life.

My eyes felt like they weighed a thousand pounds, and I forced them open the following day. I was sprawled naked across the bed, and I reached for Caspien but where he was laying was cold. My eyes fluttered shut, but my brain was telling me to wake up.

s**t, Emmett.

I sat up and rubbed my eyes. Wait, he was with Caspien's parents. I relaxed but the feeling of confusion didn't leave me, I felt like I was missing something, that I had to be doing something.

What time was it anyway?

I groaned against the edges of a headache that formed around my mind. I don't know what time we managed to fall asleep. We ended up talking for Goddess knew how long after a few rounds of him. My cheeks heated at the memories, and I pressed my legs together, trying to stop the swirl of tingles just from the memory of him.

I peeled myself out of bed and went to the bathroom I used off of Emmett's room. I showered, but the warm water only made me more tired, so I changed it to cold to shock myself awake. It only barely helped.

Brushing my long hair took ages; it was tangled and knotted, and no matter what I did to my face, even applying a few coats of mascara, I looked as tired as I felt.

I tugged on a white sundress dress Caspien bought for me and pulled part of my hair back to the sides, not bothering to fully dry it.

Something hit me as I opened the door to Emmett's room. I woke up and felt comfortable enough to get dressed and ready before making sure Emmett was okay. I knew he was okay no matter if he was with Caspien or his parents, which was huge for me.

I smiled to myself, leaving the room, thinking back at how even a few months ago, I was worried sick. I was confused and lost and had no idea how I would relocate alone, only not to have to do it alone.

As much as I wanted to figure out life for myself, finding Cali and Loreli, and then Caspien and his parents and friends, I realized I could still be independent and accomplished but didn't have to carry the weight by myself.

I didn't see anyone in the living room as I descended the stairs. The sound of laughter directed me to the kitchen. I leaned in the open doorway and saw a mop of brown hair and light red curls sitting at the kitchen island, watching Caspien's back intently.

They were both giggling, and when he turned around, I choked on my laugh.

Caspien had a whipped cream mustache and strawberries over his eyes.

"I can't find him, I've looked everywhere and I swear he was just here!" He exclaimed, actually exclaimed.

"He's behind you," Emmett and Loreli shouted, falling into a fit of laughter.

Caspien turned around, not noticing me, with strawberries covering his eyes. The next time he turned back to us, his mustache and eyes were gone.

"Did I miss something?-" He asked the kids before stopping when he saw me.

I waved a hand, "Go on," I stepped into the kitchen, placing a kiss on Emmett's head and squeezing Loreli's shoulder, "Don't let me intrude"

"Mr. Baker stole our strawberries, so Caspien is trying to get them back so that we can make waffles."

"Color me intrigued," I raised an eyebrow studying Caspien. If the man was capable of blushing, I think he might at this moment, "We need to solve this mystery." I added seriously.

Loreli nodded, "We're close." She clapped her hands together.

“Mr. Baker was just here,” Emmett added.

“I saw him; I can vouch for that.” I tilted my head thoroughly, enjoying Caspien’s embarrassment.

Caspien swallowed, “Well, great then. If you saw him-”

“I did,” I confirmed with a smile, I loved seeing him embarrassed, I didn’t think this was an emotion that he was capable of.

“Well, then I guess we are on the right trail,” Caspien took a deep breath, not meeting my stare, and turned around.

A few moments later, he had the mustache and strawberry eyes back.

“There he is,” Emmett and Loreli pointed, I smiled, biting down on my laugh.

Caspien spun around, “I got him,”

“No, I got him.” He said back to himself.

This went on for a few more moments. Loreli and Emmett could hardly contain themselves until he turned back to us without a mustache holding up a handful of strawberries. He took a few steps to the kitchen island, pretending to be out of breath, and let the strawberries fall from his hands, rolling towards us.

A few seconds of silence passed until I started clapping slowly. Loreli and Emmett joined once they caught their breaths.

“An actor,” I commented, “Is there anything you cant do?” I picked up a strawberry and took a bite out of it; his eyes went to my lips.

“I told you there wasn’t.” His voice was serious, “Now, who wants to help make the batter?” His voice lightened as he turned his attention to the kids.

They bounced up and down and shouted ‘me’.

“How and when?” I asked, motioning to them; I didn’t expect to see Loreli here.

He shrugged, turning around to gather ingredients, “I was up early and asked them to bring Emmett, I didn’t want to leave Loreli by herself so here we are.” He set the ingredients on the kitchen island and went back to grab mixing bowls.

“Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,” Holden’s voice sang from the front.

“I really shouldn’t have given him a key,” Caspien muttered.

Cali walked into the kitchen, stopping in her tracks when she saw Loreli.

She was wearing one of Holden's white button-downs with her belt around it. Her hair was everywhere but it looked windswept somehow. She looked like she just walked out of a magazine shoot instead of like like she rolled out of bed.

"Baby girl," She placed kisses on Loreli's cheeks and head, "I missed you." Loreli pushed her off and laughed. Cali ruffled Emmett's hair and gave him a kiss on his head too.,

"What did I miss?" She asked, crossing her arms surveying the kitchen.

I opened my mouth to say something.

"Don't." Caspien pointed a spatula at me and I shut my mouth.

Cali was about to say something, but Holden came in behind her grabbing her from behind, he looked up and saw the kids and dropped his hands, backing up a few steps.

"Is that?" Holden pointed to the back of Loreli's head.

Cali and I nodded.

Holden put a hand over his mouth, "Wow," He breathed.

I looked at Cali and she rolled her eyes but couldn't hide her smile.

"May I?" He looked to Cali, who snorted.

"She's not a dog," She shook her head, "You can talk to her. Or try," She whispered.

Holden took a few steps up and around the side of the island.

"Hi Holden," Emmett said, Holden gave him a bright smile and a wave.

"Hi Holden," Emmett said, Holden gave him a bright smile and a wave.

"Hi," Holden held out his hand to Loreli," I looked at him and shook my head, and he moved his hand away.

"I'm Holden; I'm your mom and Willa's friend."

"Eh," I butted in and he scowled at me.

"Not helping," He muttered before turning to Loreli, "What kind of pancakes do you like?"

"We're making waffles," Emmett corrected him, and Holden paused.

“Okay then,” He took a deep breath closing his eyes, “What kind of waffles do you like?” He said a bit slower.

“Strawberry,” Loreli went on babbling about waffles and powdered sugar and summed up Mr. Baker and Caspien’s show leaving Holden and Cali completely confused.

“Well, that sounds absolutely amazing,” Holden smiled at her, he looked at Loreli with so much affection it warmed me. I looked at Cali and she gave me a slight shrug, but I could tell she was melting too.

“Can I get you some coffee?” Caspien asked Cali.

“A red eye,”

“Same please,” I added.

“What?” Caspien looked between us.

“A shot of espresso in a cup of coffee,” Cali pulled her hair back in a ponytail.

“You guys are tired?” Holden asked dragging his attention from Loreli for a second.

“Exhausted doesn’t even begin to cover it,” Cali responded.

“Cas, are you tired?” Holden looked to where Caspien was starting to make coffee at a machine that looked like something from Star Trek.

“I’ve never been more invigorated in my life, I woke up early,” He glanced at Holden with an almost playful smile.

“Same, I’ve never been more awake.”

I stared at them crossing my arms; Holden gave me a sly grin.

“But I guess if you guys are too tired,

“Maybe it’s because we were doing most of the work,” Cali raised an eyebrow at me.

“Not in front of the children,” Holden scolded.

“You started it,” I argued.

Caspien brought us our coffees, and after I drank mine in silence I felt almost awake.

We all ate breakfast together. Caspien made waffles with the help of Emmett and Loreli, and Cali helped squeeze juice as I set out the table.

Loreli climbed onto Holden's lap by the end of the meal after he showed her how to make a cabin out of waffle pieces. Emmett was intrigued and we spent a while trying to make a volcano at his request.

"She looks just like me," Holden held Loreli facing us. Her strawberry curls, blue eyes, and pale skin were a slight contrast against Holden's golden skin and blonde hair.

"Um," Cali tilted her head.

"You both are, um, human?" I said, "Oh wait," I laughed, giving him a look, he glared at me.

"Can we keep him?" Loreli squished Holden's cheeks

"Can we?" Holden asked Cali a broad smile on his squished face.

"Let me think about it; he's not house-trained yet," Cali responded dryly with a cunning smile.

"That was low," Holden scowled, Caspien's shoulders shook in a silent laugh.

"I can train him," Loreli looked at Holden and squished her nose against his.

Cali insisted on helping me clear the plates.

"Not because I'm domesticated or anything, but I want to hear the gossip." She flipped her ponytail wiggling a brow, "Also what is that on your neck and how do I get one? Looks kinky,"

I blushed putting my hand to my neck where I held Caspien's mark, smiling at the fresh memory of it.

"It's binding, it's forever. But-"

"You can get one right now," Holden chimed in, I sighed closing my eyes.

"We also have really good hearing," I explained, I don't know why I was still whispering.

She narrowed her eyes, "You have a lot of explaining to do," I looked away turning on the sink to rinse the dishes.

"Do you believe me?" I asked, worried about her answer.

She came up next to me and took the plates from me, loading the dishwasher, "I guess I have to, I saw my best friend turn into a wolf," She shook her head.

"How do you feel?" I asked her lowering my voice, I heard Caspien strike up a conversation behind us and thankfully he started to usher them into the other room.

“Maybe we wash hands, you guys are cute, but the sticky thing, not sold on,” Holden said and I saw Cali almost laugh.

Once they were actually gone she leaned back on the sink, all pretenses of helping clean gone.

“I feel good. I know it sounds cheap, taking the easy way out but having some deity choose the perfect guy for me, honestly,” She shrugged, her hazel eyes met mine, “It makes it easy.”

“I know, but I mean, it’s what I’m used to.”

“Do you guys not date?”

I shrugged, “Depends; some people find their mates later, some of them as soon as they get their wolf at eighteen.”

“Okay, we’re going to park the whole get the wolf at eighteen thing for now and circle back later,” She eyed me, “You just found yours?”

“I’ll explain later,” I really didn’t want to get into all of it now, I wanted to share with her everything and I was glad I finally could, but we didn’t have the time.

“Hmm,” She turned back to grab some plates, thankfully letting it go for now.

We started loading the dishwasher in silence, and I waited for her to speak, not wanting to pressure her on anything at the moment, I knew that even if she accepted it, this would still be a lot.

“I don’t know; it’s nice to not have to wade through all the a.ss f.ucks to find one that is almost mediocre.” She put down the plate she was holding, looking far away, “I used to not mind so much, the people I was with, who they were or what they did, did to me. What I thought I wanted.” Her voice came out shaky.

“But, that was when it was just me, and it isn’t anymore. I can’t put myself on the line like that. I couldn’t risk anything happening to me, Loreli would have no one.” Her eyes misted over, and she snapped them shut, “It’s not about me anymore,” She looked at me, “If something happened to Loreli because of me, I mean,” She shook her head vigorously, scrubbing a plate we missed.

“It’s not about me,” She repeated firmer, “I can take care of myself. I could when I had nothing to lose, but now,” She gripped the side of the sink, “I have everything to lose.”

I swallowed, I understood, maybe not her past, but I understood how everything shifted because of them.

“Lorelei’s dad?” I left the question open, we never talked about it, and she never offered anything. I guess I didn’t mention much about Nolan to her.

Cali bit her lip and shook her head, “Doesn’t know she exists, it’s for the better. Part of the reason I dipped during high school and finished my GED later. I wanted people to think I ran away; I didn’t want him to know.”

I nodded, taking that in.

“But do you want this? It’s pretty permanent. I know he would take it at your pace, Caspien would make sure he would,” I added. I would, too, but I didn’t think it seemed as intense.

“I think I want this, Willa.” She looked at me, almost pleading, “I want someone that had been waiting for me, someone that won’t leave. And I mean the things he can do with his finger,” She looked at me with a raised eyebrow I hit her shoulder lightly.

“Seriously, Cali. This is a lot. I’m easing into it, and I’m from this world. I just want to make sure you’re happy. But I will say that Holden would make an incredible partner and an even better father. But, I have to say that I don’t know him too well.”

“Sure, get those disclaimers in now, in case he kills me and hides me in twelve dumpsters around the city. Clear your conscious” She raised an eyebrow but gave me a shadow of a smile.

“Twelve is very specific,”

She rolled her eyes, “This is what you dream of, right? The perfect prince that sees you once and knows your his. Love at first sight bullshit.”

“You make it sound so romantic,” I leaned closer to her, “But it does make it easier, there’s a beacon to your perfect person. It goes deeper than attraction, way deeper. They were made for you,” I thought of Caspien last night a smile crossed my face.

Goddess, the way that he looked at me. I wore his mark, and I touched the place where he marked me.

I was his officially, he was mine. We belonged to each other. I didn’t have time to process it yet. Thinking about it was surreal.

“And you guys are now, like, married?”

“Yes,” The word slipped out, but it was true. I looked at her without anything but what I felt marring my features.

“Good,” She smiled a bit, studying me, “Good,” She nodded, turning back to the sink.

“I’m honestly happy that you’re mated to Holden, if you choose this, we can, you know, hang out forever,” I bumped her hip with mine, and she smiled.

“That would be the best part,” She smirked, “Also, getting like a surprise soulmate you don’t even have to date first.”

“That too,” I amended.

We went back to cleaning up, focusing on it this time before I heard my phone ring, but it sounded far away. I looked around, realizing I didn’t know where I put it last night.

“Here,” Caspien came into the kitchen, “It was on the dining room table,” He raised an eyebrow as if he had to remind me of last night.

“Thanks,” I grabbed it, and saw my mom was calling. I picked up. I needed to fill her in on a lot of things.

“Hi honey, how are you?” My mom’s voice immediately put me at ease.

“Good, really good,” I played with a strand of my hair as I walked around the kitchen.

“That’s great to hear; we were just checking, you know.”

“Why? Did you hear something?” I asked, there was no way they could have known I was mated again, could they? I internally kicked myself for not telling them sooner. I should have told them sooner.

“Nolan came by,” I stopped pacing; what did he want?

“Why?”

“We’re not sure. He came in and just sat there, really. I think he wanted us to say something but of course, we didn’t give anything away. I think that we just showed up here unannounced made him worried.”

“Oh,” I chewed my lip, “When did this happen?”

“This morning. He stopped by a few days ago, but we weren’t home. The neighbors told us,”

“I think I know what that was about,” I explained the letter I sent him and how he renounced paternity.

“Oh, I didn’t know you had to do that,”

“I didn’t either, but it’s over and done with so we don’t have to worry.”

“Then why would he come? He seemed nervous; maybe he was worried you had something up your sleeve.”

I laughed once, "He might, but that is ridiculous. He, well, you know what happened, it's not his place to worry now." I sighed, "He's just being paranoid, and I find it absolutely ridiculous that he would think I would want anything to do with him or try to sabotage Goddess knows what." I paced faster and knew I was sounding annoyed. Cali looked up at me.

"I know, honey, we know that. We just wanted to check in to see."

"I know, thanks; I just, he doesn't even matter; if he asks, you can tell him that." I was pissed actually, the fact that he was worried about me crawling back or trying to take my revenge now, the f*****g nerve.

"Okay," She didn't sound sure.

"I actually found my second chance," I wanted to change the subject.

The line was silent, and I felt Cali's stare; I had a lot to fill her in on.

"What? A chosen mate or."

"A second chance, mate, Mom, a real one." I sighed.

I was a s**t daughter, we talked daily but I wanted to make sure that it was real before sharing it; I was worried it was too good to be true and I saw how much my rejection affected them; I couldn't get their hopes up. I did plan to tell them, though, before we marked each other. Again, I wasn't planning on that either, it just seemed right, and I didn't want to spend another moment not officially belonging to him.

"When?"

"Honestly, right after you left, I've been taking it slow because, you know," I shrugged, "Emmett is involved this time."

She let out a long breath, "Well, if this is what you want and he treats you right, then we are happy for you. I'm just worried that"

"Mom, don't worry; I had all those same worries and more."

"Okay, I trust you, honey. Are we going to get to meet him?"

"I would love that. We miss you."

"We miss you too,"

"How is it over there?"

“Good, good. It’s like nothing happened, like we didn’t leave. It makes me feel weird, honestly. People dance around the subject like they are afraid to talk about it or ask us about you or where we were or any of it. It doesn’t feel the same.”

“I’m sorry,” I felt guilty even though I knew it wasn’t my fault. I wanted my parents to be comfortable at their home pack.

“It’s fine, it’s fine; what choice do we have?”

“Move to Crescent Moon,” I suggested, half joking.

“Your mate is from Crescent Moon? Well, of course, that would make sense.” She paused for a moment, “I’m not sure city life is for us, at that Alpha, that Prince, he is terrifying. I don’t think that I could live with him as The Alpha; I don’t think we would fit in there.”

“Mom,” I smiled, “They have a packhouse and cottages in the forest, too; you don’t have to live in the city. How about you come here and meet him, and then you decide? No pressure, it’s just an option.”

“Of course, I’ll talk to your dad about it.” She didn’t sound convinced, but I didn’t expect her to want to pack up and move to a new pack where everything she knew was at Blue Ridge.

I wasn’t sure if I should bring up that The Alpha was my mate, I figured I could ease her into it.

“Okay, I’ll set something up with him.”

“Willa?”

“Yes, Mom?”

“Are you happy?”

I paused. A smile tugged at my face.

“Yes, happier than I think I have ever been,” My hand went to my fresh mark.

The Rejected Luna’s Prince Chapter 32 -

33–42 minutes

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(Willa)

Caspien and I talked about how things would go moving forward. We would move in eventually, but I still wanted to ease Emmett into it even though he already felt so comfortable here. Caspien insisted that Emmett and I have a say in adding our own touches and redecorating.

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Caspien and I talked about how things would go moving forward. We would move in eventually, but I still wanted to ease Emmett into it even though he already felt so comfortable here. Caspien insisted that Emmett and I have a say in adding our own touches and redecorating.

He had a team, a literal team waiting for me in the dining room the following morning, a contractor, two designers, and what I assumed were assistants.

“Change anything, add another floor, an indoor pool, paint it hot pink for all I care,” He walked away, taking a call.

Emmett was down at Holden’s apartment with Loreli and Cali, so I had the team’s full, unwanted attention on me.

They looked at me expectantly as if I was about to whip out some vision boards from my back pocket and give them a full-a.ss presentation.

“Um,” I stared at them, and to my chagrin, none of them stepped in, “I don’t know what I want; honesty, I don’t really know my style.”

“Perfect,” One of the designers slid a few books to me, “Have a look here, and how about you flag some things that you like? Some fabrics, rooms, furniture, and we can put something together.” She looked at the male designer, and they both smiled at each other widely.

“This is our dream project,” The man said, “Especially with someone that we can start from scratch with; it rarely happens.”

“Well, then, I’m glad to help,” I gave them a genuine smile, and the contractor asked me a few things about the layout, but I didn’t want to change anything; I didn’t see a need to go around knocking down walls or anything.

“We will be in touch,” They got up and went to take room measurements while I flipped through the books. I honestly didn’t know how they would transform this space. I couldn’t see it at all. I couldn’t see past the stark modern fixtures and furniture and the neutral pallet.

Caspien came back and took a seat next to me.

“I’m bringing my mismatched mugs; I hope you know that,” I raised an eyebrow, and he stared at me.

“Maybe,”

“Maybe?”

“I thought relationships are about compromise, so instead of saying no, I said maybe.”

“You haven’t even seen then,” I crossed my arms.

“Are you inviting me over?” He asked. He almost smiled, almost.

“No, but I mean yes,” I shrugged.

He’s been in the front hallway before, he’s come up to pick me up for our dates, but many times I met him downstairs, too excited to wait. On the weekends, he was usually finishing meetings when I was done with work, so we took a car to him.

“Would you be more comfortable with me meeting your parents there?”

“I don’t think it matters, actually, but it might be nice. I want to show them the city and let them enjoy it a bit more than what they saw the week they were here.”

Caspian’s eyes lit up, “We’re simple people,” I stopped him, “Before you even think about a sunrise jet ride to the Moon, reel it in.”

“Fine,” His lips made a thin line, but I could tell he was still thinking about something.

“Fine,” I shook my head, “I have to get back to fabrics, ah, this one will match the wallpaper perfectly.” I pointed to one with black and white clowns.

“I’m terrified to see your choice in wallpaper,” He smiled.

“You said I could do anything I wanted,”

“I trust you,”

“You paused and winced,”

“I think I trust you,” He amended.

I nodded once, “I accept that.” I would have to figure out a way to sneak some of this awful fabric in somewhere.

“The sooner you choose, the sooner you can move in,” He looked at me.

“I know, I know,” I wanted this, but I wasn’t completely ready to give up my own place just yet.

The days seemed to pass quickly, now that I had weekends to look forward to and relax having only five days of work and school seemed so short. My parents were coming that weekend, and Caspien decided to do our date night at my place this week.

He brought over takeout from a few places and set up a picnic for Emmett and me in our living room. He didn’t hate it, not that I really had much choice over the furniture, but it was nice seeing him so comfortable here, even if he did look out of place with Emmett and me in our pajamas while he sat across from us with a perfectly pressed suit.

“Is Caspien staying? Are we having a sleepover?” He asked excitedly.

I looked at Caspien and shrugged.

“If you want me to,” Caspien said to Emmett but was looking at me.

“You can stay in my room,” Emmett said, and Caspien’s lips tugged up.

“You can stay,” I said to him, “I would like you to,” I wasn’t sure how to explain this situation to Emmett, but we would all be living together soon enough.

Emmett was drawing what he wanted his room to look like while Caspien helped me put the leftovers away.

He started studying my mug collection, “Fine, some of these can come,” He smiled, holding up one that said, ‘Someone who loves me went to Myrtle Beach, and all I got was this lousy mug’.

“It’s going to look so good next to your espresso machine,” I thought of his tiny white cups that all matched perfectly, and he frowned.

“These are going in the cabinet, compromise remember?”

“Fine,” I took the mug setting it on the counter, “I’ll set this aside to pack it.”

He pulled me close to him and kissed my hair, “I can’t wait until I never have to leave you again,” I settled into his embrace.

“You want that right?” He pulled back, looking into my eyes, “I can move here, or we can get our own place.” I shook my head, but my stomach did a flip. I knew he was serious and that he would move to this tiny apartment on the opposite side of town just if it made me happier.

“You have a pack that wouldn’t make sense.”

“I know something is bugging you, but I have to remind you, you can’t take this back,” He ran a finger over my mark, and I shivered.

“This is the only home I have had to myself,” I stepped away from his touch, “The only place I have had just Emmett and I. I feel like I just got it, and now we’re leaving so soon,” I looked around at the kitchen with the white paint and exposed bricks.

I shrugged, “I wanted to try to do it alone,”

“And you did,” He put his hand under my chin and gently tilted it, so I was facing him.

“I did,” I snorted, “For a few weeks at least. Don’t get me wrong, I am so happy to have found you, and I want to move in more than anything. Me feeling a bit sad to leave this place and leave another life I was planning behind doesn’t detract from that.” His eyes softened.

“It’s just different emotions right now, I wish I had a bit more time, I guess, to see what I could have done on my own.”

He nodded and removed his hand from my chin, “I understand, at least to the extent that I think I can. I don’t want you to give up anything for me.”

“I’m not,” I shook my head placing my hand on his chest and looking up at him, “I’m only gaining with you. Your friends, your parents, everyone has been incredible. I just won’t ever know now if I could have really done it.”

He put a hand on the back of my head and pulled me to his chest, “You know you could have, I know you could have.”

I nodded into him, I did know it, but I couldn’t help that feeling of sadness leaving this place behind the only place Emmett and I had just the two of us. But I knew what we were gaining, the fact that it didn’t have just be the two of us ever again, we were becoming a family.

(Willo)

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“Are you inviting me over?” He asked. He almost smiled, almost.

“No, but I mean yes,” I shrugged.

He’s been in the front hallway before, he’s come up to pick me up for our dates, but many times I met him downstairs, too excited to wait. On the weekends, he was usually finishing meetings when I was done with work, so we took a car to him.

“Would you be more comfortable with me meeting your parents there?”

“I don’t think it matters, actually, but it might be nice. I want to show them the city and let them enjoy it a bit more than what they saw the week they were here.”

Cospien’s eyes lit up, “We’re simple people,” I stopped him, “Before you even think about a sunrise jet ride to the Moon, reel it in.”

“Fine,” His lips made a thin line, but I could tell he was still thinking about something.

“Fine,” I shook my head, “I have to get back to fabrics, oh, this one will match the wallpaper perfectly.” I pointed to one with black and white clowns.

“I’m terrified to see your choice in wallpaper,” He smiled.

“You said I could do anything I wanted,”

“I trust you,”

“You pouted and winced,”

“I think I trust you,” He amended.

I nodded once, “I accept that.” I would have to figure out a way to sneak some of this awful fabric in somewhere.

“The sooner you choose, the sooner you can move in,” He looked at me.

“I know, I know,” I wanted this, but I wasn’t completely ready to give up my own place just yet.

The days seemed to pass quickly, now that I had weekends to look forward to and relax having only five days of work and school seemed so short. My parents were coming that weekend, and Cospian decided to do our date night at my place this week.

He brought over takeout from a few places and set up a picnic for Emmett and me in our living room. He didn’t hate it, not that I really had much choice over the furniture, but it was nice seeing him so comfortable here, even if he did look out of place with Emmett and me in our pajamas while he sat across from us with a perfectly pressed suit.

“Is Cospian staying? Are we having a sleepover?” He asked excitedly.

I looked at Cospian and shrugged.

“If you want me to,” Cospian said to Emmett but was looking at me.

“You can stay in my room,” Emmett said, and Cospian’s lips tugged up.

“You can stay,” I said to him, “I would like you to,” I wasn’t sure how to explain this situation to Emmett, but we would all be living together soon enough.

Emmett was drawing what he wanted his room to look like while Cospian helped me put the leftovers away.

He started studying my mug collection, "Fine, some of these can come," He smiled, holding up one that said, 'Someone who loves me went to Myrtle Beach, and all I got was this lousy mug'.

"It's going to look so good next to your espresso machine," I thought of his tiny white cups that all matched perfectly, and he frowned.

"These are going in the cabinet, compromise remember?"

"Fine," I took the mug setting it on the counter, "I'll set this aside to pack it."

He pulled me close to him and kissed my hair, "I can't wait until I never have to leave you again," I settled into his embrace.

"You want that right?" He pulled back, looking into my eyes, "I can move here, or we can get our own place." I shook my head, but my stomach did a flip. I knew he was serious and that he would move to this tiny apartment on the opposite side of town just if it made me happier.

"You have a pack that wouldn't make sense."

"I know something is bugging you, but I have to remind you, you can't take this back," He ran a finger over my mark, and I shivered.

"This is the only home I have had to myself," I stepped away from his touch, "The only place I have had just Emmett and I. I feel like I just got it, and now we're leaving so soon," I looked around at the kitchen with the white paint and exposed bricks.

I shrugged, "I wanted to try to do it alone,"

"And you did," He put his hand under my chin and gently tilted it, so I was facing him.

"I did," I snorted, "For a few weeks at least. Don't get me wrong, I am so happy to have found you, and I want to move in more than anything. Me feeling a bit sad to leave this place and leave another life I was planning behind doesn't detract from that." His eyes softened.

"It's just different emotions right now, I wish I had a bit more time, I guess, to see what I could have done on my own."

He nodded and removed his hand from my chin, "I understand, at least to the extent that I think I can. I don't want you to give up anything for me."

"I'm not," I shook my head placing my hand on his chest and looking up at him, "I'm only going with you. Your friends, your parents, everyone has been incredible. I just won't ever know now if I could have really done it."

He put a hand on the back of my head and pulled me to his chest, "You know you could have, I know you could have."

I nodded into him, I did know it, but I couldn't help that feeling of sadness leaving this place behind the only place Emmett and I had just the two of us. But I knew what we were going, the fact that it didn't have to be just the two of us ever again, we were becoming a family.

(Willa)

Caspian and I talked about how things would go moving forward. We would move in eventually, but I still wanted to ease Emmett into it even though he already felt so comfortable here. Caspian insisted that Emmett and I have a say in adding our own touches and redecorating.

My buzzer rang, and I jumped; why did it have to be so loud? I pressed the button to unlock it, hoping that my parents knew what to do.

My buzzer rang, and I jumped; why did it have to be so loud? I pressed the button to unlock it, hoping that my parents knew what to do.

"They're here!" I yelled to Emmett, and he bounded out of his room, almost tripping in just his socks, "Did you clean your room?" I asked.

"Yes, Meme."

There was a knock on the door, and I rushed to open it. My parents' smiling faces filled the doorway and I was overcome with happiness.

My mom knelt down and scooped Emmett into her arms, looking him over. My dad pulled us all into a hug.

"It's been too long," My mom said, "You've grown so much."

"Goddess, we missed you," My dad said with his hands on my shoulders, "Willa," His eyes were wide.

"What?" I asked, looking behind me, half expecting to see someone breaking into the window.

"You're marked," He whispered, his eyebrows furrowed.

"She's what?" My mom pushed my dad out of the way and looked at my neck, "Goddess, she is."

"Did you think I would lie about that?"

"No, but, I didn't know."

“I wesn’t plenning on it, it just heppened,” I shrugged. My mom looked towerd Emmett, “Mom, I met him right efter you guys left. He just merked me. I’m teking things slow; I took things slow.”

“So when do we get to meet this mystery mete?” My mom eyed me with e smile, “Hopefully not enother Alphe,” She joked.

“Could you imegine?” My ded leughed end welked into the epertment.

I took e deep breeth, following them in.

“Plece looks nice, the windows though. I’ll see whet I cen do about them while we’re here.”

“We ectually might be moving soon,” I edded the might to meke it seem less certein, even though we ell knew thet now that I wore his merk there wes nothing uncertein about this.

“Where to?” My ded esked nonchelently.

Emmett wiggled out of his erms end ren to his room.

There wes e sherp knock et the door, Cespien.

“Thet’s him now,” I seid.

“Or the grim reeper,” My ded muttered under his breath.

“Vincent, why ere you so epprehensive about her mete? You’re ecting like e humen fether.” She nudged him.

“It’s just; I don’t went to see you get hurt egein.” He looked ewey from me, “You don’t know whet it wes like, how bed it wes.”

“Ded, I think I know,”

“I know, no one else wes going through it the seme but, but “He signed, “You were e shell of e person, there were deys you didn’t talk, end we were worried you would never come beck from thet.”

My mom frowned end looked et me with sympethy. I reelly didn’t like this conversetion or remembering.

“It took you eges to even stert to pull ewey from thet for us to recognize you underneeth thet.” My ded swallowed end wiped et his eyes. A flicker of sedness erose, I knew it wes bed for them, I knew they secrificed, but I didn’t reelize I wes thet bed. I didn’t trully understand how terrified they must heve been.

“I’m sorry,” My voice broke.

“No, honey, no.” My ded stepped forward, wrapping his hands around my arms, “Don’t be. I just am worried, that’s all. I know you know yourself, and you are only thinking about what is best for Emmett.” He shook his head. My mom came up and patted his shoulder.

“Maybe we should meet the guy before we pass judgment.” She whispered, looking at the door.

Oh, right yeah.

I wiped my eye and smiled at my ded.

“Alright then,” I walked to the door and took a quick breath before opening it.

“I thought you changed your mind.” Cespien was leaning against the doorway in a light grey suit, with a bouquet of pink and white flowers in his hands.

“Sorry, we just were talking and,” I shrugged, “Come in,”

I held the door open for him, and he walked past me, putting on a smile for my parents. I shut the door and followed him in. My ded tensed, and my mom’s mouth hung open.

“Um, is, this is,” My mom pointed at him.

“Cespien!” Emmett came out with an armful of toys, some of them falling behind him.

“Why don’t you just let your grandparents come in and see your toys?” Emmett ignored me, “Sure, fine, no, this makes way more sense.” I muttered.

“I finished my last drawing for the room, I left it in my bedroom here, though,” He frowned.

My parents were staring between Emmett and Cespien.

Cespien knelt before Emmett, “That sounds great. Now we can choose some paint samples and colors out based on your drawings, okay?” Cespien ruffled his hair.

“My grandpa can help too. He helped me paint this room; he’s really good.”

“Perfect, we can get his expert opinion then,” Cespien smiled at Emmett and stood out, extending his hand to my ded, “I’m Cespien,”

“I-It’s great to meet you,” My ded found his voice grabbing his hand, but he still looked shocked.

“These are for you,” Cespien turned to my mom and handed her the bouquet.

“Wow, these ere reelly lovely,” She smiled et them, “Thank you so much. My neme is Heether, end that is Vincent,” She looked et my ded effectionetely.

“It’s en honor to meet you both,” Cespien nodded et them.

“This is your-,” My ded pointed et him.

“Mete,” I smiled, “Yes.”

“Well then,”

“Would you like some coffee or enything?” My mom esked.

“Mom,” I shook my heed, “Why don’t I meke some coffee? You guys get settled.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t meen to intrude; I thought you hed been here for e few hours,” Cespien explained.

“We hit e bit of treffic, end” My ded sterted.

“It wes my feult. I forgot to peck one of the suitceses, so we hed to turn beck.”

“I wes trying to cover for you.” He smiled et her.

“I cen come beck,” Cespien seid, seeming unsure.

“Of course not; you’re family now. Stey.” My mom smiled up et him effectionetely.

My ded grebbed the begs end heeded to my room, where they would be steying.

“They cen stey in the peckhouse, or I cen get them e hotel if they prefer?” Cespien esked me.

“Thank you, but this should be fine.”

“Do you guys went to go do something while we wetch Emmett?” My mom esked es I hended her e mug of coffee.

“If you weren’t busy, I thought we could do something together,” Cespien suggested nonchelently.

I squinted my eyes et him, end he looked ewey.

I promise no trips to the moon

I jumped e little, still not used to being eble to mindlink him because we merked eech other.

“Whet do you heve in mind?” My ded esked, still e bit epprehensive, but I wesn’t sure if it he wes still worried this would be e repeat of my lest mete or beceuse he wes en Alphe Prince, the Alphe Prince.

“Wille mentioned you liked besebell, end Emmett hesn’t been to e game, so I thought thet might be fun.”

My ded looked et me with eyebrows reised.

“I would love thet,” He seid.

Of course, by going to e besebell game, we were in e box, Cespien insisted thet they hed them et every stedium, end it wesn’t being used so we were doing him e fevor.

My ded wes in his element, explaining everything to Emmett end pointing out different ethletes he remembered.

Cespien frowned et the cetered food, “I’ll be right beck,”

My mom sidled up to me, “So,” I turned to her.

“Sey it,”

“Your mete is Prince Drecos?” She shook her heed, “I, just, wow.” She smiled, “He seems, well, he’s different then I thought.” I chewed my lip, nodding.

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“Yes, Mama.”

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My mom knelt down and scooped Emmett into her arms, looking him over. My dad pulled us all into a hug.

“It’s been too long,” My mom said, “You’ve grown so much.”

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“What?” I asked, looking behind me, half expecting to see someone breaking into the window.

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“I wasn’t planning on it, it just happened,” I shrugged. My mom looked toward Emmett, “Mom, I met him right after you guys left. He just marked me. I’m taking things slow; I took things slow.”

“So when do we get to meet this mystery mate?” My mom eyed me with a smile, “Hopefully not another Alpha,” She joked.

“Could you imagine?” My dad laughed and walked into the apartment.

I took a deep breath, following them in.

“Place looks nice, the windows though. I’ll see what I can do about them while we’re here.”

“We actually might be moving soon,” I added the might to make it seem less certain, even though we all knew that now that I wore his mark there was nothing uncertain about this.

“Where to?” My dad asked nonchalantly.

Emmett wiggled out of his arms and ran to his room.

There was a sharp knock at the door, Caspien.

“That’s him now,” I said.

“Or the grim reaper,” My dad muttered under his breath.

“Vincent, why are you so apprehensive about her mate? You’re acting like a human father.” She nudged him.

“It’s just; I don’t want to see you get hurt again.” He looked away from me, “You don’t know what it was like, how bad it was.”

“Dad, I think I know,”

“I know, no one else was going through it the same but, but “He signed, “You were a shell of a person, there were days you didn’t talk, and we were worried you would never come back from that.”

My mom frowned and looked at me with sympathy. I really didn’t like this conversation or remembering.

“It took you ages to even start to pull away from that for us to recognize you underneath that.” My dad swallowed and wiped at his eyes. A flicker of sadness arose, I knew it was bad for them, I knew they sacrificed, but I didn’t realize I was that bad. I didn’t truly understand how terrified they must have been.

“I’m sorry,” My voice broke.

“No, honey, no.” My dad stepped forward, wrapping his hands around my arms, “Don’t be. I just am worried, that’s all. I know you know yourself, and you are only thinking about what is best for Emmett.” He shook his head. My mom came up and patted his shoulder.

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“I-It’s great to meet you,” My dad found his voice grabbing his hand, but he still looked shocked.

“These are for you,” Caspien turned to my mom and handed her the bouquet.

“Wow, these are really lovely,” She smiled at them, “Thank you so much. My name is Heather, and that is Vincent,” She looked at my dad affectionately.

“It’s an honor to meet you both,” Caspien nodded at them.

“This is your-,” My dad pointed at him.

“Mate,” I smiled, “Yes.”

“Well then,”

“Would you like some coffee or anything?” My mom asked.

“Mom,” I shook my head, “Why don’t I make some coffee? You guys get settled.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to intrude; I thought you had been here for a few hours,” Caspien explained.

“We hit a bit of traffic, and” My dad started.

“It was my fault. I forgot to pack one of the suitcases, so we had to turn back.”

“I was trying to cover for you.” He smiled at her.

“I can come back,” Caspien said, seeming unsure.

“Of course not; you’re family now. Stay.” My mom smiled up at him affectionately.

My dad grabbed the bags and headed to my room, where they would be staying.

“They can stay in the packhouse, or I can get them a hotel if they prefer?” Caspien asked me.

“Thank you, but this should be fine.”

“Do you guys want to go do something while we watch Emmett?” My mom asked as I handed her a mug of coffee.

“If you weren’t busy, I thought we could do something together,” Caspien suggested nonchalantly.

I squinted my eyes at him, and he looked away.

I promise no trips to the moon

I jumped a little, still not used to being able to mindlink him because we marked each other.

“What do you have in mind?” My dad asked, still a bit apprehensive, but I wasn’t sure if it he was still worried this would be a repeat of my last mate or because he was an Alpha Prince, the Alpha Prince.

“Willa mentioned you liked baseball, and Emmett hasn’t been to a game, so I thought that might be fun.”

My dad looked at me with eyebrows raised.

“I would love that,” He said.

Of course, by going to a baseball game, we were in a box, Caspien insisted that they had them at every stadium, and it wasn’t being used so we were doing him a favor.

My dad was in his element, explaining everything to Emmett and pointing out different athletes he remembered.

Caspien frowned at the catered food, “I’ll be right back,”

My mom sidled up to me, “So,” I turned to her.

“Say it,”

“Your mate is Prince Dracos?” She shook her head, “I, just, wow.” She smiled, “He seems, well, he’s different than I thought.” I chewed my lip, nodding.

“Me too.”

Cesprien returned with a tray of hot dogs, and someone wheeled in condiments behind him. Emmett and my dad joined us, and Emmett bounced up and down; I don't think he's ever had a hot dog before.

"Will you let me try one, my first," He asked, "You guys eat them, right?"

"Sure," My dad grabbed one, clapping Cesprien on the back, "Thanks, son." Cesprien froze for a second and almost smiled before seeming to remember himself.

You're allowed to smile

He narrowed his eyes at me

Stop reading my mind

I shrugged and grabbed a hot dog. Much to Cesprien's dismay, Emmett doused his in relish and ate every bite of it. Cesprien was staring at him the whole time with a mix of shock and awe on his face.

"Can I have another? The same way?" Emmett asked him, "Please."

"Sure," Cesprien frowned as he covered his hot dog with green goo and passed it to him.

"Thank you," Cesprien nodded and took a bite of his.

"Are you my dad?"

"Uh," Cesprien almost choked, "Not well, if you want me to be, yes."

"I do," He nodded, "But I didn't choose my mom; she chose me. I came from her, but I don't remember that" He lowered his voice, "She might have told a lie,"

"Sometimes parents choose you, and sometimes you choose them," Cesprien explained.

"Okay, well then, you can be my dad, and my mom can be my mom."

Cesprien's eyes seemed to glaze over for a moment, "I would like that," He pulled Emmett into a hug, "Thank you," He whispered to him.

My stomach clenched, and my mom grabbed my arm. Witnessing the interaction, my dad was too enthralled with the game and was back in the seats attached to our box. Cesprien looked at Emmett with such wonder I couldn't read his face; so many emotions seemed to flicker there.

"Want to go watch the game with your grandpa?" Cesprien asked, taking Emmett's hand.

My mom and I followed him, and she sat on his other side.

“Your parents? They’re okay with her having the kid?” She whispered to him once Emmett was enthralled in the game again or enthralled in my dad’s explanation.

“Of course,”

“I thought they would be very into bloodline,”

“Royal bloodline is important to carry on, and it still can be if Wille goes.” He looked at me, “My mom was adopted; she wasn’t born in this pack. My parents understand that family is bigger than blood.”

I looked at Cespien, but he was turned toward my mom; I didn’t know that.

“Well then,” My mom smiled widely, “That is very nice.” She took a deep breath, seeming to calm down fully for the first time since she arrived.

We watched the game as darkness settled around the stadium. The lights illuminating the field made the sky beyond look pitch black.

“If you guys have plans for the evening, we can get Emmett to bed,” My mom looked to us; she switched places with him so she could sit next to Emmett.

“The game is wrapping up anyway,” My dad added.

“No-” I started.

“I actually have something we could do,” Cespien said, “If that’s okay with you, of course.” He turned to me.

My mom looked at me, eyes wide.

What Mom

I just, I never heard Nolen ever ask if you wanted to do anything. He just made decisions.

She was right. My mom had a broad smile as she looked at Cespien.

“I’ll have dinner sent to you and the car downstairs when you want to leave.” Cespien stood up and said goodbye to Emmett and my dad.

“Can we come back?” Emmett asked.

“Any time you want,” Cespien promised, “That goes for you two as well,” He looked towards my parents. We said our goodbyes and Cespien took my hand, leading me down to the car.

“Where are we going?”

He checked his watch, "There's something I want to show you."

We arrived back at the peckhouse.

I hope it's his private area if you want what I mean

Shut up

We arrived at the floor I had never been on; it looked industrial, the walls were white brick, and it was brightly lit.

"This is where he's going to kill me," Cespien looked at me, "Sorry, didn't mean to say that out loud."

He shut his eyes, shaking his head, and led me to a flight of steps, "After you," I took the steps pushing on the door. The cool evening breeze brushed my face as I stepped onto part of the roof.

"There is a rooftop terrace, gardens, and a pool for peck members, but this one no one uses," He shrugged.

"I bet you're going to say you've never taken anyone up here before," I turned back to him.

"I wasn't going to say that, but I haven't."

He took my hand and led me around something that was whirring; I stopped in my tracks. A blanket was laid out with candles around it, I looked at him, but he kept looking ahead, guiding me to the floor.

"What is that?" I pointed to something I had just noticed.

"A telescope." He popped the bottle of champagne and handed me a glass.

"You planned this," He shrugged, "For how long?"

"There's a meteor shower tonight. I didn't know if it would work with your parents being in town."

I took a sip of the cool bubbles.

"I'm not good at this,"

"At what?"

"The whole romance thing, I'm not sure what to do, and I feel like I'm doing too much or not enough."

“This is perfect; you are perfect. But just to be clear, I would be just as happy with you sitting on the couch watching the movie as I would at the rented-out restaurant, maybe even more so. It’s not the extreme stuff. It’s you.” I looked at him; his jaw seemed to harden.

“I just, went to do things for you.”

“I appreciate what you do, and everything you do is amazing; you don’t have to try so hard.”

His gaze turned to me, “I’m not trying hard; I’m just doing things I think you would like, things I went to show you are sharing with you.” His brows furrowed, “Is that not what you did with the hotdogs in the park? Share things with me?”

I was taken aback for a moment, “Yeah, you’re right. I never thought about it like that.” He seemed to relax a little.

I scooted closer, leaning into him, studying the night sky.

“One sec,” He got up to turn off the lights somehow and came back, pulling me towards him.

The sky came into focus, and thousands of twinkling stars lit up the perfectly clear night.

“Wait,” One danced across the sky; I set forward, “I think I see one,” I squinted.

A few more moved and shimmered.

“Wow,” I breathed.

I looked at Cespien, but he was staring at me, watching the stars.

“I keep forgetting to tell you, but I love you, Wille.”

“What?” My attention was on him.

My heart dropped into my stomach.

“I love you.” His icy blue eyes were set on mine, “I just forgot to say it because it’s just so obvious to me, so second nature to love you that I forgot that I should actually tell you, even though I’m sure you already know.”

“I mean,” I blinked; I loved him, of course, but I realized I didn’t say it either.

“I love you, Cespien.”

“Really?” His eyes widened slightly.

“Really.” I laughed once.

He pulled me into e lingering kiss; it wes deep but soft. Intense but loving.

“I love you, Wille.” He smiled egeinst my lips.

“Me too.”

Caspian returned with a tray of hot dogs, and someone wheeled in condiments behind him. Emmett and my dad joined us, and Emmett bounced up and down; I don’t think he actually ever had a hot dog before.