

### CH 3

Nora was trotting down the stairs talking to her father on the phone. She was heading off to have lunch with him. She had been here putting up with Jace and his attentions at night but also trying to avoid it at the same time, by telling him she had to study, and that she would come to bed later. When she didn't really have any intention of doing that and would simply sleep in her study room.

He'd stared at her a few times this week, like he wanted to ask her something in the suite before he'd left to go to his oce, but she'd just shrugged it off with a "sorry I must have fallen asleep at the computer." She would tell him and then walked off out of the suite altogether or had just pleaded ignorance to his look, as though she'd not even seen it.

She saw no point in talking to him or explaining herself to him. He knew what he was doing, had to know she knew it as well, yet sometimes those narrowed eyes of his would land on her as if wanting her to explain her lack of being in his bed to him. It was very simple in her eyes; she didn't belong there even though she was his Mate.

When he did decide to ask her what she was doing or where she was going in passing, she always stated, "I've got a class to attend" or "I've got a study group to attend." and moved on away from him, heading for either the library or her study room. It was also the truth of the matter: she did actually have classes to attend and study to do; if he bothered to check that was, not that he had or not asked her anyway.

She would not let him and his betrayal affect her attaining her degree. No, she was going to have something to fall back on or continue to do when she left this pack. But today her parents were coming to town, and she was off to have lunch with them outside of the pack. They'd wanted to drop by for a visit, but she'd told them there was a nice place to eat outside the pack, and she'd meet them there.

Today, Nora was dressed a little differently to her normal pack attire, a little more on the dressy side, and she knew it, trying to look her best for her parents so that they wouldn't pick up on that something was wrong with her Mate Bond.

Although she'd seen Jace walking through the foyer, as she'd come down the last set of stairs, she'd ignored him, kept her conversation with her father going and her eyes steadfastly off Jace. Something that was actually getting easier to do by the day. She was treating him the way he always did her, she thought, as if he didn't exist outside of the suite.

That was probably why he was looking at her in the mornings sometimes, but he'd started it, and she was just following his lead or that's how she planned to explain it, if he ever actually asked her what her problem was, though she didn't think he would, or more likely didn't care to.

Although today she could actually feel his attention was on her. But she was on the phone talking happily to her dad about catching up with him and her mother, and she was certain it was her dress code that caught his eye, not her, herself.

Today she was wearing a simple but nice blue dress and was wearing low heels. She'd even put on make-up, and looked and sounded happy and cheerful. As though she didn't have a care in the world, because that was how she wanted her parents to see her. When normally she dressed in jeans and nice tops, a pair of runners or walked about barefoot.

Gloria always dressed in nice clothes, and had her hair and nails done. She wore nice jewelry, and she'd seen her out in the pack, swipe that Luna's card to pay for her lunch with the girls she'd been out with. Even with Nora right there, she had likely done it on purpose, Nora had thought. The lady that had taken the payment had looked at her somewhat guiltily.

Nora had ignored it. She'd been in the café inside the pack with a study book to read, not wanting to be near Jace or Gloria in the packhouse. She knew why Gloria did it. She had seen that woman look at her as she'd come into the café even, she had probably come in here on purpose just to do that to her and reinforce her position at Jace's side.

Nora had not even been given a pack card with her name on it, and she'd been here two solid months now and nothing. Jace didn't care to give her anything that was certain. She was still using the money she'd earned for herself from her old pack, from tutoring the pack's kids that needed it. She was just lucky that she had gotten a scholarship to her university of choice, so at least she didn't have to worry about paying for that on her own and not being able to afford it.

As long as she maintained her grade point average on the scholarship, she would be able to continue it next semester. Although she was already making plans to move on campus for that, she wasn't needed inside this pack for anything at all. She was just there to warm the Alpha's bed until he got that heir, and she knew it.

She was just about to get in her car when Jace called her name, "Nora, where are you going?" It seems he was curious today. Maybe he didn't like the fact she was leaving pack territory, who the hell knew?

"Out to have lunch with my parents. They're in town." She called over her shoulder as she unlocked her car.

"Do you want me to go with you?" he asked.

Nora actually stopped and looked at him and wondered why on earth he would ask that question. "No" she answered him "You're busy, go do what it is you as the Alpha does during the day." She'd stated and saw him frown right at her, and her dismissive answer to his question.

But she had no idea what he did. He'd never once tried to explain to her what his pack ran into or the human businesses that he had. She wasn't his Luna, so she didn't need to know, was how she took it. She was also now just biding her time on that rejection she knew she was going to issue before leaving to live on campus.

That was still pending for her, and she was hoping she'd be notied of this soon, though she'd still have to wait until this semester was over, and that new semester started, but her life here was quiet for the most part. She'd stopped interacting with the pack members. That was just too humiliating for her, considering Jace didn't care who in the pack saw the way he touched Gloria. So she was solely focusing all her attention on her studies all day, every day.

She'd heard many of the pack members call Gloria, Luna, over the past two months, and she was addressed as just Nora. She hadn't originally minded it, but now that she knew the truth of the matter. And although it had really hurt in the beginning, she had made herself get used to hearing those very words. That helped to keep her grounded and showed her just how right she was.

She considered herself nothing more than a regular pack member, and one that was planning on leaving the moment she had somewhere to go. Though she wasn't going back to her old pack, she would feel ashamed; that she couldn't even keep her Mate interested in her. Barely a month after being mated to him, some she knew would state 'well what can she expect she is just a lowly ranked warriors' daughter'.

"I should go with you when you see your parents," Jace stated, walking towards her now.

"Why?" she'd asked. As she saw Gloria come out of the packhouse and called his name, he turned to face Gloria, and Nora took the opportunity to get in her car and drive away from him. She wondered brieifly if he thought she would tell her parents about the fact that she wasn't his actual Luna.

Did he want to be there just to put on a show for her parents? She was not interested in doing that at all. She had enough issues with them asking about her Luna Ceremony and when it was going to be; she'd been here for two months now, and still there hadn't been any invitations sent out for it.

It was something she was going to struggle to come up with an answer to at some point, considering she'd told them this month was a mating ball but come the next full moon, what was her excuse going to be? Telling them that he was always just too busy didn't really cut it in their world.

Alphas, she knew put off everything to thank the Moon Goddess for gifting them a Mate to love and cherish. But that was not something she was going to get from him, and even if by some miracle he did offer to do it, because her parents called him and asked him about it, she knew he wouldn't mean it.

Because he'd not brought it up once in the entire time she'd been there. She'd rather it not be brought up by her parents to him and have him lie about it. Which would see her have to lie about it as well, so it was best that he just stayed away from them. He did not need to have, to have anything to do with them or they, him.