

His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 1

His best friend

Terra

I hummed to myself as I fried up bacon and eggs, the sizzling and popping of the oil providing a cheerful rhythm. Nathan's arms wrapped around my waist from behind, and he nuzzled into my neck.

"Smells delicious, babe," he murmured.

I leaned back into his solid chest with a content sigh. "Only the best for my Alpha. Sit down, it's almost ready."

Nathan and I had been mated only two days ago, on his ascension. We've known each other all our lives, started out as friends then lovers. Although we aren't each other's mates, Nathan still chose me to be his Luna.

It all felt like a dream. Just a week ago I was an orphan nobody shunned by the whole pack, now I'm the revered Luna. Words can't explain how lucky and happy I am.

There's literally nothing I wouldn't give Nathan. He's my everything. And I tried to show it in every way I could. Like making sure he was well-fed and happy.

Our small home glowed with newlywed bliss.

As we ate breakfast, Nathan told me about the visiting Alpha couple from the Nightshade Pack he had to see off this morning. Important political obligations kept intruding on our honeymoon phase, but I didn't mind. I was proud to stand by my mate as he took on his leadership role.

"I wish I didn't have to rush off," Nathan said apologetically as he rinsed his plate. "But duty calls. Will you be alright on your own today?"

"Of course! Lily already invited me over to hang out. Don't worry about me." I tucked an unruly lock of his hair back into place and straightened his tie.

Nathan kissed me lingeringly. "Have fun with Lily. But not too much fun. I'll see you tonight at the family dinner."

After Nathan left, I tidied up our little cottage, which sat just behind the Alpha's grand main house. Lily is Nathan's sister and his only relative that supports our relationship. She would be here soon to pick me up to get mani-pedis and go shopping in preparation for meeting Nathan's extended family over dinner tonight. I was nervous about making a good impression.

The door bell rang just on cue, announcing Lily's arrival.

We spent the next few hours getting ready together, doing each other's makeup and fussing over every detail. Finally, we slipped into our dresses and approved of our reflections with excited squeals.

"You look amazing," Lily gushed. "Seriously. Jaws will drop when you walk in."

I surveyed myself critically in the mirror. My normally frizzy ginger hair fell in smooth waves over my shoulders. The dress hugged my subtle curves before flaring into a bit of a mermaid style at the bottom. The tall strappy heels made my legs look miles long.

Maybe I did look good, I decided with surprise. Like I actually belonged at Nathan's side. Confidence bloomed in my chest. I've got this.

Right on time, Nathan's beta, Derek, pulled up in a sleek black SUV to drive us to dinner. He greeted us politely before opening the rear door.

"The Alpha sends his apologies for not being able to pick you up himself," Derek said as he drove us through the forest paths toward the pack's sprawling main estate. "I'm sure he's eagerly awaiting your arrival, Luna."

Hearing my new title still gave me a little thrill. "I'm looking forward to seeing him too," I replied.

Too soon, we pulled up to the impressive stone mansion. I took a deep breath, clutching Lily's hand tightly. "Here we go," she murmured. "Chins up, girl."

Derek escorted us inside, where servants in crisp black and white uniforms wordlessly took our coats. The entry hall alone was bigger than my entire cottage. Intricate oil paintings and antique vases adorned every surface. My heels clacked loudly on the polished marble floors. I had never felt more out of place.

Before I could take in more of the imposing grandeur, Nathan was sweeping me up in his arms and kissing me thoroughly. I melted into him, my anxiety fading.

“You are breathtaking, my love,” Nathan whispered in my ear. He took my arm proudly to lead me toward the sitting room for introductions and cocktails before dinner, Lily trailing behind us. My stride gained confidence in the security of Nathan’s hold.

Most of Nathan’s relatives greeted me politely, if not exactly warmly. A few aunts and uncles completely ignored my presence. Brittany fixed me with an icy glare but held her tongue with Nathan nearby. I kept my chin high. Their approval would come in time.

We soon moved to the stately dining room, which featured a table long enough to seat thirty. Nathan sat at the head with me on his right. Lily took the seat on my other side, giving my hand an encouraging squeeze under the table.

Despite the lavish spread of roast pheasant, asparagus spears and exotic fruit before me, I could hardly eat. Nathan’s uncle Reginald dominated the dinner conversation with inappropriate jokes and stories about his various s****l conquests. The other men guffawed loudly.

Across from me, Brittany smirked as I shifted uncomfortably. “What’s wrong, Terra? Not enjoying crude uncle Reggie’s tales? Oh dear, we’ll have to work on toughening up that sensitive orphan constitution of yours if you’re going to make it as Luna.”

Heat rose to my cheeks, but I held Brittany’s challenging gaze evenly.

Nathan jumped in. “That’s enough, Brittany. Not appropriate dinner conversation.”

She pouted dramatically. “Of course Alpha, my apologies.” Her expression told me this was far from over.

The heavy oak doors opened with an ominous creak, and the family’s elderly matriarch Claudia entered slowly, supported on either side by stern-looking female attendants. A hush fell over the room.

Nathan and Marcus immediately stood respectfully. We all followed suit.

“Grandmother, welcome,” Marcus said deferentially. “We are honored by your presence tonight.”

Claudia’s steel grey eyes surveyed the room imperiously as she lowered herself into an ornate high-backed chair brought by servants at the end of the table. “Good evening, all. Do not let me interrupt. Continue, continue.”

Her strange accent and the antiquated style of her formal gown made her seem like she was from another century. Which she probably was, I realized. According to Lily's lessons, Claudia had been Luna for over 200 years.

Conversation gradually resumed, but more subdued than before. I sensed everyone was on their best behavior with the matriarch in attendance.

Dessert platters of chocolate ganache cake had just been placed when the doors opened again. A slender, doe-eyed girl around my age I did not recognize entered.

Almost instantly, Nathan rose to his feet, staring at the girl with a mix of emotions I couldn't decipher playing across his face, his claws extending and digging into the table from his strong grip

"Nathan?" I called tentatively, looking back and forth between the two. The way she was staring back at him didn't sit well with me.

I knew that look very well, I had been once in her shoes. That was when Realization hit me like storm. Nathan's reaction, the claws...

Mates.