

# Their Hidden Princess – Chapter 1

My mother abandoned me for eighteen years, but she brought me back from the orphanage to marry me off. Though, I was wolfless—a disgrace to her. That’s why she abandoned me. She preferred her adopted daughter to me. Yet still, I am expected to marry someone I’ve never met.

I stared at the list in front of me. The names looked familiar. Wolfham. Lunerly. Moonraiser. The photos next to the name were of some of the most handsome men I’d ever seen. Each with striking features and shiny gold eyes.

Alphas.

I scoffed before shoving the list across the table. I slumped back in my chair and crossed my arms over my chest. I raised one eyebrow.

“So I’m supposed to pick one like a cut of meat?”

The woman standing in front of me, my mother, sighed. “Zora,” she sounded exhausted. “They’re all lovely men. Each the heir to their namesake. Excellent alphas. They could teach you a lot.”

I felt a scowl form across my face. My tone turned bitter. “Why don’t you let Amara chose and I’ll take her scraps,” I said. I shoved the paper in front of me further towards my mother. “I doubt any of the men will want a wolfless wife anyways.”

My mother’s face fell. The familiar guilt I’d seen made its way to her eyes. “You are first born,” She said softly. “You have the right to choose. Wolf or not.”

“First born yet you abandoned me for eighteen years,” I snapped. “Clearly, I’m not the one you care about. Your adopted daughter is. So why don’t you let her choose.”

My mother’s mouth twitched as if she were about to cry. I sharply stood up from my chair and stomped towards the door to the room. I wrenched it open and left Victoria in her office.

I felt like we’d had that same conversation a hundred times in the last six months I’d been living with Victoria and Amara. Queen Victoria. Of the Luna pack. One of the strongest and most feared werewolf packs in the world.

But I didn’t grow up knowing that. I grew up bouncing from orphanage to foster home to orphanage, thinking I was just a human girl who no one loved. The latter was true, but the former was that I was heir to the Luna throne. I only learned that the day I turned eighteen.

I stood on the street with my things in a bag, nowhere to go after being told I was too old to stay in the orphanage. As the tears began to stream down my face, she appeared.

Something told me the woman with fiery red hair and golden honey eyes had to be related to me. Her nose as the same shape as the one I saw in the mirror. When she smiled at me, the same dimple I'd come to hate mirrored itself on her face.

I dropped my bag immediately. Then she told me her name was Queen Victoria Luna. And she was my mother.

I had a million questions running through my head but the only one that escaped from my throat was a "Why?"

It's a question Victoria has never answered. That gave me all the information I needed to know. My mother never loved me. Never wanted me. I tossed aside like old clothes. The only reason she returned to get me was to validate her lineage and to secure the place on the Luna throne.

I was a political pawn.

That and I was a political pawn without a wolf.

Victoria's lack of love was further proved as she asked me questions about my childhood. Irritability at the full moon? No. A longing to run? No. An itchy, scratchy feeling in my bones? What the hell was she on about?

Then she told me I was supposed to be a werewolf. A being who could transform into a wolf on the flip of a dime. With super strength and hearing and all the cool occult abilities I'd read about in books. But I had none of it. I was exceptionally ordinary.

Another reason for Victoria to hate me. But that was when I learned her signature guilty look. The sadness that crept over her and melted itself onto her face.

It was burned into my skull as I left the room where Victoria threw the marriage candidates at me. I blinked a bunch of try and get it out of my head. It had slowly faded when I heard my name called and whipped around to see it again.

"Zora, please," my mother pleaded. "You are the heir to the Luna throne. You need a mate. I'm trying to help you."

"Help me?" I scoffed. "If you truly wanted to help me then you wouldn't have abandoned me. You don't want to help me. You don't even want me here."

"Of course I want you here," Victoria replied, shoulders sagged. "I love you more than anyone, Zora. You are my first born."

"If you love me then why did you leave me!" I snapped.

Victoria stood, silently. She ran her hands over her face before dropping them in a shrug.

“I was trying to protect you,” She said “You will learn—”

“I don’t want to learn,” I threw back at her. “Tell me.”

“It’s for your safety that I don’t,” she said.

She opened her mouth to speak again but I cut her off out of spite. “Is this why you haven’t introduced me yet? Have kept me hidden in this corner of the castle for the last six months? I haven’t had a chance to explore the place where I’m supposed to be from. To ‘protect’ me? If you wanted to keep me safe you would have left me alone!”

“Zora, please,” Victoria was beginning to break. “You will learn it all in time. Just know that I love you. I am your mother!”

“You’re my nothing,” I growled. “You are some random woman who is stumbled into my life six months ago and is using me for your own gain.”

Victoria paused. The hurt in her eyes was evident. I wish I cared. She swallowed thickly.

“You’re leaving tomorrow,” she said, quietly. “You will attend Lunaton Alpha Academy. If you graduate, I will tell you everything you want to know. You are free to leave.” She lowered her voice more. “If you wish.”

“I can leave?” I tipped my chin up to meet her gaze. “So, no marriage.”

Victoria grimaced. “If you wish.”

“I do,” I snapped. “And I’ll graduate your stupid Alpha Academy and I expect answers immediately. Otherwise, I’m gone.”

With that, I turned on my heel and left her glaring into my back.

It only took a week to get me enrolled in the “Alpha Academy”, whatever the hell that was. I packed what little I had back into my bags and set off in a car away from the castle. It was the first time I’d seen my country, all fading into a blur of green as I was shipped off to my next prison.

When the car rolled to a stop in front of the admissions building, I was left slack jawed. Alpha Academy looked like any other human college. It had older architecture but everything looked the same as the University I’d grown up next to. The people walking around looked like I did. No fancy clothes, no crowns. It was if I was suddenly human again.

I breathed a sigh of relief. This was easy. I could do this. I’d excelled in high school. Graduated with a four-point-oh. Did I have any friends? No. But, honestly, I didn’t need friends. I needed to fight my way through this school and come out with enough knowledge to knock Victoria off her high horse.

I stepped out of the car as the driver helped me with my bags. No one even gave me a second glance. As far as they knew, I was just another rich girl coming to learn. I wasn't the disgraced heir of the throne. Suddenly, a weight felt like it had been lifted off my chest. I could do this. I could make it through.

I grabbed my bags and started towards the admissions hall. Just as I reached the stairs, a mass of black fur came into my peripheral. I was knocked onto the ground in a flurry of my things.

The weight that had just been lifted came slamming back into me like a ton of bricks. Then, I started to scream as every bone in my body felt a surge of electricity course through it like blood.