Alpha Lucian's Fiery Luna

Chapter 1: CHAPTER 1 Unwanted

Athena slowly opened her eyes, forcing herself to shake off the lingering drowsiness. Every day was the same routine: even before the first light of dawn, she had to wake up to prepare breakfast for her parents, older brother, and sister.

With a heavy sigh, she pushed herself off her flimsy cot, the old bed creaking dangerously beneath her weight as if it could collapse at the slightest breeze.

She carefully folded her thin blanket and glanced around her small, dimly lit room, which felt more like a storage closet than a proper bedroom.

She approached a secondhand mirror she had scavenged from the trash, a mirror with a massive crack running right across where her reflection should be. A bitter smile touched her lips.

"Another day, Athena. You can do this," she whispered to herself, trying to summon the courage she barely had left.

She grabbed her faded hoodie, slipping it over her head like armor against the world. She couldn't bear to face anyone without it. Not with her hair, once a soft black, now stained a fiery red that blazed like embers under the light.

Taking a deep breath, Athena turned the knob of her door and stepped into the hallway. The wooden floorboards groaned under her weight, and she immediately moved slower, more cautiously. Even the tiniest noise could wake her family. If that happened, there would be no mercy. There never was.

Athena Higgins. Daughter of Beta Sebastian of the Ravenclaw Pack and his wife, Marie. Younger sister to Alton and Althea.

A daughter who, despite her bloodline, had never once known what it felt like to be loved... or respected.

She moved into the kitchen without a sound, her hands quickly getting to work. She fried eggs, stirred up leftover rice for fried rice, and cooked bacon, ignoring the occasional splatter of hot oil that kissed her skin with burning pain.

Just as she finished setting the table, her parents came down the stairs.

"Good morning, Mom and Dad," Athena greeted softly, her voice trembling slightly, full of desperate hope for a reply.

But her mother, Marie, cast her a cold, disdainful glance. Her father, Sebastian, didn't even look at her and simply sat down and unfolded the newspaper with a loud rustle.

"If you want to keep living under this roof, stop calling us 'Mom' and 'Dad.' You're nothing but a disgrace!" her mother spat, voice dripping with disgust.

Athena bit her lip hard, forcing down the tears that threatened to spill. She simply nodded, her voice trapped inside her aching chest.

She remained standing by the corner like a shadow, unnoticed and unwanted.

Not part of the family.

Not really.

Minutes later, Alton came downstairs. He flashed Athena a small, quick smile. Real and genuine, a rare kindness in her otherwise cruel world.

"Morning!" Alton greeted cheerfully as he slid into his seat.

Athena returned his smile with a tiny nod, carefully keeping her emotions tightly sealed.

She wasn't allowed to get close to Alton, another one of the many unspoken rules she had to live by.

Stay invisible. Stay out of the way.

Then came Althea.

She glided into the room like royalty. Tall, radiant, and brimming with confidence.

The moment Althea's eyes locked on Athena, a mocking smirk curled on her lips.

Athena immediately dropped her gaze, wishing she could disappear.

"Good morning, darling. Come, have your breakfast before you're late for school," Marie said sweetly, handing Althea a plate with a tenderness Athena had never received.

A sharp ache pierced Athena's chest.

Just once... just once, she wished her mother would look at her the same way.

While the rest of the family ate and chatted, Athena stood silently, like a servant, waiting for leftovers, if there were any left at all.

"So, how are things with Clark?" Sebastian asked a hopeful note in his voice.

"He's doing great, Dad," Althea replied with a giggle. "He still hasn't found his true mate. He said... maybe I'll just become his chosen mate."

"That's wonderful news, sweetheart," Marie beamed, fondly reaching out to brush Althea's hair. "You'll make an exceptional Luna one day."

Athena's heart shrank even further at the sight.

"And Alton," Sebastian added, turning to his son. "You'd better be ready. Once Clark steps up as Alpha, I'll pass you the Beta title."

"I won't let you down, Dad," Alton answered firmly, his voice steady with pride.

With all the conversation, only Athena was not included. She's unwanted.

Breakfast ended quickly after that.

As Athena quietly cleaned up the table, Althea sauntered, her grin malicious and sharp.

"Why are you still here, Athena?" Althea sneered. "Waiting for me to drag you out when I become Luna?"

Athena stayed silent, wiping the table with shaky hands.

She had learned long ago that fighting back only made it worse.

But Althea wasn't satisfied.

Suddenly, she yanked off Athena's hoodie, exposing the vivid, fiery hair she tried so hard to hide.

"What are you hiding under there, huh?" Althea mocked, her voice loud and cutting.

Before Athena could even flinch, a harsh slap cracked across her face.

Pak!

The sound echoed loudly in the dining area.

Athena staggered, clutching her burning cheek, her entire body trembling with rage, shame, and helplessness.

Seeing the anger simmering in Athena's eyes, Althea's temper flared even hotter.

"Look at your eyes now. Red, just like your cursed hair!" she shrieked, pointing a manicured finger at her.

Slaps rained down on Athena, each a stinging reminder of her worthlessness.

She didn't fight back.

She couldn't.

She wasn't allowed.

"You're a curse! Worthless! The only thing that's strong in you is your name!" Althea screamed before flipping her hair arrogantly and striding away, leaving Athena crumpled on the floor.

A broken sob tore from Athena's throat.

She couldn't hold back anymore.

The pain... It was too much.

She didn't make it to school that day. She spent the entire morning cleaning the house, her punishment for "causing trouble."

It was forbidden to leave until everything was spotless.

That night, Athena slipped away to the woods while the house slept.

She couldn't sleep.

Not after everything.

Not tonight.

Standing under the dim glow of the moon, she lifted her tear-streaked face and whispered, "Moon Goddess... What did I ever do wrong? Why am I like this?"

The cold air bit at her skin as she wandered deeper into the woods, and her thin hoodie was no match for the chill.

"After my birthday," she vowed, voice shaking, "I'm leaving. I'm never coming back."

As if in answer to her words, a strange gust of wind brushed against her, not cold, but oddly warm, like a caress.

"Athena..."

A soft yet unmistakable voice whispered her name, carried by the wind.

She froze, her heart pounding wildly.

She looked around, but there was no one.

Nothing but darkness and the distant rustle of leaves.

"Who's there?" she called out, her voice barely a whisper.

But only silence answered her.

Silence... and the growing sense that her life would change forever.

The next day, Athena's routine remained the same. Once again, she failed to attend school, overwhelmed by the endless house chores she had to complete.

When she finally finished, she headed toward the training grounds, where she silently watched the warriors practicing their combat skills. However, instead of receiving a warm welcome, Athena was met with cold, disdainful glares from them.

She chose to ignore their hostility and stayed where she was. Deep inside, she already knew there was nothing she could do to change how they treated her, not when even her own family looked at her with the same contempt.

As the afternoon sun blazed above, Athena stood quietly in the shade of a large tree at the edge of the training ground. She watched intently as the warriors, dripping in sweat and brimming with rage, sparred fiercely against one another.

A small part of her ached to be one of them. To be strong, fearless, respected.

But to the rest of the pack, she would never be worthy.

Every night, in the safety of the woods, Athena practiced in secret what she had learned by watching them. She wasn't afraid of the dark. After all, she greatly admired the territory's security, which was also something she greatly admired about their Alpha, Johannes.

When the day's training ended, the warriors started dispersing one by one. Athena turned to leave, but she didn't expect what happened next.

Without warning, one of the female warriors, Lissa, deliberately bumped into her, causing her to stumble back a few steps.

"You're always in a damn way!" snarled a male warrior who also collided with her roughly, almost knocking her off her feet.

Laughter erupted from the other warriors, cruel and mocking.

Athena's cheeks burned, but she kept her gaze low, refusing to show weakness.

"Aren't the beatings from your parents enough?" sneered another as he grabbed a fistful of her hair under her hoodie, yanking her head back harshly.

Athena gasped and quickly raised her hands to shield her face.

But the warrior tauntingly pulled her hands away, laughing at her fear.

Something inside Athena snapped.

Without thinking, she slammed her forehead into the warrior's face.

A loud crack echoed through the grounds as the man staggered back several feet, clutching his bleeding nose.

For a moment, Athena stood frozen.

She could have felt sorry for herself.

But all she felt... was anger.

A hot wind whipped through the training ground.

The warriors exchanged uneasy glances, rubbing their arms as if the air itself burned against their skin.

"Feels like the damn air's on fire," muttered Lissa, wiping sweat from her brow.

"It's that cursed girl again. I swear it."

She reached out toward Athena's hood, trying to reveal her face.

Before Athena could pull away, Lissa yanked the hood down, exposing the face the entire pack whispered about with fear and disgust.

The gathered crowd sharply inhaled, followed by a heavy silence that quickly filled with venomous murmurs.

"Look at her eyes!"

"She's cursed, just like her hair!"

"She should've been exiled years ago!"

"How could someone like her be Beta Sebastian and Female Beta Marie's daughter?"

"Is she even their real child?"

Each cruel word was like a dagger to Athena's heart.

Tears welled in her eyes and slipped down her cheeks as she bowed her head lower, trembling.

But when she heard the accusation that she was once again the cause of misfortune, something inside her shattered.

Slowly, Athena raised her head.

Once a soft brown, her eyes were now glowing a fierce crimson. A thin mist of heat escaped from her parted lips as she exhaled.

The warriors recoiled.

"Witch," someone hissed.

"She's a curse!"

"Alpha must be told immediately! Luna Neda might get sick again because of her!" yelled the warrior Athena had headbutted, blood dripping down his face.

Panic spread like wildfire.

Several warriors lunged forward, grabbing Athena by the arms and forcing her toward the packhouse.

As they approached the building, Athena's heart twisted at the sight that greeted her.

Standing there were her parents, Sebastian and Marie, and her sister, Althea, who watched the scene unfold with a smirk tugging at her lips.

Her mother was visibly shaking with rage while her father stood stoically, his expression void of emotion.

The pack's elders were also there, their faces grim and unforgiving.

"You are a disgrace, Athena," Alpha Johannes said coldly, his voice echoing through the silent crowd. "To have a child like you is a curse upon this entire pack."

"Alpha, please... I didn't mean to—" Athena tried to explain, but her words were cut short.

A sharp, brutal slap struck her cheek, whipping her head to the side.

It was Marie, her mother, her eyes burning with fury.

"You can't do anything right, Athena!" she screamed. "If I could, I would denounce you as my daughter!"

Athena stood stunned, tears stinging her eyes.

"I'm your daughter, too," she choked out. "Why are you treating me like this? All I did was watch the training, what did I do wrong?"

"You dare question us?" Alpha Johannes bellowed. "Ever since your hair turned red, my mate, your luna has been bedridden!"

"But I never—! I never did anything! I don't even talk to anyone!" Athena pleaded, her voice breaking. "Dad, Mom, please... believe me... I'm not doing anything wrong..."

She nearly begged, desperate for any hint of affection from her parents. But all she received in return were cold, murderous stares. Her rage flared again, and her crimson eyes glowed even brighter.

"What now, Athena? What illness will befall my mate next because of your cursed existence?" spat Alpha Johannes, fear and anger etched into his features.

"I warned you, Alpha," said one of the elders, shaking his head grimly. "She is a curse. We must protect Luna Neda at all costs."

"Sebastian!" Alpha Johannes roared. "Do you see your daughter now?

If anything happens to Luna Neda tonight, her blood will be on your hands!"

Sebastian's jaw tightened.

He approached Athena with a look of pure disgust, seized her by the arm, and dragged her roughly toward their home.

There, they locked her in the attic without food, hoping to weaken her to suppress whatever evil they believed she carried.

That night, as the rest of the pack settled into an uneasy sleep, a chilling sound tore through the territory.

It was the mournful, broken howl of Alpha Johannes.

The next morning, devastating news swept through the pack like a storm.

Luna Neda was dead.

She had passed away in her sleep. No wounds, no signs of an attack, no struggle.

Simply... gone.

And once again, all eyes turned toward Athena with hatred, fear, and blame.