

The Alpha's Secret Luna #Chapter 23: Trash - Read The Alpha's Secret Luna Chapter 23: Trash

Chapter 22

The room felt heavy. It was thick with the lingering chill of the fever that had left Sophia drained but not defeated. She lay propped against a tangle of pillows, one arm discarded carelessly across her forehead, blue eyes sharp despite the exhaustion roiling beneath her skin. Orion sat across from her, the wooden chair creaking under his weight as he leaned forward, lazing his stare in an attempt to break through the wall she held so tightly.

"I never called you trash though." Orion pointed out.

"You said I look like trash."

"It doesn't mean you are trash."

"You insinuated that I was trash though." She told him.

"And you jumped to conclusions. I never said it..."

"Outright."

"You're being stubborn," he said, voice rough and low like gravel sliding down a slope.

"And you are an ass." She told him.

"Are we going to do this all night?" He asked her.

Sophia didn't respond immediately. Instead, she turned her head away, exposing the sharp line of her jaw, muscles taut with refusal. "I don't care if you do..." she finally muttered, the words laden with iron and fatigue. "...or rather we. You are the annoying one here."

Her defiance stirred something inside Orion. He wanted to meet her stubbornness with softness, to soothe the raw nerves, but the sharp edge of her words pulled at the cords of his own tempered anger. He swallowed, then pressed again.

"You don't have the strength for this fight." He said softly. "You can save your energy for later, when you are healthy."

A dry laugh escaped her lips. "I really don't have the energy and I'm not so sure I'll have the energy when I'm healthy either."

"And even if I did," she continued, "I wouldn't waste it on you."

Their gazes locked, warriors sizing each other up in a battle of wills. Neither willing to back down, both bound by weariness they didn't admit aloud. For long minutes, silence twined around them, punctuated only by the faintest rasp of Sophia's labored breathing.

Finally, Orion shifted, voice softer but no less heavy with meaning. "The whole pack voted."

Her brow lifted, surprised despite herself.

"Okay?"

"Not just the elders," he continued, voice a mixture of weariness and resolve. "Everyone decided you'd stay."

Sophia blinked, the news washing over her in waves she hadn't expected. She swallowed, uncertain whether to breathe relief or brace for disappointment.

Orion's dark eyes searched hers. "I know you hate that I sent you away, but I'm curious though, why?"

"Why what?" She asked him.

"You don't even belong here. You are not a part of this pack but you are attached when you don't belong here so I want to understand, why?"

The question hung between them like smoke curling from a dying fire. Sophia's shoulders slumped and the fight flickered in her eyes. She looked down, her voice barely a whisper, fragile but honest. "You're right. I don't belong here. Not like you or them."

A pause, fuller than heavy silence.

"But... even with your annoying presence... and everything I hate about this place which if I'm not clear is you, I feel safer here."

She looked back up raw vulnerability shining through the armor she barely wore. "I can't explain why. I don't even understand it myself. But I feel safe in this place with people I don't even know."

Orion didn't speak. He simply nodded, his jaw tight. It could be that what she felt had to do with her last but she didn't remember a single thing about her life except her name.

"Never thought Nirvana would be a place where someone would feel safe." He said to her,

She opened her mouth to speak but he shook his head. "Get some sleep," he commanded, his voice softer than before but just as firm. "You really do look like trash."

"Kind words from an ogre." She muttered. "Get out of here, your presence makes the air unclean."

"But you were breathing so well," he pointed out.

"I never said so."

That wry corner of his mouth twitched before he rose from the chair, the sound of his boots on the rough floor echoing in the cool room.

He paused at the door, turning back one last time. "Tomorrow, you move to your own room."

Her voice, though weak, held a bitter edge. "Hopefully far from where you live."

Orion gave her the middle finger not that she could see him though.

With that, he left, leaving behind the quiet hum of the room and the scent of winter drifting just beneath the closed door.

The corridor outside was dim, lit by flickering sconces casting dancing shadows on stone walls worn smooth by years of footsteps. Orion's boots padded steadily as he made his way toward the compound's heart, the section known as the Residences. The Keeper of Residences, Serena, oversaw that domain.

Orion found her by the common area, seated with a ledger on her lap and a calm, precise manner slicing through the common clamor of arrivals and preparations.

"Serena," Orion called softly.

Her strong gaze lifted, eyes sharp yet warm. "Orion, what's the news? Is she awake?"

He inclined his head. "She is but we need a room for her. Is there any available? Somewhere quiet." He told her and after a second thought added, "and close to my room also."

Serena closed her ledger, setting it aside, with a frown on her face. "I'll find her a room. Somewhere quiet, private. Natural light if possible. But, are you sure you want her in a place next to yours?"

Orion smiled widely and devilishly. "She requested it."

Serena was shocked by the smile but didn't say anything. "I'll have it ready by dawn."

"Thank you," he said curtly, then turned to leave.

Orion had one more place to be that night. The council chamber was cool but tense, the air thick with responsibility and unraveling knots of fear. Brynhild and Ronan waited, their expressions stoic but shadowed.

"Any word on Tobias?" Orion asked, voice low.

Ronan shook his head, frustration tight in his jaw. "We found no trace. Scoured that entire area. Nothing."

Brynhild's silver eyes pierced the dim light. "His whistle was real. Someone had to have it."

"Right," Orion muttered, biting back a gnawing worry. "But Tobias wasn't there."

"Nor could we find a hint he ever passed through," Ronan added.

Orion's frown deepened. "Then we'll have to ask Sophia."

Ronan's hesitation was sharp. "She just woke up. Shouldn't we let her rest?"

Orion paused, gaze drifting toward the infirmary door where soft echoes of healing filled the hall.

"Rest first," he decided, voice firm. "We wait until she's stronger. Then we ask her everything."

Brynhild nodded slowly, relief tightening in her posture as she released a breath beneath her breath.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.