

## Chapter 71 - Denying the Alpha

“Oh, my Goddess, your awake”, I squeal at the top of my lungs as I run happily into my uncle's room. I have never been so relieved in my entire life. Without sparing a second thought, I throw my body across his and squeeze him with all my might. I couldn't believe it. He was going to be okay. It wasn't until this moment that I allowed myself to so much as consider that he was really going to make it, no matter what I'd been trying to convince myself or Amy of beforehand.

“Uhm ouch”, his dry voice croaks. Thank you, goddess, for the miracle that is his voice. It feels so good to hear it again.

Amy's proud and teary eyes watched over us as we embraced. I am so happy for her. I couldn't imagine how hard this had been for her. I am so relieved that she didn't lose her mate. Maybe now she will go home and get a good night's sleep. Goddess knows she needed it. Amelio squirmed a little in my arms.

“Oh my gosh, Amelio, I am so so so sorry, I couldn't help myself. I have been so incredibly worried about you. I was terrified that I'd never get to see you again.” I fussed over him as I blabbered, feeling guilty. So very, very guilty. I would always hate myself for bringing all this trouble to their doorstep. They had busy but peaceful lives before I came along and tore everything apart. It was all I could think about since the attack, well, that and the Curse drama.

Quit blaming us all the time. Sapphire sighed. We aren't responsible for our crazy ex mate! We would have died if we had stayed! I have said it before, but I'll repeat it again, and I will keep repeating it until you believe it, and not just saying that you do but, in your heart, truly believe that Declan is the only guilty party here!

I could tell Sapphire was feeling a little hurt by my deafening silence, she had this emotional moment, but I didn't have the words for her right now, so I chose to ignore her until I found them. Why did feelings have to be so hard to put into context sometimes? Why was it that I knew how I felt but couldn't explain it? It was truly frustrating.

I can't believe how much better Amelio looks. He has healed even more since my last visit. I was surprised. He looked so completely normal now. If I didn't know all he had been through recently, I would never have guessed that a mentally unhinged Alpha male had brutally attacked him in his own home, almost killing him.

"You do not need to apologize. There was nothing you could have done. I am the one who is sorry. I should have been able to protect you. I should have called for help. He took you, and it was all my fault. I am sorry that I failed you, Faith. I will carry that burden until the day I die." I can't handle it. He doesn't really blame himself, does he?

"Stop that! Do you hear me? You need to stop that right now!" I wailed. "You are the best uncle a girl could ever have. You are brave and caring..... generous, protective, fiercely loyal and not to mention extremely thoughtful. In no way do you have anything to be sorry for." I hugged him again as I broke down. I was careful, however, this time, as I didn't want to hurt him again.

"I'm so terribly sorry, Kyle", Amelio mumbled over my shoulder. I could feel his chin slightly digging into my collarbone, so I knew he must be looking down. I wish he could bring himself to look Kyle in the eyes, maybe then he could see what I feel through the bond, and that was that he didn't blame him. Not even in the slightest.

"I would be forever shattered into a million pieces, irrevocably damaged, if something happened to my beautiful Amy, she is my sun, moon and stars. My beginning and my end. I know what it is to have a mate. I should have taken better care of Faith. I will understand if you choose to punish me, but please spare my mate" I could feel Kyle's horror. I could feel his doubt. Wave after wave of Kyle's emotions spilled out through the mate bond. Did his boyhood friend believe he was that heartless? What could he do to fix it? I wish I could tell Kyle that it was Amelio's own guilt doing this to him, and it has nothing to do with Kyle's leadership, but I didn't want to voice my concerns for him right now. It would just make my uncle feel even worse.

"Amelio, Faith is absolutely right! You have nothing to be sorry about. I don't ever want to hear another apology about this. The only thing I want to hear from you right now, man, is how you're feeling." Kyle attempted to shove his feeling down, something I could feel through our incredible bond.

Promise me that we will talk about it later? I mind linked Kyle while doing the best I could to send him feelings of love and support. I hope he can feel them.

Don't worry about me. Let's worry about Amelio for now. He quickly linked back.

“Aside from a burning dry throat, I feel great, actually. A little tired, which is strange because I have just been unconscious for days, so you’d think I would feel well rested.” Amelio shrugged. I chuckled lightly to myself. I knew that feeling all too well. I had been there myself after my seizure landed me in the hospital.

“He’s doing great.” Amy stood beside him and swept the few strands of his hair from his face, and planted a gentle kiss on his forehead.

“How long ago did you wake up?” I asked. “I would have come straight away if I’d known.”

“Only about half an hour ago.” Amy looked at me apprehensively. “I was going to mind link you shortly, but I just wanted to spend some time with him first.” She explained.

“Would you like us to leave?” I offered, honestly, I didn’t want to, but they deserved their privacy, and if that’s all that they were going to ask for, then I was more than happy to give them that.

“No, that's okay, Faith. You can stay. We want you to stay.” My aunt and uncle answered together.

“Amelio, Amy,” Kyle approached them. “You spoke to me about a holiday before all this happened. After all, you have been through. Please accept what I am about to offer. I want to pay for it immediately. You have both been such good friends to me, and you help out so much around the pack, and this past couple of weeks have been especially difficult for you. Let me help you, we are family now, after all, and it will give you guys time to recuperate. You can choose a new house while you are gone, and we will make sure everything’s all ready for you when you come back.”

Kyle's offer was exceptional. I could kiss him. He’s so sweet, but I decided to hold back. I had something bigger in mind to show him how much that meant to me, and it was inappropriate to do that in front of others.

“Oh, Kyle, that is a very generous offer, but it’s a lot of money. We just don’t know if we can accept it.” Amy blushed.

“Take it, please.” Kyle reaffirmed.

“Amy, I think we should take it. We have been saying we want to go for years before something else comes up. Let’s just go. We could use the Quality time together.” I almost pumped my fist into the air. I didn’t expect Amelio to be the one to accept the offer, not

when he just confessed his own feelings of responsibility for what happened. Still, if Amelio was happy to take Kyle's offer, then I knew that Amy would be too. And Kyle was right. They did deserve it.

"Okay, but it's quite a big holiday. We planned to go to many places. Are you sure that we wouldn't be taking advantage?" Amy fussed a little. She was always happy to help others but never asked for it in return, but I could see how much she wanted to right now.

"You have everything planned already? Great, let me know what is, where you want to stay, places you wish to visit, activities you want to try, and I'll make sure your itinerary is ready by the morning."

"Oh, Thank you so much." This time it was Amy who was emotional as she flung herself around Kyle. His eyebrows shot up in surprise, but after a moment, he moved his arms out of her grip and hugged her awkwardly back.

You and your family are big huggers. Kyle mind linked me, and I chuckled. Amelio and Amy looked at me quizzically, but I brushed them off with a slight wave of my hand.

"It's settled then. Well, we will take the holiday." Amelio beamed. It was strange to have so much joy in a hospital room that once held so much despair, but I would take what I would get.

"But" Amy let go of Kyle.

I hated that word sometimes. But what?

"Yes?" Kyle answered.

"Amelio and I have been discussing it. And... We have decided that we would like to stay in our house. We don't want to let that one thing define us or our lives here, so we would like to keep our house, please."

You are all really resilient, too. It makes me so proud to be your mate. Kyle praised me over the mind link, and I blushed. I love it when he compliments me, and strangely, even more, when he compliments my family.

"Great. It's already cleaned and repaired. You just have to replace some furniture."

We stayed with Amelio and Amy for over an hour. Amy went over her holiday plans with us in great detail. It was a delightful distraction. Kyle and I took notes so that we didn't

forget anything. I planned on adding in a few surprises of my own. I want them to enjoy this.

It was dark outside before we finally left them. I was feeling apprehensive about returning to our room. I could sense that Kyle wanted to talk about our meeting with Ingrid today, but I didn't want to. He liked my plan too much, and that scared the hell out of me, so while we walked hand in hand back to our room, I tried hard to enjoy the few moments of silence between us.