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Sarah may have been my father's childhood sweetheart, but she abandoned him when he faced financial crisis when he was eighteen years old.

At that time, my father almost collapsed under \$100,000 of debt. His sales job barely covered our basic needs.

Sarah didn't just leave - she married our pack's Beta, claiming she "deserved better" than a failing salesman.

"I need a real wolf," she told my father, "Not some omega pretending to be more."

She didn't even say goodbye. Just disappeared one night, leaving my father broken.

That's when my mother came into his life. Their wolves recognized each other instantly as true mates.

Mother worked three jobs to help pay off father's debts. She never complained, even when her hands bled from cleaning other wolves' houses.

When I was a little girl, I'd watch her apply healing salve at night, trying to hide her tears.

"It's worth it," she'd whisper, smoothing my fur. "Your father just needs time to heal."

But when Sarah returned five years ago, everything changed. Her Beta husband had died in a pack war, and she brought her daughter Emily with her.

They showed up at our door in designer clothes, playing the grieving widow.

My father welcomed them back with open arms. He even started supporting them with money my mother earned. Every month, more of mom's hard-earned cash went to Sarah's "temporary" needs.

The worst was when Emily needed private school tuition.

Father stormed into my room one night, his eyes wild. "You'll have to leave college. Emily needs the money more - she's younger, she has potential."

Mother shocked everyone that day. She'd always been quiet, submissive. But she grabbed a silver knife and told father she'd rather die than see her daughter lose her future. Her hands shook, but her voice was steady.

"Kill me now," she said, pressing the blade to her throat. "Because I won't live to watch you destroy our daughter's life for that woman's child."

Father backed down, but he never forgave mother for standing up to him. The pack bonds between them grew colder each day.

I worked my way up to Gamma five years ago. Finally, mother could stop taking extra cleaning jobs. I still remember her crying when I handed her my first payment check.

My brother Jason was only nine then. I took over his care completely, determined to give him a better life than I had.

I trained him personally, spent hours teaching him to fight. I paid for his combat courses, made sure he had the best gear.

I didn't want him growing up ashamed like I had, watching other pups with their fancy training equipment.

I handled all the family expenses too - father's bills, grandmother's medical care, everything. My combat training business thrived, and I made sure my family wanted for nothing.

Mother could finally rest. Or she could have, if father hadn't kept inviting Sarah and Emily over. Every visit was another chance to remind us who he really wanted.

Tonight was no different. Grandmother turned to mother with that familiar sneer, her aged face twisted with contempt. "The kitchen's a mess. Clean it up and start dinner. Sarah and Emily deserve a proper welcome."

Mother just stood there silently, shoulders hunched. Years of abuse had taught her to expect nothing else.

Jason, my own brother whom I'd raised for five years, jumped in. "Mom, hurry up! Emily and Sarah are hungry!"

The same brother who'd cried in my arms when he couldn't afford school trips now treated our mother like a servant.

I couldn't take it anymore. My wolf scratched beneath my skin, demanding justice. "Why don't you cook, Jason? Or you, Grandmother? Since you're so concerned about everyone's hunger. Or did you forget how to use a stove while ordering mother around?"

Father's eyes flashed gold, his wolf rising to the surface. "Watch your tone! Your mother knows her place!"

"Oh, I know!" I smiled sweetly, letting my Gamma power leak into the room. "Sarah, why don't you cook? Show us those housewife skills that supposedly made you so perfect for father. Or can you only play house when someone else does all the work?"

Sarah's face reddened. Her perfectly manicured hands clutched her designer purse. "I... I can cook! Just watch me show you how a real wolf female handles a kitchen!"

She spent the next hour destroying our kitchen. The smell of burnt food filled the house, and I heard her cursing as she ruined pot after pot. So much for her superior skills.

Emily pulled mother toward the table, her lips curled in a smirk. "You'll have to eat in the kitchen. This is Sarah's spot now. We need to maintain proper... hierarchy."

I saw mother's hands trembling as she turned away.

"Wait." I grabbed mother's arm, feeling her flinch at the contact. Years of abuse had left their mark. "We're dining out. My treat."

I let my Gamma power fill my voice, daring anyone to object.

Father snarled, his wolf eyes glowing. "The cruise is tomorrow. Neither of you have packed! But what can I expect from a daughter who was raised by such a useless mother?"

I felt my claws extend. "What did you just say?"

"Look at you - no respect, no manners. Just like your mother." He sneered. "I should have let Sarah raise you. Maybe then you wouldn't have turned out to be such an embarrassment."

That's when mother surprised us all again. "What, those mighty hands can't pack their own bags?" Her voice was quiet but firm, years of suppressed anger finally surfacing. "Thank the Moon Goddess I didn't raise my daughter to be as helpless as you."

Father's jaw dropped as we walked out. For once, he had no quick comeback.