

His Rejected Mateless Luna Chapter 2

Shattered dreams

Terra

'No. Please no.' Panic clawed up my throat as Nathan continued staring, stunned, oblivious to my hand tugging at his shirt. The girl finally blinked away, offering him a timid smile.

"Nathan, dear, I'd like to introduce you to Jade," Nathan's grandmother said. Her voice rang through the silent room. "I've recently become her guardian. Her parents were tragically killed, leaving the poor child orphaned."

The pitying looks that shot my way did not escape my notice. Of course they would bond over her sob story. They weren't blind to the blatant attraction simmering between the two.

Nathan seemed to finally shake himself out of his daze. He pried my hand away from his shirt, then moved towards Jade, taking her hand and bent to kiss it. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Jade." He said, his voice strange and faraway. Jade glowed under his attention.

"Nathan?" I called again forcing a polite smile, as if to remind him I was still present.

But Nathan only spared me a brief glance from the corner of his eyes. "Yes, Terra?" A trace of guilt flashed across his features. But Jade said something in that moment, stealing his attention back to her.

'This couldn't be happening.' I swallowed back a lump in my throat.

Not now, when everything had finally fallen into place for Nathan and me. Panic clawed up my throat. I wanted to scream, to grab Nathan and remind him I was his Luna. That he had chosen me, promised he'd reject his mate for me. Because goddess knows I'd do the same for him.

But my voice failed me. I could only watch, helpless, as he became further ensnared under this girl's spell.

Because clearly, they were mates. The dreamy way he looked at her left no doubt. Which meant everything Nathan and I had shared meant nothing at all.

Bile burned my throat as Jade let out a coquettish little laugh and run her fingers along his arms. The sound cut through me like shattered glass. Last night I had lain naked in his arms, utterly his, believing the rest of our lives would be that perfect. And now...now I was nothing.

With terrible comprehension, I finally found my voice. "Nathan, won't you introduce us?" Though I already knew the horrible truth, I still tried, not wanting to appear rude.

Jade turned her doe eyes toward me. "Ah, you must be Terra, Nathan's lover!" she exclaimed. My smile died at her choice of words. Lover. Nathan is my husband, not lover.

Jade continued before I could correct her. "I know this is very sudden, but Nathan and I are mates." She looked back at Nathan meaningfully. "Bonded by the goddess."

I stared at Nathan pleadingly. "It that so, Nathan?"

Nathan's Adam apple bobbed as he swallowed thickly, avoiding my gaze. "Terra... This is Jade. My..."

"Mate. His mate." Jade finished for him, pressing herself shamelessly against Nathan's side, which he surprisingly did not resist.

I sucked in a sharp breath, willing to keep the tears from falling.

"I see. Nice to meet you, Jade."

"I know this may be difficult for you, Terra, given how long you've been together. But you must see now that you and Nathan were never truly meant to be. The goddess clearly wills for me to take my rightful place as his Luna."

"Jade..." Nathan called, but I cut him off. I was done acting nice.

"Never meant to be? Really, is that what you think? Sorry to break it to you, but we are married." I brandished the moonstone ring on my finger. "We swore vows before the entire pack not long ago. You're too late."

Jade's eyes narrowed, a hint of steel behind her soft demeanor. She turned pleadingly to the head of the table.

"Matriarch Claudia, I really didn't mean to show up late. But after everything that happened with my..." She let out a choked sob. "I'm sorry. I really don't want to lose my mate after everything. He's the only one I have left." The rest of the words were muffled by her painful sob, suddenly painting me the victim.

All eyes turned to me accusingly. "Enough child, you've done enough damage as it is." Grandma Claudia's voice was like a slap to my face. "The girl have gone through much already, you don't have to go rubbing salt on her wounds. Besides, no vows or trinkets can supersede a mate bond ordained by the goddess," she intoned solemnly. "For the good of the Crescent pack, Nathan must recognize his obligation and take Jade as Luna."

Murmurs of assent passed around the table. Nathan's grip on Jade tightened protectively, his body tensed as he reacts to his mate's pain.

"What? Why am I suddenly the criminal here? Nathan and I are married..." I defended, but no one was listening to me. "Tell them the truth, Nathan! How can you remain calm in a moment like this?"

Nathan turned tortured eyes to me, finally meeting my gaze for the first time. But instead, he just shook his head silently at me, urging me to remain quiet. But how can I when his mate started this and he isn't saying anything!?

"Mistakes were made that led us down this misguided path," Brittany mused, false sympathy dripping from her voice. "But all is not lost, dear Terra. You may yet find a mate who better...suits your station."

Fury boiled inside me, but also despair. This couldn't be happening. But I forced myself to remain silent, hoping Nathan would come to my defense.

But he didn't, and Jade used that to her advantage. Stepping forward, she extended her hand, voice still quivering. "Please understand, Terra. I truly didn't mean to come between you two, but Nathan is the only one I have left."

I stared at her outstretched palm, having half the mind to ignore it. But that would only make me bad in front of Nathan's family again. Thus numbly, I reached to shake her hand. But as our palms touched, a cruel smile flashed across Jade's face.

Suddenly I was jerked forward, stumbling into a servant who emptied a red wine down the front of Jade's dress.

Jade gasped theatrically, yanking her now-stained glove away. "You ruined my dress!" she cried. "How could you? It was the only thing I had left from my mom?"

"What? No, I didn't, you yanked —" I stammered in bewilderment, but Jade had already dissolved into another bout of sobs.

"Do not compound your insult with lies!" Brittany shrieked. "Nathan, remove this girl at once!"

Nathan drew in a sharp breath, running his hands through his hair.

"Nathan.... You saw what happened... I didn't spill this..." I pleaded.

But Nathan's next words cut me off. "Terra, I think it's best you step outside for a while."

The room spun. This could not be reality. But the cold finality in Nathan's voice left no room for doubt.

What have I done wrong? Was it a crime for me to stand up for myself? How did everything come to this?

Blinded by tears, I turned and fled the cruel, opulent room. Nathan's soothing words mocking as he comforted his mate.

Bursting outside, I gasped lungfuls of the cool night air. The pain in my chest threatened to tear me apart from the inside.

I ran without thinking, shedding my human form to race into the dark forest on four legs. My wolf's primal howl of anguish echoed through the trees.

Nathan was lost to me. My friend, my love, my life – gone in an instant. The warm home and affection I had so briefly found, all snatched away by Nathan's scheming mate. Once again I was alone. An orphan. A stray.

And this time, the wounds cut so much deeper than before. I ran faster, giving myself over to the wolf, losing myself in her wild fury. Anything to escape this searing agony.

I ran, vowing never to return, until my paws bled and my heaving sides screamed for rest. Collapsing in a small moonlit clearing, I lay there panting, too exhausted even to howl.

As I slipped into unconsciousness, one question clawed ceaselessly through my weary mind.

Why, Nathan? Why?