Chapter 71

The Severed Mate Bond

**** Zenith's first life ****

Dawn's POV

"You marked someone for heaven's sake! How are you going to fix that?!" Dawn roared. She was so mad, her claws elongated. She had this urge to claw his stupid face, to make him stop apologizing to her and saying that he could make it right for her. "You are a piece of trash!"

Blake knelt down, he grabbed her hand and refused to let go, begging her for a second chance relentlessly.

"Please, please, Dawn... I am sorry. I am sorry, give me a second chance, there must be a way to fix this." Blake looked pitiful and it irked Dawn even more. "It's your fault, too. You didn't give me enough attention. You ignored me for so long..."

The audacity of this man was appalling. Even when he begged for forgiveness, he still found a way to shift the blame on Dawn.

"My father, whom I looked up to, the person, who I always thought of as someone remarkable, was actually a piece of trash, who betrayed my mother's trust and the mate bond they shared. He had a daughter with that woman and his other daughter had been torturing my life for years and now you slept with her just like my father did with her mother."

Dawn really wanted to laugh at the irony. It felt like a vicious circle.

"If my father had a son, I am sure, he would be just like you."

There was no turning back from this, not only did this stupid mate of hers have mated with Emily, but he had actually gone all out and also marked her.

Blake's face turned red with embarrassment, he could see the disappointment on his father's face and the sadness in his mother's eyes. Dawn didn't need to kick him while he was down and humiliate him even more.

He had apologized to her, begged her on his knees, what else did she want?

"If only you had given in, if only you had let me mate and mark you, all of this would not have happened!" Blake said sharply. "You are at fault in this matter, too. Don't put all the blame on me!"

Dawn had enough, she gritted her teeth, her anger surpassed her heartache and disappointment. She stared incredulously at this pathetic man and before anyone could stop her, she said the words.

"I, Dawn Attiana Ash, reject you, Blake Michael Gillian, as my mate. May the bond between us be severed for good."

A burning sensation washed over them before the pain followed. The agony when the sacred mate bond was broken was something that they had never felt before.

There was really no going back for them after this.

"Dawn!" Blake roared, as he felt this sharp pain in his chest and curled his body up on the floor, gasping hard, trying to breath with so much difficulty, he felt like he was being burned alive. "Dawn! No!"

Dawn staggered back, she couldn't stand still, this pain was ten times sharper than when she found out about her father's infidelity and Emily's birth origin.

Ava cried, as she rushed over to comfort her precious son, while Beta Jason looked at them grimly. It was really embarrassing for him, especially in front of Alpha Zenith.

Thankfully, before Dawn could lose complete control over her body, Darius had stepped forward and caught her.

"I think you need to get some rest," Darius said, looking concerned. He didn't expect this kind of drama on their way here to fetch Zenith's chosen mate.

"I will take her to her room." Lyra immediately volunteered and helped Dawn leave the premises, while Blake was still wailing, calling Dawn's name and refusing the rejection.

On the other hand, Alpha Zenith still looked aloof as usual, only his brows were slightly furrowed, showing how much this drama wasted his time.

"Beta Jason, we need to talk."

Zenith walked ahead with the Beta following behind him, but Gamma Alex also left with them. It seemed he expected what conversation they would have.

"You don't need to come."

"I am part of this pack, as much as you are."

Jason narrowed his eyes, but he didn't argue with Alex. The three of them finally stopped on the balcony that overlooked the sea in the distance. If only it was not a storm out there, the scenery would have been beautiful.

"Should we find a more comfortable place to talk?" Jason frowned, because the wind was howling and the sky looked very grim, as if monsters were lurking behind the gloomy clouds.

"Let's make it quick." Zenith let the rain splatter on to his cloak. "I am not going to take a marked woman as my chosen mate." He halted for a while. "I will take Dawn."

Jason gritted his teeth. He had expected this request. But, of course, there was a reason why he didn't give him Dawn in the first place and suggested Emily instead. It took him great efforts to convince Tony to do so when he visited him in the royal dungeon.

But everything that he had worked for was now in shambles, because of that stupid son of his!

Alex said nothing, while Jason tried to find a way to turn Zenith down. "Alpha, you saw yourself; Dawn is not yet stable because of everything that happened to her, you can't take her from this pack right now. She will be even more devastated to be away from her home."

"It's funny to think that you give her a home." Zenith crossed his arms. "You intentionally put her half sibling close to her, let the people in this pack tarnish her name, gave her no leg to claim her birthright as the alpha of the pack even when she came of age. Your own son even betrayed her." Zenith was very calm, while the storm continued to brew in the background.

"Alpha, the truth is not like that."

"Or, are you afraid that I will take over this pack, because she is supposed to be the heir of your Moonlight pack?" Zenith smiled. "The King wanted to humiliate me by giving me an omega, but I got a pack instead."

Chapter 72

This is Not Her Home

***** Zenith's first life ****

Dawn's POV

"You are overthinking, Alpha Zenith. The decision to give Emily as your mate is not up to me." Jason looked uncomfortable at the accusation. "But you can't just take Dawn away, no matter what, this is still her home. She had never been anywhere, aside from this pack."

"The home that you refer to is a place where the people condemn her for what her father had done. And as an acting leader of this pack, you did nothing to protect her. You did nothing to protect the daughter of your alpha." Zenith laid out the truth. "And that's what you call home? I am sure she will be happy to live far away from your claws."

Jason was flustered. He was about to say something, but Zenith cut him off.

"Leave. I think Gamma Alex has better things to tell me." Zenith waved his hand. "I want you to let her know about this, once the storm passes, we are going to leave."

Jason was not happy with this, but he couldn't retort the alpha's decision. In the end, he could only resign himself and do what he was told to do.

Zenith was an alpha and he was a beta, but then, even if Jason was the alpha of this pack, Zenith's status was still higher than his own, because the alpha was part of the royal family.

"What do you want to say?" Zenith had kept his eyes on Alex for the past few years. It was not easy to get a hold of him, since he was often away because of the problems of the harbor when Alpha Tony was still here. He was in charge of trading.

And now, when Alpha Tony was not around, he was hardly in the pack.

"I think you have said what I wanted to say, Alpha." Alex nodded politely. "Initially, I wanted to suggest that you take Dawn away from this pack. This environment is no longer good for her."

"You are well aware of what people say about me, are you not?"

"The rumors might not be true." Alex lifted his head. "You are right, Alpha. This place is no longer good for her. I hope you can treat her better. I will talk to her and she will understand."

"Whether she understands or not, she is leaving with me, Gamma."

Zenith then walked away. If there was nothing more important to talk about, Zenith was not going to waste his time and decided to get something else done instead.

Meanwhile, Lyra stayed with Dawn, the girl was in so much pain because of the rejection and the healer tried to alleviate the pain, but it was not something that she could heal.

Her body was burning and Lyra put a wet towel on her forehead, wishing it would help. "Come in," the healer said when she heard the knock on the door before Gamma Alex's voice traveled into the room.

"How is she?"

"She is burning up."

Alex entered the room and sat down on the edge of Dawn's bed. He stared at the sleeping girl. Her face turned red and she was in such a bad state.

"Alpha Zenith will take her away right after the storm passes."

"No. He can't take her away when her condition is like this." Lyra furrowed her brows. She felt extremely bad for Dawn. "Tell him about her condition, please. At the very least, she needs to rest for a week. Her condition is already very weak to begin with from all the things that happened in the past few months."

Alex was not sure if he could convince Alpha Zenith otherwise, but he was going to try. "Let's see what I can do."

After that, silence fell between them again.

"Are you leaving again?" Lyra asked and Alex didn't answer her question, and the quietness resumed, while out there, the storm kept raging.

"I want to see her." Blake insisted on leaving, but Ava didn't even allow him to stand up. "This is not the right time for you to see her; she has been unconscious after the rejection." Ava wiped her tears. "Son, it's Emily that you have marked, not her. You need to stop thinking about Dawn, or it will only hurt you."

Blake shook his head. He started crying again and Ava's heart broke to see her son like this. She felt bad for Dawn, but Blake was still her son.

Ava was only grateful that she didn't need to go through this kind of agony. She was grateful to have Jason as her mate...

But, at the same time, while Ava was comforting their son, Jason looked for comfort from someone else.

"Your daughter is insane!" Jason gritted his teeth. He was in the strategy room and Julia was there with him, listening to him rambling about everything.

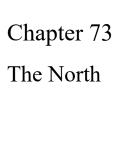
"Your son is at fault too here," Julia reminded him, but when she saw how upset Jason was, she approached him and kissed his lips lightly. "Don't be so mad. You need to loosen up a little bit. Maybe this is for the best. After all, Alpha Zenith doesn't have any interest in this pack, with Dawn gone, you can make a petition to step up as the Alpha of the pack. It will benefit the King too."

Jason fell silent, he watched how Julia kissed his lips, his neck before she started to grind herself against him, she chuckled a little bit when she could feel how hard he was.

"Did Ava neglect you again?" Julia tilted her head, she touched him and he moaned, pleased with her care. "She loves her son more than you. She is really a bad mate."

"Stop talking about her!" Jason growled. "She is still my mate; I will not allow you to badmouth her!"

Julia was not happy, but she knew better than to argue with him. "You are right, I am sorry." She then knelt down and started to kiss him down there, while Jason grabbed her hair and shoved his phallus into her mouth.



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**** Zenith's first life ****

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***Dawn's POV***
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Dawn was in so much pain, before she could even heal from the emotional pain caused by her father, she had to endure the agony from the rejection. She felt like nothing was going right in her life.

Dawn would regain her consciousness occasionally and every time she opened her eyes, Lyra would be there with her. The healer tried to make the pain more bearable for her, while ignoring Ava's cries to do the same for her son.

However, when Dawn finally woke up in the middle of the night, as the storm out there still raged wildly, she found Lyra sitting on the floor, holding her hand. She talked about something that she didn't understand.

"... go to the west if you find it difficult. Look for Rye to get some help, okay? Remember this, Dawn." Lyra kissed Dawn's forehead and she fell asleep again.

Meanwhile, out there the sky looked so dark, Dawn was not sure whether it was still night or the storm was just getting worse.

But that was the last time Dawn saw Lyra, because the next time she opened her eyes, she was no longer inside her comfortable room, but a moving carriage. The storm had passed, but the sky was still dark.

Dawn looked around the carriage, but was too tired to figure out where she was. She didn't seem to care what was going to happen to her. She just wanted to heal and forget everything that hurt her. It didn't matter where she was going, because as long as she could escape the source of her pain, she was fine with it.

In between her conscious and unconscious states, she would see a pair of striking blue eyes, always staring at her. He would help her to eat and drink.

He was Alpha Zenith. The Alpha was still aloof and as cold as a frozen lake during winter; calm and unperturbed.

Dawn didn't know how long she had slept for, but her bed stopped moving eventually and she felt so warm now. Only when she opened her eyes and looked around did she realize she was no longer inside the carriage, but a comfortable room. The fireplace was lit up to warm the cold air.

She could hear someone moving around and when she tilted her head to her left, she found a beautiful girl with bright green eyes and long brown hair, wearing a green dress that matched her eyes. She was staring back at her.

"So, you are awake."

Her voice was not friendly, but not vindictive either, as if she was bored and now that Dawn was awake, she could do something more important.

"Here, drink this." She approached Dawn and waited for her to sit down, as she handed her a cup of water. "I will ask someone to bring food for you."

"Th- thank you." Dawn felt how dry her mouth was, she felt hungry too.

However, after that woman with green eyes left, no one came to bring any food for her. She had to wait for two hours before somebody finally came and brought her a meal.

"Since you just woke up, you can't eat too much," she said. She was an old woman, but from the looks of it, she seemed to have some status in this pack.

"Is this... the northern pack?" Dawn asked her weakly. She had thought about this when her mind finally started working and deduced the possibility.

"Yes."

Dawn nodded. Her assumption was right. Alpha Zenith must have taken her here as a replacement for her sister, since he couldn't take her as she had been marked and the other daughter of her father was her.

"Why? You are not happy to be in this pack?" The old woman asked, there was a bit of aggression in her voice, thinking Dawn's silence was because she didn't want to be here.

"No, I didn't say that."

"You don't need to say that. I can see it on your face."

Dawn narrowed her eyes. She knew this type of person. They wouldn't trust no matter what you say and simply assume the worst of you. There was no winning against this kind of person.

"What's your name?" Dawn stopped eating and focused all of her attention on her.

She looked hesitant for a moment, but then she mentioned her name. "Fern."

"Fern." Dawn repeated the name, but she didn't say anything else, which left the old woman frowning and feeling awkward.

After that uncomfortable encounter, Fern came for the second time to bring two personal servants to Dawn.

"This is Pyllo and Kynes, your personal servants, they will help you with everything." Fern then added. "Don't bother the Alpha, he is busy. If you want to meet with him, you can ask me first. I will ask when he is free."

"I want to meet with him as soon as possible, when could it be arranged?" Dawn asked, she had been wanting to see Alpha Zenith and discuss the thing between them, but Fern kept saying that she had to nourish her body and not to bother the alpha because currently, he was very busy.

"I will tell you when the Alpha has free time." Fern nodded and resigned herself.

For the next two weeks, it was only Pyllo and Kynes by Dawn's side. They took her to see a small area of the north pack house, but there was an area that they did not allow Dawn to wander.

It didn't take a genius to know the reason.

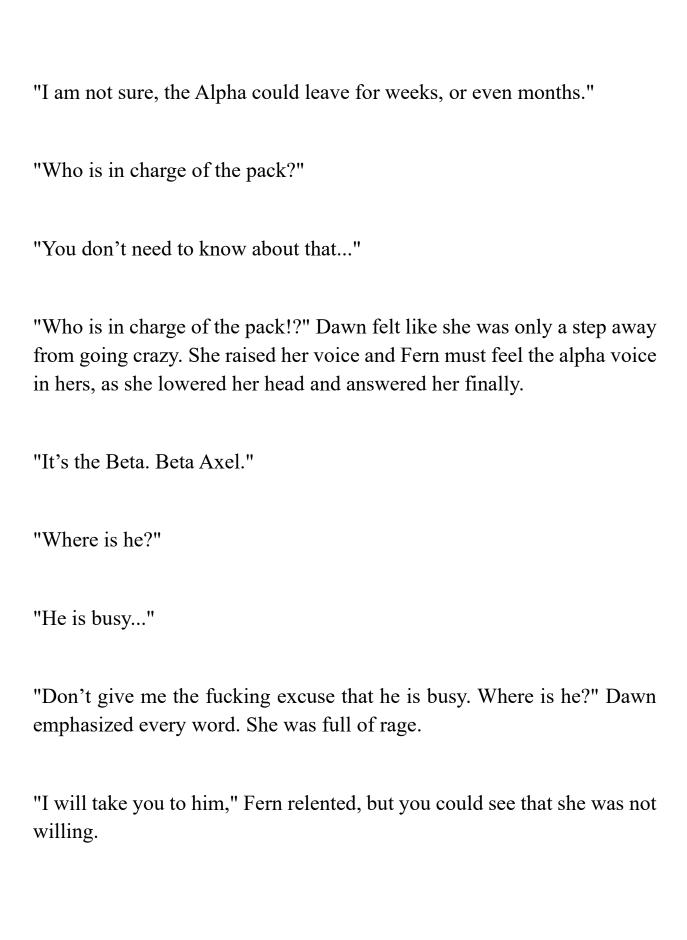
And for the past two weeks, Zenith didn't even try to explain himself. He only sent Fern to talk to her about trivial issues.

After that, Zenith went away for a whole three months, leaving Dawn in this unfamiliar place. No one came to her or talked to her and the only people who did would be Pyllo and Kynes, or Fern. Dawn also saw the green-eyed woman a few times talking with Alpha Zenith, but when she wanted to approach them, Pyllo and Kynes would distract her.

"Why didn't you tell me that Alpha Zenith is leaving?" Dawn was very angry at Fern. She had requested to meet with the alpha for so long, but this morning she heard alpha Zenith had left the pack again.

"The Alpha's schedule is a secret. I am not privileged to know about it," Fern said with a straight face, she didn't feel bad at all.

Dawn really wanted to snap at her, but she held herself back. "For how long?"



Chapter 74 Desolation

This was the first time Dawn met with the beta. Beta Axel had this stern look on his face when he saw Dawn approach him. She felt rejected by him even before she could say anything.

At this point, Dawn really needed to admit that her social skills really sucked. How could someone dislike you from the very first moment they saw you? That was really ridiculous, right?

Currently, Beta Axel was in the training ground, training a lot of scary warriors, which made Dawn halt in her tracks. She found them really scary. People from the north were really built differently.

"I told you, right? He is busy. You should have waited."

"I will wait here," Dawn said, she sat down on the top of the tribune, so the beta could see her. "Tell him, I want to talk to him once he is done with the training."

Fern took a deep breath, she didn't even hide that she was annoyed by Dawn's order, but thankfully, she still had common sense and knew her place, as she did what Dawn told her to do. She left to approach Beta Axel, interrupting his training with the warriors.

"Beta, I am sorry for the interruption," Fern said. She knew that these warriors hated it when their training was interrupted for something that was not urgent.

"What is it?" Axel frowned, thinking there was a message from the alpha or something.

"Dawn wanted to see you right now." Fern nodded in Dawn's direction, but because she was too far away, the latter couldn't hear their conversation. Dawn nodded at Beta Axel politely when he looked in her direction. "She insisted that you meet her right away."

"I will see her after the training," Axel said, slightly annoyed by the demand.

"You can't, Beta, please." Fern held back the beta.

"No. I will see her after the training," Axel said sternly.

"She will give us a hard time if you delay. She wanted to see you right away. She has been very upset because the Alpha left without saying anything to her and screamed at Pyllo and Kynes a lot."

"She was the one who didn't want to see Zenith, why would she be upset?"

Fern shook her head helplessly. "I don't know. I have never met someone as flippant as her." Fern begged the beta with her eyes. The old woman looked pitiful. "Apparently, even when she doesn't want to see Alpha Zenith, he has to be always available for her."

"That's ridiculous!"

In the end, Axel left the training ground and asked another warrior to take over. He approached Dawn in a bad mood and it surprised her because he came right away. However, Dawn didn't seem to feel anything fishy about it, because she really needed to talk with him.

"Thank you for coming to see me right away," Dawn said politely.

"Just tell me what you want."

"Can I talk to you alone?" Dawn looked at Fern, who was still within earshot.

Axel looked impatient, but then told Fern to go somewhere else. "What do you want to talk about?"

"I want to know what my role is here." Dawn could see that she needed to talk straight to the point with this man, thus she didn't beat around the bush. "I assume I am here as a replacement for Emily. Am I... Alpha Zenith's chosen mate now?"

"You can say so."

"I only wanted to know my place in this pack." Dawn nodded. "May I know when he will return?"

"He will come back in three months."

"I see." So, he would return in three months and she would be the luna of the pack once the ceremony was held.

"Anything else?"

Dawn shook her head, slightly taken aback by his cold demeanor. "Can I look for you again if I have something to ask?"

"Fine, but not in the training ground."

Dawn assumed his coldness was because he was annoyed at her for interrupting the training. "Okay. I am sorry for the interruption."

There was a flicker of surprise in Axel's eyes, but he didn't say anything and left immediately. He had something else to do.

After that, Dawn didn't have any interaction with Axel anymore. But Zenith didn't return even after three months had passed.

Six months and then one year passed just like that.

Dawn waited for him in this dull life. This pack felt like a prison for her. She found it hard to even breathe in this pack. She was literally isolated.

She didn't know what was happening out there. She heard no news about what happened outside of the north, nor did she get any letters from anyone.

It felt like her existence had been forgotten. It took a toll on Dawn and after a year, she barely recognized herself.

She had no one and her dull life was the only thing she had.

She lived only because she didn't die. After being isolated for so long, she didn't know how to interact with people. Even meeting the members of the pack gave her anxiety now.

People in this pack didn't even care about her existence and after spending so much time alone, Dawn only had herself. She spent her time in her room, staring at the changing seasons from her window.

She had long forgotten her desire to meet her father for some kind of explanation and closure.

Dawn didn't even know what she wanted, or what she had to do with her life. She only waited for Zenith to return, in hopes she could have some kind of bond with him.

She still remembered how people said that a mate bond was the most beautiful thing that you could experience, as if having someone who knew you very well, until the silence between you turned into a solace.

Dawn craved such a connection. She was desperate to feel something, anything, because this numbness haunted her and she was afraid of it.

She even wrote a letter to Zenith every month and gave it to Fern. "Please, make sure Alpha Zenith receives it."

"I will."

That was what Fern said every time, but there was no reply from Zenith even after the twelfth letter, after that, Dawn stopped writing to him.

And then, after more than a year and half, finally Dawn heard some news about Zenith. He would return to the pack within a week or two.

This was the first time Dawn felt something, an anticipation.

The day came and Dawn went out of the bedroom, anxious, because she could feel a lot of eyes staring at her, full of judgment and she felt very small.

However, Dawn forced herself to endure it, because she wanted to be part of the people, who greeted Zenith when he returned to the pack house.

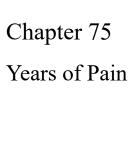
"You don't need to come, Dawn," Pyllo said.

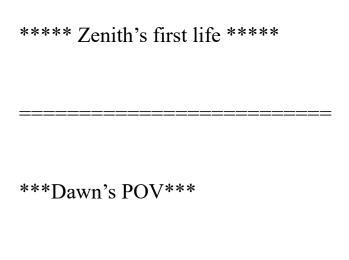
"You will only make yourself uncomfortable," Kynes chimed in.

"The Alpha will not even recognize you among these many people."

"No. I want to be here." Dawn was really desperate to be part of something. She bit her lips and picked on her nails, waiting for Zenith.

"Oh, the Alpha has returned with the luna!"





"The Luna?" Dawn looked around. She didn't understand what they were talking about. If she was here as Zenith's chosen mate, then why was there someone else that was called as the luna? "What are they talking about?" Dawn looked at Pyllo and Kynes for explanation.

"Dawn, the Alpha had a ceremony a month ago. He returned with his chosen mate, the Luna." Kynes looked at her with pitiful eyes. "That's why, we told you don't need to come."

Dawn felt so stupid when she heard that, but even more when the question just slipped her lips.

"But, aren't I his chosen mate?" That was what Dawn believed, that was what Fern told her. She needed to be patient in the face of Alpha Zenith's ignorance, as he was very busy, because at the end of the day, she was his chosen mate.

"You should listen to us." Pyllo tugged her elbow. "Let's go back."

"You never said anything about this."

Dawn watched how people greeted the alpha, welcoming their new luna. She was a beautiful girl with long black hair, wearing a white dress, which made her look fresh and innocent, but at the same time, it gave off a regal aura.

People were awed by her beauty and they were dumbstruck when that woman smiled. And with the way she wore her dress, people could see the mark on her neck, she had been marked.

People gushed and she blushed, it was a beautiful sight to see and everyone looked very excited for them. Despite the alpha's coldness, they were too happy to be scared of their alpha like usual.

Behind the alpha and the luna, Aurel stepped out of one of the carriages, there was a smile on her lips, but it was a forced one. She was the girl with green eyes that Dawn saw the first time she woke up in this pack.

Dawn stared at the warm welcome that the pack members gave to their luna and she felt devastated. She hadn't been introduced when she came here the first time.

And when Dawn stared at that beautiful woman they called luna, her eyes met with Zenith's blue ones. He stared at her expressionlessly, until Kynes and Pyllo managed to pull her away from there.

From what Dawn learned, the ceremony between Zenith and Alia happened in the palace; this woman was a granddaughter of one of the king's advisors. The ceremony itself was held in private. There was no royal ceremony for the brother of the king.

Dawn got this information with so much difficulty, since the only people around her were her two personal servants and Fern.

Ever since then, Dawn stopped talking. She didn't go out of her room and days went by just like that, until two years later, when she heard of the unexpected death of the luna.

The luna died during one of the monster attacks and her body was buried the next day because of how bad her condition was. During all this time, Aurel would stay by Zenith's side. She would be seen whenever the alpha was around.

So many years had passed by now and when Zenith finally gave her the visit that had long been overdue, four years had already passed. People had gone through mourning for the loss of their beautiful luna.

"Dawn," Zenith called her name.

Dawn just returned from a short walk in the greenhouse that she could access whenever she wanted. She found solace in taking care of the plants there, because no one cared about it and started to relearn what Lyra had taught her years ago.

She was surprised to see Zenith inside her bedroom, waiting for her.

However, she didn't have any expectations of him. She was only curious about why he came to visit her now when he didn't give a fuck about her usually.

He refused all of her requests to meet and the people around him seemed to hate her.

"As you know, you came here because you will be my chosen mate." Zenith then proceeded to tell her about their upcoming ceremony, not even once did he mention his dead mate, even though he just lost her two months ago.

Shouldn't he still be sad about her?

"Be ready for the ceremony, you can do whatever you please about the preparations."

Dawn didn't say anything, she let Zenith do the talking. She remained silent until he was done, but when he was about to leave, she finally spoke.

"That's it? You only came here to tell me that you finally wanted to claim me?" Dawn stared at Zenith's back; he turned around and faced her. "Don't you think it's four years too late for this?"

"You are my chosen mate in the first place; there is nothing too late about this." Zenith talked as if Alia had never existed.

People said the alpha was quite unhappy because the luna failed to get pregnant, not giving him an heir that the people had been waiting for.

Did he want to be with her now, claim her as his mate because he was in a hurry to have an heir? Dawn couldn't stop considering this reason.

"Why now?"

Zenith didn't answer her right away. He seemed to choose his words carefully. "The right time is now."

Dawn didn't understand what he was talking about at all. She was tired of waiting and didn't want to get her hopes up for no reason.

"Let's have breakfast together in the dining hall. This time, don't refuse again."

And after saying that, Zenith walked away from her bedroom, leaving Dawn alone with her own thoughts after this weird and short conversation.

After four years, this was all she got.

But Dawn failed to notice Zenith's parting words...

Dawn indeed had never had her meal in the dining hall; it was because Fern always brought her food to her room. No one had invited her to come and join the meal in the dining hall, so how could she refuse it 'again'? The next day, true to his word, Zenith came to Dawn's bedroom and fetched her to have breakfast together.

Dawn sat beside him, on the chair that was supposed to belong to the luna of this pack. On this platform, she sat with Zenith, his beta and his gamma.

There were around five hundred people there, eating together in the dining hall.

And after four years, finally Dawn was being introduced, but their response was lukewarm at best. There was one person that stood out among the warriors in this dining hall. It was that woman with green eyes.

She didn't take her eyes off Dawn and those green eyes were filled with hatred.

"Eat more," Zenith said. He put meat on Dawn's plate after he cut it into small pieces. This gesture only confused Dawn further. "Do you want to have a walk with me after your meal?"

"Okay," Dawn said. She didn't talk more and focused on her food instead, but she didn't eat much either.

After that, they walked together near the forest for two hours, only the conversation between them did not exist.

They simply walked side by side, until Aurel came and informed the alpha he should leave.