

## Chapter 84 - Denying the Alpha

I lay on the floor, cold and lonely. How long I have been here, I cannot tell. There's still no light, so maybe the sun hasn't risen yet, or perhaps I'm underground, somewhere the sun cannot reach. My teeth are chattering, and my bones hurt from the constant shiver.

"Can I have a blanket at least," I called for the umpteenth time? But no one answers. I'm not going to do them much good if I freeze to death down here.

I'm sorry I left you, Faith. I wasn't strong enough. I jumped, startled by the sudden voice. Sapphire surprised me.

Don't you dare apologize! I'm just glad that you're okay. Are you? Okay, I mean? Despite scaring me half to death, I was so relieved to hear from her finally.

Yeah, I'm fine. But there is something that I need to tell you. Something very important. The way she dreaded telling me instantly had me on edge.

What? What is it, what's wrong? I immediately feared the worst. I reached out, sensing the mate bond, terrified that I had somehow missed it dying. To my relief, I could still feel him, my love, although the connection between us was weakened and I worried about the distance between us; still, I breathed a sigh of relief. He was okay, and that meant that I was too.

It's not Kyle. It's about us. Sapphire mutters sorrowfully. I almost wanted to shut her out. I could feel her concern radiating from her in waves. Whatever she was keeping from me was huge, and that frightened me.

Are you sure that I need to know? I asked dreadfully.

Yes, I am sure. She sighed sadly.

Okay, what is it? I may not want to know, but I trusted Sapphire. If she thought I needed to, well, then I believed her.

We're carrying a pup. We're pregnant. My heart stopped. No, that couldn't be.

A pup? Are you absolutely sure? I trembled.

Yes. I'm sure. Sapphire said miserably.

Normally a pup was a wolf's greatest joy. But this baby was destined to die, and that was terrifying. How did this happen? Kyle and I had been careful. We agreed never to get pregnant, not unless we found a way to break the curse.

Sapphire? I felt cold to the bone, like I may never feel joy again or the sunlight on my skin. Everything felt so still that I swear it was like the world itself stood still for me. Time stopped for this moment,

Yes, Faith?

What do we do? I had no one else to turn to for guidance. I missed my mom and my Auntie more than ever. They would be able to help Kyle and me. I couldn't even tell Kyle about our baby. He's going to be so busy trying to find me that he won't even think to break this curse. What if he can't find me before the baby is born? Will I give birth all alone in the dark? Will I hold my baby while they died and never be able to see their face? Will my pup die never having the chance to meet their father? All these questions stampeded uninvited through my mind, each one shattering my heart a little more than the last.

There is only one thing we can do. We protect our pup! We fight with everything we have. We trust that Kyle will find us, and we pray that he gets to us in time. And then we break this curse and raise our son. We spend the rest of our lives content in the arms of our mate. That's what we do. She said fiercely.

My hand drifted to my flat stomach. It was hard to imagine that there was a life growing inside of me. An Innocent little baby. I never thought I would have this, and now I was terrified to lose it. The picture sapphire painted of Kyle and me, happy with our son, was idyllic. I wanted so badly to believe that it was possible, but I was as equally afraid to imagine what it could be like. It would only hurt more when it was taken from me.

Son? You can tell that it's a boy? I marveled.

No, I can't. It's just a guess. It could be a girl. I won't know until you give birth.

I wish we could tell Kyle. I admit. He would work himself up into a worried frenzy, and I would spend weeks trying to calm him while we tried, again and again, to break the curse in time, but at least we would be together.

Duke really wanted a pup! He would be so happy if he knew. Poor sapphire.

We sit for a while with our connection open, taking comfort in one another. I could feel her emotions just as strongly as I could feel my own. She missed Duke and was incredibly sad that she hadn't been able to spend more time with him. I felt guilty because that

was partially my fault. I was selfish and took most of our time for Kyle and me. The rest of the time, I was simply busy trying to settle into my new role, and I was too focused on my training.

I promise, once we make it out of here and I have given birth, I will give you and Duke so much time together you will tire of one another. If my baby doesn't survive, Sapphire can take me. She can live for the both of us in her form. I won't want to be here anymore anyway. My little bean was already everything to me.

I could never tire of Duke. She sighed. I promise if you ever change your mind and you want your body back, that it's yours. I could feel her hesitancy with my plan. To her, the idea of me leaving Kyle was unconscionable, so for her to agree meant more to me than I could put into words.

Thank you. I utter feeling ashamed. My heart was heavy and full of guilt. Sapphire was right. It was horrible of me to want to leave him. He would need me. I know that, but I'm not sure how I could face a world that my baby wasn't in.

You should really get some sleep. I'll keep watch. Her offer was tempting. I haven't slept since I was Brought here, and I was so tired my eyes burned, but what if I fell asleep and my kidnapper came back?

No. I don't want too." I said defiantly.

"Wake up." A hand stroked my cheek and brushed the hair from my eyes. For a brief second, I thought it was Kyle coming to wake me, but the agonizing Reality came crushing through. A light candle burned in the corner. I was still in this wretched place, and the hand upon my face was one I promised myself I would never let touch me again. Of course, this vile creature would make sure his face was the first one I was able to see. How dare he think he has a right to any part of me anymore.

"Get your filthy hands off me." I snarl. How could Declan go this far? I knew it was him. Why couldn't he just be happy with Samantha and his Alpha duties?

"You smell different." He glared at my mark with such hatred. "I miss your old scent. The one you had before that bastard pup you're carrying."

I flinched away from him. He knew about the pup already.

"I don't know what you're talking about." I sneer. I hope my face doesn't give away my shock.

“Oh, come on, Faith. I know you better than anyone, even better than Kyle, your so-called mate. I could tell that you were pregnant the moment you stepped out of that car! I almost thought about letting you go and calling this whole thing off, but there is always a way around it.” His twisted grin spread unnaturally across his face. I thought about striking him, but I had my pup to protect. I could not risk fighting Declan anymore.

“Knew.” I corrected him.

“What?” Declan looked at me, confused,

“You knew me better than anyone. You don’t know anything about me anymore. If you did, you never would have kidnapped me.” Whatever our history was, I had long forgotten it. I was different and changed, and I was proud of that.

“People don’t change Faith.” He rolled his eyes.

“I know. I said that to you when you came to me, looking for a second chance, with your promises that Grayson had helped you see the light. I knew you were full sh.it.” I glare at him. I could tell that I was getting under his skin. His nostrils only flared like that when he was angry.

“Let's make each other a promise.?” his hand reached for my face again, but I jerked away from him. He must not be a complete idiot because he didn't push it.

“Let's promise each other that we will forget everything that's happened in the past and start fresh.” nope, I was immediately wrong. He is a complete idiot. Worse, actually, he was delusional.

“You can't be serious.” I scoff

“Of course, I am.” the sincerity in which he spoke was chilling.

“Of course, I am.” I mock Declan. “Well, I don't promise.” and I would never.

“You have two choices here, Faith. You can have a life with me, or you can die in this cell,” he says cruelly.

“This right here, Declan. This is why I don't want to be with you. You’re not treating me like I am a person.” I squared my shoulders and stared him down, challenging him to deny it.

“You keep making the wrong choices,” he shouts. His fists clench and unclench at his sides. I'm sure he's thinking about striking me. Honestly, I'm surprised that he hasn't, but I'm ultimately relieved. Who knows how much my poor pup could survive.

“You are being very ungrateful, you know.” he sneers.

“Ungrateful?” I ask, shocked and horrified. “Ungrateful?” I repeated. “How on earth do you figure that?”

“Because.” he omitted, his lip twitched. Whatever he wasn't saying, it was clear he wanted to.

“Honestly, Declan. How do you think this is going to play out? I'm marked. You can't just rub it off. And even if I wasn't. I still wouldn't want you. So why? Why kidnap and chain me down here.”

“To be perfectly honest, it wasn't me. Someone else came to me and asked for my help, and when they mentioned you, well, I couldn't resist. I'm only playing along for now. Don't be worried. I'll get you out of here when the moment is right. Until then, we will just have to keep meeting in secret.” He winked.

“Someone else? Do you mean the man who was in here earlier?”

“Now that I can't tell you.” He stood and wiped his hands on his jeans.

“Please leave the candle?” I hated asking him for anything, loathed it beyond measure, but I didn't want to go back to the dark.

“Sorry, princess can't.” And with a quick huff, he blew it out.