

The Rejected Luna's Prince Chapter 20

20 – First Exam

(Willa)

I could think of nothing else besides Caspein on the way back from his office. It wasn't just his tongue between my thighs, it was the way that he listened to me. He made me feel alive both when his tongue was on me and when I was in the middle of their meeting. I never felt like an outsider, even with his Beta and Gamma.

I wanted to work through my feelings, but I realized that I didn't have to think it through. I wanted this, at least some part of it. I wanted to help Caspien and I realized that I just might be able to have my own life alongside his.

Of course, Cali gave me a broad smile as soon as she saw me, nothing got past her. She whistled as I ushered Emmett into the car that waited outside to take us home.

"You're being careful, right?" She crossed her arms, Loreli hugging her leg by her side.

"I am," I nodded, I was, I hoped.

"Because it's easy to fall for all these things," She motioned one hand to the black SUV behind me, "But, its a lot further to fall when you get used to a different lifestyle, luxuries that you won't be able to reproduce yourself." I

"I know that," I said, a bit quieter. I appreciated him honestly, but I had already thought of all of those things, and she didn't understand the bond.

H.ell, I knew the bond wasn't infallible. Looking back now, I knew that Nolan and I weren't right. Even as a fated pair, we weren't aligned. As much as I tried, and I tried all the d.amn time with him, I couldn't get through to him, or maybe there was nothing to get through to.

I started realizing that in the cottage when I could look back and see through anger instead of infatuation. We weren't well suited, and it went further than his lack of attention or recognition of me. I needed a partner in life, someone to stand next to, instead of behind. That person would never be Nolan, and I was just glad that I figured it out before I was tied forever.

H.oly s.hit.

I was glad that Nolan let me go.

That was the first time I thought that, that I truly realized and believed it.

I was better off without him, even worried about bills, and stressing about school and work, raising a child alone. I was better off without him.

“Willa?” Cali raised an eyebrow and sighed, “Just be careful, okay? Your own pace.” She reminded me.

“I will, I am,” I corrected myself.

“Sure,” A look of worry and almost sadness crossed her face. It honestly made me feel kinda good that she cared that much.

“I’ll take care of myself, of Emmett and I, I promise,” I gave her a firm nod and got in the car. I hoped she believed me; I was starting to believe myself.

“The car is as dark as night, Mama,” Emmett smiled at me and I made sure he was buckled in correctly, making note to get a booster seat for future drives.

“It is, it’s like a spaceship,” I wrapped my arm around him and grabbed his hand with my other one.

“I like it,” He looked around, and I laid my head on his soft hair.

“I do too,” I whispered.

The next few weeks went by in a blur. A chaotic blissful stressful blur. From the moment I woke up to the moment I laid my head down at night, I felt that I didn’t stop moving.

The days were filled with classes, work at the restaurant, and sometimes both. Evenings were spent with Emmett, catching up over dinner and playing. After he went to bed I had time to study and attempt to clean the apartment. Once a week, which I could barely even manage, Caspien and I went on a date, and he still made sure to stop by the restaurant daily when I was working, even though I knew it was across town.

It was a lot of constant activity, but I didn’t notice because it never stopped. I think if I had time to really sit down I would realize how exhausted I really was.

I liked only one of my classes, chemistry. I realized that figuring out processes was how my brain worked best. Economics and psychology were a lot of memorization; I knew we were just starting out, but memorizing terms did not sit well with me. I would much rather work through an equation than sit down and try to remember terms that seemed to never quite fit together, it didn't flow.

Cali was the opposite, flying through her business classes, barely looking at the notes. She loved the simple memorization of it, but I just couldn't wrap my mind around it.

My mind wandered to a date that Caspien and I went on, the one I insisted I would pay for. I did actually get him to eat a hot dog in a suit at the park.

"No, you can't just raw dog it," I looked at him, horror evident on my face as he went to shove a plain hot dog in his mouth.

"Excuse me?" A smile played on his lips.

"Mustard, ketchup, onions?" I looked at him.

"What's that green stuff?"

"Relish," His eyes widened.

"That is not relish." He pointed at the bottle of green goo.

"No, not really," I shrugged, smiling, "But it's a must," I lied, I never put that neon green crap on my hot dog, not like I really had many in my life, but he didn't need to know that.

"If you insist," He eyed me.

"I do,"

"Well then, I will."

"I don't want you to do this because I want you to,"

He paused his reach for the bottle, "That is literally the only reason why I would do this,"

“Fine,” I tried not to smile.

“If you do it, I will too,” He held the bottle to me to go first, “I think that’s called a compromise. I’m not really up to date with relationship lingo, but I think that is generally seen as a good thing,”

“I think that word should be used in things past relationships,” I eyed him, suddenly curious how he ran his pack if ‘compromise’ wasn’t in his normal vocabulary.

One side of his mouth turned up in a way that I knew meant he was amused but didn’t entirely want to admit it.

“Do what you want,” I shrugged, “This is your first hot dog, apparently,” I shook my head at him.

“I grew up in this city, but I didn’t get to experience many of the normal parts about it,” I could tell he chose his words carefully, “Not that my parents wanted to deprive me of anything, and they didn’t really, but we finished building the packhouse in the city when I was young and there was a lot to do,” He shrugged.

“Not much time to explore?” I looked at him, reaching for the ketchup.

“Holden and I did when we were older, and then Griffen tagged along. But growing up, it was similar to any other pack. A lot of it was training and learning pack duties for me, at least. My parents didn’t deprive me of anything. Honestly, we have a decent relationship, I might even call it good.” He took the ketchup from me and handed me the mustard.

“We had outings but it was more to the opera, a favorite of my mothers,” He frowned at the ketchup bottle and shook it once, the sight was so normal, so unexpected and different from what I saw from him that I almost laughed, “My dad preferred baseball actually, but we had a box there, catered. Unfortunately, no hot dogs,” He smiled at me, satisfied finally with the amount of ketchup on his.

“I have only been to one baseball game,” I admitted, “We didn’t come to the city, to here, that often, but I vaguely remember once when I was younger. My parents were happy enough with pack life, but they wanted me to have other experiences.”

He looked sideways at me and I couldn't tell what he was thinking.

"We had a bit of a different experience growing up, I guess," I shrugged.

"I guess we did, but that doesn't make it a bad thing. I wouldn't want to end up with someone who had all the same experiences, I don't think that would make for much of a partnership."

I watched him take a bite.

"Not bad," He said.

"Liar,"

"No, really, not bad."

"Maybe you should try it with the green sauce,"

"Maybe next time," He smiled, taking another bite.

We walked towards a small pond in the middle of this park. It wasn't a big park, but Emmett loved to come here. It was near Cali's house, and whenever we got the chance we would take the kids here after work if we weren't swamped with homework and studying.

We sat on a bench overlooking the murky water, "How would you want to raise your kids?" Caspien said quietly, his question surprised me.

"I have a child," I reminded him. Did he really forget that?

"I know that; sorry, I know. I meant between the pack life and city, what would you prefer if you could choose anything,"

I never thought about that because I didn't think I really had a choice. I chose to move to the cabin, but it was out of convenience, and wanted quiet and seclusion. I chose the city, but it was because it was the closest to the pack my parents were going back to.

My choices were mine, but now they felt like they were always determined by others as well, but maybe most decisions were. There was hardly a choice or decision that was only affected by a singular desire.

"I did love traditional pack life, but then again, that was all I knew," I started, picking at the last remnants of my hotdog bun, "I'm still new to the city, but I see the appeal," I shrugged.

"Go on," He said after I didn't speak for a while.

"I honestly haven't thought about it. I've been trying to do what was right for Emmett, and a huge part of that is for me to have a future, to have a career."

"What do you want for yourself?" He took the empty napkin from my hand and shifted to face me.

"I don't, I don't know," I shook my head, "That's what I'm trying to figure out. It's hard to sort it all. I never really knew what I wanted outside of pack life; I never thought about it."

"And then?" His icy blue eyes held mine, holding nothing but curiosity.

"Then, I was mated to Nolan, and that was my future. I prepared for Luna duties and shortly after that ended." I swallowed, that was a f.ucking understatement, "Then I focused on trying to be the best mother could to fill to void of him not having another parent, and after that. Well," I shrugged, "Here I am."

"That's really admirable of you, you know that, Willa," Caspien never took his eyes off me, "I know it's easier said than done but try to figure out what you want for yourself, what would make you happy and fulfilled."

"Harder when there are bills to pay and someone else to worry about," I said dryly.

"Pretend that-

"But that all does exist, sure if nothing else mattered, I would love to be a d.amn fairy princess, maybe have a nice unicorn," I looked at him, "I get what you're saying, I really do, but this is my life, there isn't any what ifs,"

"I understand," He held my stare.

"What about you? What do you want? What do you want to be?"

“I guess I never really had a choice, I have no siblings, so I was always the only option. I count myself lucky that I wanted to become Alpha, and I’m good at it.” He said matter-of-factly and I had to admire that.

“Did you want to take the title, or do you think it was because it was all that you knew?”

He sat back, seemingly lost in thought, “I, no one has ever asked me that,” He shook his head, “I honestly don’t know.”

“No need to unpack that right now,” I nudged him, and he put his arm around me after pausing for a split second.

I loved the fact that this man was still worried about putting his arm around me. I grabbed his hand and placed a kiss on it, trying to reassure him that he was allowed to touch me. I guess I didn’t make it easy in the beginning, and we still had a lot to work through, but I craved his touch.

“I wish things could be easier; this feels easy,” I relaxed into his arm.

“I could be,” He murmured into my hair.

I let him hold me, and I let myself believe, just for a second, that it could be.

“Hello, lover girl.” Willa threw a pen at me.

“What?” I jumped back out of my daydreams, which mainly consisted of him. Okay, they all consisted of him.

“Time for bed, or want me to go through these flashcards with you again?”

We were at Cali’s house, Emmett and Loreli were fast asleep. Both of our first real exams were in the morning, and I had been panicking for days. Cali didn’t seem to be phased, though, and worked on painting her nails between quizzing me.

“I think I’m taking the wrong classes,” I hung my head in my hands, “More science and math, less flashcards,” I grumbled.

“There is something seriously wrong with you,” She grabbed my hands from my face.

“Why aren’t you freaking out? I missed when you were all panicked with me; when did you stop being panicked? True friends panic together,” I threw my hands up.

She laughed, “My classes are easier, maybe, or maybe I’m just a genius, and you’re, well, you’re not,” She smiled at me winking, and I shot her a glare.

“Okay, one more time,” She patted my hand a few times, bringing my full attention to her, “You know this, you know you know it, but let’s do it once more to get it in that thick skull of yours,” She flicked the side of my head.

“Ouch,” I swatted her away, “Okay, one more time,” I sighed; I knew this, I just needed to focus, but my brain was swimming.

“You got this, I promise,” Cali nudged me, her version of a hug.

“You do, too,” I nudged her back.

“I know,” She flipped her ruby red curls over her shoulder with a kind of confidence that I could only dream of, “See you after? Coffee, possibly Irish,” She winked at me.

“Yes,” I smiled at her, leaving her to head to my exam.

I would focus on this exam, I knew it, and then I had a few hours of utterly unadulterated relaxation until we had to get the kids from Cali’s.

I stood in front of the exam room; for some reason, this felt like a moment, even more than when I had orientation or chose my classes. It felt like a shift, maybe because I was finally gaining momentum—the first big hurdle about to be put behind me.

I pushed the door open and my phone buzzed, and then again. I grabbed it to turn it off, but it was the sitter calling me.

“Hello?” I took a few steps back into the hallway, “Is everything okay?”

“Yes, well, Emmett has gotten sick, a few times actually,” She paused, “He has a fever; I wouldn’t call, but it’s gotten pretty high, I think he needs to see a doctor, and I’m not sure which one he goes to and Loreli is here…” She trailed off.

f**k, this couldn't be happening, I could maybe explain it to my professors, but I didn't know if they would buy it. Our summer classes were shorter than the standard semesters, and I know how much of an impact these exams had on my grade, which is a massive part of why I was freaking out now.

My phone beeped, and I looked down, Caspien was calling, and I went to decline it but accidentally picked up.

"I'm sorry, I can't talk, I don't have a doctor, and my exam-" I rambled every half-thought that went through my mind backing up against the wall; I felt like everything that I worked for was out of my control. I thought I had it handled, but I didn't even have a doctor for my sick kid.

"Willa?"

Another beep, and I clicked it.

"I'm so sorry, I think we lost the connection," Our sitter's voice sounded again; people rushed past me into the door, I knew the exam was starting soon, "I wouldn't be calling unless it was urgent, but I'm worried about him,"

"Okay, I'll figure it out," I hung up my chest tightened, I knew I couldn't do it all, but I hated actually seeing it crumble before me.

Caspien's name popped up again.

"I can't talk," I croaked, damn tight throat, damn tears.

"What can I do?" His voice sounded serious with a hint of panic in it.

"Nothing," I repeated, "My exam is about to start, but Emmett is sick" My chest was tightening, and my breathing was becoming erratic.

"I'm sorry, I got the time wrong I thought it was over," Caspien cut in, "Wait, Emmett is sick? Are you with him?"

"No," I shook my head even though I knew he couldn't see, "Our sitter called, he's sick he needs a doctor, and I don't even have a doctor."

"You're at your exam now?"

"Yes, it's starting now, but I have to leave." I chuckled dryly, pulling myself off the wall.

“Stay where you are; take your exam. I’ll handle it,”

“W-What?”

“Send me your sitter’s number, it will be taken care of. He needs to see a pack doctor anyways, not a human one,”

“He’s never been sick before I need to be there,” I was worried about him, even though I knew it was common for children to get sick, even for werewolves, I had to be there.

“And you will be after your exam,” He said sternly.

“But-”

“Holden is here, he’s good with kids if you’re worried.”

“I’ve definitely seen a child before,” I heard Holden’s voice in the background, and I almost laughed.

“Do you trust me? Willa,” He repeated, “Do you trust me?”

“Yes,” Of course I did.

“Then let me handle this; take your exam; I’ll have a car outside waiting for you when you’re done.”

“But-”

“Willa, I don’t want to tell you what to do, and I know better than to tell you not to worry about it, but I will handle this it. Trust me,”

“Okay,” I agreed reluctantly.

The bell rang, jerking me from my thoughts that were about to spiral. I sent Caspien her number and walked into my class feeling a mix of emotions, but mostly gratitude. I took a deep breath; Emmett would be safe and would see the best doctor for him in this city. The best thing I could do for his future was pass this exam, and then I would hurry to his side.