

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 16

16 – Mochi

(Willa)

Saying that out loud shifted something in me. I knew it was true and I wasn't as confused anymore. He made it clear that he would let me set my own pace and wouldn't push anything on me, and I believed him.

Being with him, I felt seen. He listened to me in a way that I never knew outside of Lola and my parents, and now Cali. I genuinely liked talking to him and seeing his mask slip away and show who he was underneath made me like him even more.

I knew he had things to share and I wouldn't push him either, but I was beginning to trust him. Trust that he was different, and I hoped the Moon Goddess wouldn't make another mistake.

"Good," He smiled, "That's settled then,"

"What's settled?" I paused running my fingers over his knuckles.

"We've established something,"

"I guess," I smiled at him.

"I'm not going anywhere," His voice got quieter, "No matter how long it takes for you to trust me, to realize that I won't let anything hurt you or do anything to hurt you. I'll be here," I swallowed having to avert my gaze.

"Look at me," He pleaded and I did, "Don't look away please, I know it might not be comfortable but I need you to see how much I mean it,"

D.amnit I felt like I could almost cry.

"I do believe you, but it's not just me this time. I don't know what happened with Nolan, I never got answers as to why he chose to reject me and choose someone that wasn't his mate. So I'm worried that the novelty might wear off or the bond might fade," I shrugged.

I felt that it was different.

Looking back, I don't think Nolan really listened, he never asked for my opinion on anything but I thought that was just because it wasn't part of Luna duties. I don't think he really took me into consideration, I never felt like his equal. I used to think that was because I was obsessed with him before he even knew who I was, but he didn't ever do anything to make me feel like I was important to him or the pack.

"I already know that this is different, and I don't want you to resent me trying to sort through all of this. I'm just wary because of how things happened last time and how he treated me at the start was a lot better than how it ended," That was an understatement. To be honest though, even at the start with Nolan it was nothing like this. Then again, he didn't have to try with me, I fully accepted him.

Nolan seemed addicted to me in the beginning, he was protective and maybe he saw me as someone who needed saving. He probably wanted that. But now that I could sort through it without the love or lust clouding my vision I knew that Nolan started to lose interest way before he rejected me.

I honestly didn't really know much about him. We spent a lot of time together, but I don't think we had many if any, deeper conversations. Not that I didn't try, especially in the beginning, but usually it turned into s.ex.

The level of understanding that I felt from Caspein even in the past few days was more than I ever got from Nolan. It did a lot to quell some of the anxiety but I couldn't completely ignore that I still held that fear that he would leave me.

"What are you thinking about?" Caspein reached over and brushed a strand of my hair behind my ear, I leaned into his touch and he rested his palm on my cheek.

"Just that this is different, I know it is. What I feel for you and how you've made me feel is deeper than the mate bond. I want you to know that I understand that. I just need time to make sure that it will stick."

He chuckled once, rubbing his thumb over my cheek. I never wanted this moment to end. I took a breath cataloging the sensation and the feeling that swept through me. I would replay the warmth of his touch and the calmness that I had around him whenever I needed to feel grounded.

"It will stick, my wolf suggested a tattoo if that would help," He laughed again.

“What’s your wolf like?” I asked.

“Atlas, he is a teddy bear.”

I snorted, “Seriously?” I tried to imagine the powerful Alpha Prince’s wolf being a softy, “I figured your wolf would be possessive and dominant, no offense to either of you.”

“I let people believe that, but I think one of us has to stay grounded.” He removed his hand from my cheek and the coldness that replaced it made me frown.

“I find it hard to talk to people, for many reasons,” I resumed tracing the back of his hand, craving more of his touch, my eyes met his, as I waited for him to go on.

“The titles don’t help, and neither does the reputation that I didn’t build for myself. I knew it would be like this, my dad warned me, but it still didn’t prepare me for what it would be like taking over as Alpha. Even before then people saw me as a prince and an heir, the only person I really connected with is now my Beta, Griffen. I knew my Gamma since we were pups, but besides that I had acquaintances, and that was it.”

I frowned, “That must have been lonely,” I couldn’t imagine him growing up where people judged him by the title and feared him for it, even as a boy.

“That was one of the first things that attracted me to you,” He commented, “Besides you in that striking silver dress of course.”

I snorted, “Nolan thought I looked like a s.lut,”

Caspian’s eyes went wide, “He sounds possessive and insecure.” He commented and I raised an eyebrow, “Strong men don’t care what their partners wear, it sounds like he didn’t want others looking at you,”

I didn’t quite believe that “I was going to be Luna, I had an image to uphold.” I shrugged, “It was hard walking that line of his mate and his Luna, I never quite got the balance right to appease him and his mother. I don’t think I was cut out for it.”

“You are,” He squeezed my hand gently, “A real Luna isn’t meant to bow down to her Alpha or his mother. You weren’t meant to appease everyone,

you were going to be a leader of the pack. To be a leader you can't succumb to everyone else's wishes."

He was right, but I never felt like I was going to be a leader. I was more of an accessory. I didn't make decisions, I barely made any party-planning choices without his mother changing it at the last minute.

I shrugged, "That's a pretty thought, but I don't think that's what they wanted from me."

"Then thank the Goddess you left," He gave me a half smile, "You're too strong of a person to have to live up to such mundane expectations."

I smiled at him, "Well put,"

"It's the truth,"

"Sorry, now back to you. What were you saying?"

"Don't apologize, but I was saying that besides that gorgeous silver dress fit for a powerful Luna, the fact that you were unaffected by my presence caught me off guard. You speak to me like a person, you're not afraid to tell me what you think, and I find that extraordinarily sexy," I bit down on my smile.

"I'm being serious, I find it hard to talk to people like I said. Much of that is because of what they think about me, the image they created for me before even meeting me. People don't know the real me and honestly, I was starting to get worried that the person I was playing would become me." He swallowed, "Until you."

"Until me?"

"I feel like you've tethered me, you remind me who I was, who I still am, under all the weight of the titles and responsibilities. I felt myself slipping into the persona that others created for me, and I didn't like that."

I nodded at him to go on, not taking my eyes off his.

"I'm not saying that it's all rainbows and sunshine under here," He laughed, something that was becoming more frequent and I loved hearing it, "I still have a standard, and I expect near perfection from my team, I'm used to getting my way, and I hate waiting."

“Oh,” I murmured.

“I hate waiting for anything that isn’t you,” He corrected and I smiled, I hoped he was serious.

“I think I am both of them, I don’t know if I can fully shed that persona because part of it became me, and it gets me the results I need. But when I’m around you I feel like myself for the first time in, I guess forever.”

A lump formed in my throat and my stomach flipped at his words, “I don’t understand exactly how you feel, I grew up not being a princess,” I smiled, “But I feel like I can talk to you in a way that I never talked to Nolan. I feel like I’ve known you forever and I don’t have to force myself to be open with you, I want to be.”

“Good,” His smile was genuine and he tightened his grip on my hand, “I’m honestly so glad to hear that, Willa. And if you ever want to become a princess, just say the word.” He smirked.

My mouth hung open at that but I chose to ignore it, for now.

We moved on to more menial topics, he asked how I met Cali and I shared a bit about what Emmett was like. I was hesitant to get into that topic with him for many reasons. I was worried that he wouldn’t want to take on that role. It was one thing to find your mate, and another thing for them to already have a child. Werewolves were possessive by nature, and I was worried that his affection toward me wouldn’t extend to him. It was a conversation for another day, but one that would have to happen.

We finished dinner with some ice cream he called Mochi, it was wrapped in something and melted in your mouth.

“Emmett would love this,” I commented without realizing it.

“Anything else you want?” He asked, I knew if I asked for anything right now he would give it to me.

“This has been perfect, more than perfect. Thank you.” He helped me out of my chair and the blonde handed us a bag as we left. We didn’t pay, and I didn’t want to know how much this cost him, or maybe he owned the damn place.

“Here,” He handed me the black bag with the name of the restaurant in gold font. Inside was a box.

“Don’t open it yet, it’s freeze-dried.”

I looked at him questioningly.

“It’s some mochi, for Emmett to try,” He continued staring out the glass wall of the elevator not meeting my stare.

“Thank you,” I whispered.

“I’ll walk you up,” He opened my door before my seatbelt was unbuckled, taking the bag of mochi from me.

“You don’t have to, I know the way,” I laughed.

“I want to,” He held out his arm for me and I wrapped mine around his.

“Thank you for allowing me to take you out,” He held the door open for us, “Thank you for trusting me with your past.”

I nodded, not knowing exactly what to say. It felt good that he knew. I didn’t want to keep anything from him, but there was a part of me that was worried that once he realized what happened to me he wouldn’t want me anymore, that he would view me as another Alpha’s rejects. I should have known better. Just because that happened before, didn’t mean it would happen again. I didn’t want to paint all mates or all Alphas like that, and I didn’t really. I didn’t think it was fair to do that because of one bad experience, but I had to give myself some credit, that experience really f.ucked up every aspect of my life.

We reached my door sooner than I wanted to, the more time I spent with him the more time I craved it.

“You have my number, use it,” He looked down at my taking my chin in his hands. I nodded closing my eyes, letting his scent and the solid steady warmth coming from him envelop me.

Another moment I wanted to memorize.

His lips brushed my forehead in a soft kiss and he pulled back. I opened my eyes to see his filled with need and what I hoped was desire.

He started to pull back, I instinctively grabbed his shirt so that he couldn't put any more space between us.

"Willa," He studied me, it was a question.

"Yes," I breathed, tugging him a bit closer.

I closed my eyes before his lips touched mine, my breath hitched in my throat at the feeling of his soft lips sending tingles erupting through me and settling in my core. One of his hands gripped my waist and pulled me to his chest as the other made its way behind my neck and tangled in my hair.

I couldn't think, I couldn't breathe, everything in my body was focused on the kiss, on his proximity, on his closeness.

His lips moved against mine, soft yet hungry. He dragged his tongue over my bottom lip. I opened for him, tugging him closer, as our tongues danced and he explored my mouth.

Heat curled below my stomach, and an acute need awoken within me.

"Willa," He breathed pulling back slightly, he spoke my name on my lips and it sounded like a prayer.

"Caspien," our breaths intermingled and I placed one last kiss on his lips, knowing that I would never get enough of him from this moment on.

With that kiss alone I felt some scattered pieces of me return to myself, I felt some of that gaping wound in my chest stitch up, and it was more than I expected.