

The Luna Choosing Game by Jane Above Story Chapter 19

Chapter 0019

Nicholas **and** I continued to stare at each other, neither of us saying a word. We both glanced down at the empty chair and back at each other again.

Every other spot a

at the table was filled. Unless Nicholas were to excuse himself, he **would** have to sit here to eat. But to leave in the middle of his own competition would be unbearably rude.

Weren't the royal family trying to win the hearts and minds of the common people?

Nicholas must have had the same train of thought, though his face revealed nothing.

He sat.

The King cleared his throat. After a pointed look to Nicholas, who avoided it by staring **hard** at the table, the King spoke loud enough for the entire table to hear.

"Once again, we welcome all the ladies here, chosen by our royal magic at the ceremony.

Though he was addressing the girls sitting at the table, his eyes were on the cameras on the corners of the room, which the cameramen had clicked on. The red lights indicated they were recording.

"We eagerly look forward to the coming days, where you will be asked to showcase your virtues and your talents. Both will be needed in excess to become the kind of truly capable Luna that our pack deserves."

Some of the girls at the table nodded.

“In addition, of course, you will be able to spend time with my sons, developing friendships that could progress into more. A successful King needs someone at his side that he can trust.”

Nicholas crossed his arms.

I looked away from him toward the other end of the table, where the Luna – the Queen, sat with perfect posture. Her back was flat against the dining chair. She held her head **tall**, her chin lifted, proud and dignified.

She watched the King speak with quiet poise, her attention never wavering from him.

I tried to mimic her posture, but I couldn't manage it for long. All the other girls seemed to, however.

All the girls here, even Susie beside me, had trained their entire lives for events like these. Wearing gowns and attending formal dinners like this were a common occurrence for them,

with my calloused fingers and the slump in my shoulders, I **didn't** belong **here**, even with the training

that I had received in the past few days.

+15 BONUS

When I had been at the Academy, I had felt like a bit of an outcast. And when I had been with Nicholas...

I had known I was on borrowed time, even without knowing he was a prince.

A noble was a noble. A commoner was a commoner. We could interact. We could even try to be friends.

But romantically, what

kind of future could we have? No one in his life would have ever approved of me.

Even now, I was only here because of a publicity stunt. Julian had said so himself.

Thank you, for letting this old man talk your ears off,” the King said.

A few soft laughs sounded around me. Realizing I had missed much of what he’d said, I lost in my own thoughts, I lowered my head in guilt **and** shame.

The King continued, “Now, let us enjoy this meal and each other’s company.

“A fine speech,” said the girl on the King’s left. Everyone else spoke quickly to agree.

I still felt like a jerk, for missing most of it.

The servants brought out the first course, a soup with a side of bread. It smelled heavenly. I had to remind myself not to eat too eagerly.

I hadn’t had a full course meal since the Academy, and had to reorient myself with the cutlery. It had only been three years, but it felt like a lifetime ago. So much had happened since then; raising Elva. working job to job, stressing over bills and Elva’s health....

It was difficult to remember such trivial things as formal table manners.

The trainers had talked me through this, but now, in the moment, my mind was completely blank.

Susie nudged me with her elbow, then made a show of lifting the correct spoon. Grateful, I nodded and followed her lead.