

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 11

Faith's Pov

The lie was a heavy burden that made it hard to breathe. For 2 days, it was all I told my father. I was so tired of pretending, but I couldn't hurt him. He thought I was happy now, truly happy. He wanted to make up for my childhood. But he did do enough.

He loved me more than anyone ever had. His strong love made me both strong and weak, making me keep the lie going. So I kept making up stories about a life I didn't have, a happiness I didn't feel.

Still, I liked remembering the good parts of my childhood with him. Even with the bad times, my childhood was bright because of him.

We fished by the river, quiet except for the water and the fish pulling on the line. He taught me how to be patient, how to understand the water, and the fun of catching fish.

We also hunted. I couldn't have a wolf like him, but I still felt wild and free. I'd ride on his back when he shifted, running through the old forest. The wind blew through my hair, and I smelled pine trees. It was the best feeling, like I truly belonged. I'll never forget those times. They showed how much he loved me.

But good things don't last. I knew that for sure. I also knew that Astor's warriors would likely look for me here first. I saw them right away.

On the first day, I saw a small movement in the woods that wasn't an animal. On the second day, I saw a quick flash of metal. They were good at hiding, but I was better at watching. They had been watching my father's cabin for two days. Their presence made me feel worried, even with my father.

I had to leave.

"I'm glad your anger is gone, my little one." My father said, in a warm voice as he poured tea.

I had just told him I was "going back," still lying. He believed me. He thought I was going back to my mate after a small fight. He didn't know the life I was living, and I hoped he never would.

"I wasn't going to stay forever." I joked, trying to sound normal. My smile felt fake.

He chuckled. "I know couples fight, but you don't have to run away. I'll forgive it this time, just because you visited your old dad. I missed you so much. Just don't make it a habit, okay?"

I got up and hugged him. He held me tight. For a moment, I wanted to cry and let out all my sadness. But I was done crying. I was done being a victim. I had to be strong and face what I had to do.

I pulled back a little and looked at him. I asked the question we both avoided.

“Are you two back together?”

He looked at the fire, and his worried lines deepened. We hadn’t talked about her, the woman who hurt me. But I needed to know if he took her back. If he did, I’d still love him, but I’d feel differently about her and my own hopes.

He sighed. “No, of course not. But she’s my mate, little one. It’s hard to ignore that pull sometimes. It’s... instinct.”

I understood, but it still hurt a little. I was glad he was honest. He was my hero and always told the truth, even if it was hard.

“I’ll never forgive her for what she did,” I whispered. “But if you want her back, if you think she’d make you happy... then do what you want. You deserve all the happiness in the world, Dad.”

I knew they broke up because of me. He couldn’t forgive her for hurting me.

He was a great, loving father, and my pain hurt him deeply. But I also felt the bad pain of being away from my own mat. It was like I couldn’t breathe sometimes. I knew it was even worse for my father. He had a wolf, so his feelings, his pain, were much stronger.

Saying goodbye felt like a part of me was torn away. I didn’t know if I’d ever see him again. It was goodbye to the only safe place I knew.

“I’ll call you, I promise,” I whispered, the lie tasting bittersweet.

He hugged me tighter, not knowing what I really meant.

As soon as I left the cabin, my lie changed into a plan to escape. I was very alert. I had watched Astor’s men for two days. I knew their paths, where they couldn’t see, and when they changed shifts. I could feel a small shake in the ground when they moved as wolves, and smell them slightly when they were human. They thought they were secret, but they didn’t know how desperate I was to be free.

My plan was simple but smart. I had to disappear without them knowing I was truly gone.

Instead of the main path, which they surely watched, I turned into the thick forest behind the cabin. My father and I knew this forest well. It was full of old trees, bushes, and hidden valleys. It was my land. I knew it better than they did.

I moved quietly. I took off my jacket and left it on a low branch near a small animal trail. This tiny detail might make them think I was just taking a short walk or had gotten warm.

Near the deeper part of the woods, I found a spot I had marked. A group of thick, thorny bushes made a hidden tunnel down to a dry creek bed. It was small, hard to get through, and you couldn't see it from above.

I squeezed through, the thorns catching my clothes.

I stopped once and looked back. I couldn't see the cabin, just a dark outline against the fading light.

I probably will never see my father again soon, but at least I know he is safe

and happy

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 12

Astor's Pov

I waited two hard days before I went to find Faith. I felt many things: anger, fear, confusion, and a strong need to get her back. My wolf was very troubled.

However, the pack faced numerous problems simultaneously. I had to make sure my pack was safe. All our borders had to be secure, and every guard had to be checked. I had to do this before I could leave my duties to get her.

I had put my best warriors to watch her when I found out where she was.

My wolf wanted to shift and run, but I had to use my car so that I could bring her back safely.

When I got to her father's house, I felt a bad feeling in my stomach. I could already tell that she was gone.

I jumped out of the car and ran to the door. I tried to knock, but whoever was inside was just taking their own sweet time, and I felt like breaking the door open because my patience was wearing thin, until an older man opened it.

He looked kind, gentle, and a bit sad. His own wolf was quiet, like an Omega. He bowed his head to me, showing respect for my rank. But he didn't need to. He was my mate's father.

“Where is she?” I growled.

I looked around the living room, hoping to find her scent. I can tell she’s been gone for more than half an hour. My warriors didn’t even notice.

He moved back, looking at the floor. “She... she went back home, Alpha. I’m sorry she ran away. However, she dislikes fights and shouting. She promised she wouldn’t run again if you two fought again.”

“Fight?” I asked, confused. “What fight? We didn’t fight. I just came home and she was gone. I don’t know why and she was supposed to be at the ceremony, by my side.*

He wrung his hands, looking very upset. “I know it’s your life, Alpha, and I shouldn’t speak. But please, forgive her. She had a very hard life. It’s hard for her to trust people because her parents hurt her very much. We were supposed to protect her, but we made her life a living hell. I will never forgive myself.”

The man’s voice cracked, and he cried. I’ve rarely seen a grown man cry like that. His sadness was so raw. I wanted him to stop, to be strong in front of me. But he was telling me something important about my mate. Something she never told me.

I always thought Faith had a normal childhood. I knew her adoptive parents were not rich, and her mother was an Omega. But I never thought she was abused. This thought sent a shiver of cold through me.

“What are you talking about?” I asked him quietly. My anger was gone, replaced by a bad feeling.

“She didn’t tell you?” He said, truly confused.

He had a right to be confused. Mates usually talk about these things. But we were not a normal couple.

“No, she didn’t,” I said, my jaw tight.

“Then I think she should tell you herself.” He insisted, wiping his eyes.

“That won’t work for me!” I snapped, losing patience.

He nodded and pointed to a chair, and sat in another.

The house was small, a bit messy, but it felt warm. Safe. I saw why she came here. It was a safe place, very different from my cold, grand pack house.

“Your daughter lied to you,” I began carefully. “Because she’s not coming back to me. She ran away days ago, after my Alpha ceremony. I thought she would be there. But she ran here instead. I’m trying to understand why she did it, because we didn’t fight.”

His eyes grew wide with horror. “No, she wouldn’t lie... she told me that you two had a fight and... oh no. Oh, I’m so sorry, Alpha.”

He started to bow again, shaking his head quickly. I put my hand firmly but gently on his shoulder, helping him sit back down.

“It’s not your fault,” I said, my voice softer than I meant. “You said she had a hard childhood. Maybe if I understand what happened to her, I’ll understand why she did this. Why did she leave her place and make me look like a fool in front of everybody?”

He swallowed hard, looking far away, lost in his memories.

“Her adoptive mother... my mate... she never truly accepted her. Never. She was always... a problem, to her. From the moment she was born.”

He started talking, slowly at first, then faster, like a dam had broken inside him. And the more he talked, the sicker and sadder I felt for her.

“From the moment she could understand words, she was told she wasn’t good enough. Not smart enough, not pretty enough, not quiet enough, not thankful enough. Every good thing she did was met with a ‘could have done better.’ Every mistake with a sharp ‘I knew you’d fail.’ She was always compared to other children, always found not good enough. She was made to feel like she didn’t belong in her own home. She had to do chores late into the night while her friends played outside. If she tried to join them, her adoptive mother would pull her back. She was not allowed to have friends visit. She learned to speak softly, to walk quietly, to hide in the shadows. Because if she stood out, her adoptive mother would get angry at her.”

A cold anger started to burn inside me. How could anyone do that to a child?

To my mate?

I sat there, listening, feeling each confession pierce me, one after another. My mate, my beautiful, vibrant mate, had lived through this. It was almost impossible to grasp.

“Her adoptive mother never touched her with love.” Her father began, his voice rough with pain. “Never held her close. If she cried, she was sent to her room. She was told she was ‘manipulative’ or ‘too fragile.’ If she got hurt, she was blamed for being clumsy, never given any kind words.”

I imagined a small version of my mate, hurt and alone. My heart ached.

“I saw the light dim in her eyes, Alpha,” he continued, his gaze distant. “She was always so bright, so full of spirit. But my mate... her adoptive mother... she chipped away at her, piece by piece.”

He stopped, a silent cry shaking his chest. “I tried, Alpha, I swear I tried to help. To step in. But my mate... she had a way with words. A sharp tongue. And I was weak. I let it happen. I let her turn my home into a prison for that sweet girl.”

My mind reeled. The image of my mate, the one I knew – full of quiet strength, a gentle grace, and a light that drew me in – began to crack. How had she survived this? How did she carry such a bright spirit after living through such a nightmare?

“It wasn’t just words, though, Alpha,” her father whispered, a fresh wave of agony hitting him. “Sometimes... sometimes her adoptive mother would say she needed to be ‘taught a lesson.’”

He told me about when my mate was nine. She accidentally broke a porcelain doll. Her adoptive mother made her stand outside in the pouring rain, without shoes, for hours.

When she was twelve, she was caught reading a book under her covers with a flashlight. She locked my mate in the dark basement for two days. No food, just a bottle of water. Her father tried to sneak her bread, but he was watched closely.

But it wasn’t the worst.

“The worst was after she turned sixteen he said, his voice barely audible.

“Her adoptive mother started saying she was ‘getting too big for her britches,’ that she needed to ‘learn her place.’ That’s when the ‘accidents’ started happening more often.”

He listed them, each word a new cut to my heart. The shoves down the stairs, always called “not intentional.” The “accidental” burns from a dropped kettle. The times she’d “trip” and fall, always near something sharp that would leave a lasting mark.

It was a nightmare, and everything she went through was one hell after another.

Now I understand. This beautiful, strong woman I loved had been forged in fire, but not the kind that refines. A destructive fire. And yet, here she was, still shining. Still full of spirit.

My mate.

My miracle.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 13

My voice was a rough whisper, full of regret. “How could I have missed this?”

I stood in what Faith's father called her “room” in the attic. It wasn't a real room, just a small, sad space. There was a narrow, uncomfortable bed, a small, old chest, and a few worn-out books. These were all Faith owned. This was where Faith just existed, not lived. And I, being so blind and proud, had made her misery worse.

My mind raced. Old memories and new understandings crashed together. I had been so focused on being forced into this marriage, so angry about how unfair it was to my life, that I completely forgot she was going through the same thing.

She probably didn't want to get married either. She just wanted to live her life, free and she too, was trapped in this fancy cage with me. But instead of being there for her, instead of trying to understand her, to get to know her, to make our hard situation easier, I just pulled away.

I built walls between us, brick by brick. I thought they kept me safe, but really, they trapped us both.

A dark and ugly part of me blamed her for it. I let my anger grow, and with my coldness, I even made sure she knew it. But she was doing the exact same thing as me trying to make our parents happy. Trying to survive.

I remembered the first time I saw her. I remember thinking that she was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen. Her hair fell in soft waves around a face that held many unspoken secrets. When the mate bond between us was revealed, her joy was unmistakable. Her eyes, bright with hope and devotion, followed me everywhere. However, I met that warmth with cold indifference.

Little by little, her smile faded.

When my father ordered us to mark each other, I didn't see a smile on her face that day. No sign of joy, no warmth to match our families' grand plans.

Instead, she just went along with it, like a perfect doll doing what she was told.

I hated her for not fighting it like I did. My inner wolf was angry. It hated the unfairness, the old rules, and the idea of a woman chosen for me, not by me. I growled and pushed back against my father, against the whole council, looking for any way out. But she... she just gave in. Like a lamb led to be killed, accepting her fate with a quiet sadness that I had mistaken for not caring. She gave in because she felt she had no choice.

She had learned, long before I came into her life, that fighting was useless and only brought more pain.

Guilt, sharp and burning, filled me. Neither of us deserved this, but she, especially, didn't deserve the life she had before me, or the cold treatment I gave her after.

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. Her scent, so light but everywhere, filled my lungs. I just wanted her close, to pull her into my arms and say sorry for every small hurt, every cold look, every moment of my foolish, selfish anger.

I had found it easier to pretend I just wanted her back because she had shamed me in front of everyone by not showing up for the Alpha ceremony and that was a blow to my power, a public rejection. But to be honest, that was a lie I told myself to protect my pride. The honest, painful truth was, I miss her.

'You're in love with her, aren't you?' My wolf's voice, a low, happy rumble deep inside me, spoke the thought I had been trying to hide.

I wanted to deny it. My Alpha pride, my careful distance, screamed at me to deny such a soft feeling. But I took a few seconds of quiet, painful thought, and to be honest, I think deep down I've known it. Long before she disappeared, long before the sting of her absence became a pain I couldn't bear, I knew. And I don't know why I didn't tell her in time. Maybe all of this, all the pain, all the distance, all the fear, could have been avoided. Maybe if I had just opened my mouth, opened my heart, she wouldn't have felt so utterly alone.

'She's ours! You must bring her back!' My wolf howled.

I heard talking downstairs, and I thought maybe she had returned, and I made my way there, but it wasn't her.

I didn't need to be told to know who the woman was because she was just an older version of Alice.

The woman who ruined my mate's life. In that moment, I don't think there was anybody luckier than her because she's a woman, because if she wasn't, and I don't know how my wolf would have reacted.

She bowed as soon as she set her eyes on me, but I was pissed.

"Welcome, Alpha. I'm sorry I wasn't there to welcome you, but I tend to lose my temper with that good for nothing girl." Eleanor said, looking up at me, and I looked back at her coldly. "I can't believe she left and humiliated you in front of everybody."

Unlike Marcus, she definitely has been talking to Alice or whoever is feeding her this information.

“Do you know where she is?” I asked her even if the only thing I wanted to do was wrap my hand around her neck and squeeze the life out of her because women like her do not deserve to live.

“No, but it’s good because you can finally be with the one that you always preferred and you were meant to be, which is Alice.” She said, and I don’t want to say that I was taken by surprise, but I was definitely disgusted. “Who do you think you are, talking to me like that?!” I asked and I could feel my Wolf coming to surface and I pushed him back. I will deal with this woman, and I will make her pay for everything she has done to the woman that I love, but now is not the time nor the place.

“I—I—I just—” She looked between me and her ex-husband, embarrassed, before excusing herself and running out like there was something chasing her.

I looked back at Marcus, who looked embarrassed by her behaviour.

I wanted to feel sorry for him. A part of me, the part that still remembered family ties, tried. But I couldn’t. Faith might have forgiven him, or maybe just stopped feeling the pain he caused, but will never forgive him for what he did, or, more truly, for what he did not do. He didn’t protect her enough. He let his wife hurt her, emotionally and physically, and he kept quiet.

He still keeps quiet even today because he is still letting her in.

He was the man of the house, the father the one who should have been Faith’s shield. I don’t care how weak he was against his cruel wife. His weakness caused her suffering. I don’t care if he divorced her after Faith left. It was too late then. He couldn’t do it while she was still here, trapped in that hell.

They basically ruined her whole childhood. And that’s something you can never get back. But I will make it up to her.

“Where do you think she could have gone?” My voice was low, without any warmth. “Does she have friends? Anyone she’s close with? Family members, maybe?”

Marcus blinked slowly, his eyes unfocused. “She wasn’t close to anyone,” he mumbled, his voice rough. “And we don’t have any family left.”

Just as I was about to stand, feeling frustrated, his eyes suddenly lit up with a small spark of hope.

“Her phone!” He cried, jumping to his feet with unexpected energy, and running back towards the attic.

I looked at him, confused, but followed my instincts on high alert. He began to search quickly through the few things in Faith’s corner.

He looked at me, holding it out, a glimmer of victory in his eyes. “She took her phone with her, so you can call her!”

She had destroyed the phone I’d bought for her. I found it near the garage where she ran from her parents. So, this must be an old one. A part of me felt a little admiration.

“Do you know the number I can call?” I asked.

He nodded, fumbling with the tiny buttons to show the number. But as he did, a different idea, cold and cruel, began to form in my mind. One that might bring her back faster than begging, faster than any apology I could offer. It was a dark thought, one that went against everything I believed was right, but my wolf, desperate and focused on one thing, didn’t care.

I snatched the phone from his trembling hand, my fingers already dialing the number as Marcus watched, confused.

“Hello?”

My blood sang at the sound.

This was it.

There was no going back.

I just want her to come back to me.

“Faith,” I said, my voice low and rough. I hoped my threat would really hurt her. “I have your father. If you want to see him alive...”

Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 14

Faith’s Pov

The room smelled of dust and old sadness. I sat on the edge of the motel bed, the thin mattress dipping under my weight. This was my hiding place. A room with yellow walls and a window that didn’t close all the way, I thought I was safe here, but I was wrong.

My phone rang, a sharp sound in the quiet room.

I didn't want to answer. I don't even understand how my dad noticed that I took it with me. But a deep, terrible feeling in my gut told me I had to.

I pressed the phone to my ear and answered because it could be an emergency.

"Hello?"

Hearing the voice of the man that I was not expecting to be the one on the phone was alarming.

But before I could say anything, he surprised me.

Tears already pricked my eyes. Because he cannot be capable of what he just told me.

"No."

He laughed, a short, cruel sound. "No? You humiliated me. You embarrassed me in front of every single pack member at our mating ceremony. You didn't show up. You ran."

I know what I did had repercussions, and it was terrible, but I didn't expect him to feel like this.

"I... I had my reasons-" I tried to explain, my voice breaking. "You cannot do something like that. Please, it's not you."

"Do you think I would still have mercy for you after what you did?" He said, his tone so cold, and I felt the hurt and betrayal deep in my bones.

I honestly didn't know what to say. This was the first time we've talked since I ran away. And some things cannot be explained over the phone.

"Astor, I..."

"In case you think I'm joking," he interrupted, his voice dropping to a dangerous whisper. "I think you'd better hear it from your father's mouth himself."

There was a rustling sound. Then, I heard him. My dad.

"Faith?" His voice was choked, thick with emotion. He sounded broken. He sounded like he had been crying.

"Dad?" I whispered, my blood turning cold. "Dad, are you okay?"

"No, Faith," he cried, and the sound shattered my soul. "You need to come back. He will hurt me. He will... he will kill me."

A sob ripped out of my throat. I put him in this position. This was all my fault. I never should have involved him. I thought I was protecting everyone by leaving, but I had made everything worse.

“Please!” I begged Astor, my words tumbling out between sobs. “Please, just let him go! You and I both know that he has nothing to do with this! Please!” My dad is the most important person in my life. The only family I have left. “Unfortunately,” Astor’s voice came back on the line, cold and unmoved by my tears. “That’s not how it works. So, I’m going to give you a few seconds to make a decision. If I drop this call, then I will make that decision for you. And you won’t like it.”

This wasn’t the man I knew. The Astor I knew was strong and proud, sometimes stern, but he was never evil. He could never be cruel like this. But I heard the truth in his voice. There was no lie there. Only cold, hard anger.

How did I not recognize this man when lived with him for 3 years, because i could have sworn that I trusted Him with my life, even though I didn’t trust him with my heart, because he stomped on it time and again.

“Why?” I cried into the phone. “Why do you want me back? So you can be happy? We were both forced into this! I’m giving you a chance to be with somebody you really love! I know you care about your parents and you want to make them happy, which is why I made the decision for us!”

I was hoping and praying that he would understand. This was the best for both of us.

“I don’t want to listen to your stories!” He snarled, his voice devoid of all warmth. “I just want you to come back and save your father’s life. I hope you’ve thought things through, because I’m not going to be waiting for long.”

The line was silent, waiting. I wiped the tears from my face, even though he couldn’t see them. I took a deep, shaky breath.

There was no choice.

There had never really been.

“I’ll do it,” I whispered, the words tasting like ash. “I’ll do whatever you want me to do. Just… please let my father go.”

There wasn’t anything in the world I wouldn’t do for him.

“Now that’s a good girl,” Astor said, and could hear the dark smile in his voice. “Where are you right now?”

I looked around the dirty motel room. The peeling wallpaper, the dripping faucet. This was supposed to be my freedom. I had been running through the woods for an hour after I left my dad's cabin, my wolf form pushing through the undergrowth in a blind panic. I'd stumbled into this small, human town, thinking I could blend in and disappear. I was wrong.

I told him the name of the motel. I told him the room number.

"Don't move," he ordered. "I'm close."

The call ended.

Silence.

I sat there in the quiet, dusty room, listening to the sound of my own heart pounding. I didn't know what Aster had become. I didn't know what he would do when he got here.

Minutes ticked by, each one feeling like an hour. Then, I heard it.

The low, powerful growl of an engine pulling into the motel parking lot. Tires crunched on the gravel outside my door.

A car door slammed shut.

Then another.

Heavy footsteps approached my room. One step. Two steps.

They stopped right outside my door.

The doorknob began to turn.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 15

I truly cannot control how my body and heart reacted to him. It was like a switch had been flipped, waking up every nerve, every feeling I had put to sleep.

My breath caught, my stomach twisted, and a strange, hot feeling spread through my chest. For a moment, I could only see him, only feel him, as if the rest of the world had stopped.

"Astor."

The name slipped out, a soft gasp, a quiet plea. I hadn't meant for my to sound like I was longing for him, like was calling to him from a lonely night, but it did.

He didn't even look at me. His wide shoulders, his dark presence, just filled the door, then moved further into the small room as he let himself in.

No questions, no permission, just a natural right to be in my space, my life.

I didn't dare to look at his face. I couldn't. The thought of seeing the pure, strong hate he must feel for me right now was a knife I wasn't ready to face. And I honestly didn't get it. I thought he would be happy. Joyful, even. Finally rid of me, the trouble, the mistake.

"So basically," he said, his voice low and full of a sharp anger that hurt me more than any shout ever could, "you left a perfectly good house with everything you could ever want, only to come and stay in this dirty motel."

I still didn't lift my head. My eyes were stuck on the cheap, worn carpet. During my time as his Luna, I had learned not to give in to anyone. I was second-in-command, my word often his word, and I had never been truly afraid of him. Not of his power, not of his strength.

I had always been afraid of how he made me feel. The way he could start a fire in my heart with one look, or put it out with a cold word. The way my heart would beat fast just hearing his steps, a natural, difficult reaction couldn't stop.

"Pack up. We're leaving."

The order was total. It pulled me out of my daze. My head shot up, and I finally met his eyes, letting every feeling I had, every bit of tired fight and raw pain, show in my look.

"Are you not tired?" I asked him, the words tasting bitter in my mouth. I didn't want to cry. I promised myself I wouldn't. But even with my promise, a few tears escaped, running hot down my cheeks.

"Don't pretend like you don't understand, I pushed on, my voice breaking but firm. "There's no one here. You don't have to act like you care about me, so why the hell do you want me back?"

The question was a desperate cry, a demand for answers I felt I deserved. I deserved some peace. I deserved to have the life I wanted, instead of living under his shadow for the rest of my life.

"I-" He began, a flash of something I couldn't read in his eyes.

I didn't let him continue. I wasn't finished.

"I've always done what you wanted. I lived the way you wanted. I breathed the way you wanted. But you could never understand me, or even treat me with kindness. And I am tired." My voice got louder, each word a strong hit against the wall I felt he had built around us. "I'm tired of

being treated like I'm some kind of monster just because agreed to marry you. I am your mate, damn it, and I didn't ask for this, but you made me feel like I did. You made me feel like I ruined your life, and maybe if I hadn't met you in the first place, then our lives would have been very different, but none of this is my fault!"

The raw honesty of my outburst seemed to hit him hard. I watched his face change into something I'd never seen before, a strange mix of regret, realisation, and maybe, just maybe, a hint of weakness. It was gone almost as fast as it appeared.

"I know you want an explanation," he said, his voice softer now, though still firm. "And I promise that I'll give it to you. But for now, I just want you to come with me."

And as always, he just didn't listen to me. He truly believed he was always right, always in charge. The thought was maddening.

"Where's my father?" I asked, a sudden cold fear replacing my anger. He better have been joking with me when he threatened my dad. I could forgive him for many things, even for some of the cruelest words and neglects. But I could never, ever forgive anyone who touched my father, or even made him cry. And I was pretty sure he had already done the last part.

"Your father is okay," Astor replied, his eyes steady. Then, his voice dropped, a chilling sound that turned my blood cold. "For now."

My heart sank further, a heavy weight dragging me down. The vague threat was clear, a cruel twist of the knife.

"Why do you hate me so much? What did I ever do to you?" I asked, my voice barely a whisper. I hated this. I hated the desperate, begging sound of it.

He tried to reach for me, his hand out, maybe to comfort, maybe to order. For some reason, I pulled back, moving away as if from a hit.

"I promise you, we will talk when we get home." He said, his hand dropping. But he didn't know what home really was.

The drive back to the pack lands was quiet, full of unspoken worries. Every turn of the wheel felt like another link in the chains tying me, pulling me back to a life I no longer wanted. When the big stone walls of the packhouse finally appeared, a cold fear rushed in.

The car stopped. Astor was out in a flash, opening my door. I stepped out, my legs feeling heavy, barely looking at him. My eyes shot up, and my breath caught.

It was my father-in-law, Alpha Sander. His silver hair seemed to buzz with a strange energy, and his eyes, usually a calm, strong blue, burned with a cold anger.

He was staring hard at me, his face a mask of furious disappointment, and I knew, with a certainty that chilled me deeply, that the real trouble was just beginning.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 16

The air left my lungs in a rush. My father-in-law, Alpha Sander, stood on the steps of the big house.

“So, you’ve decided to come back.” His voice was low, but it cut through the silence like a sharp knife. He didn’t ask a question; it was a statement, full of judgment. “After causing such a fuss. After shaming our pack.”

I felt small, like a child caught doing something wrong. Shame washed over me, a hot wave that quickly turned into cold anger. I hadn’t shamed anyone. I had only tried to find peace.

However, they always catch me.

Astor stepped forward, placing a hand on my back. It wasn’t a comforting touch; it felt more like he was pushing me, guiding me, owning me. I wanted to shrug it off, but I was too tired.

“Father,” Astor said, his voice even, though I could feel the tension in his body. “Let’s go inside. We can talk there.”

Alpha Sander didn’t take his eyes off me. “There’s nothing to talk about, Astor. Your Luna ran away. She left her duties, her home. What kind of example does that set?”

I was hurt by his words because he had never been that angry with me.

“I didn’t run away,” I said, my voice shaky but firm. I straightened my shoulders, trying to find some strength. I left because I was unhappy. Because I deserved better than to be treated like a burden.”

He scoffed. A harsh, disbelieving sound. His hand swept towards the grand house behind him. “A burden? You are the Luna of this pack! You have everything a woman could ever want! A strong mate, a beautiful home, power!”

It’s easier to get comfortable in a big house, but that never brings you happiness, because I was happy with the little moments that I had with my dad for 2 days, but I haven’t been in 5 years.

“I have a cage!” I shot back, my voice rising. My eyes burned, but I wouldn’t let the tears fall, not in front of him. “A golden cage, maybe, but a cage just the same. And power? What power? The power to be ignored? The power to be told I don’t deserve to be here?”

In fact, they can all try and pretend like they don’t know how everybody around here treats me, but they know as well as I do how hated I am, and none of them has ever done anything to change that.

Astor’s hand tightened on my back.

“That’s enough,” he said quietly, but his voice carried a warning.

“No, it’s not enough!” I pushed his hand away, finally finding my own voice, my own power. “You always tell me when enough is enough, Astor. But I’m tired of it. I’m tired of being told what to do, what to feel, what to say. I’m tired of being hated for something I never asked for!”

Alpha Sander’s face grew red. “Hate? Astor, is this what you’ve been telling her?”

He looked at his son, his anger shifting. I know he is very much disappointed in me, but he is also one of the few people who have always been by my side, and he gives something called tough love, but he does care.

Astor’s jaw clenched. He looked from his father to me, his gaze unreadable, a storm brewing in his dark eyes. For a moment, I thought he might finally say something, defend me, or explain. But he just stood there, silent, his broad shoulders tensed.

“I need to talk to my father,” I said, ignoring both of them. My voice was softer now, filled with a new, colder fear. “Where is he? Tell me he’s okay.”

Alpha Sander looked surprised and confused, so I’m guessing he doesn’t know.

“Your father is fine,” Astor said trying to push me forward but I stood my ground.

“I want to see him,” I stated, not asking. “Now.”

Astor finally spoke. “You will see him. But first, you will come inside. We have matters to discuss.”

I felt the last bit of fight leave me. My shoulders sagged. I had faced his anger, his father’s anger, and still, nothing had changed. I was back where I started, back in the cage.

As I walked towards the grand entrance, Astor’s large hand on my arm, I felt the eyes of pack members on me. They were watching, judging, just as Alpha Sander had. I imagined them whispering, seeing me as the one who tried to escape and failed.

My heart was heavy. I had dreamed of freedom, of a life where I wasn't just Astor's mate, the Luna, the hated outsider. But those dreams felt like ashes in my mouth.

I was being dragged back, not by love, not by understanding, but by threats and power.

And of course, it wouldn't be a humiliation ritual if I didn't come face-to-face with Alice first.

I don't think she was aware that I was coming until right now because she looked shocked and I think hurt.

I don't take pleasure in people suffering, but when it comes to her,

sometimes I do wish she could feel a fraction of what I feel because she has always made me feel like s***.

I don't know why, but I felt something between the two of them, like there was some kind of energy around them.

Astor was glaring daggers at her, and she looked like she was about to cry.

I just don't know why he was adamant about bringing me back because he is obviously hurting the woman that he loves.

"You brought her back," she said, looking between me and Astor, and I just knew that this had nothing to do with me and more to do with both of them, so I decided to just walk away, but she had me stopping on My Tracks.

"You still brought up back after last night." I felt my breath catch and my heart and soul sink at her words.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 17

I could run, and I could hide. But there was no escaping a broken heart. And that's exactly what I felt right then, a pain so deep it stole my breath. It wasn't loud enough for everyone to truly hear, but I felt every single second of it. It tore apart the tiny bit of hope I had left inside me.

I didn't need to understand the words she was saying. I felt it. I saw it. In his eyes. In her eyes. Maybe he had never cared about me, never truly loved me. And that, I thought, I could live with. But he slept with her.

And she, my sister, not by blood but by every other tie that mattered, because we shared the same parents, announced it so easily, right in front of me.

Everyone around could hear it, because werewolves have sharp hearing. I didn't dare look back at anyone. The shame was already a burning fire inside me. My face felt hot, and my stomach churned.

I just left the Pack House. I walked out with my head held high, even though my soul, every piece of my heart, was sinking in pain and humiliation.

As I passed Alpha Sander by the door, I looked up at him. I didn't need to say anything. I hoped he finally understood the message my heart was screaming. After all, he put me down and insulted me, perhaps now he would just understand.

I couldn't run away. My father was somewhere near, and I had to stay. I wished I had a wolf inside me, a partner to share this heavy sorrow with, but the Moon Goddess hadn't given me one. So I had to suffer alone, in silence. There was no one here I could talk to, no one who would truly understand.

I kept walking away, but the pain wasn't external. It was inside me. No matter how far I went, it still hurt.

After a while, I felt someone following me. I tried to ignore it, to pretend I was alone. But soon, they caught up. I was shaking, my whole body trembling, until I felt arms wrap around me. They were warm, comforting.

It was Wendy Astor's mother.

I wanted to stop crying. Wendy had always told me never to show people my weaknesses. And that's exactly what I was doing. But the humiliation, the pain, was just too much to hold back.

I pulled back from her.

"I'm sorry," I choked out, my voice raw. "I just needed a moment."

She gave me a weak, pitying smile. "We both know you needed more than just a moment, child. And you have every right."

I should feel better, knowing they finally understood why I ran away. I don't belong here. My mate, the man chosen for me, wanted my sister, not me.

"I can imagine how you must be feeling," Wendy said gently with her hand resting on my arm. But she couldn't. She would never understand. She had a mate who loved her, who would do anything for her.

“I just need to know where my dad is,” I pleaded with desperation in my voice. “I just want to go. I don’t want to be here. What do I have to do to convince you all to just let me go and live my life? Your son has proven he doesn’t want me.” My voice was rising, a desperate plea. “And it’s not his fault. You made this decision for us. You caused all of this pain.”

Tears streamed down my face again, hot and heavy. “So now I’m begging you. Just let me go. Talk to your son and your mate. Set me free. You have the daughter-in-law you always wanted now. We can pretend, Wendy. We can pretend you cared about me. But the truth is, you only helped me become Luna because you had no other choice. You’ve never liked me, and I don’t want you to like me anymore. I just want to leave. I promise, I’ll never bother you again. And you can finally have Alice, the girl you always wanted for your

Wendy has never been truly bad to me. But she had also shown me, over and over, that she didn’t like me. Why was she here now, comforting me? Maybe she wasn’t. Maybe she was here to rub salt in the wound. This was her perfect chance to finally get the person she wanted for her son.

Wendy’s features hardened. Her pitying smile vanished.

“You don’t just retire or resign from being someone’s mate, or a Luna. The Moon Goddess chose you.” Her voice was suddenly cold, sharp. “And I’m sorry if I had a hard time accepting you, but respect is earned, not given.”

My breath hitched, and the comforting arms, the soft words, were gone.

“I’m not sure why you expected everyone to wait around for you,” she continued, her gaze firm and unyielding, “while you did whatever you wanted. These are the consequences of your actions. If you hadn’t run away, your mate would have never looked anywhere else.”

Her words hit me like a physical blow. It was unbelievable, especially coming from another woman. She looked at me with no sympathy at all.

“What you’re going to do right now,” Wendy said, her voice dropping to a low, dangerous tone, “is put a smile on your face. You’re going to stand next to your mate as the Luna. And you are going to earn the respect of everyone in this pack. It will be ten times harder now that you decided to run away. But I’m sure you will be able to fix it.”

I stared at her, my mouth open slightly. Fix it? How could I fix this? Fix what my mate and sister had done? Fix the humiliation?

Wendy stepped closer, her eyes boring into mine, chilling me to the bone.

“Because if you don’t,” she whispered, so low that even with my heightened werewolf hearing, only I could truly catch it, “then not only will you lose everything, but your father will pay the price for your selfishness. And I assure you, it will be a price he cannot afford.”

My blood ran cold. My father. She wouldn't... Could she?

The unspoken threat hung heavy in the air, a chilling promise that shattered any remaining hope of escape.

I was trapped.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 18

Astor's Pov

I literally pulled Alice by the arm all the way to my office. I don't know what gave her the nerve to do something like that in front of everyone, especially the way she humiliated Faith. It was appalling, and it will never happen again on my watch.

"Have you lost your mind?" I demanded, dropping her arm roughly as soon as we stepped into the office. But to my surprise, she was full-blown crying.

"You left me there like I was some sort of one-night stand, and then you come back with her!" Alice sobbed, tears streaming down her face. "How do you expect me to feel?"

"Listen, I take full responsibility for what happened." I told her, my voice firm despite the confusion and regret. "But I was drunk, yes. And angry. I don't even remember much after a certain point, but I woke up, and you were there. And you told what we did. Why did you expect it to be more than that, Alice? It's a mistake I barely recall."

I said because, even with the gaping hole in my memory, I was going to tell Faith everything I did know, which is waking up next to Alice, Alice's claims, and my own drunken foolishness.

I was just waiting for the right time. I couldn't talk to her at the motel. I knew I'd need to explain a lot, and it felt better to do it when we got home. But Alice had to do this, and now I was pretty sure Faith hated me even more than she did before. I didn't even blame her. I saw the pain in Faith's face and eyes. She may have tried to hide it, but her heart was clearly broken. I also realized how much she cared about me, but it also made me fear I might have broken her beyond repair.

"Don't try to twist this on me!" Alice accused, her voice rising despite her tears. "You're the one who cheated! And I wouldn't even call it cheating because it was supposed to be us. She came between us! We could finally be together, so why did you bring her back?*

I stared at her, genuinely confused, a new kind of dread settling in my chest. I didn't understand what was wrong with this girl. She knew I was going to bring Faith back. Did she really think that one night, or her version of one night, would convince me not to?

"What have you been talking about?" I asked, my patience thinning. "Until today, I've never seen you as anything other than my sister. We grew up together, and I know your parents were hoping we'd be together at some point, but I never thought of you that way. And whatever happened last night, or whatever you claim happened, it changes nothing. It was a mistake, born of drink and anger, and I regret putting myself in a situation where you could even suggest such a thing."

I told her the truth, and a painful realization hit me then. I finally understood why Faith had been hinting about me being with Alice. It must be something Alice had been telling her, and I had just made it all worse by getting so drunk that I ended up in a compromising situation with her, letting her twist the narrative.

"Listen, I need you to pack everything and get the hell out of my house!" I ordered, my voice hard. "It would be rude for me to chase you out of this pack, because I take full responsibility for my part in what happened between the two of us my drinking, my carelessness, and the pain it caused Faith. But if you had any honor or any guilt for what you did to your sister, my mate with your lies, you would leave the pack."

I paused, then added, "And for what it's worth, I'm truly sorry, Alice. Sorry for putting Faith through this, but I'm sure we can both learn from this and stay the hell away from each other."

I left her there, still crying in the office. I was planning on going to find Faith and try to explain the little I remembered, the awful truth of my lapse in judgment, and Alice's manipulative claims.

Of course, I bumped into my father, and he was not impressed.

"I can't even look at you right now," he stated, his voice low and heavy with disappointment. "I did not raise someone capable of hurting their own mate like that. But you'd better fix it."

He turned and walked away, not even sparing me another glance.

I felt a crushing wave of guilt, and I knew I deserved it for allowing a situation to occur that Faith would never be able to unsee. But I needed Faith to forgive me. I can't live without her. I will fix it, even if I have to spend the rest of my life doing it.

I thought I would have a hard time finding her, and for a moment, I was even more worried she might have tried to run again, despite my warriors keeping a close eye on her today to prevent her escape. But I found her outside with my mother. They seemed to be coming back from somewhere.

“Can we talk?” I asked, my voice softer than I intended. Her face was cold, impassive. I expected her to say no, but she simply nodded.

We walked in silence back to the house. I was trying to think of how to start the conversation when we got there, but she beat me to it.

“Is this where you guys spent the night?” She asked, her voice flat.

I shook my head. “No. I may have been drunk, but there’s no way I would have done something like that in our house. And truthfully, Faith, I don’t remember much of the night at all after I left the bar. I woke up with Alice claiming... claiming we had. I don’t know where it happened, or if it happened the way she said, but I accept that I was found in a compromising situation, and I take full responsibility for allowing myself to get so out of control.” It didn’t make what happened any better, but it was the truth, and I couldn’t run from it. But you have to understand, I was angry, and I was trying to find you,

and you were nowhere to be found. My anger, my fear that you were gone led me to drink beyond reason, and that was unforgivable.

tried to explain, desperate for her to see my side.

“You don’t have to explain anything to me.” She countered. “You told me to never expect anything from you on the day I arrived here. So, I have no reason to be angry at you.”

She paused, then her voice hardened. “What I don’t understand is why you are so determined to bring me back here and torture me. You can finally be with the woman you love, and I promise that I will never bother the two of you again. So, tell me where my dad is, and I will be out of your hair.”

I shook my head immediately. That was never going to happen. I will not let her leave me again. I will repent for the things I did, and if she wants to punish me, she can punish me while she is here.

“You’re not going anywhere!” I said, my voice firm with conviction. “I’m going to fix this. And I’m sorry for what I did at the beginning of our relationship, and sorry for the mistake I made last night, allowing myself to be in a situation that hurt you so deeply. But I promise you that I will be better. I will treat you with respect.”

It seemed like I was talking to deaf ears. She just stood there, staring through me.

“It’s too late for that.”

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 19

Faith's Pov

I was so incredibly tired. Every breath I took in this pack, every moment drained me. I hated it here. I truly hated being here.

But Astor wouldn't let me go. That much was clear. And I desperately needed to find my father. I didn't want to think about Alice or everything.

So, I decided to stay quiet. I decided to hide my anger and do exactly what he wanted, which was to stay here. Like a prisoner. Because that's how I was treated. Maybe a fancy prison, but a prison all the same.

The Luna made it clear that I was on my own and I would never expect any help from anybody around here, so I lived my vain life.

Astor who used to stay away, like a shadow, was now always near me, a heavy feeling on my every move. He seemed to want to know my every step, my every choice, my very presence.

I wanted to lock myself in my room and never show my face again. Alice's revelation from that day still echoed in my ears. But after the second day, I just couldn't. Being shut in was worse than anything Alice could throw at me. I needed air. And I needed a real connection. I needed to breathe because I was suffocating in silence.

I didn't want to ask questions, and I didn't want to feel alone in my room. Everything was twice as hard.

I went to my safe place, my only real way out. And they missed me. Their small, eager faces, their free hugs, and their innocent questions were a comfort for my hurting spirit. And I missed them.

It was a very good feeling, natural and pure.

I could smile as much as I wanted even though my heart was a different matter but I enjoyed every second of it.

Until Astor came by while I was there.

The sight of him, leaning against the doorframe, his usual serious face softened a little as he watched the children, made me stiffen

The friendly feeling I had with the kids disappeared. Everything felt awkward. Then he did something he had never done before.

He started playing with them. Not just watching, but really getting involved. He crouched down to their level, tossed a ball, and even tried to tell a joke that wasn't funny, but the kids still laughed.

It was so unlike him, this playful, almost gentle Astor, that it made me feel very confused. He'd never done anything like this before. It felt... staged. Or worse, like he was trying to prove something. To me.

I wanted to stay away from pack jobs as much as I possibly could. The thought of stepping into any role, or being seen as more than someone who didn't want to be there, made me want to run.

But everything was just out of order.

Calls for help went unanswered, small fights grew worse, and things like food and supplies were not used well. The pack was struggling, and it bothered me.

I didn't owe these people any loyalty, but somehow I felt obliged to help.

I had a natural urge to fix things and it was a strong feeling I couldn't fight. So I stepped in.

I started organizing things, settling arguments, and giving out tasks. And when I reached a very hard problem, I did what felt natural, what I would have done usually.

I thought I was helping, but somehow I was just giving him a different idea because later that evening, under the faint light of the two moons, he announced it. Standing before the entire pack, his voice was strong and clear, leaving no doubt.

He said strongly, "There will be a Luna ceremony. For Faith."

The words felt like a punch, knocking the breath out of me. A Luna ceremony. For me. It wasn't a question, not an offer. It was a command, a strong chain tying me to this place, to him.

My face must have been pale. My shock was clear to see. The pack, however, all gasped at once. Then they started to whisper, and soon these whispers turned into wonder.

There was a shift in their respect, yes. I know they didn't like me, but they obviously thought that he liked me.

He has never stood up for me in front of them. Instead, he always made them feel validated in mistreating me, so this was different from the norm.

I was honestly just as confused as they were because the man who used to look at me like I was some sort of disease seemed to want me around.

Astor kept me inside the pack's land after that and somehow it made him even more paranoid than he was.

No more attempts to run, no more.

Searches for my father beyond these invisible walls.

But he did allow me some freedom. Freedom to walk the lands that would soon belong to me, freedom to talk with the people who now showed me respect, freedom to take on the jobs I had, maybe without meaning to. Freedom, in short, to be the Alpha's mate, the future Luna.

But it wasn't freedom. It was a different kind of prison. And I still needed to find my father. This new reality, this future I couldn't avoid, suddenly felt like a trap. I don't know what makes him think that it will make me forget, especially that he slept with my sister.

I already had my reasons for wanting to go as far from him as possible, but that is not something I can look away from because it's all I see before I sleep at night.

The thought of the two of them together is starting to be a nightmare I cannot run away from, even though Alice is not here anymore.

I don't understand why Astor even chased her away because she just disappeared out of thin air, and I heard whispers that she left the day I came back.

But that doesn't change anything.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 20

Faith's Pov

I thought Astor's overbearing presence was bad, but the wooing began subtly. First came the gifts of wildflowers, then a carved wooden wolf, but none of those impressed me.

I was a woman scored, and everything he did temporarily made my heart flutter, but I still couldn't find him genuine.

He tried talking to me softly, bringing me meals himself, even making my favorite tea. His eyes burned with something desperate when he looked at me. He reached for my hand, brushed my hair aside, tried to break down the walls I'd built.

But I stayed cold. Each gift, each kind word, only made me angrier. He was chasing the ghost of the girl who had once loved him, a girl who no longer existed.

I ignored his efforts. I kept my answers short, my face blank.

His frustration grew. I saw it in the way his jaw clenched, the way his eyes darkened. But he didn't stop.

One night, after dinner, he cornered me in the hallway. His scent, pine and power, surrounded me. He put his hand on the wall beside my head, trapping me without touching me.

"Faith," he said with a rough voice. I could feel his wolf battling to take control. "What do I have to do to make you look at me again?"

I met his eyes, letting him see the coldness inside me.

"Give me my freedom."

"You have freedom," he argued. "Everything you need is here." I shook my head.

No, it's not." My voice was flat. "And I need to tell you something. I don't love you anymore, Astor. Whatever we had, it's gone. You killed it. Let me go."

He really did.

His face changed to hurt, disbelief, then anger. A slow, dangerous smile curled his lips.

"You don't mean that," he said, voice cold. "You're angry, but you just admitted that you loved me, which means that you still do, and I will prove it to you. Every day. Until you forgive me."

He refused to believe me.

And so, I remained trapped in a beautiful cage, surrounded by a pack that pretended to accept me and an Alpha who refused to let me go.

Inside, I was already gone.

The pack members, who had ignored or mocked me before, were suddenly acting differently. They smiled too much. Their voices were too sweet. I wasn't stupid. I could tell it was all an act.

They suddenly wanted to play nice because they figured their alpha wanted to keep me around instead of their favorite, but it pissed me off more instead of making me happy.

I was the second choice. They suddenly wanted to kiss ass because Alice was not here.

The girl who would always know him in ways that I never will, and it stung.

I was starting to lose myself in between all of this, and maybe I lost myself a very long time ago. In fact, I don't think I even got the chance to know who I was before all of this.

I have no one to turn to except Alpha Sander—Astor's father. Unlike his son, Sander was wise and fair. Perhaps he could persuade Astor to see reason.

Maybe he could help me.

It's hard for me to find him. Since he retired, he always does whatever he wants. And he always liked to be alone.

I found Sander in his study, surrounded by old books, and he looked up as I entered, his silver eyes calm.

"Faith," he said, nodding slightly.

I think the Dynamics of our relationship changed the day I came back because I said some things to him that he obviously there in appreciate even though they were true.

I swallowed hard, my throat tight with fear.

"Alpha Sander, I need your help. I can't stay here like this. Astor's keeping me against my will I need to find my father and I need to leave." I said to him because he seemed very surprised when I mentioned my father, unlike his mate.

He gestured for me to sit. I did, my hands shaking.

"What's going on with your, Faith? I thought you were happy." He said, his voice steady.

I don't know what gave him the indication that I was ever happy because even a fool could see how much I was drowning.

"Why can't any of you understand that it is my choice who I want to marry. I gave Astor and our relationship an honest chance, and it didn't work out, so why are you constantly making me suffer like I'm the only one responsible for this?" I asked.

"My son is arrogant, convinced of his own infallibility. He dismisses all counsel but mine—a grave error for any Alpha. I believe you are the one who can change him." Sander sighed. "Astor loves you, Faith. He obviously did something to make you feel like this, but I'm sure you guys can talk about it. That's no reason to want to leave."

I thought he cared, but he is just like the rest.

"But it's not what I want!" My voice rose in frustration.

“Astor’s stubborn,” Sander admitted. “He’s made up his mind. I won’t go against him because he is now the alpha of this pack, but you wouldn’t know that because you missed the ceremony. Why can’t you give him another chance, Faith?”

My hope died then because a part of me was starting to warm up to the attention Astor was showering on me. I craved it more than anything in the world because it’s one thing he kept away from me despite being always near, and now that we had so much distance between us, he was showering me with all of his attention.

I pretended not to notice, I pretended not to smile or not to be touched by everything that he did, but I was softening up, and I hate it because it doesn’t take away what they did.

How can I forgive him for running into her arms? Why Alice of all people? Why did she have to be the one that everybody in my life chose?