

## Chapter 87 - Denying the Alpha

“Good morning, Faith.” that familiar nameless voice echoed throughout the room. I sat startled, trying to cover myself. I must preserve what little dignity I still had left. Damn it. I couldn’t believe that I had fallen asleep again. It was like I wanted to die.

“Is it?” I sassed back. I didn't know if it was morning, I had no way of keeping track of how much time was passing, but I dd know that I was not having a good time.

“I brought you something to eat.” he offered, ignoring my snarky quip. I don’t remember the last time that I actually ate, I was starving, and the food smelt so good, but how could I trust it. It might have something to hurt my baby in there. I had to think of someone other than myself now.

“Oh good, that looks, oh wait, I can't see it.” I snarl sarcastically and turn away from the plate of food.

“I can hear your tummy rumbling and how you sniffed for the food. I know that you're hungry. I can only guess, but I would say that you are so hungry that it’s only painful at this point.” He snickered. Apparently, I amused him in some way. Or maybe he simply took joy in my discomfort. If only it were actually funny.

“I don’t care. I’m not eating it.” I snort.

“Faith, You’re pregnant. You need to eat, if not for yourself, then for the sake of your baby.” My kidnapper pointed out. I hated it, but he was right. My baby did need the food. If I starved myself, I could miscarry, but if I ate, they could poison my little bean. Either way, I worried that I was hurting my unborn child, and there was no clear answer as to what I should do here. How could I be failing as a mother already? I hadn’t even had the chance to hold him or her.

“No.” I deny the plate of food once again. Kyle will come soon. I know he will. Then I can eat, I tell myself. I just have to make it a little longer. My baby was strong. They could hold on, but not if they were poisoned.

“I’ll make you a deal. If you eat all of your food, I’ll bring a lantern down for you. It’s not much, but it’ll light this little place right up.” He is persuasive. I’ll give him that. I would like a light, the darkness was maddening, but I didn’t want to give into him either.

“Tell you what. I will try the food, but only if you tell me your name.” I bargained. Hopefully, he would still give me the light, but if he didn’t, at least it was I who struck a deal. It made me feel a little more in control, and I needed that right now.

“Hmmm.” He hummed.

“Actually, wait, wait.” I change my mind. “That’s not what I want to ask,” I say.

“I’ll eat my food if you tell me why you took me. If you don’t, not only will I turn this meal down, but every other meal you bring me, and I’ll stop talking to you entirely.” It wasn’t much, but it was all I had to bargain with, he seemed to care about me at least a little, so hopefully, he would take the deal I was offering.

“Okay, deal. You are not getting out of here alive anyway, so it doesn’t really matter. You eat. I’ll talk.” I could hear the soft thud of a large tray being placed on the ground in front of me.

“And you want me to trust the food?” I said doubtfully. He just threatened my life.

“I don’t want to hurt you. I just don’t have any other choice. I promise you that the food is good. I will even eat a bit if it makes you feel better.” He offered sincerely.

“Okay, but you probably knew that you’d have to offer that before I ate anything, and so you left one piece untouched by poison. I get to pick the piece of food you eat. That way, you can’t cheat.” I eyed him suspiciously regardless of the fact that he couldn’t see it.

“Can we light a candle or something to see what I’m doing?” I huff. How was I supposed to know what I was eating? Or if he ate the piece of food, I chose for him if I couldn’t see it.

“No, but don’t worry, it’s all been cut up for you, and Declan is confident it’s food that you’ll like.” He says like it’s nothing to be concerned about.

“Oh well, if Declan says that, I like it.” I roll my eyes again, not that he can see. What a tool.

“Seriously though, a light please?” So, what the food was cut up, I’d still like to see what I was doing.

“I said no.” He replied, exasperated. Oh, right, like I was so exhausting, my kidnapping must be a real

Inconvenience to him.

“Fine.” I gritted my teeth. And thrust the first piece of food, my hands brushed over straight at him.

“I hope you choke,” I say as I shove the food into his hands.

“You don’t mean that”, he chuckled.

Oh, but I did, I thought. I fumbled with the tray in front of me until I found a cup. It was cold, and moisture wet the sides. Thank goddess, something to drink. I lifted the cup under my nose and sniffed at it doubtfully.

“There’s nothing in it. I promise it’s just water. If I were going to kill you, then what’s the point in feeding you. You’re chained in here; it’s not like you can get away from me. Besides, I ate a piece,” He pointed out. That was true. It was twisted but true. They could kill me anytime. Why choose food.

“I’m still going to sniff and check everything.” I snip. It was better to be safe than sorry. Just because I believed him, it didn’t mean that I should stop being careful.

“I wouldn’t have it any other way.” He sounds amused.

“Well, then, tell me. Why am I here.” Besides Declan’s creepy over the top obsession with me.

“It’s a long story. It actually starts before you or I were even born.” He explains. What the Fuck.

“Huh?” I don’t even try to mask my shock. Was he for real right now? Why would someone kidnap me over something that happened so long ago?

“What are you talking about?” I furrowed my brows. I was so confused.

“Well, if you be quiet, I’ll tell you.” He chuckles.

“Oh right, sorry, go on,” I say, feeling a little embarrassed but also annoyed. He didn’t have to be so rude.

“As I said, it’s before you and me.” The sound of his long deep breath and sharp exhale filled the space around us. It was a little dramatic. If he was trying to make me feel even more tense, then it worked. “How well do you know Alpha Jackson?” I notice that when he mentions Jackson's name that he’s very bitter. I wonder what Jackson did to him.

“Six months ago, I would have said I knew him very well, like an uncle even, but now, I’d say he’s a stranger. I don’t feel like I ever really knew the real him at all.” I reply honestly.

I have no reason to keep this a secret. Everyone knew that the Smiths and I were no longer on good terms.

“Eat”, he nudged the plate. I feel around the tray and find a sandwich that had been cut in half. Picking up one half, I give it a quick smell. There was no wolfsbane, at least as far as I could tell.

“I’m eating it.” I take a bite, and much to my displeasure, I can taste dirt. My hands were disgusting at this point and soiling anything that I touched. It was enough to put me off the rest of my food, but if I didn’t eat, I didn’t get to hear the rest of the story, and besides, I was starving, so I took another bite.

“Good. Did you know that Jackson wasn’t Always Alpha of Crescent moon? That he was never intended to be?” Wow, the surprises just don’t stop.

“No, I didn’t,” I admit. I wonder if my father or grandparents knew. If they did, they never said anything about it. I wonder why.

“What does that have to do with me?” Even if Jackson had done something terrible, even if he cheated his way to the top, how did it lead to me being trapped in here?

“I’m getting to that.” He sighed like I was annoying him.

“Oh, sorry.” He can’t tell me something so juicy and then just expect me to sit on it quietly. I wanted to scream at him to get on with the story.

“Luna Cassidy isn’t even his true mate.” He sounds mad about this, but what I can’t understand is why? was Cassidy supposed to be my kidnapper's mate or something? No, that doesn’t make any sense. They wouldn’t kidnap me over something like that. It wouldn’t fix anything. Besides, he said this started before he was born. But if she wasn’t supposed to be his mate, why did he care who she chose to be with?

“Okay, go back to the start. I feel like you jumped a whole bunch of shi.t there.” I stop him.

“Right, okay. Well, Jackson’s a lot older than most people know, and your generation doesn’t have the first clue about his past. Jackson was an Alpha but to a different pack. His first pack is where he met his first mate, his intended mate, she was a beautiful young witch, but he was cruel to her, very cruel. No one should suffer the way she did. She was held captive by her mate, beaten, tortured and raped until she became pregnant, but even then, the torture didn’t stop. She was lucky to survive, to give birth to a beautiful baby girl. This baby was a one of a kind, of course, because she...”

“She was half-witch, half-wolf.” I gasped. Could he be talking about? No, no way that was impossible. No way, it wasn’t true. I was getting ahead of myself. He had to be talking about anybody else.

“The witch eventually escaped, but it came at a great personal cost. She had to leave her beloved daughter behind.” I could literally feel the color drain from my face as the pieces came together. The truth was staring right at me, but still, it felt unreal, and I wanted to deny its possibility.

“The witch, as you can understand, was very bitter about this. Her daughter was the only thing she truly cared about, and she was taken from her. But it doesn’t end there.”

The room was so thick with emotion that it felt wrong to move, to even think about swallowing the small bite of over chewed sandwich. I had experienced very few moments like this, and I didn’t know how to feel.

“While the witch was forced to suffer years of being tortured, beaten and raped for the fun of it, Jackson was spending his free time courting another. This girl got treated with respect. She was showered with lavish dates and expensive gifts. You name it. She got it, really, and why? Because she had power and privilege, two things a lowly witch could never have.” I wanted to feel bad for Ingrid. I did. What happened to her was horrific. No one should have to endure such things, and she was amazing for having survived, but it was hard to separate her from Eloise. Kyle was innocent, but that didn’t stop her.

“The witch was not only forced to leave her only daughter, but to watch the beautiful woman Jackson chose to give his mark to, happy and pregnant with his son. Jackson never showed the witch even an ounce of the kindness he gave to this new woman, and so she swore that one day she would get her revenge. It didn’t matter how long it would take or what it would cost her, and over the years, many people have paid the price for Jackson's mistakes.”

My blood ran cold. If he was talking about the woman, I thought he was, then Kyle was in grave danger. How did I warn him about Ingrid?

“But how did Jackson take over crescent moon if he was already an Alpha somewhere else?” That part didn’t make sense to me.

“Because Cassidy was the eldest daughter of the previous Alpha, and as she had no brothers, it was Cassidy’s job to bring in the new Alpha. Jackson marked her for the title, and they merged the two packs. Crescent moon was much bigger, and so that’s where they stayed.”

How did I not know any of this?

“Wow.” That was all I could say,

“Anyway, Jackson and Cassidy had a healthy baby boy, a pack, boundless amounts of money. They had it all. Their life was picture perfect. While the witch had nothing, her home was a small run-down shack in the woods. She was surrounded by nothing and no one.” The man paused as if he was deep in thought.

How could Jackson do something like that to someone he was supposed to love and cherish.

“No one knew that Jackson had a secret daughter out there. And he was an alpha, so when he’d tell Cassidy that he was going away on business, she believed him. She had no idea he was running off to be with his other kid in secret.”

The more I found out about Jackson, the more I realized just how much of a monster he was. It was no wonder Declan was so unstable. Talk about an apple dropping straight from the tree.

“One day, Jackson's son was out with his mother, baby brother and the betas family. When they were coming back across the border, they were attacked. The eldest son was separated from the group.”

This was the same story Declan and my mom told me.

“Jackson and Cassidy believed their son died that day.” He added scornfully.

“Wait, thought?” I gasped. Was he telling me that Declan’s brother, that Conner was still alive? No way.

“The witch left a body to be discovered, of course, and used her magic to make it look like the boy. Nobody even questioned it.” The strange man's rage grew.

But the only way he could know this was if.

“Conner?” I gasped. There was no way. This could not be happening right now.

“Ah, so you know my name.” He replied distastefully.

“They ordered the whole pack not to even talk about me. They went on with their lives like I didn’t even matter. Like I was a dirty secret and buried some other mother's little boy.” The pain in his voice was raw and unmistakable. For 18 years, the world believed he was dead. No one even looked for him. I couldn't even imagine. What had Ingrid

done to him? And to that other mother out there, left to wonder what become of her baby for almost twenty years, this was all too awful.

“Okay. I hate them as much as anyone. And I would never defend them. But losing you broke Cassidy.” I say honestly. I despised Cassidy, she was a cruel woman, and I owed her no favors, but I felt like Connor deserved to know that his mother still grieved him.

“Yeah, well, the witch.” He continues.

The witch, that annoyed me.

“Use her name. You mean Ingrid.” I cut over the top of him.

“So, you figured that out too, huh?” did he think I was stupid?

“It wasn't that hard. I have heard different versions of this same story already.” I confess.

“Anyway, Ingrid couldn't bring herself to actually kill me. Jackson was suffering, and that's all she wanted. She took me in and raised me like I was her own son. Ingrid even taught me how to use my powers. They were vastly different from her own, but still, she did her best. And she worked hard on getting Eloise to accept her.” Connor explained.

It almost sounded like..... Like he respected her.

“And it was working too. They were making progress. And then, one day, Eloise just stopped coming around, and Ingrid couldn't let that go. What mom would? So, she started digging and digging until she found Eloise with Kyle. It hurt her deeply that her daughter didn't invite her into the most important part of her life, but she didn't push it. That didn't mean she didn't keep tabs on her though. When Kyle killed her, Ingrid almost killed herself, and she would have if I didn't stop her.” if he thought I felt sorry for Ingrid because she had a sad story, he could think again, not after she used it as an excuse to hurt innocent people. The very people I cared about.

“After that, as you can imagine, Kyle became her next target. But how could she get to him? And That's where you come in. It pissed her off to see Kyle alive and happy. To her, you were just another Cassidy all over again.”

But I wasn't anything like Cassidy, and Kyle was no Jackson.

“And then, as fate would have it, Kyle came to her. She had him believe all sorts of things. She even went as far as helping strangers Eloise destroyed to make her story more believable.”

Gosh, dam it. We let her play us. We made this so easy for her.

“Beta David, tell me the truth. Is he in on it?” I had to ask. He's spent so much time with me lately. I trusted him. I've befriended him. I would rip his arms from his body and then beat him with them if he were.

“No. That was a surprise to even us. They are genuinely mates.” Conner admits.

“Wow,” I whispered. Why would the moon goddess do this?

“She planned on killing you right in front of Kyle. But despite all her anger, she was drawn to David. And that's what saved you.”

My head was spinning. This was all too much.

“All this time she's been spending with David; she's been trying so hard to get him to leave. Once she had him out of that pack, she was going to kill you. But then something else unexpected happened. Ingrid noticed something, and that changed everything again.”

“And what was that?” I can't believe I went out of my way for weeks because I felt sorry for her. All the while, she was planning on killing me.

“She noticed that you were pregnant.” He remarks.

She knew I was pregnant before I did? Somehow that made it even worse.

“And she realized the only thing that would hurt Kyle more than watching his mate die was watching his mate and baby die. She lost her child, and now he would too, an eye for an eye, you know.”

My poor sweet angel was innocent in all of this. Why did everyone think it was okay to hurt him. My bean wasn't even born yet, and still, people plotted their death.

“Please, Conner. My baby, it's innocent. You can't let her have my baby.” I cried as I wrapped my arms instinctively around my belly.

“It doesn't even make any sense.” I choked back sobs.

“Eloise has already cursed my baby, and they will die minutes after birth. Why? What could she possibly gain?” I cried without shame.

“Ingrid lied to Kyle. He is still cursed, but the curse isn't tied to his life force. That's just some shit she made up. There's a way to break the curse. While you're stuck down here, she's going to magically help Kyle find it. That's actually where Declan comes in, he doesn't know it yet, but he's just her patsy, her fall boy. Once you go into labor, she will make it possible for Kyle to find you, and Declan will be with you when he does. Kyle, of



course, will kill him on site. You'll deliver your healthy baby, and Kyle won't think twice. He broke the curse, so it will be twice as devastating when the baby dies. It's her way of letting Eloise have her revenge as well as getting some of her own." Conner admits.

Please, Kyle, don't you trust her. I send out a desperate prayer. If only I could mind link him. He needs to know who she really is.

"Does Declan know who you are?" I had to know. If so, would he keep it a secret, or would he tell Cassidy that Connor was still alive?

"No, he doesn't. He hasn't met me yet."

"Don't you want him to know?"

If Declan told Cassidy, she would come looking for Connor.

"No, I don't. I must go now, finish your food."