

30 Days To Freedom: Abandoned Luna Is Secret Shadow King Chapter 251

I Don't Want to Leave Him—2

(Third-person's POV)

At his soft plea, she lowered her gaze and nodded. The next moment, his lips were on hers in a passionate kiss.

Finally, he had made another step forward. Each kiss was a victory, each touch a claim.

Matthew took Olivia to the Grand Assembly Hall for a banquet welcoming foreign Alpha dignitaries and introduced her to the most important Elder Council leader. The elder, a man of grace and restraint, spoke to her like a kind father.

“Young wolves make mistakes, as long as you learn from them. It hasn't been easy for him to get here. It must have been hard for you to accompany him.”

The elder's kind words brought tears to her eyes. She had not expected such warmth.

As Olivia sat watching Matthew move through the crowd, she was struck by his brilliance. He was fluent in multiple languages, able to converse with any Alpha or Luna.

He commanded respect without demanding it. Every gesture spoke of natural authority.

Half an hour flew by, and after the elders departed, Matthew, smelling faintly of moonlight wine, came to her. He pressed her left ring finger, where the jade ring sat, his voice hoarse from the wine.

“Want to go?”

“Can we?” she asked, looking up at him and gripping his hand. The light above him made him seem even more dashing.

He rarely drank at such occasions, but he had tonight. Perhaps to calm his nerves.

“Yes,” he said, pulling her up and wrapping his arm around her waist as they walked out.

As many gazes had coveted him earlier, just as many now lingered on them. She tried not to listen but still heard the whispers.

“What charm does she have... to make the Alpha King so utterly bewitched?”

The jealousy in those voices was sharp as knives. But Matthew seemed oblivious to it all.

In the car, he told the driver, “Go pick up the pups.”

Olivia, sitting by the window, felt his hand on her waist slowly slip away. She turned to see he was affected by the moonlight wine, his eyes gently closed.

His face was peaceful in sleep. The harsh lines of authority softened.

She loosened his tie and the top two buttons of his shirt. Cradling his handsome face, she studied him for a long time before burying her face in his shoulder, tears silently rolling down her cheeks.

Victoria Kane’s words flooded her mind: “[I know your health is not good. A limited life should be for someone worthy. Just be Matthew’s Luna, okay? Olivia, I’m begging you, he can’t live without you.]”

And then, the most vicious words she had ever spoken: “[If you think you’re holding him back, it won’t be for too long, will it? It’s okay if you don’t have more pups.]”

The cruelty of those words still cut deep. Victoria knew exactly how to wound her.

She had always wanted to leave him. She couldn’t have any more children. She didn’t want to go through a life-and-death struggle for anyone again.

She wanted to live longer, to be with Leo and Aurora. But now, she couldn’t leave.

Yet, she didn’t want to die in his arms, to suffer the agony of separation. She had stayed with her mother in her final days, personally sending her into the healing chamber, from which she never returned.

The living always suffer more than the dead. She knew this truth too well.

Matthew opened his eyes and saw her reddened eyes and the pearly tears. “What’s wrong?” he asked, his voice raspy with drink. “Did I neglect you?”

Olivia shook her head, suppressing her sorrow. “No, I also cry when I’m happy.”

Her voice was soft, afraid to disturb the peaceful moment.

He wrapped his arm around her waist, a smile in his voice as he wiped her tears. “That’s not a good habit. You should change it.”

“Okay,” she replied obediently, nestling against him.

They arrived at a children’s restaurant. As the staff opened the door, Olivia was shocked to see Theodore, dressed in a clown costume, with her son and daughter.

Her blood ran cold. How had he found them?

He twisted a balloon into a rabbit and handed it to Aurora, who squealed with delight.

“Look, Mommy! The clown made me a bunny!”

Spotting them, Aurora ran over and threw her arms around Olivia. “Morn, I’ve been waiting for you for so long!”

The force of the hug made Olivia stumble, but Matthew held her steady. Aurora then hugged Matthew’s leg.

“Dad, I love the clown you prepared! He can juggle, tell jokes, and do magic tricks.”

Matthew’s jaw tightened. He had not arranged for any clown.

Matthew bent down and picked Aurora up, his calm gaze falling on Leo, who looked sad and a little guilty. “I’m glad you like it,” Matthew replied softly.

Leo’s eyes were red-rimmed. He had been crying.

Aurora leaned against his shoulder and whispered, “Dad, you’re amazing, you won Mom back,” and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

Matthew’s expression softened. He reached out to Leo. “Leo, come hold your sister. It’s time to go home.”

Leo’s gaze fell on a gift box on the table, already opened to reveal a model wolf figurine.

The figurine was beautifully crafted. Clearly expensive.

“Your things, I’ll help you carry them,” Matthew said in a gentle tone.

Leo’s tense expression eased, and he walked over to take Aurora. Nora and the nanny followed them out.

“Go on, I’ll be right out,” Matthew said softly to Olivia, stroking her hair.

The tension in her shoulders relaxed, and she turned and left.

The glass door of the restaurant swung shut, the bell above tinkling. Through the window, Matthew watched his beloved Luna and the pups walk towards the armored vehicle at the corner.

Only when they were safe did he turn his attention to the threat.

He turned to Theodore, his voice light. "Alpha Redgrave, how long are you going to pester my Luna?"

"Aurora is my daughter, and Leo is my son. You have no right to stop me from seeing them."

Theodore's voice was defiant, but his clown makeup was smeared with sweat.

"So, Alpha Redgrave's intention is... forever?"

Matthew's entire being radiated a powerful, icy aura. His gaze sharpened as his hand gently landed on Leo's model wolf figurine.

With his long, slender fingers, he slowly dismantled the figurine, the pieces scattering across the table from his fingertips. A black listening device was now being toyed with in his hand before he tossed it to a subordinate.

The device was small but sophisticated. Military grade.

"Spying on a pup, violating his privacy, strips you of your visitation rights. Handle it immediately," he commanded.

Theodore was enraged. "I was at the school just now! I saw you force a kiss on her! No matter how noble people praise you to be, you are a despicable man at heart. You've coveted her since she was young, 13 years ago! Matthew, you are shameless and despicable, you have no right to be by her side! Let go! That's my son's gift! You have no right!"

His voice cracked with fury. The clown costume made his rage seem almost comical.

Theodore lunged at Matthew, throwing a punch that grazed past his side, causing Theodore to lose his balance and fall to the ground. The clown lay on the floor, a pathetic sight. Matthew hadn't even needed to dodge properly. Theodore's attack was clumsy, desperate.

Theodore looked up in shock as Matthew calmly reassembled the model wolf figurine piece by piece.

Each piece clicked back into place with mechanical precision. As if the dismantling had never happened.

Then, Matthew walked towards him and planted a foot on his chest, his body emanating a murderous intent, his voice terrifyingly calm. "For every way you broke her heart, I will strip you of everything you have, one by one, until you have nothing left."

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She wants to kiss him

(Third-person's POV)

Theodore pushed the plainclothes enforcer away and got up from the ground. He was shrouded in gloom, his dark eyes swirling with a bloodthirsty chill.

"Come on, you try it, Alpha King." His voice was low and menacing. "I won't let you succeed!"

Matthew paid him no mind and walked toward the exit. Theodore chased after him but was blocked by the enforcer.

He roared at Matthew's back, "The mate bond severance documents could only have been leaked by someone close to you."

"Hacker Zero has been causing trouble, but his ultimate target isn't Cipher, it's you."

"The person Declan Shaw wants to deal with is also you."

"Matthew Kane, all you bring her is danger." Theodore's voice cracked with desperation. "Only I can keep her safe and carefree."

Matthew placed his hand on the door handle, his profile turning to Theodore. His indifferent gaze held a flicker of imperceptible sadness and coldness.

"You were once her entire world," he said quietly.

"Your betrayal left her world in ruins."

"Theodore Redgrave, what right do you have to stand before me and talk about how to make her carefree?"

Matthew's gaze fell upon Olivia's serene figure outside the glass door, and he reined in all his emotions. He pulled the door open and stepped out.

The bell on the door chimed.

Olivia reached out and took Matthew's large hand. "They were tired, so I had the nanny take them back first."

"You waited for me?" Matthew's voice softened instantly.

"Yes, you've been drinking moonlight wine." She studied his face with concern. "Want to go for a walk? To clear your head."

As Matthew and Olivia walked away, their cheerful conversation drifted back. Theodore watched through the glass window, his nails digging into his palms until they dripped with blood.

He saw her gentle features and tranquil smile, so much like the carefree she-wolf she was when they were mated.

Meanwhile, they entered a boutique shop in the Sovereign's Citadel. Olivia briefly considered buying perfume, her mind flashing to the photo of the sophisticated woman with Matthew and his comment that she was like a pup.

A wave of insecurity about her own scent washed over her, but she quickly dismissed it, deciding she was who she was.

Just as she put down a bottle of perfume, she saw a group of she-wolves admiring Matthew. One bold she-wolf approached and touched his arm, only to be instantly seized by a plainclothes Royal Guard.

Olivia hurried over, asking them not to hurt the she-wolf.

Matthew held her hand and leaned in, whispering like he was tattling, "She offended me." Confused, Olivia explained it was just an attempt to get his contact information.

"She offended you," Matthew clarified, before taking off the suit jacket the she-wolf had touched and tossing it into a nearby trash can.

"I should wear a ring," Matthew murmured through their mate bond, before asking possessively if many males tried to get her number.

He leaned close and told her seriously, "Not many people know you're my mate. If someone pursues you, you must refuse them."

His domineering Alpha tone sent a jolt through Olivia's heart. She thought about his sense of responsibility and felt a deep certainty that he was nothing like Theodore.

Trusting that he would never hide things from her, she stood on her toes and pressed her lips to his.

A smile he couldn't suppress bloomed on his face as he gently kissed her back. His ears turned red, and they walked home, fingers intertwined.

Back at the Kane Estate, Matthew placed the model wolf figurine in Leo's room. The boy was awake, his eyes filled with tears.

Matthew gently comforted him, asking him to come to him first next time he wanted to see his father and making him promise to keep Aurora's parentage a secret for her own happiness.

After praising his performance at the pup creche, he left, and a grateful Leo whispered, "Thank you, Alpha Matthew."

(Matthew's POV)

I then drove to the Stonehaven Council Hall. The press conference was over, but one meeting room remained lit.

I walked in to find a terrified Tasha sitting at the conference table, her hands trembling.

I sat down across from her and coolly laid out the evidence. "Only you had access to my office the day the mate bond severance papers were stolen from the shredder."

Beta Tristan stepped forward, his expression grim. "I've been monitoring all close personnel since your coronation was announced."

He played a recording of Tasha's phone calls, exposing her collusion with Ethan Moonstone and her role in inciting Julian Thorne to murder Olivia.

Tasha broke down, sobbing that she did it out of love for me and jealousy of Olivia.

"The person who became your mate should have been me! What right does Olivia Blackwood have?"

My voice turned to ice. "You like me? And because you like me, you try to kill my mate?"

I stood up, disgusted by her pathetic display. "You don't deserve to live."

I walked out, leaving her to her fate.

I sped home, my chest tight with a storm of emotions. The betrayal from someone so close cut deeper than I expected.

I found Olivia asleep at her desk, her face illuminated by the laptop screen, her cheeks stained with dried tears.

On the screen was her “Cipher” program, analyzing the old photograph of Ethan and Lyr a Blackwood. I realized she was investigating Hacker Zero, and my heart ached.

Were her tears for this other wolf she was now invested in?

I gently brushed her face, and she woke up, nestling into my embrace.

“Why did you go out without telling me?” she murmured sleepily.

I held her tighter, my mind racing with the dangers that surrounded her. I had been too careless.

“Are you afraid, being with me?” I whispered in her ear, then added reassuringly, “Don’t be afraid.”

I would work harder, become stronger, to shield her from the wind and rain, to let her live without a care in the world.

However, Olivia misinterpreted my intentions and reached out to take off my clothes.

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He will heal her scars

(Third-person’s POV)

In the dim moonlight filtering through the curtains, Matthew couldn’t see Olivia clearly. He pressed down on her hand as she unbuttoned his shirt, unable to suppress the smile at the corner of his mouth.

He was pleased by her proactive passion, but wished she would be more open with him about her fears. He controlled the kiss, not allowing her to deepen it.

“It’s too late, get some rest,” he said gently. “I have pack matters to handle.”

He tucked her into bed, his large hand patting her back comfortingly. But Olivia couldn’t sleep.

She feigned sleep, growing increasingly annoyed by his restraint. She pushed his hand away and turned her back to him, her wolf bristling with frustration.

Matthew found her silent protest amusing, his Alpha senses picking up on her irritation. He quietly left the room to handle urgent Syndicate communications, which only made her angrier.

She got up, went to the bathroom to remove the makeup he hadn't praised, and returned to bed. As she lay down, she bumped into a warm, familiar body.

It was Matthew, who had returned after a quick shower, the scent of moonlight herbs and his natural musk filling her senses.

Matthew kissed her softly, the familiar scent of ink from his study and shower gel calming her restless wolf, yet she still pushed him away with a petulant whine.

"Don't you have pack matters to handle?" Olivia asked, her resistance weakening as his Alpha presence enveloped her.

"I'm done," Matthew replied, explaining that coaxing his mate was more important than any Syndicate business. He held her from behind, whispering sweet words into her ear through both voice and their mate bond.

"How were you so beautiful just now? But you're even more beautiful now."

When she mumbled that he couldn't see in the dark, he countered, "Your scent is different. It's more intoxicating now."

His words made her blush and her body relax against his powerful frame. His lips moved from her cheek to her eyes, his voice growing hoarse as he whispered words of reassurance.

"You're not lacking... Everything about you is perfect."

His touch sent shivers through her enhanced senses, but as his hand rested over the surgery scars on her chest from her difficult pregnancies, he grew still. Restraining his wolf's protective instincts, he gently smoothed her nightgown.

"This morning, under the ancient oak, what did Tasha tell you?"

Matthew revealed Tasha's betrayal, explaining that she had leaked their mate bond severance documents and conspired against him with dangerous rogues.

"Don't believe what she told you," he warned, his Alpha authority bleeding into his voice.

"Okay, I won't believe her," Olivia replied with a conviction that told Matthew that Tasha had said something deeply unsettling to shake her confidence.

The shocking news of Tasha's betrayal made Olivia cling to him, her wolf seeking comfort from her Alpha mate, asking why someone so close would turn against them.

"She got confused by misplaced feelings," was his simple, evasive answer, not wanting to burden her with the full extent of Tasha's obsession.

Suddenly, she scrambled out of bed and rushed into the dressing room. When she returned, her eyes shining with determination, Matthew watched as she knelt on the bed before him.

She took his left hand and slid the mating ring he had prepared onto his finger—a symbol of their eternal bond in werewolf culture—softly saying, "I accept you as my true mate."

Her radiant, serene smile struck his heart like lightning. She had heard him in the boutique, his quiet wish to wear the ring that would mark him as claimed.

Overwhelmed with emotion, his wolf howling with joy, he pulled her into a deep embrace. "Now, the Alpha may claim his Luna," Matthew whispered, and they kissed deeply, their mate bond flaring with golden warmth, ending a long and weary day in each other's arms.

Meanwhile, with only 11 days left until Matthew's official coronation as Alpha King of the Eastern Territory, Faelan Moonstone was plotting from his exile. He acknowledged that he couldn't challenge the Alpha King directly in combat, but he had found a weakness.

Looking at surveillance photos of Olivia and Matthew, he planned his move.

"Use her to threaten him into withdrawing from the coronation," he told his son Ethan Moonstone, who had recently awakened from his coma.

He smirked, revealing he had orchestrated the leak of their mate bond severance documents but credited Matthew's own people for amplifying the scandal.

"He's a complete arrogant fool for personally handing over his weakness," Faelan sneered.

He was informed that Tasha had been detained by the King's forces, but he was unconcerned, claiming he had no direct dealings with her. His cold gaze fell upon Ethan, who lay recovering in the hidden medical facility.

Ethan had tried to end his own life after learning of Lyra Blackwood's death years ago.

"You wanted to die, but I won't let you," Faelan whispered to his son with cruel satisfaction. "I want you to watch how I successfully reach the pinnacle of power."

The countdown to Matthew's coronation was 11 days. When Olivia woke up, it was no surprise that Matthew was not by her side—Alpha Kings rose before dawn.

She smiled, recalling his strained whispers from the night before as he restrained his wolf's desires: "It's very late, you need to rest..."

She realized she enjoyed seeing him on the verge of losing control, as it made her feel he might already love her beyond duty. On her vanity, she found the bottle of perfume he'd bought for her, along with a note in his elegant script.

As she was packing her laptop, her "Cipher" tracking program suddenly pinged with a match: 88 Silverbrook Lane.

Elated that her search for Hacker Zero had yielded results, she rushed downstairs, kissed Matthew and the pups, Leo and Aurora, goodbye, and hurried off in her armored vehicle.

Watching her vibrant figure drive away under escort, Matthew felt through their mate bond that she was returning to her old confident self. He vowed silently, "Her ruins, her cracks, her scars—he will mend them one by one."

Olivia sped to the address with her security detail, her enhanced senses alert. She approached the door of 88 Silverbrook Lane and knocked.

To her surprise, when the door opened, she was greeted by Faelan Moonstone and his mate Annelise.

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The Mysterious Courtyard

(Olivia's POV)

I was taken aback when I saw Faelan Moonstone standing before me. My heart hammered against my ribs as recognition hit me like a physical blow.

I had only met him once before. It was at that tense dinner when Caelan Mooncrest had taken me to that upscale restaurant. Theodore Redgrave and Lydia Miles were also present that night.

The memory made my skin crawl. The way Faelan had watched me then, like a predator studying prey.

I knew he was Ethan Moonstone's father. My "Cipher" tracking system had confirmed something crucial – the photograph of my mother, Lyra Blackwood, was taken here at the Moonstone Estate.

The coordinates matched perfectly. The architectural details in the background were unmistakable.

I couldn't help but wonder if the five years my mother was missing before going to Port Silverwood were spent with the Moonstone Pack. The timing matched perfectly with her disappearance.

What had she been doing here? Why had she never told me about this place?

Faelan introduced me to his mate with formal courtesy. "This is Alpha King Kane's Luna," he said, his voice respectful but distant.

His eyes held secrets. I could feel it in the way he looked at me, like he knew something I didn't.

Annelise stepped forward, her smile warm and welcoming. Her attitude toward me was very respectful, almost deferential.

"What an honor to have you here," she said, bowing slightly. "Please, come in. You must be tired from your journey."

But my mind was fixed on the whip marks I'd seen on my mother's arm in those photographs. The brutal welts that had covered her skin like a map of pain.

Ethan's words about "letting her go" echoed in my thoughts. What had he meant by that?

What had happened to my mother in this place?

My demeanor turned cold as ice. "I'm looking for Ethan," I stated bluntly.

Faelan's expression flickered for just a moment. But Annelise's smile seemed somewhat forced, which didn't feel right—there was definitely something I didn't know about.

"Oh, he was transferred to overseas territories just last week," Annelise replied apologetically. "Such a shame you missed him."

Her words felt rehearsed. Like she'd been expecting this question.

I was about to leave when she quickly added, "But please, stay for our pack gathering! We have many acquaintances present tonight."

Her gaze drifted past me meaningfully. I followed her gaze and couldn't help but sigh, thinking that some people are truly persistent ghosts.

Theodore stood in the courtyard, his arm linked with Audrey's. They looked intimate, comfortable together.

Audrey was laughing at something he'd said, her hand resting possessively on his chest.

I thought it would be safe with so many pack members around. And I was desperate to find clues about my mother.

This might be my only chance to search this place. To find answers about what had happened to her here.

"I'll stay," I decided.

(Tristan's POV)

As Luna stepped into the Moonstone family's courtyard, a plainclothes enforcer assigned to protect her discreetly placed a call to me.

"Beta Tristan, the Luna has entered the Moonstone Estate," he reported quietly. "There's a large gathering here. Alpha Theodore is also present."

My blood chilled. This was not good.

Meanwhile, at the Stonehaven Council Hall, Alpha King was presiding over a territorial meeting. The atmosphere was tense with political negotiations.

Representatives from five different packs sat around the massive oak table. Maps and documents were spread everywhere.

I entered quietly and whispered in his ear, "My King, the Luna has gone to the Moonstone family's estate."

Matthew's pen stopped moving across the document he was signing. His entire body went rigid.

I explained quickly about the pack gathering, an invitation Matthew had declined earlier that week. "Theodore is also in attendance," I added carefully.

The temperature in the room seemed to drop several degrees. The other pack representatives shifted uncomfortably.

“Could she be in danger?” I fretted, watching his expression darken like a storm cloud. “I’ve cleared two hours for you, perhaps you should...”

Matthew’s golden eyes turned cold as winter steel. The wolf in him was barely contained beneath the surface.

But he replied evenly, “She has enforcers protecting her. She’ll be fine.”

His voice was steady, but I could see his hands clench into fists under the table.

The meeting resumed without missing a beat. The screen displayed a research proposal from Killian Vance.

But I could see the tension in his shoulders, the way his jaw clenched. Every muscle in his body was coiled like a spring ready to snap.

He wasn’t as calm as he pretended to be. Not even close.

(Olivia’s POV)

At the Moonstone Estate, after exchanging a few pleasantries with other pack members, I excused myself. “Could you point me to the washroom?”

A young pack servant gestured toward the main hall. “Just down that corridor, Luna. Past the portrait gallery.”

But I went in the opposite direction instead. My wolf senses were on high alert as I moved through the ancient halls.

I headed deeper into the ancient, preserved inner residence. The architecture here was older, more traditional than the modern sections.

Stone gargoyles leered down at me from shadowed alcoves. Tapestries depicting ancient battles hung from the walls.

My steps halted before a small courtyard. Its gate was secured by a heavy iron chain, rusted with age.

The metal was old but strong. Someone had wanted to keep people out of this place.

Peeking through a c***k in the iron gate, I saw something that made my heart stop. The wall inside was strikingly different from the rest of the house.

Instead of traditional pack heraldry, it was covered in an abstract mural. Geometric shapes and solid colors created a flowing, artistic design.

My breath caught in my throat. As a designer myself, I instantly recognized this artistic style.

It was my mother's work. Every brushstroke, every color choice screamed her name.

When I saw the mural of moonlight flowers in the bottom right corner, my eyes widened in shock. It was her iconic signature, exactly the same as the one she had always used.

The same delicate petals, the same flowing stems. The same subtle shading technique she'd taught me when I was just a pup.

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The Same Mural

(Olivia's POV)

No one else painted moonlight flowers like that. It was uniquely hers.

Overwhelmed with excitement, I threw myself against the gate. The chains rattled loudly as I tried to get a better look at the mural.

"Mom," I whispered desperately. "You were here. You were really here."

This was proof. My mother had been here. She had lived here long enough to paint an entire wall.

But why? What had kept her here for five years?

Suddenly, a hand grabbed me and pulled me into the shadows of a nearby moon gate. I gasped, ready to fight.

"Quiet," Theodore's voice whispered urgently in my ear. He pressed me against the stone wall, his body shielding me from view.

His scent enveloped me – pine and leather and something uniquely him. My wolf recognized him instantly.

Pack servants approached, their footsteps echoing in the courtyard. "What was that noise?" one of them asked.

"Probably just the wind," another replied. "These old chains always rattle."

They checked the lock on the gate, securing it even tighter before walking away. I heard the scrape of metal against metal.

After they left, I pushed Theodore away angrily. "Let go of me!"

My frustration mounted as I realized the gate was now firmly shut. The servants had made sure it was locked tight.

Remembering the brutal whip marks on my mother's body from the photos, rage filled me. Those scars had been deep, purposeful.

Someone in this place had hurt her. Tortured her.

I wanted to smash the lock, break down the gate. I needed to see that mural up close.

Theodore stopped me, his hand catching my wrist. "That will only draw attention," he warned quietly.

"I don't care," I snarled. "I need to get in there."

"Why? What's so important about this courtyard?"

I couldn't tell him. Not about my mother, not about the photographs, not about anything.

I sized up the courtyard wall, which was higher than I had anticipated. But a wolf could probably jump over it without much difficulty.

At this moment, Theodore patted my shoulder, crouching down. He offered his shoulders as a foothold.

"I know what you're thinking," he said quietly. "Step on me to get up. I'll help you over the wall."

I hesitated for a moment. Taking help from him felt wrong somehow.

But my desperate need to see that mural up close overrode everything else. I had to know what my mother had been trying to tell me.

I climbed onto his shoulders, feeling his strength supporting me. His muscles were solid beneath my feet.

The wall was higher than I'd expected, rough stone that scraped my palms. But I managed to pull myself over.

He followed immediately, jumping down with practiced ease. His landing was silent, graceful.

As I leaped from the wall, he caught me, pulling me into his arms despite my attempt to land away from him.

“Let me go,” I whispered, but my voice lacked conviction.

For a moment, we were pressed together, his arms around my waist. I could feel his heartbeat against my chest.

Then I pushed away, focusing on the mural.

Inside the courtyard, I frantically searched the small room attached to the wall. But I found nothing – it was immaculately clean, with no trace of Lyra except for the hauntingly beautiful mural.

Every surface had been scrubbed clean. Not even dust remained in the corners.

The moonlight flowers seemed to glow in the dim light. Each brushstroke was unmistakably hers.

I traced the painted petals with my fingertips. “She was here,” I whispered. “She lived here.”

Theodore watched my distress, his expression concerned. “What happened? What are you looking for?”

His voice was gentle, almost pleading. “Olivia, tell me. I can help you.”

“You can’t help me with this,” I said bitterly. “No one can.”

“Try me. Whatever it is, I want to understand.”

Just as he spoke those words, the iron chain clanged loudly. The gate was thrown open with violent force.

The sound echoed through the courtyard like a gunshot.

Matthew stood at the entrance, his face a mask of cold fury. His golden eyes blazed with barely contained rage.

Audrey was beside him, her expression triumphant. Faelan and Annelise flanked them, looking uncomfortable.

“What are you doing?” Audrey’s voice dripped with venom, her eyes blazing like a she-wolf catching her rival in a compromising position.

“Climbing into the courtyard to have an affair?” she spat, her accusation hanging in the air like poison.

I instinctively recoiled from Theodore, putting distance between us. My heart hammered in my chest.

He quickly stepped forward, his hands raised defensively. “It’s not what you think,” Theodore denied urgently.

“We were just-” he started.

But Audrey pressed on, her words sharp and accusatory. “Just what? Sneaking around together like guilty lovers?”

She stepped closer, her voice rising. “I saw you catch her when she jumped down! I saw how you held her!”

I met Matthew’s cold, indifferent gaze. The fury there made my blood freeze in my veins.

Then I saw the hawk-like stare of Faelan, calculating and dangerous. He was watching everything with keen interest.

The words of explanation died in my throat. I was trapped by the memory of my mother’s scars, by secrets I couldn’t reveal.

I still didn’t know what role Faelan and his mate played in these secrets. Speaking out rashly could be dangerous.

In that moment of silence, Audrey seized the opportunity. “A she-wolf who plays with two Alphas like this,” she spat with disgust.

“Is she even worthy of your devotion?” she demanded, turning to Matthew.

She raised her hand to strike me, her face twisted with rage. “You shameless-”

I couldn’t explain my intentions. I couldn’t tell them about the mural, about my mother’s connection to this place.

I watched as Audrey raised her hand and lunged towards me. Just as I was about to react, a figure moved faster than lightning.

Strong fingers grabbed Audrey’s descending hand, stopping her mid-strike with crushing force.

It was Matthew. His grip was so tight that Audrey cried out in pain.

Meanwhile, Theodore furiously struck Audrey with his other hand, sending her sprawling to the ground. She hit the stone with a sickening thud.

"Don't you dare touch her," Theodore snarled.

Matthew pulled me toward the exit, his grip firm but not painful. His voice was chillingly calm as he addressed Faelan.

"My mate was being impulsive, my apologies," he said with diplomatic smoothness. "She has always been curious about ancient courtyards. She likes to explore and adventure like a little wolf."

His words were measured, controlled. But I could feel the rage vibrating through our mate bond.

"And it seems Alpha Theodore shares this same hobby," he added with deadly quiet.

Faelan simply nodded, his expression unreadable. "Young wolves will be young wolves," he said carefully.

"Discipline her carefully at home," he advised quietly.

As Matthew strode away, pulling a stumbling me behind him, I heard Theodore whisper my name desperately.

"Olivia," his voice was broken, pleading.

Though I did not turn around, I could feel his burning gaze fixed firmly on my back.

(Matthew's POV)

In the car, Olivia anxiously explained to me that she wasn't meeting Theodore for an affair. Her words tumbled out in a rush of panic.

"I swear it wasn't planned," she said desperately. "I didn't know he would be there."

She insisted they had simply encountered each other by chance, and had both taken shelter in the yard together.

"We just happened to see the same courtyard at the same time," she continued. "That's all it was."

However, she did not mention her real purpose for entering the yard. She kept that secret locked away.

I remained silent as she spoke. The fury was still burning in my chest like molten metal.

I certainly knew she hadn't been unfaithful. I was just furious, so angry that I didn't want to speak.

I knew she had gone in there to investigate the mural, the same one from the photo of Lyra and Ethan. I understood why she couldn't explain in front of Faelan.

Yet seeing her in that wolf's arms, covered in dirt, smelling of his scent, and nearly being struck – it filled me with suffocating rage.

The image was burned into my mind. Her pressed against him, his hands on her waist.

I had dropped everything to rush here, abandoning important territorial negotiations. Only to find this scene.

When she awkwardly reached up to caress my face, looking into my eyes with desperate hope, she met my fierce, indifferent gaze and flinched.

Terror flashed across her features. She had never seen me this angry before.

She quickly covered my eyes with her hand, as if trying to block out the storm she saw brewing within them.

Then she pressed her lips to mine in a desperate kiss, trying to soothe the fury she had awakened.

I didn't kiss back at first. My body was rigid with anger.

But she kissed me with such desperate intensity, and through our mate bond, I felt her desperate love washing over me.

Her tears rolled down my face as she poured everything into that kiss.

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Confessions

(Theodore's POV)

I watched Matthew pull Olivia out with a dark expression etched across his face. My chest tightened with worry that he might hurt her.

I hastily said goodbye to Faelan and followed them out of the mansion. My heart pounded as I pushed through the crowd of pack guests.

When I emerged into the cool night air, I saw through the half-open car window something that made my blood freeze. The woman I loved was passionately kissing another man.

She sat on his lap, her arms wrapped around his neck. His hands gripped her waist possessively.

The whispers of the pack guests echoed behind me like daggers. “How could Luna Kane have anything to do with her former mate?”

“The Alpha King and his Luna seem to have a very good relationship.”

The armored vehicle slipped away from my sight. Even her car was driven away by Matthew’s enforcers.

Matthew Kane... he had deliberately let me see this scene! He had deliberately let everyone see it, to nip the rumors about him and Olivia in the bud.

(Matthew’s POV)

In the back seat of the armored vehicle, my hand cupped Olivia’s chin. I stopped her from kissing me further.

Olivia panted in my arms, her hands tightly covering my eyes as she trembled slightly. Her voice was choked with sobs, thick with a crying tone.

“I can explain, I...” Her thoughts were clearly a mess.

But my heart softened. I was always too soft-hearted with her.

I took her hands down and pulled her into my embrace. Her face rested on my shoulder as my voice whispered low in her ear.

“No need to explain. My Queen, I know everything.”

Olivia froze. Her tear-filled eyes trembled as teardrops fell like broken strings.

She wrapped her arms around my neck and broke down, crying uncontrollably in my embrace. “My mother was abused back then... Ethan... Ethan knows the truth...”

She sobbed intermittently. “Ethan is gone. What should I do? I can’t find him anywhere.”

She took out a photo from her bag. “The place where this was taken is that small courtyard of the Moonstone family. My mother was there back then.”

"I climbed in, but I found nothing but that wall mural. I found nothing."

I lifted her small face, wiping away her tears with my thumbs. "I will find Ethan Moonstone."

Her face was just below mine, her shoulders hitching from crying for so long. She cupped my face with both hands.

"Don't be angry. I don't know why, but no matter where I went, Theodore always appeared beside me like a ghost."

"The wall was high, and I could only enter by shifting, so I didn't refuse when he helped me." I sighed, holding her close against my chest. Finally, she was opening her heart to me. The taut string in my heart slowly slackened. I kissed her temple, whispering by her ear as my hand soothed her back.

"I'm not angry. And I'm not scolding you. But you have to be obedient, don't run around."

"If something is on your mind, you have to tell me. We are mates."

She nodded obediently in my arms. She placed her small hand in mine, our fingers interlocking. At that moment, she noticed the healing wound on my palm, now reduced to just a faint red mark, but she spotted it immediately.

"Did you just hurt yourself?" She looked at me with reddened eyes, caressing my palm.

"I couldn't help it when I saw you with him," I admitted.

Olivia stroked my face. "Don't be angry anymore, my king."

She placed my injured hand on her face and rubbed it. Then she extended her tongue and licked the wound on my palm.

I immediately had a physiological reaction. Damn, she always unintentionally provokes me.

I held her tightly, "Don't move."

Sometime later, I led Olivia into a private lounge in the Royal Citadel. I poured her a sweet glass of moonlight wine.

She noticed the bottle on the nightstand was labeled with healing herbs. I soon took the cup away.

"Raise your hands," I murmured.

Confused, Olivia complied. The dress was stripped from her body.

She frantically covered her chest, looking up at me with wide eyes. My expression was indifferent, a new dress now in my hands.

"I'll wear it myself," she said, reaching for it. But I wouldn't give it to her.

"My King," she glared.

I actually smiled, suddenly leaning in. "What did you call me?"

As she fell backward, my long arm caught her. The warmth of my inner arm against her back sent a blush creeping up her face.

She turned her head away. "Matt?"

The dress was slipped over her. I helped her into it before taking a wet cloth to clean her face.

She looks at me: "I feel like your possessiveness is growing stronger, perhaps this is just the instinct of you alphas."

I take her earlobe in my mouth, then her marking, "I'm being so gentle with you, Livvy, I really want to make love to you right here." But there are still serious matters left unaddressed.

"Faelan Moonstone is dealing with me," I revealed. "He doesn't want me to consolidate power in the Eastern Territories, as it touches upon his pack's interests."

I warned her, "Don't have any contact with the Moonstone Pack for now."

She leaned against me, nodding obediently. I lifted her face and kissed her softly.

"Are you hungry?" Her reply was swallowed by my kiss.

"I'm so hungry," I whispered hoarsely, my lips trailing down her neck, stopping at her chest. My restraint caused the veins on my forehead to throb.

"I'm hungry too," she said, her face flushed. "I want to eat venison stew."

(Olivia's POV)

After leaving the Royal Citadel, I went to meet a lawyer – Grayson in front of the Mooncrest Global building. In the executive office, I confronted Morgana Mooncrest and Caelan Mooncrest.

“You have infringed on my mother’s right of portrayal. I order you to stop using my mother’s image for your modeling project,” I stated coldly.

Morgana was livid. “Absurd! She’s my daughter, she came from our bloodline, I can use her image however I want!”

Grayson presented a court injunction. Morgana threw it to the floor.

Caelan tried to mediate, but Morgana’s scornful words ignited my fury. “I hate her, that traitorous wolf who almost brought the Mooncrest Pack to ruin and didn’t even come back for her father’s funeral.”

“If you insist, I will immediately apply to the court to shut down Mooncrest Global’s ‘Digital Resurrection’ project!” I threatened.

Morgana angrily had me escorted out.

Outside, I instructed Grayson to file the lawsuit immediately. I was resolute, but I didn’t want to involve Matthew, especially now that Faelan was targeting him.

I needed to protect my mate.

As I parted ways with Grayson and walked to the side of the road, a black SUV slowly stopped in front of me. The car door was pulled open, revealing a gentle face.

The woman spoke with a soft voice. “Do you want to see Ethan? I’ll take you to see him.”

(Olivia’s POV)

It was Annelise Moonstone, Ethan’s mother and Faelan Moonstone’s mate. Her face was gentle, almost motherly, but something in her eyes made me hesitate.

I turned away from her and got into my own car. Matthew’s warning echoed in my mind: Faelan Moonstone was plotting against him. I couldn’t risk getting involved.

Annelise quickly got out of her SUV and hurried over to my window. “Ethan is injured. Don’t you want to go see him?”

I glanced at her several times, studying her face for deception, before pulling my car door shut. However, Annelise grabbed the handle before I could lock it.

“Miss Blackwood, Ethan is very badly hurt, he might be dying.” Her voice cracked with emotion. “Are you sure you don’t want to see him? He mentioned you to me.”

Annelise's expression remained calm, but her eyes were filled with genuine sorrow. "He said you look a lot like an old acquaintance. Perhaps, before he dies, he would want to see you one last time."

I forcefully pulled the door shut. I knew I shouldn't go. I definitely shouldn't hide this from Matthew. But neither of us had been able to find Ethan. This might be my only chance to learn the truth about my mother.

After a moment's hesitation, I rolled down the window. "Get in. Ride in my car and tell me the address."

Annelise, who had been waiting patiently, opened the back door and slid in.

The car sped away from the Sovereign's Citadel, heading into the mountains. In my rearview mirror, I noticed three other cars following at a distance. Were they Moonstone enforcers? Or Matthew's men?

My phone lost its signal as we ventured deeper into the wilderness, but I discreetly activated the GPS tracking system in my car. It would continuously transmit my geographical location to the Shadow Syndicate's secure network.

When we finally arrived, I was stunned. Before me stood a massive fortress hidden deep in the mountains, its stone walls rising imposingly against the darkening sky.

"What is this place?" I asked, unable to hide my surprise.

"A research laboratory," Annelise replied calmly, leading me through the entrance.

The fortress was more like a medical facility, though eerily empty of patients. The hallways echoed with our footsteps as we made our way to the third floor of the medical wing.

Annelise pushed open a door, and I saw him. Ethan lay on the bed, tubes inserted all over his body, a heart monitor beeping steadily beside him, and an oxygen mask covering his face. He looked peaceful, almost as if he were merely sleeping.

"What happened to him?" I asked, approaching the bed cautiously.

"An accident," Annelise murmured, her voice barely audible. "Can you talk to him for a bit?"

An accident? Then why lie and say he was abroad on business?

As I sat by the bed, I caught sight of Faelan Moonstone appearing outside the room. His face was contorted with rage. Annelise quickly excused herself, and I watched as she followed an enraged Faelan into the healer's office across the hall.

(Third-person's POV)

Faelan struck his mate hard across the face, his eyes blazing with fury. "Are you insane? Bringing her here?"

The usually gentle she-wolf clutched her reddening cheek, but her eyes matched his intensity. "I am insane! I went insane the day you brought Lyra Blackwood back to the Moonstone Pack!"

She stepped closer to him, tears streaming down her face. "When I was also young and beautiful, you didn't even glance at me. Moreover, you made love to her right under my nose every night! How could I not go mad?"

She shoved him hard, her voice breaking. "You made me raise Ethan! That was your compensation! He is my son! What right do you have to lay a hand on him!"

Faelan's face darkened. "Your 'good son' was trying to destroy me and the Moonstone Pack. He was digging into things that should stay buried!"

"Because he knows the truth about his mother!" Annelise spat. "And now his sister is here. He'll never love you, Faelan, just as his mother never did."

Enraged by her taunts, Faelan grabbed his mate by the throat and slammed her against the desk. "Send her away! Or I'll kill you."

In the quiet hospital room, I carefully opened Ethan's hospital gown and gasped at what I saw. A fresh surgical scar ran down the center of his chest.

"A heart surgery?" I whispered, my hands trembling as I held his limp one. "You have a heart problem too?"

I hoped desperately that he would wake up and tell me the truth about my mother. About our shared past.

Suddenly, I felt his fingers twitch slightly in my palm. My heart raced as I quickly checked his eyes, but saw no signs of consciousness.

"Ethan, it's me, Olivia," I said softly, leaning closer. "I need to know about my mother... or about our mother."

I continued speaking to him, recounting the painful memory of my own mother's final surgery. "She never came back from that operating room," I whispered. "I was too young to understand then. But now I need to know the truth."

As I spoke, I noticed Ethan's eyelashes flutter slightly. Was he hearing me?

Just then, Annelise re-entered the room, “He didn’t wake up?”

I reluctantly let go of his hand. “No.”

Annelise nodded, offering to drive me back. “We should go. Visiting hours are ending.”

On our way out, we stepped into the elevator. As the doors opened and closed at various floors, a tormented she-wolf in a hospital gown suddenly lunged in, her eyes wild with fear.

She grabbed my arm with surprising strength, her nails digging into my skin. “Save me... save me...” she screamed before two pack enforcers rushed in and dragged her away.

“High-security ward,” Annelise explained calmly, pulling me back into the elevator. “For wolves whose minds have been shattered by trauma.”

The doors closed on the woman’s desperate face, and I couldn’t shake the feeling that I had just glimpsed my potential future if I stayed in this place too long.

I said my goodbyes to Annelise and drove onto the main road. My mind was racing with questions about Ethan, about my mother, about this strange facility.

Suddenly, a seven-seater van sped towards me from a side street. Before I could react, it rammed into my car with tremendous force, sending my car flipping off the road.

The airbag deployed with a deafening bang, trapping me against the seat. Pain shot through my body as I struggled to move.

Through the shattered window, I saw several rogue wolves jump out of the van and approach my overturned car. I tried to transform into my wolf form, but one of them was faster, shooting me with a tranquilizer dart.

The wolf form suppressant spread through my system like ice in my veins. I felt completely immobilized, helpless as they dragged me out of the wreckage and threw me into their vehicle.

As they sped away, I caught sight of a car in the distance approaching with flashing law enforcement lights. Hope flared briefly, but the van executed a sharp turn and lost them.

I fell into a semi-conscious state, aware only of being carried into what seemed like a warehouse. Rough hands threw me into a large water tank, the cold shock momentarily clearing my mind.

“Are you crazy? She’ll die like this!” one of the men screamed, his voice echoing in the cavernous space.

“These venomous snakes have no effect on werewolves,” another responded dismissively.

Horror washed over me as I felt the cold, slimy bodies of snakes writhing against my skin. I tried to scream, but my voice wouldn’t come.

Then I felt a sharp pain in my neck, and darkness claimed me.

30 Days To Freedom: Abandoned Luna Is Secret Shadow King Chapter 257

Snake

(Olivia’s POV)

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30 Days To Freedom: Abandoned Luna Is Secret Shadow King Chapter 258

Give her back to me

(Olivia's POV)

The massive warehouse door crashed open with a thunderous bang that jolted me awake. My body was covered in writhing, cold snakes, their scales sliding against my skin like liquid ice.

Strong hands plunged into the tank, pulling me out as snakes fell away from my body.

"My dear, don't be afraid," Theodore's voice whispered against my ear as he tore the remaining serpents from my arms and legs.

My skin was covered in bite marks, blood seeping from dozens of puncture wounds. The venom burned through my veins like liquid fire, each pulse of my heart sending waves of agony through my body.

Theodore held me tightly against his chest, his amber eyes gleaming with a dark, predatory light that promised violence. His hands shook as he examined my wounds.

The rogue wolves who had been guarding me scrambled to their feet, shocked by his sudden appearance. They rushed forward, but Theodore's guards burst through the entrance, quickly subduing them.

The distant howl of pack law enforcement sirens echoed through the night air. Theodore handed my trembling form to Captain Ryker, his movements careful despite his rage.

"Alpha, we need to leave," Ryker urged, but Theodore ignored him completely.

He picked up an iron pipe from the warehouse floor, his knuckles white as he gripped the metal. The rogues cowered as he approached them.

"Who gave the order?" Theodore's voice was deadly quiet, more terrifying than any roar.

One of the rogues, blood already streaming from his nose, stammered out an answer. "Caelan Mooncrest! But we were only supposed to scare her! The snake venom was mild!"

This excuse only fueled Theodore's fury. He brought the pipe down with brutal force, the sound of metal meeting bone echoing through the warehouse.

"Mild?" Theodore snarled, striking again. "Look at her! Look what you've done!"

(Theodore's POV)

I continued my assault until Ryker's voice cut through my rage. "Alpha, Luna has fainted!"

Even then, I didn't stop immediately. These animals had hurt her, had put her in that tank with those creatures. They deserved every broken bone.

Finally, I dropped the bloodied pipe and strode away as pack enforcement vehicles arrived outside. In the back of my armored SUV, I held Olivia's unconscious form.

Her pale, blood-streaked face was a stark reminder of my failures. Every bite mark on her skin was evidence of how I had failed to protect her.

"My love, I truly know I was wrong," I whispered, burying my face in her neck. My own eyes welled with tears I hadn't shed in years.

"If I hadn't taken Clara as my mistress, you would be living happily with me in the Crimson Pack Territory. You would be safe."

The thought consumed me completely. My betrayal, my momentary pursuit of pleasure with Clara, had led to this. I knew how much Olivia despised betrayal, just as she despised her father, Silvanus Thorne.

I rushed her into the nearest pack infirmary, frantically listing her conditions to the medical staff. "Vehicle crash, concussion, snake venom! She has a weak heart!"

As she was wheeled into the healing chamber, I was left alone in the sterile corridor. The memory of her heart stopping in my hands once before haunted me.

Heavy footsteps echoed down the hallway. Matthew Kane appeared, his face a mask of controlled fury.

Seeing him, my grief transformed into pure rage. I threw a punch, which he dodged with practiced ease.

"What right do you have to mate with her? You can't even protect her!" I roared, my voice thick with anguish.

I described the horrific state I had found her in, the snakes covering her body, the blood, the terror in her eyes.

Matthew stepped past me into the treatment room without a word. Pack enforcers moved to restrain me, but I barely noticed them.

Inside the room, when Matthew saw Olivia's exposed skin covered with snake bite marks, slowly healing with moonlight herb therapy, he punched the door frame hard enough to c***k the wood.

The chief healer approached him cautiously. “Although the snakes were venomous, her werewolf healing ability is neutralizing the toxicity. Her condition is stable, but she requires monitoring.”

Matthew’s voice was ice—cold as he gave his instructions. “Have Dr. Aris Lowell come immediately. And throw Caelan Mooncrest in the pack detention center.”

When I tried to force my way into the room again, begging to see Olivia and demanding Matthew return her to my care, he grabbed my throat.

“She’s not yours anymore,” he said quietly, his grip tightening.

At that moment, Olivia’s voice came from within the room, weak but conscious. Both of us rushed toward the sound, but pack guards stopped me at the door.

I was forced to watch as Matthew embraced his mate, his arms wrapping around her with infinite care.

“You’re holding me too tight. I can’t breathe,” Olivia said gently, her voice carrying a tenderness I had never heard directed at me. “It’s okay, it just looks scary, but it doesn’t really hurt.”

Witnessing this intimate softness, this gentle affection she had never shown me, broke something inside my chest. The way she comforted him, the way she fit perfectly in his arms.

I turned and left the infirmary, my heart shattered beyond repair. Through the pack link, I issued a single, chilling order to my Beta.

“Destroy Mooncrest Global.”

(Olivia’s POV)

In the infirmary room, Matthew was struggling to touch me without causing pain from the healing bite marks. When he tried to lift me, his movements were clumsy and hesitant.

I knelt on the bed and wrapped my arms around his neck, sensing his deep melancholy through our mate bond. He wasn’t angry at me – he was drowning in guilt.

“Don’t take Theodore’s words to heart,” I murmured, taking on the role of comforter. “I brought this on myself. I’m the one who wanted to shut down Caelan’s project involving my mother, so he came after me. It has nothing to do with you.”

I looked up at him, my gaze soft and affectionate. Bringing my face close to his, I whispered, “It was a close call, but we’re safe.”

My nose touched his as I leaned in and kissed his cold lips. But he remained unresponsive, i nipped his lip with my canines.

“Does it hurt?” I asked.

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She was left with 10 bite marks

(Matthew's POV)

I gently cupped Olivia's face and replied softly, “It tickles.”

Olivia, trying to comfort me, added in a soft voice, “It doesn't hurt when I get bitten, it's just a little itchy.”

I could feel that she was slowly, step by step, walking towards me. I should have been overjoyed, but my heart ached with worry.

I feared that if she were frightened again, it might trigger her heart condition, and I wasn't prepared for that. Yet, I refused to control her freedom.

She was not a canary in a cage; she was her own person.

My hand moved to the buttons of her hospital gown. Olivia was slightly taken aback but didn't stop me.

I unbuttoned it, carefully checked her wounds, and then fastened the buttons one by one. I then removed her hospital pants and put them back on for her.

Holding her as I laid her on the bed, I whispered in her ear, “Are you really not scared?” She buried her face in my chest and mumbled, “Mmm.” She tried to hold back her tears. After a moment, she couldn't hold it in any longer and began to cry.

“Caelan Mooncrest is too evil,” she sobbed. “He even said I was his cousin, is this how he treats cousin! And Cynthia Mooncrest said Caelan made her mate with one Alpha after another... The Mooncrest family... they were horrible to my mother too.”

I held her gently, careful to avoid her wounds, my hand patting her back soothingly. My lips brushed against her ear as I said, “I hold grudges. I'll remember this for you.”

She nodded emphatically in my embrace. “I want to sue him! You have to back me up! I want him to go to the pack detention center! He kidn*pped me!”

“Alright,” I agreed.

I lifted her tear-streaked face, surprised by her sudden reliance on me. I wondered if this meant I could take another step forward.

“Olivia,” I said her name seriously.

She looked up, startled, as large tears rolled down her cheeks. Her vision cleared, revealing my gentle golden eyes.

“Yes?”

I reached out and tenderly wiped away her tears. “Don’t cry. You’re breaking my heart.”

I lifted her higher, bringing us closer. Her heart pounded uncontrollably as my warm breath caressed her skin, turning it pink.

My kiss landed on her eyes, tasting her tears. “Talk to Dr. Aris,” I whispered. “I’ll come back to be with you later.”

She clung to me, reluctant to let me go, but she knew I was a very busy Alpha King.

“Okay,” she murmured.

After leaving the room and letting Dr. Aris Lowell in, I sat on a bench in the corridor, my gaze distant.

A plainclothes pack enforcer, part of Olivia’s protection detail, stood beside me, reporting the day’s events to Tristan while summarizing the key points for me.

“Annelise Moonstone?” I asked.

“Yes. Annelise Moonstone got into the Luna’s car, led her out of the territory, and deep into the neutral mountains. We lost them when we tried to follow. It was as if the mountain itself was shielded by magic.”

I replied calmly, “If my mate leaves the Eastern Territory, you are to stop her.”

The enforcer hesitated. “My King... we don’t have the authority to restrict her personal freedom.”

I looked up, my Alpha aura flaring slightly. “Find a reason.”

The enforcer took a nervous step back before Tristan pulled him aside.

I sat there, my eyes fixed on the infirmary room, hearing the faint sounds of sobbing from within. I listened as Tristan instructed the enforcer on how to handle the situation.

“Our Luna has a soft heart. If she tries to leave the territory, you stop her and say she’s exceeding the protection range. Ask her not to make things difficult for you, and she won’t leave.”

The clever tricks went on and on.

A half-hour later, at the pack detention center, the warden personally greeted me as I and my Royal Guard arrived.

After inspecting previously caught Jago’s situation and walking through various sections, I spotted Caelan Mooncrest sitting leisurely at the edge of a training yard.

I gestured for Tristan to hold everyone back and walked over to sit beside Caelan.

“You kidn*pped my mate?” I asked coolly.

“Matthew, those rogues weren’t mine, they belonged to Silvanus Jr,” Caelan immediately argued, feigning innocence. “It must have been Julian seeking revenge against Olivia for what happened to his plans. I’m Olivia’s cousin, how could I ever do something like that to her?”

He tried to place a hand on my shoulder, acting as if we were the closest of allies.

I glanced at the hand approaching my shoulder. “Do you know why I put you in here?”

“Why?”

“I have many acquaintances here,” I said, my eyes turning icy and my knuckles tightening into a fist. “They will take good care of you.”

In the instant Caelan was trying to process this, a dark figure suddenly rushed forward, throwing a punch aimed at me.

I sidestepped with supernatural speed, and the punch landed squarely on Caelan’s face.

The detention center alarm blared, but the attacker didn’t stop, continuing to swing at me, with every blow landing on the screaming Caelan, who was now rolling on the ground.

I looked down at him contemptuously. “It’s still not enough.”

My Olivia had been left with 10 bite marks from the serpents.

Immediately after, I saw the assailant pull a sharpened silver shard from his trouser leg and pounce towards me.

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Lyra's Past

(Third-person's POV)

Caelan Mooncrest also saw it, his cold face finally showing a look of terror. Just like his Olivia, filled with fear.

Matthew lifted his foot and kicked the sharpened silver shard from the assailant Jago's hand. As Caelan dodged, the silver shard plunged into his shoulder, making him scream in pain.

Just then, pack enforcers arrived and subdued the attacker. As Caelan was helped up, Matthew approached him, his slender hand resting on the silver shard.

With a gentle pull, he said, "You should be glad I follow pack law. Dare to touch her again..." The rest of his words were lost in Caelan's pained cries. Matthew walked calmly towards Jago, who had been watching.

He tossed the bloody silver shard at Jago's feet. "Do you know what else I can do to you if you fail to protect her? Your case hasn't been sentenced yet."

Jago nodded, "I will teach him a good lesson."

With that, Matthew walked away. Tristan, following behind, noticed a change in his Alpha

King.

Usually composed and reserved, today Matthew's oppressive aura was palpable. For the first time in years, Tristan felt he was seeing a glimpse of the real Matthew—an Alpha one dared not look at directly, let alone disrespect.

Meanwhile, at the infirmary, Olivia's mood had stabilized after Dr. Aris Lowell's visit. As she sat by the window reading, Morgana Mooncrest entered with her assistant, who held a bouquet of flowers.

Olivia, recognizing the visitor, put down her book. Though her upbringing demanded politeness, her tone was sharp, "What are you doing here?"

Morgana sat opposite her. “You had my granddaughter arrested, and now my grandson. Your mate has quite the authority.”

“Tell me, what will it take to get them casca Morgand offered a file and a hard drive—five percent of Mooncrest Global’s shares and the code for her resurrection project.

The offer enraged Olivia. “Cynthia Mooncrest pointed a gun at my head, wanting to kill me. Caelan Mooncrest has a list of crimes, from pack fund theft to bribery... he tried to assault me and then kidn*pped me.”

“The detention center is where they belong.” Remembering her mother Lyra’s fate, she swept the items off the table.

“Not everything can be measured by value. My mother’s mating couldn’t, and neither can my pain. Please leave.”

Infuriated by the disrespect, Morgana raised her hand to strike Olivia. “You have no respect for your elders! Since your mother is gone, I, as your grandmother, must teach you a lesson.”

At that moment, Victoria Kane and Seraphina Kane walked in. “Lady Mooncrest, what are you doing?” Victoria cried out in alarm.

Olivia caught Morgana’s wrist. “You were an unworthy mother, you are not my grandmother! What right do you have to teach me anything!”

Seraphina then loudly interjected, “Lady Mooncrest... How could Caelan Mooncrest dare to kidnap our Luna and scare her with snakes? Luna has a heart condition, was he trying to give her a heart attack? How could he be so evil!”

The revelation stunned Morgana, who stared at Olivia and murmured, “You have a heart condition too...”

Victoria tried to reason with her, recalling the tragic past of Lyra Blackwood, Morgana’s most beloved daughter. “Lyra... was your most cherished child. Can’t you be kinder to Olivia? She has your blood too.”

Victoria tearfully recounted how Lyra had sought her help at 18 when the family tried to mate her off to an older Alpha, how she later fled, and lived a difficult life as a rogue, only to die at 40.

“Olivia nearly followed in Lyra’s footsteps. Her ex—mate cheated on her... Please, Lady Mooncrest, don’t disturb her anymore.”

But Morgana remained cold. “An older Alpha? He was only ten years her senior. It was a perfectly good match.”

“She defied her father and ran away... I have no interest in the daughter of an unfilial girl.” With that, she left, but her mind was racing.

She was furious with Caelan for his reckless plan and resolved to take control of the Mooncrest family’s assets, including a secret research lab in the mountains.

Unseen in a corner, Eleonora and Isadora had heard everything. Eleonora suddenly remembered a diary Lyra had given her years ago, asking her to burn it.

She never did. Realizing there were inconsistencies in the story of Lyra’s escape and that she was being pursued by someone dangerous, Eleonora decided to return to Stonehaven City immediately.

“I have to find that diary! If I give it to Olivia, maybe she’ll see that I helped her mother and forgive Theodore...”

Isadora, however, grew anxious, worrying that unearthing the past would only bring more trouble.

Back in the room, Victoria, feeling guilty for her previous harsh words, gently suggested a small, private mating ceremony for Olivia and Matthew. “Just for close family, to create some material for Beta Tristan’s PR work.”

“The ceremonial gown and the royal chambers are ready, it won’t be much trouble.” Olivia, still emotionally distant, looked at Victoria’s hand holding hers.

“I’ll ask the Alpha King. If he’s okay with it, so am I. He’s busier than I am.”

That night, Matthew returned to the infirmary to find Olivia engrossed in her laptop. He leaned in and kissed her, but she was preoccupied.

Pushing him away slightly, she teased, “Indulging in desire is bad for your health,” throwing his own words back at him. She told him about the moonlight herb soup from his mother and the mating ceremony plan.

As Matthew fiddled with the thermos, seemingly unable to open it, Olivia sighed, got off the bed, and opened it for him, pouring the contents into a cup. “It’s still hot.”

Matthew, however, recognized the scent of an aphrodisiac his mother had prepared using moonlight herbs.

He discreetly poured the soup into the trash. Then, feigning discomfort, he clutched his stomach.

“What did you make me drink?” Alarmed, Olivia rushed to his side.

He seized the opportunity, pulling her onto his lap and wrapping his arms around her waist. He whispered in her ear, "It's over, my Luna. I've been drugged."