

A Warrior's Second Chance

Chapter 11-20

A Warrior's Second Chance

It was morning and I already brushing out my hair when a knock came on my door. A second later, my mother peeked in.

“They’re here,” she said softly.

I blinked at her, then at the window, where sunlight poured in like the universe was mocking me. Today was the day...the day I officially left Silver Hollow and everything I’d ever known behind. A day I was never prepared for.

I set the brush down. “Did you see who it was?”

She shook her head. “I was just told by your father that someone from Blood Crescent is waiting outside.”

Not Alpha Alexander himself then. Thank the goddess. The thought of sitting beside that man for hours in a confined space made my skin crawl. Not because I was afraid of him—no. It was the opposite, actually. It was how damn cold he could be without lifting a finger.

He didn't need to yell or glare. He just stared at me like I was nothing. That blank, unreadable expression of his, those calculating eyes that looked like they'd seen too much and felt too little. That was worse.

I walked out to the front with my parents, my last bag slung over my shoulder. Most of my things had already been sent ahead of me by my mom before I finished dressing up. This was the only one I kept back, filled with personal items I wasn't quite ready to hand over to

someone else.

As we approached the car parked just outside the gates, my father gave a little grunt beside me, the kind he only made when he had something serious to say.

"You know, Faye," he started, "this... this may not have been how you imagined things."

Understatement of the year.

"But life isn't always what we picture. It's what we do with it that matters. You're not just going there as anyone's daughter now. You're going as Luna of the Blood Crescent pack. That means something. So please—no drama, no carelessness, nothing that would bring dishonor to them, or to Silver Hollow."

I nodded slowly.

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“I know it’s not easy,” he added, voice gruff but honest. “But I trust you. I trust that we raised you well enough to know how to carry the weight of duty, even when it’s heavy.”

I turned to face him properly, meeting his eyes. “You did raise me well, dad,” I said. “And you don’t have to worry, I understand what’s expected of me. I won’t do anything to weaken the alliance or embarrass Silver Hollow. You have my word.”

He patted my shoulder, gentle, but firm. That was my dad. He wasn’t big on words when they weren’t necessary, but when he spoke, I listened. Chapters first released on Find-Novel.net

Then I looked at my mother, and all she did was pull me into a hug. No pep talk, no last-minute advice, just a long, lingering embrace. She didn’t say anything, and she didn’t need to. I felt her shoulders shake slightly as she held me tighter. I knew she was trying not

to cry.

I hugged her back...no tears from me either. We were too similar for that. We wore our calm like armor, especially when the world expected us to break.

“I’ll be okay,” I whispered into her ear.

She nodded, and I knew she believed it.

Just then, the front passenger door of the car opened, and a man stepped out. Young, probably in his twenties, tall and clean-cut with sharp eyes that scanned his surroundings before they landed politely on us.

He walked over with an air of confidence that wasn’t arrogant... nothing like Alpha Alexander in that aspect. He stopped in front of my parents and offered a slight bow. “Alpha Alexander sends his regards. My name is Cole, Beta of the Blood Crescent pack. I’ve been sent to escort Luna Faye to her new home.”

Luna Faye.

The title hit a little differently when it was spoken aloud like that. I always knew I would be Luna, but not of a different pack, maybe that added to the weirdness.

My mother tensed ever so slightly beside me, and my father gave a sharp nod.

“Welcome, Beta Cole,” my father said. “We appreciate you coming.”

Cole turned to me then and gave a respectful nod. “Luna,” he greeted, then extended his hand for my bag.

I hesitated for a heartbeat before letting him take it. “It’s fine,” I said with a small smile. “Thanks.”

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He offered a smile back—brief, professional. “Of course.”

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I turned one last time to my parents and hugged them both again. My mother brushed her fingers over my hair like she used to when I was little, and my father gave my hand a squeeze before letting me go.

Cole had already walked ahead and opened the back door for me. I gave him a grateful nod, slid into the back seat, and settled into the silence. A moment later, the door clicked shut, and Cole got back into the front passenger seat. The driver, a quiet, broad-shouldered man I didn’t recognize, started the engine.

We pulled away from the gates of Silver Hollow.

No parade, no crowd, just my parents standing side by side, watching me leave like they weren't sure when they'd see me again.

I pressed my hand to the glass, just once. A silent goodbye.

Then I leaned back in the seat and let the silence fill the car.

I didn't speak, and neither did Cole. I appreciated that. He didn't try to make small talk or ask me pointless questions.

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BLOOD CRESCENT

FAYE

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As the car pulled up in front of the Blood Crescent pack house, Cole turned to me and said, "We've arrived," as if I couldn't already tell.

The mansion before us was impossible to miss. Still, I understood he was just trying to be polite, probably trying to ease the tension he could sense radiating from me.

I didn't say anything. The building loomed ahead, grand and intimidating, with towering pillars that framed tall, glossy double doors. The silence that surrounded it felt thick, almost unnatural—like the house was holding its breath, or maybe it was just me.

Before I could reach for the door handle, Cole was already out and walking quickly to my side. He opened the door for me, offering a small smile as I stepped out. The gentleman act threw me off slightly.

Was this how they treated their Luna here? Or was Cole just naturally this attentive, the kind of man who made a woman feel like she mattered?

It was a sweet gesture, I had to admit, but it made me a little uneasy. I wasn't used to being fussed over unnecessarily, I was a warrior for goodness sake, not some princess. My upbringing in Silver Hollow had taught me to do things for myself. Even when I was announced as Alexander's mate, no one had gone out of their way to roll out a red carpet. Still, I wasn't going to push against Cole's gesture, so I smiled politely.

"Thank you," I said.

"You're welcome, Luna," he replied, giving me a slight nod.

I glanced around the compound. It was quiet, uncomfortably so. No one stood outside. There were no howls or voices in the distance, no sign of Alexander waiting on the porch to welcome me home. It was just me, Cole, and a large, empty space.

No welcome committee, I guess.

No excited pack members lining up to meet their new Luna.

No Alpha Alexander.

I wasn't sure how I felt about that.

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Grateful, maybe? At least, I didn't have to pretend to be excited, I didn't have to smile at strangers or meet curious gazes trying to study the woman who had somehow become their Luna. Then again, I couldn't help but feel the tiniest sting of rejection.

Cole seemed to sense my confusion.

"This way, Luna," he said gently. "Don't worry about your things. Someone will take care of bringing them in."

I fell into step beside him as we approached the front doors. I couldn't stop my eyes from drinking in every inch of the structure.

"You'll love it here, don't worry," Cole said. I guess he took my expression for skepticism.

I felt the need to correct that impression for some reason. "I always thought the Silver Hollow pack house was big," I said. "But this makes that one look... small."

Cole laughed softly. “Oh! I see...this is just the front. You should wait till you see the rest of it. The west wing alone could house an entire pack on its own.”

“I can’t wait,” I replied, managing a weak smile.

We stepped into the house, and my jaw nearly dropped. Polished wooden floors stretched into a long hallway flanked with intricately carved walls and soft-glowing sconces. The ceilings were ridiculously high, with crystal chandeliers hanging like floating stars. Everything gleamed, smelled expensive, and whispered, you don’t belong here.

Don’t get me wrong, we’re not small or poor at Silver Hollow. But you know how you think you’re all that...then you meet the real boss in the game, and then suddenly realize you’re not all that? Yes, that’s just it.

“How many rooms are in this house?” I asked, trying to shake off the growing tightness in my

chest.

“Sixty-three,” Cole answered, as if it were perfectly normal.

I gaped. “Seriously?”

“Including the guest suites, training quarters, library, and offices,” he added. “Alexander’s father liked things big. Overcompensated, if you ask me....he did most of this.”

I chuckled. “Sounds like a lot of maintenance.”

“That’s why we have staff,” he said, then glanced sideways at me. “But don’t worry, you won’t have to lift a finger unless you want to.”

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“I might,” I muttered. “Lifting fingers keeps me sane.”

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We passed corridor after corridor. The deeper we walked into the house, the more I realized just how lost I would be without help.

“I’m guessing I’ll need a map just to find the bathroom,” I said.

Cole chuckled. “Nah, just give it a day or two. You’ll be leading people around by the end of

the week.”

I didn’t answer. I wasn’t sure I’d be here by the end of the week. Latest content published on FindN()vel.net

Finally, he stopped in front of a pair of double doors. He reached into his pocket, pulled out a key, and unlocked them. He stepped aside and gestured for me to enter.

“This is your chamber,” he said.

I stepped inside slowly. The room was beautiful...lavish, even. Cream-colored walls, high arched windows with sheer white curtains, a bed so large it looked like it could fit five people. There was a vanity table, a couch set, and a fireplace already crackling with warmth.

Still... it felt foreign like it wasn’t meant for me.

“Where is everyone?” I finally asked, turning to face Cole.

He blinked. “Oh...sorry, I should have mentioned that earlier. They’re all at the square right now for the weekly assembly. It’s standard protocol here. Alexander’s probably still addressing the pack. They should be back soon.”

I nodded slowly. “Okay.”

Cole offered a small, apologetic smile. “I’ll let you settle in. If you need anything, I’ll be downstairs.”

I quirked a brow. “Assuming I can even find downstairs.”

That made him laugh again. “Fair point. I’ll have someone stationed nearby in case you need help navigating. It can be overwhelming at first.”

“Thanks,” I said, then added quickly, “Oh, and... my luggage?”

“Would be right on its way up,” he assured me. “I’ll make sure they know to be gentle with everything.”

“Thank you,” I said again.

Cole gave me a small bow of his head and stepped out, quietly closing the door behind him.

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The moment he was gone, I stood there in the middle of the room, arms crossed over my chest, staring at the empty space around me.

This was it.

My new home...my new identity. Ready or not, I was here.

I walked over to the window and peeked through the curtains. The compound was still silent, the car already gone. Somewhere out there, my mate was addressing his people. Somewhere out there, everyone already knew I had arrived.

And

yet, here I was, alone in a grand room, with no idea how to feel.

I let out a long, shaky breath and murmured to myself, "Welcome to Blood Crescent, Faye."

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FAYE

I had already arranged my things and gotten everything set up in my *room*. After freshening up, I heard a knock on the door.

“Come in,” I called out, not really sure who to expect.

The door opened and in walked a beautiful woman—tall, graceful, confident, and smiling so brightly that I instantly felt disarmed. I’d been bracing myself for anything, but certainly not someone like her.

“I’m Irene,” she said cheerfully. “Alexander’s sister. And you’re his mate! I’m so excited—we’re going to be sisters!”

She moved with the kind of ease that made you feel like you’d known her forever, making a bit of a fuss about how close we were going to be and all. I smiled, trying to keep up with her

energy.

“It’s really nice to meet you, Irene” I said, offering my hand.

She shook it enthusiastically. “Oh, please, don’t be so formal. Come here!” she said, pulling

me into a warm hug that caught me off guard. “Goddess... you’re so beautiful,” she added.

“Wow,” I said, laughing lightly as we pulled away. “You’re... very welcoming.”

“Of course I am! We’ve all been waiting for you. Well, maybe not all,” she added with a mischievous wink, clearly referencing her brother.

I tried to laugh again, but before I could say anything, she did the one thing I completely saw

coming.

“Alright, Sage...”

She called me Sage.

My smile faltered a little, and I think she noticed it immediately. Her eyes widened. “Oh, no...I’m so sorry,” she gasped, waving her hands apologetically. “That was such a slip of the tongue. I’ve just had Sage’s name on my mind ever since I heard about the alliance. I knew she was supposed to be my brother’s mate, and it kind of stuck in my head.”

I took a breath and gave her a small nod. Honestly, I couldn’t really blame her. It could have been a simple slip—especially since I wasn’t even fully used to the idea myself. I wasn’t supposed to be here. My sister was.

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“It’s okay,” I told her. “You don’t have to feel bad. It’s honestly a good thing that everyone here already knows I’m not the original plan, it kind of takes the pressure off. I don’t have to pretend I’m something I’m not or act like I’ve got it all figured out. I can just... be myself.”

She looked at me for a second, and then gave this amused little smirk that made me think she was genuinely impressed. “I love you already,” she said, grinning. “We’re definitely going to get along, I can’t wait for us to start bonding. As sisters, of course.”

I chuckled, relaxing a bit more. “You’re really different from what I would have expected. I don’t mean that in a bad way. Just... surprising.”

She tilted her head. “Different how?”

I hesitated. “You’re... really warm. Friendly, and open.”

Irene laughed again. “And you were expecting what? A cold, formal she-wolf....a female version of my brother?”

I bit my lip to keep from laughing. “Something like that.”

“Trust me, I get it. Alexander doesn’t exactly make the best first impression....or second...or third,” she said, rolling her eyes. “But he’s not all ice, I promise. He just takes some time to melt.”

I raised an eyebrow. “So you’re telling me there’s actually a person in there somewhere?”
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She gasped dramatically. “A whole, real-life human being. Scary, right?”

We both laughed and the tension I’d been holding onto since I arrived started to fade.

“So,” she said, sitting at the edge of my bed like we were already best friends, “what do you think of the pack house so far?”

“Honestly? It’s beautiful. A bit overwhelming, I got lost in the hallway for like ten seconds just trying to remember which way the stairs were.”

“That sounds about right,” she said. “Even I still get turned around sometimes. The place is like a castle. And you haven’t even seen the gardens or the east wing.”

“There’s a garden?”

“Not just one. A rose garden, a herb garden, and a ridiculously massive training field disguised as a green lawn. I’ll give you a tour tomorrow...if you want.”

“I’d love that. Thanks, Irene.”

She smiled and leaned back on her hands. “You know... it’s brave of you to come here like

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this. With all the pressure and expectations, especially after what happened.”

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My expression softened. “I didn’t really have much of a choice. But... I made peace with it.”

She nodded, looking thoughtful. “Still. Doesn’t make it any less impressive. You’re doing

better than I would if our roles were reversed.”

“I doubt that. You seem like the kind of person who adapts quickly.”

“I’m the kind of person who talks too much when I’m nervous,” she said with a grin. “Which, surprise, I am right now. I really wanted you to like me.”

That made me laugh out loud. “Well, you didn’t have to try so hard. You had me at ‘Come here!’”

We both smiled, and there was a brief, comfortable silence before she straightened up.

“Anyway,” she said, brushing her hands over her thighs, “dinner should be ready any moment now. Someone will come up to call you.”

I nodded, then paused. “Is there some kind of dress code?”

She laughed, that soft, melodic kind of laugh that made her eyes crinkle. “Not at all,” she said. “Wear whatever you feel like. It’s a private dinner, probably just the two of you at the table.”

Great. Just me and the Alpha Iceberg.

“Got it,” I said. “Do I have time to pretend I’m choosing an outfit and not just overthinking this entire evening?”

She stood and stretched. “Absolutely. And if you need me to come back up and pretend to help you pick something just so you’re not alone with your thoughts, say the word.”

“Thanks, but I think I’ll manage.”

“Alright then, Luna Faye,” she said with a playful salute. “See you later. Good luck breaking the ice at dinner. Literally.”

She winked and left the room, her laughter echoing faintly in the hallway.

I found myself still smiling when Nova made her remark, “This place is not so bad now is it?”

“It’s too early to judge, Nova. We’ll see about that,” I said.

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ALEXANDER

I was buried in work when I heard the door to my office swing open. I didn't need to look up to know it was Irene. Only she had the nerve to barge in without knocking. Sure enough, her

voice followed a second later.

"You're still here? Aren't you coming down for dinner?"

I didn't even glance at her. "No," I said, scanning through the document in front of me. "I'll eat

later."

There was a pause, but I knew she wasn't done talking.

“You can’t do that,” she said, crossing her arms. I could hear it in her tone...that subtle mix of irritation and conviction that only Irene had mastered.

I finally looked up. “Why not?” o mean she knows I have the habit of skipping dinner most of the time, why is she acting so surprised.

“Because your mate is going to be at the table,” she said, as though that explained

everything. “It’s her first meal here. You can’t just leave her to eat alone. That’s rude, even for you,”

I blinked at her, my thoughts still halfway tangled in numbers and logistics. “She’ll survive dinner without me, Irene. She’s not a guest. She’s here because of an arrangement we both agreed to.”

Irene rolled her eyes so hard I was surprised they didn’t get stuck in the back of her head.” Have you even gone to see her since she arrived?”

I hesitated. I really totally forgot about all of that. But even if I hadn’t forgotten, it was nothing

to make an issue over.

“No,” I admitted. “I’ll see her later tonight, maybe. Or tomorrow morning.”

Irene’s hands went to her hips like she was about to launch into a full-on lecture, but she paused, studying me like I was some infuriating puzzle she still hadn’t given up trying to solve.

“She’s new here, Alex,” she said, her voice lower now. “Everything is strange to her, and the one person who’s supposed to make her feel welcome has locked himself in his office all day like she doesn’t exist.”

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Lexhaled, leaning back in my chair. “Irene, what do you want me to do?” I asked. “Throw a welcome party? This isn’t a fairytale. It’s not a love story, and I’m sure she understands that. This is a business arrangement, and we both knew what it entailed...no expectations.”

Irene looked at me like she genuinely couldn’t believe how dense I was being. Seriously, how she manages to make a big deal of every little thing needs to be studied.

“That girl out there didn’t get here on a just business contract, Alex,” she said. “She left her home, her life, everything she knew, because of this alliance which...by the way...

favors blood crescent pack more. The least you could do is act like a decent partner for five minutes.”

I rubbed the bridge of my nose. I hated it when Irene was right, and she usually was.

“She’ll adjust,” I said, though my voice lacked its usual certainty. “And you’re distracting me, please can I get back to work now?”

Irene stared at me for another long beat. I could tell she was seconds away from throwing something—possibly herself—at me in frustration. And maybe she would have, if I hadn’t

raised a hand.

“Fine,” I muttered. “I’ll try to wrap things up here and go see her later tonight.”

She raised an eyebrow, clearly not impressed.

“In the meantime,” I added, “why don’t you go keep her company over dinner? She’d probably appreciate your energy more than mine right now. I’ll ask Cole to escort her to the table”

Irene didn’t look entirely satisfied, but she finally turned to leave.

“I will,” she said, pausing at the door. “But you better show up. Because if you don’t, I’ll come back here...you know that.”

Of course I know that. She knows how much I hate being disturbed, but trust Irene to do it

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FAYE

I was trying to find the dining hall on my own.

Partly because I didn’t want to call anyone for help... Cole, a servant, anyone, and partly because I just didn’t want to feel like a lost child in a place that was already looking for reasons not to accept me.

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I needed to look like I belonged here. Like I didn't need anyone's hand to hold. So I'd set out confidently, telling myself that it couldn't be that hard to find a dining hall in a packhouse this

size.

And maybe it wasn't. But the corridors were long and quiet, filled with too many turns and stairways that all looked the same. Eventually, I must have taken the wrong turn because I ended up in a spacious room that didn't smell like food, it smelled like starch and warm fabric.

I paused just past the doorway, frowning.

It was a laundry room.

Several ironing boards were set up, steam hissing softly from one corner. Racks of folded clothes lined the walls, neat and sorted. Two girls stood by the table, busy folding shirts. They hadn't seen me yet.

I was already turning to leave...maybe retrace my steps...when I heard one of them laugh.

“She must not be all that,” she said in a voice that dripped with casual cruelty. “I mean, she’s only here because there was no better option. A replacement Luna? That’s so embarrassing.”

I froze.

They were talking about me.

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I stayed completely still, back straight, face calm, even though something inside me immediately tensed. My hand lingered against the wall beside me, fingertips grazing the cold

stone.

The second girl snorted. “They say she’s the twin sister of the original. So maybe she looks similar? But I mean, no one...including Alpha Alexander...ever even met the lady sage, so it’s not like anyone would care if the replacement didn’t look exactly like her.”

Their laughter bubbled up again, soft and cruel, the kind that people use when they’re confident the subject of the joke isn’t around to hear.

But I was right there. Listening.

They couldn’t have known, of course. But that didn’t make it sting any less.

“Still,” the first one went on, her voice more animated now, “it doesn’t change the fact that Blood Crescent got a secondhand Luna. Like... imagine that being your story. You weren’t the first pick, just the backup plan.”

My stomach turned. That one hit harder than I expected.

A secondhand Luna? What is that even supposed to mean? I wanted to lash out but...

My wolf, Nova stopped me. “Easy Faye!.... Don’t let them trigger you.”

It wasn’t like I hadn’t thought those exact words myself before. In the quiet of my own thoughts. In the dark, when it was just me and my doubt. But hearing someone else say it so confidently, so dismissively, it made something twist deep inside me.

A part of me wanted to turn around and walk away. Pretend I hadn’t heard any of it. I didn’t owe them a reaction. But I also knew myself well enough to realize that if I walked away now, their voices would echo in my head all night. Their laughter would linger.

I didn’t want *to* confront them exactly. I wasn’t angry that angry now. But I wanted them to wonder. I wanted them to lie awake later and question how much I’d heard. That’s how you get people cornered, and make them loyal subjects even against their wishes. I learned that from mom.

So I stepped into the room, deliberately and cleared my throat.

The sound was sharp in the quiet room. Both girls jerked around to look at me. One still held a half-folded shirt in her hands.

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“Oh!” one of them gasped. “Sorry, we didn’t see you there...are you one of the new members?”

Ignored the question of course. “I didn’t mean to interrupt,” I said with the warmest smile I could muster. “I think I got a little lost. Could you point me to the dining hall?”

They both blinked at me, eyes wide, clearly flustered for some reason, but trying to mask it with politeness. Their posture stiffened.

“Um... yes, of course!” one of them replied quickly, her voice suddenly much higher than before. “Just head back down this corridor and take the second left, then...uh...”

The other one cut in, clearly trying to help. “Actually, it’s easier if you pass the garden walkway and go through the west hallway. The hall should be just...”

“Oh, I see.” I tilted my head slightly, pretending to consider their directions. “Thank you. That’s very helpful.”

I could feel the tension in the room now. Not mine...theirs. They hadn't recognized me yet, but maybe something in my posture, or my voice, or maybe just their guilt...was making them second-guess everything they'd just said.

And then just like that, Cole stepped into the doorway casually, as if he'd been looking for me and knew exactly where I'd end up.

His eyes swept the room, landing briefly on the two girls before settling on me.

"I had a feeling I'd find you here," he said with a small smirk. "From your chamber, it's easy to

end up this way."

I gave a soft laugh, brushing some hair back from my face. "I was just trying to ask these ladies for directions. But I think I would've figured it out eventually."

The air in the *room* changed in an instant.

Cole had called me from my chamber, and that implied familiarity. His tone, his body language, the way he looked at me... all of it screamed status. And I knew the girls were even more on edge now.

Then came the final blow.

“My apologies, Luna,” he said, taking a slight bow of his head as he stepped forward. “I should have come for you sooner.”

The silence was deafening.

Both girls paled...one of them dropped the shirt she'd been holding. They stared at me like

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they were suddenly seeing me for the first time—and realizing they'd made a very big

mistake.

The word Luna hung heavy in the air.

I could see the panic in their eyes. They were probably playing back every word of that conversation in their heads, mentally slapping themselves for not checking who was standing nearby. Wondering if I'd go straight to Alexander. Or worse—if I'd retaliate some other way. The worse part was probably the smirk on my face.

Cole noticed the tension too. He glanced between the girls, then turned back to me.

"Is there a problem here?" he asked lightly, though there was a sharpness in his tone.

One of them opened her mouth, possibly to apologize or explain—but I spoke before she could. I wasn't about to let them off the hook easily.

"No problem at all," I said, smiling sweetly at Cole but keeping my eyes on them. "I'm just hungry."

The unspoken message in my stare was clear: I heard you, I saw you, and I won't forget.

Cole's gaze lingered on me for a beat, like he was trying to figure out what he'd walked into,

but then he nodded.

“Well then,” he said smoothly, “I’m right on time. I came to escort you to dinner...Alpha

Alexander’s orders.”

“Perfect.” I turned to him and walked forward, pausing just slightly as I passed the girls. “Thank you again for the directions.”

They didn’t respond, they couldn’t even if they wanted to. Their silence was loud. Original content can be found at [Find_Novel\(.\)net](#)

I followed Cole out of the room, keeping my back straight, my steps even. I didn’t look back.

But inside... my chest still burned a little. Not from embarrassment...not even really from anger, it was something colder...heavier.

The realization that this was only the beginning. That in this place, in this role, I would be watched, judged, picked apart by people who had already decided I didn’t deserve to be here.

...people who didn't care about the reasons, people who didn't care that I hadn't asked for any of this....who only saw me as someone's replacement.

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I was surprised to see that it was only Irene waiting for me at the dining table for breakfast again.

It was just two of us at dinner yesterday. She had made excuse for her brother, Alpha Alexander—saying he was busy at the office. A part of me had assumed he'd have the decency to show up to breakfast.

I guess I expected too much. No Alpha Alexander, good!

Relief slipped in like a quiet breath I hadn't realized I'd been holding. I let it go slowly, keeping my face neutral. I didn't want to look too pleased—even though every cell in my body had braced for his presence like I was about to be thrown into a pit with a wild beast....A very good looking wild beast. I didn't need that kind of tension during a meal.

“Oh, I'm so sorry,” Irene said almost immediately, rising halfway from her seat as if she'd committed a crime. “Alexander couldn't make it still. Something came up with the eastern patrol, and he had to leave early this morning.”

She looked genuinely apologetic, as though I should be disappointed. How does she not see that I don't really care?

“Oh,” I said, giving a light shrug. “That’s alright.”

I slid into the seat across from her and reached for the glass of water beside my plate. It wasn’t alright, but not for the reason she thought. It wasn’t alright that I had to be here at all.

None of this was alright—but Alexander’s absence? That was the best part of my stay so far. Of course it was rude of him to ignore my presence, but it’s better than him being here just to be rude in person...if it makes sense.

“He really did want to be here,” Irene added, like that would help her brother’s reputation. “He even asked the kitchen to make sure your favorite was served for breakfast. I know it’s not much, but... well, he’s trying.”

Trying. Right. I stabbed a piece of fruit with my fork and forced a polite smile. If she calls this trying, then I wonder what Alpha Alexander acts like when he’s not trying.

“That’s thoughtful of him,” I said, which was more generous than I felt. I didn’t even know how he knew what my favorite breakfast was, or if this was just Irene’s way of softening the blow...it was probably just coincidence. Either way, I didn’t care.

Irene looked at me for a second too long, like she was waiting for more emotion from me. I

didn't give her any

More Rewards >

Maybe if this were some kind of love story or destined fairytale, I might have been flattered. I might have been annoyed or hurt or confused by his absence.

But this wasn't that. This was an arrangement...strategic, forced, necessary. Emotions were luxuries I couldn't afford, and sentiment? Sentiment had no place here.

"I assure you he's not always this busy," Irene said after a moment, trying again. "But he can get really absorbed in his duties sometimes."

I bit into a slice of toast. "I understand. Alphas have a lot on their plate...I totally get it."

Irene sighed, stirring her tea absentmindedly. "Still... it must be awkward, not seeing him. since you arrived. I thought you two would at least spend some time getting to know each other. Talk a little, maybe walk around the grounds. I mean, the bond..."

She trailed off, her voice softening.

I pretended to focus on the eggs on my plate. I wasn't about to have a bonding conversation over breakfast. Not now, not ever, if I could help it.

"If I could avoid crossing paths with him altogether," I muttered, mostly to myself, "I'd honestly be okay with that."

Irene blinked at me. "What?"

I looked up, realizing I'd said that out loud.

"I mean..." I corrected quickly, "...for now. Until we're settled. I think some space might be good, to adjust."

Irene didn't press. Maybe she saw right through me, or maybe she just decided not to poke at the wound. Either way, I was grateful.

We ate in silence for a while. The kind of silence that prickles at your skin and makes every clink of cutlery feel louder than it should.

To break it...and also to satisfy my curiosity...I asked, "Why does the house feel so... empty? I thought there would be more pack members around."

Irene perked up at the question, visibly pleased at the change in subject. “Ah, yes! That’s because this is the western wing. Only the Alpha and his immediate family stay here, along with Beta.

The rest of the pack lives in the eastern wing—that’s where all the activity is. The training

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grounds, the common halls, the barracks... it’s much livelier on that side.”

More Rewards >

I nodded, grateful for the explanation. “Makes sense now. It was starting to feel like I was staying in someone’s private mansion.”

Irene chuckled. “That’s not far off. The Alpha wing has always been more... reserved. Fewer people, tighter security. They like their space, I guess.”

I looked around the high-ceilinged room, with its elegant stone pillars and wide glass windows. It was beautiful, in a cold and curated sort of way.

“It’s really organized,” I admitted.

Irene beamed. “You’re right. Everything runs on schedule. Nothing is done without a system in place. Even the kitchen rotates menus weekly based on seasonal produce. Most of it is Alexander’s doing actually...he very meticulous.”

I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. Of course he was that type.

Then she leaned forward a little. “So, tell me about Silver Hollow. I’ve heard stories, but I’ve never actually been there. What’s it really like?”

That made me sit up straighter.

Silver Hollow. Just the name alone made a warmth stir in my chest. But at the same time it’s bringing memories I’d rather not deal with.

“It’s... home,” I said simply at first, unsure where to begin. “We’re smaller than Blood Crescent, obviously. But we’re tightly knit, everyone knows everyone. There’s a strong sense of community.”

Irene nodded thoughtfully. “I’ve heard it’s surrounded by misty forests.”

“Yes,” I said, smiling despite myself. “The forest is thick and old. We call it the Silverwood. The trees there are massive—some of them older than the founding of the pack itself. And when the sun rises or sets, the mist around the trees catches the light in this silvery glow. That’s how we got our name.”

“That sounds beautiful,” she said softly.

“It is.” My voice carried a quiet pride now. “And we’re proud of it. We may not have the biggest territory or the fiercest warriors, but we protect our own. Our warriors are fast, quite skilled.”

“Hmm! You sound like you have a deep knowledge about the warrior part,” Irene said.

I paused, then added with a small smirk, “Of course. I’m the Delta...was the Delta of Silver

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Irene gasped. “You don’t say! Are you serious?”

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I nodded. “I miss it already,” I admitted after a second, catching myself off guard with the honesty.

She gave me a warm look. “You’ll put those skills into good use for Blood Crescent now. Right?”

I nodded. “That’s the plan.”

There was a moment of silence.

“Faye,” Irene said after the pause. “Can I ask you something?”

I looked up. “Sure.”

“Do you really not feel anything for him? I mean... Alexander? Well, I understand that you’re just his mate by duty, and you weren’t even supposed to be the one, but...” she trailed off.

I had to drink some water before responding.

“Well, I’m yet to get to know him well, so I guess it’s too early to say anything for sure,” I said.

Of course I was just being polite. I knew exactly the kind of person he was, and I don’t feel anything but the weight of my duty when I think about him.

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A Warrior's Second Chance

FAYE

After breakfast, I returned to my room even though Irene had insisted I come with her to the eastern wing right away so she could show me around.

She had that bubbly enthusiasm that made it almost impossible to say no without sounding rude, but I needed space. And more importantly, I needed a bath and time to get properly dressed.

I wasn't about to step in front of an entire pack looking like a last-minute addition to their hierarchy—which, let's be honest, I kind of was. Still, being called a "replacement Luna" was already bad enough. I wasn't going to give anyone the satisfaction of whispering that I also looked like a charity case.

Steam fogged the mirror by the time I stepped out of the shower, towel wrapped around my body, water still dripping from my hair. I was halfway across the room when a knock came at

the door.

"Who is it?" I called out, slightly annoyed at the interruption.

A female voice answered, "It's Maya, Luna. The Alpha sent me."

I had no idea who Maya was, but I opened the door anyway, keeping the towel firmly wrapped. She stood there, wide-eyed and slightly flushed, with a dress draped elegantly over one arm. In her other hand, she held a pair of nude heels and a small, decorative jewelry container that sparkled even under the hallway lighting.

“Good morning, Luna,” she said with a smile that made her cheeks look permanently pink. “Alpha Alexander sent these for you. He asked that you wear them this morning. He’ll be summoning *you* shortly to meet the rest of the pack.”

I blinked at her, taking in the soft lilac fabric of the dress—expensive, clearly well tailored, and probably picked out without a single thought about what I might actually like. I smirked.

“How considerate of Alpha Alexander,” I said dryly.

She smiled even wider, clearly mistaking my sarcasm for admiration.

“He really thinks of everything, doesn’t he?” she giggled, eyes shining like she was imagining herself in my shoes.

Oh, how wrong she was.

More Rewards

I took a step back and gestured politely. “Why don’t you go ahead and return them? I already have something in mind for today.”

Her smile faltered instantly.

“I–I’m sorry, Luna. Did you say return them?”

“Yes,” I said calmly, walking over to my closet. “I appreciate the gesture, but I’ll be wearing my own outfit.”

She stood frozen, blinking as if I had just informed her I planned to walk into the meeting

stark naked.

“But Alpha Alexander said–I mean, he specifically requested that you wear this. It would make him very unhappy if... if I took them back.”

Of course I know that, I don't care.

I turned around to face her again, tilting my head slightly. "I'm sure he'll survive the disappointment."

She looked so conflicted, I almost felt bad for her. Almost.

"He won't be angry at you," I added, softening my tone a bit. "Just tell him I already had plans for what I wanted to wear. No big deal."

"But..." she hesitated, glancing down at the dress like it might disappear if she held onto it any longer. "You don't want to at least see how it looks?"

I gave her a tight-lipped smile. "No, thank you."

She stared at me like she was trying to solve a puzzle that didn't make sense. I didn't blame her. To her, this was probably the fantasy: being the Luna, receiving gifts from the Alpha, being pampered like a queen.

To me, it was just a chain disguised as a ribbon.

And I wasn't interested in wearing chains—not today, not ever... especially not one designed by my so called mate.

Eventually, she nodded, though her face was still twisted in confusion. “Alright, Luna. I’ll let

him know,”

“Thank

you, Maya,” I said with a gentle smile.

She lingered a second longer, then turned and walked away, her footsteps light but hesitant.

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As the door clicked shut behind her, I exhaled slowly.

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Alexander must have thought he was being generous. Or maybe he thought he could control every part of this arrangement—including my wardrobe.

I didn't know which was more insulting: the assumption that I didn't own anything suitable to wear or the arrogance of choosing something for me without asking... especially after he ignored my existence in his pack house since yesterday.

Either way, it was funny.

I turned back to my closet, my fingers brushing over a deep blue dress with and a simple neckline. It wasn't too flashy, but it made me feel like myself—strong, poised, beautiful.

Exactly how I intended to look when I stood in front of the Blood Crescent pack.

I slipped the soft material of my dress over my head, fingers smoothing it down with more force than necessary.

My reflection in the mirror stared back at me...sharp-eyed, guarded, unimpressed. My jaw tightened as I adjusted the neckline and reached for one of the pairs of earrings I'd packed myself.

“You’re being dramatic,” Nova piped up from the recesses of my mind, her voice calm and maddeningly reasonable. “He probably didn’t mean anything bad by it.”

I rolled my eyes...not at my reflection, but at her. “You mean Alpha Alexander?” I said aloud, deliberately putting a chill in the title. “The same Alpha who hasn’t so much as acknowledged my presence since I got here yesterday?”

“He’s busy,” she offered, but it sounded half-hearted even to her. “Pack leaders always are.... you *know* that already.”

I scoffed, fastening my earrings. “He’s not the only pack leader in existence.”

There was a beat of silence. I could feel her pacing now, the way she always did when she didn’t have a comeback but didn’t want to let me win either.

“Maybe the clothes were his way of reaching out,” she tried again, “a peace offering.”

“Peace?” I gave a short, humorless laugh as I slid my feet into my shoes. “He hasn’t said a single word to me. Didn’t check to see if I’d arrived safely...didn’t offer to explain anything. And then suddenly, this morning, an outfit appears at my door step.”

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“He could’ve sent anything. Hell, he could’ve come himself if it really meant something...he

would’ve.”

“You don’t know that,” Nova replied gently. “You didn’t even give him a chance.”

I turned away from the mirror. “Well, it doesn’t matter now. I already sent it back.”

Nova sighed. A long, drawn-out, wolfy sigh full of disappointment. “You’re so stubborn sometimes.”

“I learned from the best,” I muttered under my breath.

ALEXANDER

I was in my office, mid-conversation with Cole, when a knock came on the door. I already knew who it was immediately the scent hit—Maya. I gave a nod, and she stepped in, still holding the outfit I'd asked her to deliver to Faye.

I didn't say a word. Just waited.

"Alpha Alexander, Luna Faye said she already had plans to wear something else," Maya said, her voice careful, like she knew she was walking on thin ice. "So she asked me to...she asked Get full chapters from

me to return it."

For a moment, I just stared at her. Cole did too. Then he turned to look at me, and I didn't miss the flicker in his eyes—equal parts disbelief and amusement.

Faye really had the audacity to send the outfit back.

I clenched my *jaw* and gave Maya a stiff nod. "You can go."

She gave a quick bow and left. The door clicked shut behind her, but the silence that followed was louder than anything. I turned to Cole. His expression said it all—he was impressed.

“She really sent it back,” I muttered. “How does she just... defy me like that? In front of Maya? Like my authority means nothing to her.”

Cole leaned back slightly in the chair. “I don’t think it means nothing to her, Alexander. But she’s Luna, and that gives her a kind of authority too. It’s not strange that she’d want to choose what she wears. And frankly... everyone would understand that.”

I turned, narrowing my eyes at him. He wasn’t even trying to hide the smirk that was tugging at the corner of his mouth. The bastard was enjoying this.

Of course, I was pissed. But more than that, I felt something else...unsettled, off-balance. I

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wasn’t used to being told no. Especially not like this.

“She needs to learn her place,” I said sharply.

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Cole arched a brow but said nothing. He didn't have to, I already knew what he was thinking.

He liked that she had a spine.

Well, I'd be damned if I let her get comfortable thinking she could toss my commands aside like that. Luna or not, I'm still Alpha. And she was going to learn that, one way or another.

I'll tame her eventually.

She just doesn't know it yet.

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A Warrior's Second Chance

Chapter 18

ALEXANDER

I was still in my office with Cole, trying to get through the last of the reports for the day, when there was another knock on the door.

The sound grated on my nerves. I was already in a foul mood because of Faye. I had gone out of my way—personally—to have something sent to her, something that I knew would fit the occasion perfectly, only for her to send it back without a reasonable word. That kind of defiance, subtle as it was, could get under a man’s skin, and mine was already thin today.

So when the knock came, my tone was anything but welcoming.

“Who is it?” I snapped.

I was ready to send whoever it was away without even hearing their reason, but then-

The scent hit me.

It came softly at first, teasing the edge of my awareness, then flooding in until there was nothing else in the room but that smell. It was... intoxicating. Stronger than anything I had ever perceived, but not overwhelming in the way you might expect. No...this was the kind of scent that worked its way into your head, made your lungs greedy for more, made you take deeper breaths without even realizing it.

I know that smell, it was hers.

I didn't even have to open the door to know. My mood shifted—just enough to soften my voice. This update is available on

“Come in,” I said, in a much calmer tone than I'd used a moment ago.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Cole straighten, the way only he could when he caught a scent he respected. Gentleman to the core, he adjusted his jacket slightly, his movements careful, expectant. He knew as well as I did that the Luna was about to walk in.

And then she did.

Faye stepped inside as if she had all the time in the world, her posture relaxed, her chin lifted just enough to meet my gaze but not enough to challenge it.

My eyes went to her outfit immediately. She hadn't worn what I'd chosen, but damn it all if what she was wearing didn't suit her perfectly.

More Rewards

It fit her in a way that seemed almost deliberate...soft fabric that moved when she walked, subtle details that drew the eye without trying too hard. She looked... warm, calm. Like the chaos she stirred in me wasn't even on her radar.

I didn't let my approval show.

Cole stood as soon as she entered. "Luna Faye," he greeted, inclining his head with that polite, understated tone of his. "I'll be in my quarters," he added as he turned to me, then back to Faye.

She gave him a faint smile...barely there but enough to be noticed, and Cole slipped out without another word, closing the door behind him.

That left just the two of us.

For a moment, neither of us spoke. I stayed in my seat, watching her quietly, letting the silence stretch. She didn't fidget, didn't try to fill the air with meaningless words. She just stood there, waiting.

Finally, I stood.

My chair scraped softly against the floor as I rounded the desk, my eyes never leaving her. She followed my movement but didn't step back. I stopped in front of her, close enough to take in every detail of her chosen attire, the curve of the collar, the fall of the fabric, the way it framed her neck.

Without saying a word, I moved around her.

I could feel her turning her head slightly to follow me with her eyes, but she didn't speak. I took my time, deliberately letting my gaze travel from her shoulders to her shoes and back up again. I wasn't just looking—I was assessing. I wanted to see if she'd gotten it wrong. If this outfit of hers, no matter how well it fit, fell short of what I'd intended for her to wear.

I hated that I couldn't fault it. Still, I kept my expression neutral.

By the time I came back around to face her, she still hadn't said a word. That surprised me. In our earlier encounters back in Silver Hollow, she had been quick to jab at me—

sharp remarks, subtle challenges, anything to prove she wouldn't bend. But here, in my territory, I half expected her to be different.

And maybe she was. For a second, I thought she was holding herself in check. That maybe she had learned to keep her tongue.

I should have known better.

The moment I stopped, she tilted her head, her mouth curving just enough to hint at trouble.

More Rewards >

"Well?" she asked casually. "Are you done inspecting me, or should I take off the dress too so you can check the innerwear? You seem to be enjoying yourself."

I narrowed my eyes at her, though my jaw tightened to keep from reacting too obviously. She had the gall to say it with a perfectly calm expression, looking at me like she'd just asked whether I wanted tea or coffee.

"You think you're funny," I said, my voice low.

She shrugged one shoulder, the movement infuriatingly graceful. “I think I’m honest. You were circling me like you were checking for contraband.”

“That was me deciding whether what you chose to wear is good enough,” I said flatly.

Her smile didn’t falter. “And? Did I pass your... inspection?”

I took a step closer, letting the silence answer for me. Her scent filled the space between us again, almost too rich now, as if the air itself was trying to test my restraint.

“I’ll decide after the meeting,” I told her.

She tilted her head again, studying me. “Meaning you haven’t decided now, or meaning you just want an excuse to look me over again later?”

I let out a slow breath, not rising to the bait. “Meaning you’ll be in front of people, and you represent me now. How you look is not just about you.”

Her brows lifted slightly. “So this is about appearances.”

“This is about everything,” I said sharply. “Every choice you make here—what you wear, what you say, who you speak to—it reflects on me. You don’t get to pretend it doesn’t.”

Her lips pressed together briefly, but I caught the flicker of something in her eyes...thoughtfulness, maybe, or calculation.

“And what about how you speak to me?” she asked softly. “Does that reflect on you too?”

I paused, realizing she’d shifted the conversation in her favor. “Don’t push it, Faye.”

She smiled again...small, infuriating, and completely deliberate. “I’m just making sure we’re both aware of the rules here.”

I held her gaze for several seconds before stepping back. “You’ll have plenty of time to test them. For now, you’re going to be where I can see you.”

“That sounds... possessive,” she said lightly.

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“That sounds like common sense,” I countered. “If you have a problem with it, too bad.”

She didn’t reply right away, instead, she glanced toward the desk, then back at me. “So... what happens now?”

“Now,” I said, walking back around to my chair, “you sit down, and we talk about the meeting. Who will be there, what to expect, and what not to do.”

Her brows rose in mock innocence. “Oh, so there’s a don’t-do list too? Should I take notes?”

“If it will help you remember,” I said dryly.

She crossed the room without being told, taking the seat opposite mine. “Go ahead then. Tell

me how not to embarrass you.”

I didn’t look at her right away. I could still feel her scent pulling at the edge of my focus.

And that was the problem.

Because no matter how I tried to keep the conversation about business, I couldn't ignore the fact that just having her in the room made it harder to think straight.

"I didn't really come here for the lecture though," she said.

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A Warrior's Second Chance

ALEXANDER

I leaned back in my chair. "Why did you come to my office, Faye?"

She crossed one leg over the other, her movements deliberate, like she knew I was watching. She met my eyes with that calm confidence that was as provoking as it was... impressive.

"I got tired of waiting for you to show up and welcome me to the Blood Crescent pack properly," she said, voice even and smooth, almost rehearsed. "So, I thought... why not come find you myself and give you a little lecture on courtesy before the great meeting?"

I should have been annoyed. I was the Alpha here—wolves didn't just stroll in and lecture me on manners. Normally, anyone with half a brain would choose their words carefully in my presence. But her tone was softer than usual, lacking the bite she usually wielded like a weapon. That disarmed me more than I cared to admit.

I don't know how she does it.

Instead of bristling, I found myself leaning back and watching her a moment longer. "Well," I said, allowing the faintest curve at the corner of my mouth, "I'm glad you know something about courtesy Luna Faye. For a moment there, I thought you had none at all. I mean... why else would you reject the outfit I sent to you this morning?"

She shrugged...light, casual, like my question wasn't worth the effort of a real answer. "Like I told Maya, I'd already made plans on what to wear. I couldn't just change my mind at the last

minute."

That easy dismissal lit a spark of irritation in me. I leaned forward slightly, my elbows on the desk. "Do you realize how disrespectful that was? That singular act undermined my authority in front of Maya, who is supposed to be my subject."

Her head tilted just a fraction, eyes narrowing slightly, but not in anger. More like she was examining me, peeling apart my words in her mind. "I didn't think you exercised your authority by deciding what the people around you wear," she said slowly, like she was

genuinely curious about my answer. “Tell me, did you pick out Cole’s outfit this morning too?”

I blinked at her, caught between surprise and disbelief.

“Because if *you* did,” she continued, her tone perfectly steady, “I’d say you’ve got a better taste for the males’ attire than the females’. What Maya brought wasn’t that impressive. Maybe *now* that I’m here, I can take over picking outfits for the female pack members while you focus on the males.”

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Her face was soft, but I could hear the deliberate provocation in her voice. She wanted to get under my skin...testing, poking, looking for cracks. And the fact that she thought I had the time or inclination to play stylist for my pack members was absurd.

“You’re being a brat on purpose,” I said flatly, my eyes locked on hers. “Is that how they all behave in Silver Hollow?”

Her expression didn’t shift, not even a twitch. She didn’t flinch or look away, didn’t even seem mildly insulted. If anything, she looked faintly amused.

“I was raised to have my own opinions and my own taste,” she replied without hesitation.” And if, for any reason, someone thinks they need to have a say in what I wear, then my opinion should be sought too. I’m not a pet, Alpha Alexander.”

Her voice sharpened slightly, not in volume, but in precision, each word clipped just enough to carry its weight. “And this has nothing to do with how people behave in Silver Hollow. If an entire pack is to be judged by the actions of individuals, then I’d be right to assume that all members of the Blood Crescent pack are arrogant, cold-hearted, and lacking in basic

manners.”

I felt the words like a strike—not enough to knock me down, but enough to remind me she could land a hit when she wanted to. Anyone else would’ve been crushed under the weight of my response for daring to speak to me like that.

But with her... it was different. Not because I couldn’t punish her...I could...but because she was my mate. Bound to me by duty, and the truth was... I didn’t even want to punish her.

Instead, I sat there, letting the sting settle.

Her eyes flickered, and I saw it—the subtle satisfaction in the curve of her lips, the almost imperceptible lift of her chin. She thought she’d won. And maybe she had for now.

I'd let her have this little victory. I did the same thing with my sister Irene. Sometimes the quickest way *to* shut them up was to let them think they'd gotten the last word.

So I leaned back again, studying her. "You enjoy this, don't you?" I asked quietly.

Her brow arched. "Enjoy what?"

"Pushing," I said. "Seeing how far you can go before I snap."

She smiled faintly, almost playfully. "Maybe I do. But you haven't snapped yet, have you?"
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"No," I admitted. "Not yet."

She leaned forward slightly, resting her elbows on the arms of the chair. "Then maybe you're

not as easy to provoke as you think."

I huffed a quiet laugh, shaking my head. “Or maybe I’m choosing not to give you the satisfaction.”

“Or maybe,” she countered, “you like it.”

I went still, holding her gaze. “Careful.”

Her lips curved into something that was half a smile, half a challenge. “Or what? You’ll tell me to sit quietly in the corner and look pretty?”

“I could,” I said, my voice low. “And you’d ignore me.”

Her smile widened just enough to confirm I was right. “Exactly.”

For a moment, neither of us spoke. The air between us felt like a taut wire, stretched thin but refusing to break.

“You know,” I said finally, “most wolves wouldn’t dream of talking to me the way you do.”

“Most wolves aren’t me, she replied simply.

“That’s... painfully obvious,” I muttered, though there was no real heat in my words.

She tilted her head, studying me again. “Does it bother you? That I don’t bow my head and nod along like everyone else?”

I considered the question longer than I expected. “No,” I said at last. “It bothers me that you think I’m trying to control you when I’m not.”

Her brows lifted slightly. “You sent me an outfit this morning and expected me to wear it without question.”

I shrugged. “That wasn’t control, that was... tradition. Presentation matters here. Especially for you.”

“Presentation,” she repeated, tasting the word. “You mean appearances.”

“Yes” I said plainly. “And whether you like it or not, the way you present yourself reflects on

me.”

She leaned back in her chair, crossing her arms. “So I’m a reflection now. Good to know.”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“It’s what you said.”

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I exhaled slowly, reminding myself she was deliberately twisting my words. “You’re impossible.”

“Thank you,” she said, the corner of her mouth twitching.

“That wasn’t a compliment,” I said.

“It sounded like one.”

More Rewards >

I shook my head, trying not to let the amusement creep into my expression. “You exhaust me, Faye.”

“Then maybe you should stop entertaining me,” she said.

I leaned forward, resting my forearms on the desk too. “And maybe you should stop mistaking my patience for weakness.”

Her eyes sparkled with that dangerous mix of defiance and intrigue. “Maybe I like testing the

limits.”

“I know you do,” I said quietly. “But be careful, Faye. You might not like what happens when you finally find them.”

For the first time, she didn’t fire back immediately. Her gaze lingered on mine for a long,

loaded second before she looked away.

I think she finally got the message.

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A Warrior's Second Chance

FAYE

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Cole returned a few minutes later, his expression polite as he walked in. He gave a small nod

toward Alexander before looking at me.

“Apologies for interrupting,” he said, voice formal as always, “but the members are gathered and waiting to meet the Luna.”

For a heartbeat, my stomach tightened.

A flicker of nerves crawled up my spine. I didn’t know what their reaction to me would be. Would they be polite? Cold? Would they stare like I was some exotic creature dragged in from the outside? This wasn’t Silver Hollow, where people at least knew my name and my family. Here, I was the outsider.

Still, I brushed the thought aside quickly. I wasn’t here to audition for the position of Luna. This wasn’t a popularity contest. I was already bound to Alexander by duty, and duty didn’t come with an approval rating. Whether they liked me or not, whether they accepted me or whispered behind my back, they were stuck with me. Just as I was stuck with them... and with their Alpha.

I was halfway lost in that thought when Alexander’s voice pulled me back.

“Are you ready?”

The question caught me off guard, though I didn’t let it show. I glanced at him, and for a moment, I wondered if he actually wanted to know or if it was just one of those perfunctory things people say when the answer doesn’t matter.

His face gave nothing away. Classic Alexander-expression measured, tone neutral, eyes watching like he was trying to read every unspoken word.

I nodded. “Why not? Of course I’m ready.”

Even if I wasn’t, what difference would it make? He would still expect me to go. And it wasn’t like he actually cared whether I was prepared. The question felt like false courtesy,

something to fill the air before he ushered me out.

“Good,” he said simply, straightening his posture. “They’ve been waiting.”

I arched a brow. “I’m sure they have. What exactly am I supposed to say to them? Or am I just expected to smile and look pretty while you do the talking?”

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The corner of his mouth twitched—amusement or annoyance, I couldn't tell. "You can speak if you want. But I'd advise keeping it simple. First impressions matter here."

"That's funny," I said, folding my arms. "Because first impressions aren't something you seem to care about when it comes to me."

His eyes narrowed slightly. "Meaning?"

"Meaning," I replied, "that's rich coming you."

Cole cleared his throat quietly, clearly sensing the tension. "Alpha, Luna... the members are waiting," he reminded us.

Alexander's gaze stayed locked on mine for a moment longer before he finally looked away." We'll be right there."

When Cole stepped out of earshot, Alexander took a step closer, and I subconsciously took a step back. "You don't have to like me, Faye. But when we walk into that hall, we present a united front. No snide comments, no sarcasm meant to undermine me."

gave him a slow, deliberately sweet smile. "I would never dream of undermining you, Alpha Alexander."

The way his jaw flexed told me he didn't believe a word of it. "I mean it," he said, his voice dropping lower, quieter, but no less firm. "They'll be watching everything, how you stand, how you speak, even how you look at me. If they sense division, it gives them an excuse to question my leadership. And yours."

I tilted my head slightly. "So, this isn't about me making a good impression. It's about me protecting yours."

"It's about protecting both of us," he corrected, though I caught the faintest glimmer of something in his eyes. Maybe irritation...maybe worry. "You're their Luna now, and that title carries weight."

I let out a quiet breath, the word still feeling strange in my head. "Fine. I'll play along. You don't have to worry, I know my duty and I take it seriously." THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY FndNovel.net

His lips curved faintly—something between a smirk and a real smile. "I hope so."

For a moment, neither of us moved. Then, with a subtle gesture toward the door, he said, "Shall we?"

I glanced once at my reflection in the tall mirror by the wall. The woman staring back at me looked composed enough—chin lifted, shoulders squared, eyes steady. On the surface, I looked every bit the Luna they were about to meet. But beneath it, I was still weighing every

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step, every word, every glance.

I turned back to him. “Let’s get this over with.”

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His brows lifted slightly, but he didn’t argue. He simply fell into step beside me as we left the

room.

When we arrived, it wasn’t the full pack like I’d pictured. No grand crowd spilling into the hall, no chorus of voices echoing off the walls. Instead, only the elders were present, along with a handful of wolves probably holding key leadership positions and a few others—handpicked, I assumed—to “represent” the rest.

They were already waiting in the meeting room, standing in a loose, uneven cluster. But as soon as Alexander stepped in, the shift was immediate...they straightened, aligned themselves, and watched him with sharp, expectant eyes. Whether that was respect or fear, I couldn’t tell. Probably a mix of both.

Alexander's presence filled the room instantly, as it always did. He didn't have to raise his voice, he didn't even have to smile. "Good evening," he said, tone even and controlled. "Thank you for coming on such short notice."

I stood just behind him, hands relaxed at my sides, chin lifted.

He didn't bother with small talk. "I would like to introduce you to my mate, Faye, from the Silver Hollow pack, as you already know. Faye is your Luna."

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