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AN
Acceptance
WEDDING

ACCEPTANCE - A Wedding
By Jess Buffett & Tamsin Baker

Note: This story is set after the events of Acceptance [Australian Alphas 1]

“Why the hell am I doing this again?” Axel grumbled, shifting uncomfortably in front of the mirror.

“Because you’re whipped?” Liam said flippantly while working on his own suit jacket.

Axel growled. “I’m not whipped.”

“You sure about that?” Kian added. “I mean, what other shifters do we know that would go through all of this? Granted, the humans finally pulled their heads out of their arses and made it legal here, so I guess it could help but...”

“It’s for Will,” Axel muttered, doing his best to ignore the sly looks from his Betas. “He may be a Witch but he was raised a human. And humans do this sort of thing. Which apparently requires the use of these barbaric clothes.”

“Oh Jesus,” Kian groaned coming over to stand in front of him. His Beta slapped his hands away from his tie and began fixing it for him. “How the hell did you even make it through basics without being able to do this properly?”

Grimacing when the tie tightened just that little bit further, Axel let out a sigh when Kian was done and stepped back. “It wasn’t something we had to worry about often.”

His family wasn’t very formal, and then serving in the military for a decade hadn’t afforded him many times to attend any events, let alone a human wedding.

“Why wasn’t he happy with just the mating? That’s good enough for us.” Kian groaned as he tightened his own collar.

Axel rolled his eyes, frustration starting to mount inside himself. “I already told you...” He turned on them to tell them to stop. He didn’t really want to do this, but how to explain that to his Betas?

He loved Will. Adored him. But this flowers and frills thing made no sense to him.

Help came from an unexpected corner.

“I think it’s great you’re doing this for Will, Axel. I know I’ve been giving you both shit for it,” his brother, Joel said and Axel grimaced, remembering all the jokes about pansy’s Joel had dished out over the past month. “But you know... Will’s had a pretty shit life, no parents and then finding out he’s a witch and a pretty powerful one too. I say do whatever he wants. If he wants flowers and a tux, for one day. Do it, bro.”

Axel could have kissed his brother at that moment, but instead, he just grinned and let his Betas slink away muttering about how nice a guy Will was.

Will was the best. The most amazing mate an Alpha could have. Not only was he sexy as hell, so powerful most of the Witches now looked up to him... but he was also kind and loving towards every member of the pack.

“Hey son, can I bend your ear a minute?” His dad stuck his head in and Axel nodded.

“Sure dad.”

His brother and his Betas filtered out while his dad moved closer, his eyes dancing with mirth.

“You know your mother’s a mess? She’s blubbing all over Will and saying how this will be the most beautiful wedding ever.”

Axel rolled his eyes. “Yeah, well, with all the money we’ve been throwing at it and the Witches gifts, it bloody better be.”

His dad cleared his throat. “We have a bit of a situation. Some of the shifters are nervous about Will’s family coming. What would you like to do about it? The last thing we want is a fight to erupt.”

Axel growled, letting the depth of it rumble through his vocal chords. “Tell them, that if they don’t wish their Alpha well in his mating, they may leave. Otherwise, they will be lined up, in their chairs, and they will respect Will’s family as I do. The Witches are far more powerful than most of the shifters we have, so they should show more respect, not less.”

His father bowed his head. “Yes, son. I agree with you. Not only are the Witches powerful allies, but they are Will’s family. I will go out and deliver the message now.”

His father turned away, paused then swivelled back.

“I’m very proud of you, son. You were preparing this for Will even before the country made this ceremony legally binding. You’re proving you would do anything for your mate. Including suffering through all those bouquets out there,” Larry said with a smirk.

Axel shook his head in bewilderment. “There are just so damn many of them.”

“Still,” his father added, his hand landing on Axel’s shoulder briefly. “You’ve done me, and your mother very proud.”

An unusual tickle heated the back of his throat and he coughed it out.

“Thanks, dad.”

His father left the room and Axel was left alone to stare at himself in the mirror, unsurprised when Joel appeared in the reflection, grinning like the fool he was.

“Yo, bro. You ready to do this?”

Nodding and taking one last moment to straighten his suit, he nodded. “Yeah. Let’s do this.”

Will stood near the window, looking out over the yard where everyone waited for him. A temporary isle has been set up, Axel's mother going to such great lengths that even a garden arch sat at the end where Axel stood, pacing up and down a small patch.

Smiling, Will shook his head at his mate.

"And what, may I ask, are you grinning at?" asked Teresa, one of the Witch elders he had come to know well.

"Axel," Will answered, turning back to look at his mate. "He's pacing like he thinks I'm going to leave him standing at the altar by himself."

Teresa chuckled. "I'm sure that's not the issue."

With a grimace, Will nodded and turned back to her. "You're right. It's probably all those hearts and flowers. I mean, damn, there are so many. It looks like St Valentine partied a little too hard and threw up all over the place."

Looking slightly horrified at his description, Teresa blinked. "Well, that was quite the mental image. Thank you for that, dear."

"It's just so..." He couldn't find the words and Teresa cocked her head to the side.

"You don't want to do this Will?"

Her insight was too powerful for him to lie to. He'd been pushing through all of his misgivings for weeks, but they'd built to the point where nervous energy clutched his gut like a powerful punch.

"I don't know anymore. Don't get me wrong. I love Axel. I'd do anything to be with him... but this all just seems like so much fuss, and hassle, and money! Damn, the money! What a waste!"

Teresa smiled with the tenderness of an old woman looking down upon a child.

"Don't be concerned about the money. That's the last thing you need to worry yourself about."

Will glanced away, slightly embarrassed. After growing up poor, it was quite shocking that his partner was so well off. The Woodland's had been exceedingly generous.

"I know, but..."

The door opened and his friend Tara burst inside, her beautiful hair swept into a formal updo, and her killer body wrapped in a black dress.

"Wow, you look amazing Will! You ready? He's waiting."

Will took a steadying breath. Yes. He was ready for this. He needed to forget about all the money and the flowers... and focus on what today was about.

His love for Axel, and Axel's for him.

"Yes. Definitely. Let's go."

He grabbed hold of Teresa and Tara's hand and together, they walked outside and into the beautiful garden.

"Good luck." They both whispered to him, slipping into the crowd.

Will was left alone, at the beginning of the long aisle, feeling like his necktie was choking him.

Axel could count on one hand the number of times he had been left speechless. Funnily enough at least three of those times could be attributed to his mate. And today was no different.

Watching Will make his way toward him as their family, friends and Leap surrounded them in such a public display of their connection, Axel realized he finally understood the human need for a ceremony like this.

Their mating had been intimate, Axel introducing Will as his mate to his Leap had been a statement, but this...this was a declaration.

His leopard prowled just beneath the surface, a sudden primal need to public claim Will overwhelmed his senses. Axel had to reign himself in knowing full well that Will would not appreciate that kind of a gesture right at that moment.

The entire ceremony went rather quickly after that. Axel was aware of their celebrant speaking, and words being exchanged by both he and Will, yet aside from the overpowering scent of pollen surrounding him, Axel's entire focus was on his need for his mate.

When the chance finally came to take Will into his arms Axel didn't hesitate. He kissed him with every ounce of passion in his soul, a cheer going up from the large crowd around them.

When he finally pulled back to stare down into Will's eyes, all he saw was a dazed love and a gorgeous little smile.

"Wow."

He smirked as he straightened Will once again. He didn't remember practically bending him in half, but he must have. "Well, you wanted this to be special. This is my way of doing that."

They were surrounded by well wishes and everyone was corralled into the Marquee that had been set up with banquet tables and music.

"Hey, come here." Will grabbed him just as they were about to step into their family party and pulled him under the shade of a beautiful yellow wattle tree.

"You okay?" Axel asked his mate, and now by all definitions, his husband.

Will nodded. "Yes, today was perfect. Everyone seems to be having a great time."

"I'd do anything for you, Will. You know that."

Will frowned. “But you know I didn’t really need this? I know it’s legal now but our mating was more than enough of a commitment for me.”

Axel stared at his mate for a moment, absorbing the uncomfortable look on Will’s face.

He pointed towards the marquee. “Are you telling me you didn’t want all of this shit, either?”

“Either? I thought you wanted it!” Will exclaimed.

“No! As if I give a shit about flowers and paperwork.”

They both stared at each other intensely for a moment, and then Will started to laugh. Big belly laughs that had him leaning against the tree in hopes of keeping him standing.

“I thought I was doing it for you,” Will explained trying to catch his breath.

Axel couldn’t help it, and he started to chuckle too. “And I thought I was doing it for you.”

“I can’t believe we did all this for our families!”

Will pushed himself upright and wiped at the tears on his face. “Welcome to being human!”

Sighing, Axel shrugged. “Ah well, at least we get to enjoy a big party.”

Will went to move back to the marquee and Axel sobered, grabbing his mate and pulling Will’s warm body into his.

“You know I kinda get it though. Why you, or your family, or anyone, would want to get married. I love you, and I want the whole world to know it.”

Will lifted his chin and kissed him, the flavour of love and devotion permeating his senses and making his leopard once again demand to grab up his mate and take him to bed.

Axel growled. “Keep that up though and I’ll be dragging you away from this to show you how shifters really get *married*.”

With a sly grin, Will slid his hand down Axel’s chest. “I like the sound of that, but for now...Let’s go celebrate, husband.”

With that, Will tugged Axel into the party, and into the rest of their lives.