

30 Days To Freedom: Abandoned Luna Is Secret Shadow King Chapter 261

Confessing My Feelings

(Third-person's POV)

Olivia stared at the thermos in astonishment and nervousness. "Impossible, Victoria brought it herself."

"I'll call a healer right away." Not daring to delay, she was about to call for help when Matthew held her in his arms.

His warm breath tickled her ear as he asked, "What kind of soup?"

Olivia felt her ear itch and tried to dodge, but couldn't. "Venison with moonlight herbs..." she mumbled.

"Oh, moonlight herbs... Why would there be an aphrodisiac? Did you add it?" Matthew's breath grew hot as he kissed her ear, making her mind buzz.

"If my Luna wants it, she just has to ask," Matthew's voice was low and raspy, a faint smile on his lips. "My body is very good."

Her face instantly burned. She hadn't thought of it that way at all!

Besides, she was really busy today!

Matthew relentlessly continued, "It was my fault last night. I didn't satisfy my Luna."

His kisses trailed down her neck, making Olivia feel like she was about to fall apart. She recalled his words—that he held a grudge.

She had teased him to his breaking point last night, and now he was returning the favor.

Olivia's whole body felt hot as she pushed against his chest, but he caught her hands, pinning them behind her back.

As his lips landed on her pale neck, she tilted her head back in helpless pleasure, a pink hue covering her skin.

"It hurts..." she gasped. "You touched the wound..."

This only elicited a soft chuckle from Matthew, his chest vibrating against hers. “Really? Did I touch it?” he murmured, lifting her face to his.

They were so close, their warm breaths mingling. Seeing the desire burning in his golden eyes, she shook her head.

He knew where the wound was. He was just too good at this, leaving her defenseless.

“Are you really uncomfortable?” she asked worriedly.

He didn’t speak, his gaze fixed on her glistening lips and enchanting eyes.

Her heart softened, and she gently rested her warm face against his cool one. Her lips slowly moved to his earlobe as she whispered, “Let’s go home.”

He refused, “I have to stay for observation.”

“Aren’t you uncomfortable?” she pressed.

“Just holding you for a while will be fine,” he replied, calming her.

The moment grew quiet. Olivia, nestled in Matthew’s embrace, focused on her laptop.

She had initiated her “minesweeper” program, inputting keywords: “Port Silverwood,” “mountain area,” “research lab,” “heart surgery,” “Moonstone family.”

A stream of information flashed and disappeared across the screen. From time to time, she would look back and meet his gaze.

He was idly playing with her long hair, a rare moment of leisure.

“Where did you get this?” Olivia asked, noticing her hair tie in his hand.

“I stole it,” he admitted.

It was from the night she had fled the apartment with Leo and Aurora. He attempted to tie her hair into a bun, then, dissatisfied, undid it.

“Does it hurt?” he asked, his movements gentle.

She shook her head, puzzled. “What are you doing?” she asked.

“Aurora made a new friend, and her friend’s father does her hair. She wants me to give her a pretty hairstyle,” he explained casually.

“I’m practicing.”

A shadow fell over Olivia's eyes. He was so good to Aurora, treating her just like his own daughter.

Suddenly, Matthew hugged her tightly and closed the laptop. During the time she was with Annelise Moonstone, the Shadow Syndicate base had continuously received her location signals.

If she had been in danger and sent an alert, the base's computers would have pinpointed her immediately.

His mate had grown up, become more cautious, and even knew how to investigate suspicious targets.

He held her close and kissed her red lips, sighing softly, "It feels like I'm bullying a child."

She suddenly sat up, almost bumping into him, and defensively muttered, "I'm not a child."

"Yes, you're not..." he replied softly.

He pulled her back, laying her on the bed. "It's late, time to rest."

With her face buried in his chest, she recalled a memory. "When I was 16, the third time I saw you, I said goodbye, but why did you ignore me? I was sad about it for a long time."

Sad for him? Matthew gently stroked her back, coaxing her to sleep as she mumbled, "My mother refused to let me go with you. Were you angry then?"

How could he have been angry at her? He just couldn't face the fact that he'd fallen for a child at first sight.

He was twenty, a full-fledged adult with experiences far beyond his years, which made her seem even younger in his eyes.

He finally confessed, "I was sitting in the car thinking, if you had pulled open the car door and gotten in, I would have taken you away, regardless of your mother's wishes."

He regretted not doing anything back then, but he was not yet powerful enough, and she was simply too young.

The line between adult and minor was a chasm he couldn't cross, not to mention Theodore was in the picture.

"Domineering," she whispered, turning to face him.

“Mmm,” he agreed, kissing her deeply.

Later that night, he asked again, “Were you sad for me for a long time?”

“Mmm.”

“How long?”

“A week.”

Matthew fell silent. He felt so cheap.

He deepened the kiss.

Meanwhile, at the Sovereign’s Club, Aurora leaped from the sofa. Just as Theodore put down a washbasin, she raised her water gun, remembering Matthew’s lesson on aiming, and a stream of water shot directly into Theodore’s eye.

She burst into a fit of silvery laughter.

She would never forget her father’s words: “When the enemy is too strong, launch a surprise attack, retreat, hide, and call for backup.”

As Theodore blindly wiped the water from his face and Seraphina Kane cried out in anger, Aurora dashed upstairs, grabbing the stunned Leo.

“Brother, let’s hide and call my dad!”

Downstairs, Seraphina’s shouts followed them, “Aurora, Aurora, he’s your father... how could you do this...”

Aurora froze, but Leo pushed her forward. “You go hide in Mom’s room on the third floor and call your dad. I’ll hold her off.”

Aurora didn’t hesitate. Her father had taught her that while she could make a sacrifice if needed, it was better to let someone more suitable do it.

Preserving what could be preserved was most important.

She watched Leo go down, then climbed on a chair and flipped the circuit breaker, plunging the entire club into darkness.

But, she thought, when you don’t have to sacrifice, you should do your best to save everyone.

She crept back downstairs in the dark, intending to grab Leo and run. But then she heard her brother's voice.

"Dad, my sister doesn't know her identity. She's happier as Uncle Matthew's child. She's a child with a mom and a dad. I forbid you from telling her the truth, from getting close to her. You only bring pain to those around you. Don't hurt my sister."

At that moment, the voices of Nora and Martha came from outside.

This was followed by Nora's panicked cry, "Why is there a power outage at home?"

She rushed inside, calling, "Aurora! Aurora!"

A small, choked voice came from behind them all, thick with unshed tears, "I'm here."

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Confronting the Past

(Matthew's POV)

When I arrived at the club, the lights were blazing bright. Aurora sat in her high chair, methodically eating ice cream while staring at Theodore, who stood there looking utterly disheveled. His hair was damp, his expensive suit wrinkled and wet.

The familiar sound of my footsteps made Aurora's head turn. She quickly stuffed another spoonful of ice cream into her mouth just as I walked through the door.

My gaze swept over Seraphina, who immediately averted her eyes in fear. I walked directly to Aurora, pulling out a handkerchief to gently wipe the sticky sweetness from her face.

"Nora," I called to the caregiver hovering nearby. "Ice cream this late?"

Nora wrung her hands nervously. "She needed comfort, Alpha King. After everything that happened tonight..."

Aurora's small, sticky hands suddenly cupped my face. Her dark eyes, so much like Olivia's, searched mine with an intensity that made my chest tighten.

"Are you my daddy?" she asked, her voice small but clear.

My mind flashed back to the beginning. My relationship with Aurora had started as calculated strategy. I knew how much she meant to Olivia, how loving her daughter would be the fastest way to Olivia's heart.

But through the sleepless nights, watching her grow from a fragile infant in an incubator, she had become something more. She was my daughter now, a gift from the Moon Goddess herself.

"Yes," I answered calmly, my voice steady despite the emotion threatening to overwhelm me.

Aurora's face lit up like sunrise. Her small teeth showed as she chirped, "Daddy."

The tender moment shattered like glass.

"She's not your dad, I am!" Theodore's voice cracked across the room like a whip.

I stood slowly, lifting Aurora into my arms. "Leave, Theodore."

I started toward the stairs, but his hand shot out, gripping my wrist with desperate strength.

"Do you intend to continue this farce in front of the pups?" I asked, my voice dangerously quiet.

Aurora's little hands suddenly grabbed Theodore's fingers. For a split second, I wondered if the blood bond was truly that strong, if some primal recognition would pull her toward her biological father.

My doubt evaporated instantly.

"Let go of my daddy!" Aurora shouted, her small voice fierce with protective fury.

She began prying Theodore's fingers off my arm with painstaking determination. Each tiny finger she moved was like a nail in Theodore's coffin.

Theodore's face crumpled with pain. "I'm your father."

Seraphina stepped forward, her voice shrill. "Aurora, he's telling the truth. Theodore is your real father."

"No!" Aurora yelled, turning to glare at her aunt with surprising venom for such a small child.

"You're wrong! He's not my daddy. He never told me stories, or tucked me in, or braided my

hair.”

She clung to me, her small body trembling with emotion as she stared defiantly at Theodore.

“You’re not! You’re my brother’s dad! You only make my mommy sad. My daddy is the best daddy in the world. He makes my mommy happy!”

“No!” Theodore cried, the sound torn from his throat like a wounded animal.

He looked as if he were about to collapse, his face pale and stricken. I adjusted Aurora in my arms and headed for the stairs.

“Seraphina, escort Theodore out,” I commanded without looking back.

But it was Leo who moved first. The boy approached his biological father, his etched with exhaustion and pain.

“Dad, I’m begging you, please go.”

young face

Theodore stared at his son, when he reached out toward Leo, the boy violently pulled away.

“You never cared about me!” Leo screamed, his voice cracking with years of repressed anguish.

“At that time, when you brought Clara to me and left her to take care of me, I thought my mother no longer wanted me, that I had hurt her somehow.”

Tears streamed down his face as the words poured out like a dam bursting.

“And now? You want to please my mother, so you’re bringing me back again? I was just a tool to make Mom happy! You abandoned me to that orphanage for three years!”

His voice rose to a desperate wail. “Why are you showing up now? To destroy my sister too? Why did you betray Mom? You ruined everything!”

The raw anguish in his son’s voice was a knife to Theodore’s heart. I could see him physically recoil as if struck.

I stepped forward, pulling the sobbing Leo into my arms. He buried his face against my shoulder, his small body shaking with sobs.

“Uncle Matthew, make him leave,” he whispered brokenly.

Theodore stood frozen for a long moment, staring at his children. Then, utterly defeated, he stumbled toward the door like a man walking to his execution.

Later, in Leo's room, I sat reviewing his homework while he lay in bed. The mathematical equations blurred slightly as I thought about the evening's events.

"Uncle Matthew," Leo's voice was quiet, hesitant. "If... if you and Mom separate one day, will you still be Aurora's daddy?"

I closed the notebook and turned to face him fully. "Yes."

Relief washed over his features like sunrise after a storm. I could see the tension leave his small shoulders.

I made my way to Aurora's room next. She was lying in her bed, eyes squeezed shut in an obvious pretense of sleep.

I sat on the edge of her bed, speaking gently. "Aurora, there's something we need to talk about."

Her eyes opened immediately, proving my suspicion correct.

"There are different kinds of fathers," I explained carefully. "A birth father, who helped create you, and an adoptive father, who chooses to love and raise you."

Aurora's small brow furrowed in concentration. She wrapped her arms tightly around my neck, her grip surprisingly strong.

"I don't want him. I only want you."

"Promise me," she demanded, her voice muffled against my shoulder.

"I promise," I agreed, then added seriously, "But this is our secret from Mommy for now, okay?"

She nodded solemnly.

"Remember what I taught you," I continued. "Always protect yourself first, then your mother second."

"I know!" Aurora said brightly, then added with touching sincerity, "And third, protect Daddy."

When I returned to the Royal Infirmary, the atmosphere in Olivia's ward was surprisingly cheerful. Killian Vance sat in the visitor's chair, his daughter Elara beside him with what appeared to be a fresh cast on her leg.

Olivia looked weary but was wearing a man's suit jacket that was clearly too large for her. She was carefully peeling an apple for Elara, her movements gentle and maternal.

I walked in, my expression carefully neutral despite the irritation building in my chest.

Without a word, I took the jacket from Olivia's shoulders and handed it back to Killian. Then I walked to the thermostat and adjusted it back to its original setting.

"It's getting late," I said politely but firmly. "Elara should rest."

Killian's jaw tightened, but he stood. "Of course."

After they left, I stepped out into the hallway. Killian was waiting.

"We need to talk," I said, leading him toward the courtyard.

Rain was falling steadily as we stood under the covered walkway. The sound of water hitting the pavement filled the silence between us.

"Was I not clear enough?" I asked, my voice cold as winter steel.

Killian's composure began to c***k. "I don't know what you mean."

"The suspiciously new cast on your daughter's leg," I began systematically. "The conveniently lowered air conditioning to justify lending your jacket. The fact that Olivia's vehicle is still impounded, making your story about hearing of her 'accident' impossible."

Each point hit him like a physical blow. His face grew paler with every word.

"How did you really know she was here, Killian?"

He broke completely, his voice filled with nine years of anguish. "I've loved Olivia for nine years! How could you just claim her with a few words? It was supposed to be me!"

His pain was real, raw, and desperate. But it changed nothing.

"You're an Alpha, Killian," I said quietly. "You have to ask yourself why she never chose you."

My calm dismissal seemed to infuriate him more than any anger could have.

"I don't understand," he said, his voice breaking. "You're an Alpha King. You could have anyone. Why her? Why Olivia?"

I turned to see Olivia approaching through the rain, her silhouette graceful even in the dim light. I walked past Killian to her side, wrapping my arm around her shoulder.

Behind us, Killian's incredulous voice rang out through the rain.

"You've loved Olivia, you've loved Olivia for a long, long time!"

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Go All the Way

(Killian's POV)

All my words stuck in my throat. I watched helplessly as Matthew called a healer and had

Elara's cast removed.

Elara jumped around happily, testing her foot. It had only been sprained from playing – it didn't need a cast at all.

I had used my own daughter as a pawn. The realization hit me like a physical blow.

Elara walked toward me, holding my suit jacket. Her innocent smile made my chest tighten with guilt.

I couldn't face Olivia anymore. I couldn't even look at my daughter.

"Dad, Aunt Olivia promised to take me, Leo, and baby Aurora to the amusement park this weekend," Elara said happily, taking my hand.

I stroked her head, my heart heavy with shame. As we left, I didn't dare look up at the ward.

I was afraid to meet Matthew's golden eyes. He was like a god, seeing through my pathetic scheme instantly.

The fear in my heart was overwhelming. Was my fate with Olivia really over?

I was too unwilling to accept it.

On the way home, Elara held my hand tightly. "Dad, Uncle Matthew said I can't call Aunt Olivia 'Mom' anymore."

I was stunned. Elara wasn't upset – she seemed calm about it.

“Did Aunt Olivia agree?” I asked carefully.

“Yes,” Elara replied. “Uncle Matthew said he would have Grandmother Victoria choose an auspicious day for the ceremony.”

My mind went blank. I already knew what was happening.

“I'll have another dad in the future,” Elara said with a grin. “Uncle Matthew wants to recognize me as his goddaughter.”

The words hit me like daggers. “I'll have to call him and Aunt Olivia, Godfather and Godmother.”

My hands clenched into fists at my sides. “Sweetheart, you agreed?”

Elara suddenly paused, realizing something. “Yes. Uncle Matthew is going to take me to a training ground.”

“He is Alpha King, and I want to be strong like him too.” Her eyes sparkled with admiration.

“Uncle Matthew also said... Dad, your mate will be my mother. I can't call other aunts 'mom'. Your future mate will be unhappy.”

“Sweetheart, haven't you always known how I feel about Aunt Olivia?” I said helplessly.

“But Uncle Matthew has already become Aunt Olivia's mate,” Elara looked at me seriously. “They're mated.”

Elara might not understand the full meaning of the mate bond. But she had seen them hold a mating ceremony.

Although the ceremony was chaotic, she and Aurora were the flower girls. She had attended with a heart full of blessings.

She knew Uncle Theodore was not good to Olivia. She knew Olivia's heart was bitter.

But Uncle Matthew was very good to her.

I looked at Elara's pure eyes and helplessly hugged her. The Alpha King had even convinced my daughter.

All my hopes were extinguished. It was too much.

(Matthew's POV)

My gaze shifted from the departing father and daughter. I closed the door firmly.

After dealing with Killian, my eyes fell on my sleepy mate. Olivia was sitting on the sofa with her knees hugged to her chest.

A laptop with several systems open sat on the coffee table. She was engrossed in the computer, her fingers tapping ceaselessly on the keyboard.

My Royal Guards were stationed outside the door. If she hadn't been awake, Killian and Elara would never have had the chance to see her.

I sat down opposite Olivia. She looked up and used a small fork to feed a piece of apple to my lips.

I grabbed her hand. From Elara calling her "Mom," from her wearing Killian's suit, from her being up at 1 AM instead of sleeping.

A breath caught in my chest. My anger was building.

And the person responsible was shamelessly continuing to provoke me. Eating fruit in the middle of the night, causing indigestion.

"Matt? Darling?" Olivia waved a hand in front of my face. "You're hurting me. What are you thinking about?"

Olivia was stunned as I stood up. My tall frame pulled her up with me.

She stood on the sofa, almost at eye level with me. She shouldn't assume that calling me by an endearing title twice would make me soften.

I wouldn't soften this time.

Olivia met my indifferent gaze. She wrapped her arms around my neck and rested her head on my shoulder.

"Where did you just go? Did you go home to see Aurora?" Her voice was soft against my ear.

"You have Aurora's milky scent on you. Does Aurora miss me a lot? What about Leo? Is his homework done?"

She turned her head, her breath tickling my ear. "Hold me, I can't stand."

I reached out and lifted Olivia. She was drowsy in my arms, her eyes closed.

I carried her to the bed. The bed was too small for both of us.

I tried to settle Olivia, but she clung tightly to my shirt collar. I had to lie down holding her.

She lay on top of me, her face resting on my shoulder. “My King, I was wrong. I shouldn’t have worn my colleague’s clothes.”

If another woman touched my clothes, I would burn them. And she had just been wearing another man’s suit.

I had stripped the suit off her as soon as I entered the room. I had been angry from the moment I walked in.

“Last time, I shouldn’t have said I should have mated with my colleague.” Her voice was barely a whisper.

“The time before that, I shouldn’t have left in my colleague’s car on the night of the concert.”

“The time before that, I shouldn’t have gone to the restaurant to eat with my colleague. The time before that...”

All her “last times” were silenced by me. I kissed her fervently, finding her soft lips.

She gasped in my arms as my hand touched her chin, lifting her face.

“Wrong, think again.” I kissed Olivia’s lips, pressing her beneath me.

My hand moved from her waist to her hip, patting it lightly twice.

Olivia’s mind went blank from the kiss. She pushed me away, panting.

“I shouldn’t have become your mate and still acted as Elara’s mom.”

I reached out and turned off the light. In the darkness, only our outlines and warmth remained.

A smile spread across my lips. I was too easily softened. My mate could even self-reflect? Unbelievable.

I suppressed my joy, kissed her soft lips again. “Keep thinking,” I said in a low, husky voice.

(Faelan’s POV)

In the mountains of the Moonstone territory, I sat by the window in my wheelchair. The distant lights flickered like stars.

“Alpha Faelan, Miss Olivia was kidn*pped by Caelan Mooncrest’s men today,” my aide reported.

“Alpha King Matthew threw the man in the pack dungeons. By midnight, he was sent to the pack infirmary with a cerebral hemorrhage.”

“Fortunately, you didn’t make a move on Miss Olivia today.” My aide’s voice carried relief.

“The Alpha King’s methods are truly...” He trailed off, unable to finish.

“It just proves that Olivia Blackwood is very important to him,” I said. My scarred hands gripped the wheelchair armrests.

“There are only 10 days left until his coronation ceremony.”

“K*****g is definitely not an option now. He must be on guard,” the aide said.

I stared into the darkness for a long moment. “In that case, we might as well go all the way.”

< Chapter 262: Go All the Way

My aide’s expression shifted slightly. He looked at me, waiting.

After a long silence, I spoke. “Make sure no one can trace it back to us.”

“Rest assured, Alpha Faelan.” The aide’s voice was steady. “Miss Olivia is in the infirmary, and

the Alpha King is there right now.”

“With so many healers and attendants around, it will be impossible to trace it back to us.”

I gave a slight nod. The aide walked out of the room.

I heard him speak into his phone. “You can make your move.”

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Matthew was Poisoned

(Olivia's POV)

I woke to the soft sound of breathing nearby. Opening my eyes, I saw Matthew sleeping on the small sofa in the ward, his tall frame awkwardly folded to fit the limited space.

Despite my attempt to sit up quietly, his eyes snapped open immediately. The Alpha King's senses were always alert, even in sleep.

"You're awake." His voice was husky from sleep as he rose and stretched. "How did you sleep?"

"Better than you, it seems," I replied, eyeing the uncomfortable sofa. "That can't have been pleasant."

Matthew smiled, running a hand through his tousled hair. "I've slept in worse conditions."

I felt my throat dry and scratchy. "I'm thirsty."

"Let me get you something." Matthew walked to the table where a teapot sat. "The healers left some moonflower tea. It should help with your recovery."

He poured the pale golden liquid into a delicate teacup. The fragrant aroma of moonflowers filled the room as he lifted the cup to his lips, taking a small sip.

"Testing the temperature?" I asked with a smile.

"Of course. Can't have my mate burning her tongue." His eyes crinkled at the corners as he walked toward me.

What happened next seemed to unfold in slow motion.

Just as Matthew reached my bedside, his hand suddenly jerked. The teacup slipped from his grasp, shattering on the floor with a crash. His body swayed and then collapsed forward onto me.

"Matthew!" I gasped, my heart racing with sudden fear.

His heavy weight pressed me into the mattress, but before I could panic further, I felt him. give my hand a subtle squeeze. His eyes met mine, and he winked—actually winked—before his expression contorted into one of pain.

Through our mate bond, I sensed his thoughts: Act alarmed. Call Tristan. Now.

Understanding flooded me. I drew in a deep breath and screamed, “Tristan! Help! Something’s wrong with the Alpha King!”

The door burst open immediately. Tristan rushed in, followed by two Royal Guards, their faces tight with alarm.

“He collapsed after drinking the tea!” I cried, my voice shaking with what I hoped sounded like genuine fear.

Tristan’s face paled as he and the guards carefully lifted Matthew off me. “Get the healers! Now!” he barked at one of the guards, who immediately sprinted from the room.

“Take him to the emergency room,” I said, my voice trembling. “Hurry!”

As they carried Matthew out, his eyes fluttered open briefly, meeting mine. Through our bond, I felt his message: Wolfsbane. Faelan. Stay safe.

I nodded imperceptibly, understanding his plan. He was faking the severity of the poisoning to draw out whoever was behind this.

The room emptied quickly, leaving me alone with my racing thoughts. Matthew had tasted wolfsbane in the tea. And he suspected Faelan Moonstone was behind it.

I took a deep breath, steeling myself. If Matthew wanted to play this game to catch the culprit, I would play my part perfectly.

Hours later, I paced outside Matthew’s treatment room, playing the role of the distraught mate. The corridor was filled with tense Royal Guards and healers rushing back and forth.

“Luna Olivia.”

I turned to see Seraphina Kane approaching, her face a mask of concern that didn’t quite reach her eyes. Two guards stepped forward, blocking her path.

“Let me see him,” she demanded. “I’m family.”

“No one is allowed in,” the guard replied firmly.

Seraphina’s gaze shifted to me, her eyes narrowing. “It’s your fault. Ever since you entered his life, he has been restless! Why won’t you go back to Theodore? He loves you so much, why won’t you accept him? You won’t even let Aurora acknowledge him?”

I caught the key point in her words: “You brought Theodore to meet Aurora without my consent? Sera, you’ve gone too far!”

Seraphina stubbornly pursed her lips, and I knew she didn’t think she was wrong, “It’s you who prevented their father–daughter reunion, that’s what’s gone too far.”

“Theodore... is not Aurora’s father,” I said somewhat helplessly.

“Livvy, don’t deceive yourself!” Seraphina slightly raised her voice, “I’ve already confirmed with my parents that Aurora is not my brother’s child, but Theodore’s.”

Seraphina lifted her chin defiantly. “Aurora deserves to know her biological father. Besides, she was incredibly rude to him. You’ve poisoned her against her own father.”

Something snapped inside me. Before I could think, my hand flew out, connecting with her cheek with a resounding c***k.

Seraphina gasped, her hand flying to her face. Before she could recover, I slapped her again, harder.

“You know nothing,” I hissed, trembling with rage. “Nothing about what that man did to me.” “He loved you!” Seraphina protested, her cheek reddening. “He’s always been devoted-” “Devoted?” I laughed bitterly. “When I was pregnant with our stillborn daughter, he had already started sleeping with Clara. And when I was pregnant with Aurora, do you know what he suggested? That I get an abortion.”

Seraphina’s face drained of color. “You’re lying.”

“Am I?” I pulled out my phone, my fingers shaking with anger. “You think Theodore is such a good man? Let me show you who he really is.”

I pulled up the video I’d kept all this time—After I left, the video of Theodore’s live stream, where he begged me for forgiveness and tearfully admitted his mistakes.

“I don’t believe you,” Seraphina whispered, but her voice lacked conviction.

“See for yourself.” I thrust the phone into her hands. “Watch it. Every second of it.”

As she watched, her expression changed from disbelief to shock, then to disgust. When the video ended, she looked up at me, her eyes wide and confused.

“I... I didn’t know.”

“Of course you didn’t.” I took my phone back. “You only saw what he wanted you to see.”

I turned to the guards. "Place her under house arrest. She is not to leave until the Alpha King is fully recovered."

"You can't do that!" Seraphina protested.

"I just did." I met her gaze coldly. "And if you ever bring Theodore near my daughter again, house arrest will be the least of your concerns."

As the guards led her away, I turned back toward Matthew's room, my heart heavy. Playing this charade was necessary, but I couldn't help worrying about the real danger we were facing.

Faelan was enigmatic. Behind the events of my mother's disappearance five years ago, Ethan's injury, the Mooncrest Pack's incident, and Matthew's poisoning, there was always his shadow.

30 Days To Freedom: Abandoned Luna Is Secret Shadow King Chapter 265

Lyra's Diary

(Olivia's POV)

I lay on Matthew's sickbed, watching him handle official business from his tablet. His other hand stroked my hair gently, the familiar gesture soothing my frayed nerves.

"Don't worry," he murmured, his voice low and reassuring. "I've already arranged everything. No matter what he tries to do, we'll definitely catch him this time."

Just then, Tristan knocked and entered the room. His expression was carefully neutral, but I could see the tension in his shoulders.

"My King, Theodore Redgrave has arrived," he announced. "He says he's here to deliver Lyra's diary to Luna Olivia."

My heart skipped a beat. Mother's diary? I hadn't even known she kept one.

Matthew's hand stilled in my hair. Through our bond, I felt his protective instincts flare. "Do you want to see him?"

I nodded slowly. "If he has something of my mother's, I need to know what it is."

I made my way to the reception area, my steps echoing in the quiet corridor. Theodore stood by the window, his usually commanding presence diminished. He looked utterly dejected, his shoulders slumped in defeat.

When he turned to face me, I was shocked by his appearance. Dark circles shadowed his eyes, and his normally pristine appearance was disheveled.

“Olivia.” His voice was hoarse, barely above a whisper.

He held out a small, ornate box. The metal was tarnished with age, and intricate symbols were carved into its surface.

“This contains your mother’s diary,” he said, his hands trembling slightly. “She locked it in a safe before her death. She told me to give it to you if you ever left me and came to the Eastern Territory.”

I stared at the box, afraid to touch it. “Why didn’t you give this to me before?”

Theodore’s face crumpled. “I didn’t want you to know too much. If you knew everything, I knew you would be even less likely to return to me.”

His admission hung heavy in the air between us. Even now, even after everything, he was still trying to control what I knew.

“But now,” he continued, his voice breaking, “I feel it’s necessary to tell you. If anything happens to Matthew, I hope you’ll leave with me and return to the Northern Territory.”

I took the box from his hands, feeling its weight. “Theodore, I know what you’re thinking. You believe that if Matthew dies, I’ll need to find another strong tree to cling to for survival.”

His eyes widened slightly, caught off guard by my directness.

“But I don’t need that anymore,” I continued, my voice growing stronger. “I can grow into a strong tree myself.”

Theodore’s face turned pale. He opened his mouth as if to speak, then closed it again.

I didn’t want to say anything more to him. Clutching the box to my chest, I turned and walked back toward the ward.

Back in the room, I sat on the edge of Matthew’s bed, staring at the coded lock on the box. My fingers hovered over the small numbered dials.

“What do you think the password could be?” Matthew asked softly, setting aside his tablet to focus on me.

I tried my birthday first: 0312. The lock didn’t budge. Then I tried my mother’s birthday, but that didn’t work either.

Frustration built in my chest. What would my mother have chosen?

Suddenly, inspiration flashed through my mind—I recalled that photograph, the one with my mother and Ethan. The date written on the back: May 11, 1995.

With trembling fingers, I entered: 0511.

The lock clicked open.

Inside was a yellowed diary bound in soft leather, and beneath it, a childhood photo of the same boy from the other picture. My hands shook as I opened the diary to the first page.

“Livvy, my sweet heart,” I read aloud, my voice barely a whisper. “By the time you read this diary, I believe you will have met your brother Ethan.”

The words hit me like a physical blow. “Brother?” I gasped, looking at Matthew in shock.

He was my brother? Ethan Moonstone was my brother?

With growing dread, I continued reading. The diary revealed a past I never could have imagined.

From the age of fifteen, my mother’s father had used her beauty to socialize with the alphas of various packs. She had loved computers and dreamed of studying in the human world, but her father refused to let her leave.

After receiving a university acceptance letter, she had planned and successfully escaped from the Mooncrest Pack. But she hadn’t expected to encounter a rogue wolf attack during her escape.

Faelan Moonstone saved her. But she didn’t expect that it was a conspiracy. Faelan had already colluded with her pack, deliberately letting her go and then pretending to rescue her. After bringing her to his territory, he imprisoned her. He r****d and sexually abused her, forcing her to give birth to Ethan.

My hands trembled as I continued reading, Luna Annelise resented her mother for taking away her husband, always punishing her with whippings when Faelan was away from home. Until Ethan was five years old, when Faelan left the territory for diplomatic activities, she finally escaped. But she couldn’t take Ethan with her. Because Annelise promised to let her go on the condition that she leave Ethan behind, and she promised to treat him as her own. She had kept this part of her history buried in her heart and never told anyone.

As I finished reading, I realized tears were streaming down my face. So much had happened to my mother before I was born. So much pain and suffering that she had carried alone.

Matthew hadn't said a word throughout my reading. He simply reached out and silently wiped away my tears.

"Can I see it?" he asked cautiously.

I remembered the parts of the diary that mentioned him. My mother had written about watching him from afar, about recognizing the way he looked at me.

I nodded, my voice thick with emotion. "Go ahead and read it. You're mentioned in there too."

Matthew looked at me in surprise and carefully picked up the diary.

(Matthew's POV)

As I read through Lyra's elegant handwriting, I discovered truths that shook me to my core.

She had known about my feelings for Olivia long before I'd ever acted on them. But she believed that returning to the Eastern Territory would be dangerous for her daughter, so she had allowed Theodore's pursuit to continue.

"If one day Olivia and Theodore separate and Olivia returns to the Eastern Territory," I read aloud, "I hope Matthew will protect her well."

Olivia's breath caught beside me. Even from beyond the grave, her mother had been trying to protect her.

But it was the next section that made my blood run cold.

Lyra had discovered the secret of the mountain laboratory. The Mooncrest bloodline was cursed—their hearts were doomed to fail before the age of forty. To survive, they had cooperated with Faelan and sent Lyra to him as payment.

Faelan had helped them establish the research lab, which studied not only heart transplants but ran a horrific trade in werewolf organs and conducted genetic experiments on our kind.

Faelan wanted to become stronger. He was using the research to enhance himself, to overcome the natural limitations of his wolf form.

I looked up at Olivia, seeing the same realization dawning in her eyes.

We had finally found Faelan's weakness.

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Return to the Mountain Lab

(Olivia's POV)

My fingers trembled as I dialed Annelise's number. After reading my mother's diary, I knew I had to face this woman—the one who had tormented my mother and raised my half-brother.

"Hello?" The voice on the other end of the phone remained soft.

"Luna Moonstone," I said, keeping my voice steady. "I need to see Ethan. I found a photo of Ethan among my mother's belongings, and I hope to return it to him, talk to him, and see if it might help with his recovery."

The silence on the phone lasted for a long time, she answered coldly, "Fine. I will pick you up and take you to the facility in the mountains tomorrow, and I will make all the arrangements." The line went dead. I turned to Matthew, who had been listening intently.

"I don't like this," he said, his jaw tight with concern. "Something feels wrong about her tone." "I have to go," I insisted. "Ethan is my brother. He's been unconscious for days, and when he wakes up, he needs to understand what really happened to our mother. In our few previous conversations, I could sense that he always believed his mother had abandoned him."

His jaw tightened, but he nodded reluctantly. "I'll arrange for a security detail to follow at a distance. They won't be seen, but they'll be there if you need them."

I leaned forward and kissed him softly. "Thank you."

The next morning, I dressed carefully in practical clothes—dark jeans, a fitted sweater, and boots I could run in if necessary. I slipped the small tracking device Matthew had given me into my bra, where it wouldn't be found in a casual search.

"Be careful," Matthew whispered as he embraced me at the door. "At the first sign of trouble-

"I'll activate the tracker," I promised. "I'll come back to you."

The drive to the mountain laboratory was tense. I had insisted on going alone to avoid raising suspicion, but I could feel Matthew's security team following at a discreet distance.

As we wound up the mountain road, I noticed Annelise's demeanor changing. Her initial cold politeness gave way to barely concealed hostility. day would come."

"What day?" I asked, keeping my eyes on the winding mountain road.

She didn't respond, remaining immersed in her own world, talking to herself. "Your mother was always so proud," she said. "Even when she had nothing to be proud of."

"I don't know what you're talking about," I continued to play dumb, "I just want to return the photos to Ethan. I want to help him."

Annelise laughed bitterly. "Help him? You're just like your mother. Beautiful, manipulative, thinking you can seduce any man with your looks. You two are whores."

—

I gripped the steering wheel tighter. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Of course you don't," she sneered. "I bet your mother didn't tell you anything, did she?" She

laughed, a harsh sound that echoed in the car.

When we arrived at the facility, my instincts immediately went on high alert. Today, the security was excessive—too many guards, too many checkpoints. This wasn't just a medical research facility.

Annelise led me through the corridors with purposeful strides. Her earlier hostility had transformed into something more dangerous—anticipation.

"He's in the same room as before," she said, stopping before a heavy metal door. "Go ahead."

Inside, Ethan lay unconscious on a hospital bed, just as he had been the last time I saw him. His face was pale, his breathing shallow. Looking at him now, I could see the resemblance to my mother—the same high cheekbones, the same delicate nose.

I approached his bedside slowly, my heart aching for this brother I'd never known. Suddenly, I heard the distinctive click of a lock behind me.

I spun around to find Annelise standing by the door, a cruel smile twisting her features.

“Did you really think I brought you here out of kindness?” she asked, her voice filled with malicious glee. “You know? I’ve waited years for this moment.”

I keeping my expression neutral. “What moment is that?”

“The moment I get to make Lyra’s precious daughter suffer just like I made her suffer.”

Her face contorted with rage. “That b***h! Always so beautiful, so perfect! She seduced my husband with her looks, made him obsessed with her!”

I slowly step back, “We both know that’s not how it happened. It was a conspiracy by your husband. He coveted her, oppressed her with his power, imprisoned her, r***d her, and forced her to bear his pup.”

“LIES! Faelan loved me! Your mother was a w***e!” She spat, “She seduced my husband with her beauty, her innocent act. She destroyed my mate, my family, my life.”

She pulled a syringe from her pocket, her eyes gleaming with malice. “When you called, I was so pleased to hear you were coming. I have been planning this revenge for years.”

Annelise screamed. “She enjoyed stealing him from me. And now you’re going to pay for what she did.”

I lunged for the door, but two guards had entered silently behind her. They grabbed my arms, holding me still as Annelise approached with the syringe. The needle pierced my arm, and I felt the cold burn of sedative entering my bloodstream.

“This is just the beginning,” Annelise whispered as the drug began to take effect. “I’m going to make you suffer just like she made me suffer.”

My vision started to blur, but I managed to activate the hidden tracking device Matthew had insisted I carry. The emergency signal would reach him within minutes.

The sedative worked quickly, making my limbs heavy and my thoughts sluggish. I slumped in the guards’ grip, pretending to be more affected than I actually was.

Fortunately, in her eyes, I was merely a fragile she-wolf, and the dosage she gave me was far from enough to render me unconscious.

“Take her to the preparation room,” Annelise ordered. “I want to show her our operation before we begin.”

The guards dragged me down a corridor and into an elevator that descended deep below the mountain. As we emerged, I could hear sounds that made my blood run cold—whimpering, crying, the unmistakable sounds of imprisoned werewolves.

“You see,” Annelise said, gesturing proudly at rows of cells visible through a large observation window, “Faelan is a visionary. These wolves have all volunteered their bodies for the advancement of our kind.”

The lie was so blatant it would have been laughable if the situation weren’t so horrific. In the cells, I could see wolves of all ages—some barely more than pups—huddled in fear.

“Organ harvesting,” she continued, walking me past another section. “Heart transplants are just the beginning. We’ve perfected techniques for transferring enhanced organs, creating stronger wolves.”

My enhanced metabolism was already fighting the sedative, but I kept my head lolling and my steps unsteady. All the while, my mind was racing, cataloging everything I saw.

Through my abilities, I could sense the electronic systems around us—security cameras, electronic locks, alarm systems. The entire facility was networked, which meant I could potentially access it all.

“I’m going to prepare your special accommodations,” Annelise said, her voice dripping with false sweetness. “I want to make sure everything is perfect for Lyra’s daughter.”

She nodded to the guards. “Secure her in holding cell three. I’ll be back shortly.”

I pretended to be unconscious, and as expected, the guard threw me into the cell and left. I took out the lock-picking tools hidden in my boot heel, unlocked my handcuffs, and then focused, spreading my mental energy to every corner of this facility.

I needed to act quickly before Annelise returned to begin her torture.

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Liberation and Chaos

(Olivia’s POV)

As the effects of the sedative gradually diminish, I close my eyes and extend my consciousness into the various corners of the facility.

What I saw made my blood run cold.

The facility wasn’t just a research lab—it was a slaughterhouse. Dozens of werewolves were imprisoned in underground cells, many with fresh surgical scars. Some were missing limbs. Others lay motionless, their chests cut open and partially sutured.

“Moon Goddess,” I whispered, horror washing over me.

I could see everything -Faelan’s entire operation laid bare. In one room, surgeons were harvesting a heart from an unconscious wolf. In another, technicians were cataloging organs in preservation units.

This wasn’t medicine. This was butchery.

My fingers flew over the cell’s electronic lock, and the door clicked open. I slipped into the corridor, staying close to the wall. Two guards stood at the end of the hallway, their backs to me.

I needed a distraction—something big enough to create chaos but controlled enough not to harm the prisoners.

The main generator room appeared on my mental map of the facility. Perfect.

I closed my eyes again, focusing my energy on the generator’s control systems. With careful precision, I triggered another electrical surge through the vibration.

The explosion wasn’t massive, but it was enough. The lights flickered and died, plunging the facility into darkness. Emergency lights cast an eerie red glow through the corridors.

I quickly entered an empty office where the computer was not locked. Alarms blared as the backup systems kicked in, but I was already working on those. One by one, I disabled the security protocols and released the electronic locks on every cell door in the facility.

“What’s happening?” I heard a guard shout.

“System failure! All cells are opening!”

Chaos erupted throughout the facility—growls, screams, the thunder of running feet. The freed werewolves, driven by rage and trauma, were attacking their captors.

I moved quickly through the corridors, dodging panicked staff and vengeful prisoners. I needed to get back to Ethan before Annelise realized what was happening.

A guard rounded the corner, his eyes widening when he saw me. Before he could raise his weapon, I delivered a swift kick to his knee, followed by a strike to his throat. He crumpled, and I grabbed his access card.

The elevator was down with the power outage, so I took the emergency stairs, climbing back up to the main level where Ethan was being kept.

The medical wing was eerily quiet compared to the chaos below. Most of the staff had fled or gone to help contain the situation downstairs.

I slipped into Ethan's room and locked the door behind me. He remained unconscious, his breathing shallow but steady.

The computer terminal in the corner was still functioning on backup power. I quickly accessed it, sending our exact location to Matthew through an encrypted channel.

"Help is coming, Ethan," I whispered, approaching his bed. "Just hold on."

I examined the IV drip connected to his arm. Whatever they were giving him was keeping him under, but I suspected it wasn't a natural coma. His brain activity readings were too high for someone truly unconscious.

Pressing my forehead against his, I closed my eyes and tried to sense his consciousness. To my surprise, I could feel his mind—active, alert, but trapped within his body. They weren't keeping him unconscious; they were paralyzing him.

"You're awake in there, aren't you?" I whispered. "You can hear everything."

The horror of his situation hit me. How long had he been like this? Aware but unable to move, speak, or even open his eyes?

I searched the room frantically, looking for something to counteract the paralytic. The medical refrigerator in the corner contained various vials and syringes.

One label caught my eye: "Epinephrine – Alpha Grade."

It was risky, but epinephrine might stimulate his wolf enough to overcome the paralytic. I filled a syringe with the recommended dosage and returned to Ethan's side.

"I don't know if this is a good idea," I warned him, though I wasn't sure he could hear me. "But it's our best chance."

I injected the epinephrine directly into his IV line. For several tense moments, nothing happened. Then his heart monitor began to beep faster, his pulse racing as the powerful stimulant hit his system.

A low growl emanated from his chest—not human, but wolf. His wolf was fighting back against the drugs.

Suddenly, the building shook with the force of a distant explosion. The freed prisoners must have reached the laboratory's fuel storage.

“Come on, Ethan,” I urged, watching his vitals climb. “Wake up. We need to get out of here.”

His fingers twitched, then his eyelids fluttered. The wolf growl grew louder.

Just as hope surged within me, a bone-chilling roar echoed through the corridor outside—the unmistakable sound of an enraged Alpha wolf.

Heavy footsteps thundered toward us, growing louder with each second. I positioned myself between the door and Ethan’s bed, ready to defend my brother.

The door exploded inward with such force that it tore from its hinges, revealing a towering figure silhouetted in the doorway.

Faelan Moonstone stood before me, his eyes glowing with Alpha power, his face contorted with rage.

“You,” he snarled, his voice barely human. “Lyra’s daughter.”

I held my ground, refusing to show fear. “It’s over, Faelan. Everyone knows what you’ve been doing here.”

He laughed, a cold, cruel sound. “You think I care? When I’m finished with you, there won’t be enough left to identify.”

He stepped into the room, his massive frame blocking the only exit. Behind me, Ethan’s monitors continued to beep frantically as his wolf fought to wake.

Faelan’s eyes flicked to his son, then back to me. “Two of Lyra’s children in one room,” he said, his lips curling into a sinister smile. “How convenient.”

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The Monster’s Final Stand

(Olivia’s POV)

“You,” Faelan snarled, nostrils flaring as he fixed his gaze on me. “I should have known you’d be behind this chaos.”

I positioned myself between him and Ethan’s bed, my heart hammering against my ribs. The facility alarms continued to blare in the background, punctuated by distant explosions.

Faelan's expression shifted as he studied me, his rage giving way to something far more disturbing. His eyes raked over my body, lingering in places that made my skin crawl.

"My, my," he purred, his voice dropping to a predatory rumble. "You're even more beautiful than your mother was. More delicate. More... fragile."

I fought to keep my expression neutral despite the revulsion churning in my stomach.

"You could take Lyra's place, you know," he continued, taking a step closer. "As my personal... companion."

"I'd rather die," I spat.

He laughed, a cold sound devoid of humor. "That can be arranged. But not before I've had my fun."

His gaze drifted to Ethan's unconscious form. "My son has been playing quite the game, hasn't he? Pretending to hate you while secretly protecting his little sister."

My eyes widened in shock. "What are you talking about?"

Without warning, Faelan drew a pistol and fired at Ethan. I screamed as the silver bullet tore into my brother's shoulder.

"Insurance," Faelan explained casually, tucking the gun away. "That will keep him in a nice, deep sleep while we get better acquainted."

He stepped closer, his massive frame blocking any path to escape. "Did you know your brother was my greatest creation? The first successful heart transplant recipient. That's why I couldn't bring myself to kill him, despite his betrayal."

My mind raced, processing this new information while desperately searching for a way out. "Just thinking about having you tied up," Faelan continued, his breathing growing heavier,

"whipping you like I did your mother... it excites me in ways you can't imagine."

He reached into his pocket and withdrew a syringe filled with pink liquid. "This will make things easier for both of us. A special aphrodisiac of my own creation."

My blood turned to ice as he advanced. "Once this thing is inside you, you'll beg me to f**k you, you little b***h. I really want to see you suck my d**k and please me."

I backed away until I hit the wall. "You're a monster."

“I’m a visionary,” he corrected, lunging forward with surprising speed.

I ducked and rolled, but he anticipated my move, grabbing my arm with crushing force. I fought with everything I had, kicking, clawing, but his Alpha strength was overwhelming.

He slammed me against the wall, pinning me with his body weight as he brought the needle toward my neck. “Stop fighting what’s inevitable.”

I struggled desperately, but he was too strong. The needle’s tip pressed against my skin, and I felt the first burning sensation as it began to pierce.

Suddenly, a low, feral growl filled the room.

Faelan froze, his head whipping around toward the source of the sound. Ethan was awake, his eyes glowing with Alpha power, his face contorted in rage.

Before Faelan could react, Ethan lunged from the bed with inhuman speed, a surgical silver scalpel clutched in his hand. The blade flashed in the dim light as it sliced through the air.

Faelan released me, staggering backward with a gurgling cry. Blood spurted from his throat where the scalpel had opened a gaping wound.

He collapsed to his knees, hands clutching futilely at his neck as his lifeblood poured between his fingers. His eyes, wide with disbelief, fixed on Ethan.

“My... son...” he choked out, his voice a wet rasp.

Ethan stood over him, trembling with rage and weakness. “You’re a demon! I am not your son. I am Lyra’s son.”

Faelan’s mouth worked silently, forming one final word as the light faded from his eyes: “Lyra...”

Then he toppled forward, his massive body hitting the floor with a dull thud.

I stood frozen for a moment, unable to process what had just happened. Then Ethan swayed dangerously, and I rushed to catch him before he fell.

“Ethan,” I whispered, tears streaming down my face as I helped him back to the bed. “You saved me, brother...”

His eyes, so like my own, searched my face. “Little sister,” he murmured, his voice weak but filled with wonder. “I found you.”

I sobbed as I embraced him, careful of his wounds. “And I found you.”

After all these years, after all the pain and separation, we had finally recognized each other.

(Third-person’s POV)

The facility shook with another explosion as Matthew Kane’s forces breached the main entrance. The Alpha King himself led the charge, his elite warriors fanning out to secure the compound.

The scene that greeted them was one of utter devastation. Fires burned throughout the lower levels, and the freed werewolves had exacted their vengeance on their captors. Bodies of guards and medical staff littered the corridors.

Matthew followed Olivia’s scent through the chaos, his heart pounding with fear for her safety. When he finally reached the medical wing, he found her cradling a weakened Ethan, Faelan’s massive corpse sprawled on the floor nearby.

“Olivia,” he breathed, relief washing over him.

She looked up, her face streaked with tears and blood. “Matthew.”

He was at her side in an instant, assessing her injuries before turning his attention to Ethan. “We need medical support here now!” he barked into his communication device.

Within minutes, a team of healers arrived, carefully transferring Ethan to a stretcher. Despite his weakened state, Ethan gripped Matthew’s arm.

“The pack,” he rasped. “I claim leadership of the Moonstone Pack.”

Matthew nodded solemnly. “It is witnessed.”

Throughout the facility, Matthew’s forces worked efficiently to evacuate the imprisoned werewolves. Many were in critical condition, their bodies bearing the scars of Faelan’s cruel experiments. Each survivor was documented, their testimony recorded as evidence of the atrocities committed.

“The evidence is overwhelming,” reported Beta Tristan as he joined Matthew and Olivia. “Decades of werewolf trafficking, illegal organ harvesting, unauthorized experiments. The Moonstone Pack’s leadership will face justice for this.”

“Faelan has already faced justice,” Matthew replied grimly, glancing at the Alpha’s corpse. being removed from the room.

Word spread quickly through the compound that Faelan was dead. The remaining Moonstone Pack loyalists, seeing their leader fallen and their operation exposed, surrendered without further resistance.

A young warrior approached Matthew with news. "Alpha King, we've found Annelise Moonstone. She took her own life when she learned of Faelan's death."

Olivia closed her eyes briefly, processing this information. Another chapter of her mother's tragic history closed.

As the situation stabilized, Matthew turned to Olivia. "With Faelan gone and Ethan claiming leadership of the Moonstone Pack, the path to my coronation is now clear."

She nodded, understanding the political implications. "More importantly," Matthew said, taking her hand, "justice for the victims. Including your mother."

Olivia provided her testimony to Matthew's investigators, detailing everything she had witnessed in the facility. Her words would ensure that none of Faelan's crimes would be forgotten or forgiven.

As dawn broke over the ruined facility, Matthew and Olivia prepared to return to the Eastern Territory. Ethan would follow once his condition stabilized, ready to begin the difficult task of reforming his father's corrupt pack.

"Are you ready?" Matthew asked softly, offering his hand to Olivia as their transport awaited.

She took one last look at the facility where so many had suffered, including her own family. Then she placed her hand in his, their fingers intertwining.

"Yes," she said with quiet determination. "Let's go home."

They boarded the transport together, their bond strengthened by surviving this ordeal together.

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Shadows Before the Crown

(Olivia's POV)

The morning sun streamed through the windows, casting long shadows across the polished floor. I stood by the window, watching as a sleek black car pulled into the Kane Estate's circular driveway.

My heart clenched. I would recognize that vehicle anywhere.

Theodore.

“He’s here,” I said quietly, more to myself than to Martha, who was arranging fresh flowers nearby.

Martha paused, concern etching her features. “Shall I call for Beta Tristan, Luna?”

I shook my head. “No. I need to face him alone.”

This confrontation had been inevitable. Tomorrow was Matthew’s coronation ceremony—the official recognition of his status as Alpha King. And Theodore, true to his nature, would make one final attempt to reclaim what he believed was his.

I met him in the garden pavilion, away from prying eyes. He looked haggard, the perfect facade finally cracking to reveal the desperate man beneath.

“Olivia,” he said, his voice hoarse with emotion.

I kept my distance, arms crossed protectively over my chest. “Why are you here, Theodore?”

He stepped forward, then stopped when I tensed. “I had to see you. One last time.”

“There’s nothing left to say.”

“Please,” he implored, his eyes filled with a desperation I’d never seen before. “Just hear me out.”

I nodded once, steeling myself.

“I’ve been working with researchers,” he began, words tumbling out in a rush. “They’ve developed experimental heart treatments—treatments that could extend your life indefinitely.”

My breath caught. The heart condition that had claimed my mother’s life and now threatened mine—the very reason Theodore had kept Clara as a backup.

“Come back to me,” he continued, “and I’ll make sure you get the best care. You could live a full life, Olivia. With Leo. With me.”

For a moment—just a moment—I allowed myself to imagine it. A long life. Watching Leo grow up. But at what cost?

I laughed, the sound hollow and sad. “You still don’t understand, do you? This isn’t about my heart condition. This isn’t even about Leo or Aurora.”

I stepped closer, looking directly into his eyes. “I would rather have five years of true love with Matthew than fifty years of manipulation with you.”

He flinched as if I’d struck him.

“Matthew loves me for who I am, not what I can give him. He sees me—all of me—and still chooses me every day.”

Theodore’s composure crumbled. “I love you, Olivia. I’ve always loved you.”

“No,” I said gently. “You loved possessing me. There’s a difference.”

He sank onto a nearby bench, head in his hands. For the first time since I’d known him, Theodore Redgrave looked utterly defeated.

“It’s really over, isn’t it?” he whispered.

“It’s been over for a long time,” I replied. “We just didn’t want to admit it.”

We sat in silence for several minutes, the weight of our shared history hanging between us.

Finally, Theodore straightened, wiping discreetly at his eyes. “I want you to know something.”

I waited.

“I will always protect our children,” he said, his voice steadier now. “Leo, and yes, even Aurora. From a distance. You have my word.”

The sincerity in his voice surprised me. Perhaps this was the first truly selfless thing Theodore had ever offered.

“Thank you,” I said softly. “For finally letting go.”

He stood, smoothing his jacket with trembling hands. “Be happy, Olivia. Even if it’s not with me.”

As I watched him walk away, I felt an unexpected sense of peace. The chapter of my life with Theodore Redgrave was finally, truly closed.

I returned to the pavilion where Matthew waited, his eyes questioning.

“It’s done,” I said, taking his hand. “He won’t interfere again.”

Matthew pulled me close, his warmth chasing away the last shadows of my past. “Are you okay?”

I nodded against his chest. “For the first time in a long time, I think I really am.”

Tomorrow, Matthew would be crowned Alpha King, with me by his side. Whatever challenges our future held, we would face them together.

(Clara’s POV)

The abandoned warehouse reeked of rust and decay. I huddled in the corner, my once-pristine clothes now filthy, my hair a tangled mess. How had it come to this?

Just months ago, I had been in Theodore’s private sanatorium, supposedly “recovering” from the scandal of our exposed affair. In reality, I was a prisoner—a vessel being kept healthy for one purpose only.

My escape had been pure chance. During a transfer to a more secure facility, I’d overheard a phone conversation that shattered my world.

“Isadora,” Theodore had said, his voice low as he stepped away from the car. “If I could turn back time, I would never have started a s****I relationship with Clara.”

I’d frozen, straining to hear more.

“Yes, I know it was a mistake,” he continued. “After that first night, when I had her investigated and discovered she was Olivia’s half-sister, I should have ended it. But her genetic compatibility made her the perfect backup vessel for heart cultivation.”

My blood had turned to ice. Heart cultivation? Backup vessel?

“Rosalie was... an unfortunate complication. Partly my weakness, I admit. But with Leo’s condition, having another genetically compatible child seemed prudent.”

The truth hit me like a physical blow. My daughter—my precious Rosalie—had only been conceived as spare parts for Leo.

Theodore had never loved me. Never wanted me. I had been nothing but a convenient body to him—first for his pleasure, then for my organs.

In that moment of clarity, I’d seized my chance. When the driver stopped for fuel, I’d slipped away, disappearing into the city’s underbelly.

Now, some days later, I was hiding in this decrepit warehouse, surviving on stolen food and burning with a rage that kept me warm at night.

A sharp knock at the door jolted me from my thoughts.

I crept to the door, peering through a c***k. A woman stood outside—tall, elegant, with flowing dark hair.

Audrey Vale.

Cautiously, I opened the door. “What do you want?”

Audrey’s perfect lips curved into a smile that didn’t reach her eyes. “To help you, Clara. And perhaps you can help me too.”

I let her in, watching warily as she surveyed my squalid hideout with barely concealed disgust.

“How did you find me?” I demanded.

“I have my sources,” she replied smoothly. “More importantly, I know what Theodore did to you. What he planned to do.”

My hands trembled. “Why should I trust you?”

“Because we share a common enemy.” Audrey’s eyes hardened. “Olivia Blackwood.”

The name sent a fresh wave of hatred through me. “What do you propose?”

“Tomorrow is Matthew Kane’s coronation ceremony. Security will be focused on him.” Audrey leaned closer. “It’s the perfect opportunity to take what matters most to Olivia.”

“The pups,” I whispered, understanding dawning. “Leo and Aurora.”

Audrey nodded. “With both children as leverage, we can lure Olivia away from her protectors.” My mind raced with possibilities. If Leo were back with me, Theodore would have to acknowledge me again. He would see that I was the only one who truly cared for his son.

“I have contacts,” Audrey continued. “Rogue wolves willing to help for the right price. And I know the security arrangements intimately.”

“Why?” I asked. “Why do you hate her so much?”

Audrey's perfect composure slipped, revealing raw fury beneath. "Matthew was mine before she returned. Everything was arranged. Then she waltzed back into his life, and suddenly I was nothing."

I understood that feeling all too well.

"So," Audrey said, extending her hand. "Partners?"

I took her hand, sealing our unholy alliance. "Partners."

As we began plotting the details, a cold certainty settled in my heart. Tomorrow, I'm going to kill Olivia.

And I would finally have my revenge.