

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 161

We were yelling. Right in the middle of the Pack House, outside, in the open, where everyone could see us.

“Stop, Faith,” Astor said, his voice dropping instantly to that dangerous quiet tone that meant a storm was coming. “We need to talk. Now.”

We walked quickly back to our own house. The tension between us was thick and ugly, like a heavy blanket draped over the air. I could practically taste his anger.

When we stepped through the door, He just turned to look at me eyes blazing.

“You think you can make decisions on my behalf?” I asked, the words barely contained. “You decided I was just going to step down from the Crescent Pack? Without even asking me?” I didn’t wait for him to Rage on me because I was angry on my own.

“I was trying to—”

“No, No excuses” I stepped forward, making him take a step back. “You think you know what’s best for me. You think you can handle my duties and my life.”

My head was spinning. I wish he would just understand that I need space and time to find myself but he just won’t let it go.

I took a deep, shuddering breath, trying to control the fury shaking her body. “We didn’t get to speak about this properly last night, but I already decided then. visit jo:b:n:i:b:c:o:m for complete stories I am the Alpha of the Crescent pack because it’s my duty. Whether I chose it or not, it chose me, and I have to answer that call.”

I leaned in, my voice intense now, full of purpose. “Those people deserve a leader who will watch out for them. They cannot live forever in the shadow of the fact that their last Alpha was a traitor. That’s not fair. They are innocent people. They have children, Faith. Children who still deserve to live a normal life. I will not let anything happen to them.”

The silence stretched out, heavy and painful. I felt a cold knot tighten in my stomach.

“And what will happen to us?” he asked looking defeated. “What will happen to them? Our children? Our family?”

He looked at me, and the anger was replaced by a terrible, heartbreaking resignation. He looked utterly exhausted but so am I.

“I love you,” I said, the words quiet and final. “And more than anything, I want to build our family. But it’s very difficult because we can’t seem to catch a break.”

A bitter, sad smile touched his face but I carried on. “I deserve to have a break. I haven’t caught one ever since I was born. Finding my mate was supposed to be my big break, my final chance at happiness. But instead, you make me even more miserable.” my voice cracked. “I don’t want that for myself. And I definitely don’t want the kids to grow up with a mother and father who hate each other.”

I took a step closer, reaching for his hand. “I don’t hate you, Astor. I know you’re really angry at me, but that can’t be hate.”

He pulled her hand back, shaking his head sharply. “but if I stay here I will end up hating you. And I don’t want to bleed that kind of emotion toward our children. They deserve better than that.”

“So what does that mean? You’re just going to leave me, then? Just run off and go be happy as the Alpha of the Crescent Pack?” He asked.

“We are mates. We can’t go away from each other, even if we wanted to. I hope someday, we will be able to build a relationship that is healthy and happy. But for right now? Today? There is just too much between us. It will not work.”

“We need space,” I stated, firmly. “And after some time maybe we can heal, maybe then we can finally look toward our relationship and be happy.”

“You’re just running,” he accused me “Just like you always do when things get tough.”

“Don’t you dare throw that at me,” I because now he is bringing up the past which is something that I don’t even want to think about. “Because you happen to be the biggest coward of us both! When things get tough, you always, always somehow find a way to be innocent of it, or find a way to make me look like the bad guy. I’m tired of it. I just want to go away from you because I am miserable with you.”

I felt his pain though after I said those words. “I’m miserable without you, Faith.”

“We don’t have to go away forever,” I repeated, softening my voice again, trying to offer a lifeline. Just a few weeks, maybe months. I’m not sure about the timeline, but whatever it takes for both of us to heal and be each other’s best, not worst.”

“The kids? What happens to them? Do we do it like the humans do—custody and weekends?” he asked.

“You are always welcome to come and see the kids. The kids will always be welcome to come here and be with you for as long as they like. We are not enemies at the end of the day. We are mates and we are parents. We just need a little break.”

I went over to him and hugged him “I know you are angry right now, but I need this in order to forgive you. As of now, there is so much between us, so many unspoken and spoken words, that they will not just pass if we stay together and pretend everything is okay.”

“I don’t want to lose you,” he pleaded but my mind was already made up.

“You will never lose me,” I said. “But if I stay with you, then you will lose me. Because our relationship is killing my morale, my self-esteem, everything in me. And I just need to get away.”

And I also have to come to peace with what I did to Kyle,” I whispered. “Killing somebody is not a joke, especially your own brother. I need time to mourn him and understand him. I want to get to know Kyle, not just as a man who wanted revenge, but as my brother. What better way to do that than to go be with the people who knew him?”

“I will come back but for now just let me go”

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Because of what me and my parents have been through I think leaving quietly would have been a better idea but over the last couple of days they’ve proved to be very good grandparents and my mom has been surprisingly pleasant ever since she started training me which is why I thought of having the common decency to just say goodbye in a good manner.

which is why I called them to talk in Astor’s office at home.

I spoke first, keeping my voice soft but steady.

“I got to know you a little these last few days, Mom,” I started, looking at her.

“You are not a bad woman. You are just a woman who had to make huge, impossibly hard choices. Choices that changed everything forever.”

She nodded quickly, tears starting to leak down her cheeks.

“But I need to be honest,” I continued, turning slightly to block out their reactions so I could finish my thought. “I still don’t understand how you could give me up and not feel anything. I probably never will understand it. And the truth is, I don’t even want to anymore.”

They both flinched.

“I realized something worse,” I admitted, the realization a cold stone in my stomach. “Even if you had chosen to raise me, my childhood probably wouldn’t have been much different.

Because Alpha Connor”-I used his formal title when I spoke to him about the past, a way to keep distance” would have always seen me as a reminder. A constant shadow reminding him that his maid had a relationship with someone else.”

Father opened his mouth, but I held up a hand. I wasn’t finished.

“I forgive you,” I told my mother. t”I forgive you for those choices But forgive you so that can be free, not so that you can feel better. I want you to have a chance now. Both of you.”

My mother started sobbing fully, her face buried in her hands. “Faith,” she choked out, the sound ripping through her. “You will regret giving us this chance. I know it.”

I shook my head slowly. “No, Mom. I won’t.”

I leaned forward then, setting down a new rule for myself, a shield I was creating right there in the tension of the room.

“Because this time,” I explained, meeting her

wet eyes, “I will love you without expectations. I wont expect your love back, and I won’t expect you to make up for the years we missed. If I don’t expect anything, then I can’t be hurt.”

Father finally spoke, his voice low and firm.

“You are a part of my Mate, biologically. But more importantly you’ve made an impact on my heart these last couple of years. You my daughter in every way that truly matters.”

The sudden, simple acceptance was almost overwhelming. I just nodded because I’m sure if I say anything more am I might even cry.

“Now, about the Crescent Pack,” I said, the mood shifting from personal grievance to duty.

“I’m going.”

My mother wiped her face quickly. "I know I don't have a right to advise you, Faith. Truly, I don't. But... you are wrong to give up your Mate.

I sighed, shaking my head. "So many things have happened, Mom, between Astor and me.

Things that need to be tied up one way or another. And the Crescent Pack... it's my heritage. my brother gave that pack life. I can't just give that up."

They looked at each other, confused by the weight of pack duty over Mate bond.

"We don't understand this choice," Fathet admitted honestly. "But at the end of the day, it is your decision. It is a big one."

He looked at me with pride mixed with worry. "The Eclipse Pack, or what is left of us, will always be a friend to the Crescent Pack. An alliance will stand between us."

"Thank you," I said, standing up and feeling the immense relief of having done this. "I really believe this will be good for everybody."

I walked straight to the living room. Astor was waiting for me there, standing stiffly by the cold fireplace. Liam and Kimberly were sitting on the couch.

Astor looked serious and he motioned to the seat next to him. I sat down and leaned into his side.

"We talked while you were busy," he said, his voice flat with forced control. "Liam and Kimberly will be coming with you to the Crescent Pack."

I frowned. "Kimberly?"

"Yes. She will be taking care of the children, and she said she wanted to come with you.

And Liam," Astor continued, resting his heavy hand on my knee, "because he is the only person I trust completely to stand between you and any danger that might be waiting."

I felt a surge of warmth, knowing how hard that decision must have been for Astor. But I needed to know the truth from them.

I looked at Liam first, meeting his calm, dark gaze. "Liam. Kimberly."

They both looked up instantly.

“I need you to tell me something honestly,” I said, keeping my voice gentle. “I’m not asking you this because Astor, your Alpha, decided it. I don’t want you to come because you feel you should protect your Luna. I am asking you to come with me into an unknown pack, with completely unknown people, only if you genuinely want to be there.”

I paused, emphasizing my next words. “I am going to need people I can trust absolutely, and people who truly trust me in return. I need friends, not just guards.”

Liam gave me a small, firm nod. “Luna, I am not just coming for the Alpha. I am coming for you and your future. Yes.”

Kimberly went next “I want to come with you,

Faith. I trust you, and I want to see you safe and settled.”

Relief flooded me. Now that I knew I wouldn’t be alone.

Liam and Kimberly stood up, saying they needed to start preparing for our journey.

As soon as they left, I turned fully and wrapped my arms tightly around Astor’s middle, leaning my head against his chest.

“I know you don’t like this,” I whispered into his shirt. “I know you don’t understand why I need to leave you, even for a while. But the fact that you trust me enough to work with me instead of fighting me... it means everything.”

He held me fiercely, his scent filling my lungs. I could feel the tension vibrating through his body.

“I do understand, Faith,” he murmured, stroking my hair roughly. “I understand you need to do this. You have a duty to face. I just hope, more than anything, that when the time comes, you will come back to me.”

I pulled back just enough to look into his anxious eyes. I reached up and placed a hand on his cheek, feeling the slight roughness of his skin.

“I promise,” I told him, meeting his gaze with all the certainty I had left. “I promise I will come back.”

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Astor built this house for me and he made it no less than a castle so that I wouldn't ask for anything.

Now, I was running again. The difference was, this time I had my bags packed, everybody was waiting, and I had every intention of coming home someday hopefully soon.

I stood there in the living room, feeling the silence heavy around me. The sun was hitting the wooden floor just right.

It was a beautiful house. A house full of memories. I took a deep breath, letting my wolf feel the familiar scent one last time. We will be back, I promised her silently, though her heart was already breaking.

I closed my eyes, turned around, and walked out to the front porch.

Liam and Kimberly were already loading the last bags into the big SUV. The kids were buzzing with nervous energy, clutching their favorite stuffed toys.

I went straight to my Ma and Pa first. They looked worried, but calm.

"I still don't like this, Faith," Pa mumbled, pulling me into a hug that smelled like sunshine and old wood.

"I know, Pa. But you guys have to stay here where it's safe. You can't just show up at a weird pack you don't know," I explained again. "Besides, you're safe here. Astor will keep you safe."

Ma hugged me tighter. "You come back quick. We'll be waiting."

It was a huge relief that they were staying. I don't feel comfortable about them going back home alone with nobody to take care of them and I think staying here will be good for them. And the biggest relief? Pa and Astor had somehow become proper friends. I didn't feel that awful pressure of dragging my human family into the wolf world mess this time.

Next were my mother and father. They hugged me and bid me farewell even though they didn't like it

Finally, I got to Astor.

He looked like stone. His eyes were dark with pain. My wolf was screaming inside me, tearing at my insides. Astor's wolf was crying too, a deep, painful howl that only I could hear. We were mates. This distance was tearing us apart instantly.

He didn't speak. He just grabbed me, pulling me in for a kiss that felt like a goodbye forever, even though we both knew it wasn't. It was fierce and deep, and it tasted like desperation. Our wolves clawed at each other through our bond, trying to merge, terrified of the space that was about to open between us.

When we finally separated, breathless, Astor pressed his forehead against mine. "Will we be okay,

Faith?"

My voice was rough, but steady. "We went through worse, Astor. Remember? We survived everything. This is nothing. Just a little time."

I forced a smile, patted his cheek, and told him I loved him. Then, before I could break down, I turned and rushed to the car.

"Say bye to Daddy, babies," I told Marco and Isabella, buckling them into their seats.

"Bye, Daddy! Come visit soon!" Marco yelled, still waving.

I got into the passenger seat, next to Liam, who was driving. Kimberly was in the back with the kids.

The engine roared to life. And that was when reality hit me, hard enough to steal my breath.

The car started moving. We were pulling away. I didn't look back at Astor standing there, stiff and alone. I couldn't.

You need this. You need this distance. You need to be Alpha. You have a duty. I drilled the words into my head over and over. I had to focus on the future. I had to be strong for my kids and for my new pack.

I was really thankful that Marco and Isabella were still too young to understand the messy stuff.

Yesterday, I had kept it simple. "Daddy has to stay to take care of his pack. We have to go somewhere else for a bit. But we will come back, and Daddy will visit us." Since wolf kids aren't raised with human laws and custody battles, they didn't even know what divorce was. Good. Astor and I weren't splitting up. We were just hitting pause.

The drive was long. The excitement wore off fast for the kids, and soon they were cranky. We stopped once for quick snacks and a bathroom break, but mostly we just drove. Finally, the silence of sleeping children filled the car, a blessed relief.

As we got closer to the territory, I could feel my own heart rate picking up. The nervousness was a cold knot in my stomach. I was the Alpha now, but I still felt like the outsider who had just killed their old leader.

Liam noticed my tension. “Remember what we talked about, Luna,” he said, his voice low and serious. “From the moment we stop, you show absolutely no weakness. You are the Alpha. You won the fight. You are a White Wolf. You don’t hide.”

I nodded, gripping the door handle. “I know.”

The car slowed down. Ahead of us was a huge metal gate, the entrance to the Crescent Pack. Just outside, we stopped and waited.

Soon, three large black SUVs pulled up behind us. These were the protection detail, Kyle’s former warriors. They were now my warriors. They accepted me but the rest of the pack... that was the scary part. It didn’t matter if I won fair and square; I still killed their Alpha. They had every right to hate me.

“Are you ready?” Liam asked.

I took a deep breath. I could stay in the car. I could be driven straight to the Pack house, maybe hiding my nerves until I was safely inside. But that wasn’t how you start as an Alpha.

“No,” I declared. “I’m walking in.

Liam looked surprised. “Lunq, are you sure? It’s better to assess the crowd first.”

“I am sure,” I insisted, unbuckling. “I am walking in. I need them to see me. I need them to see their Alpha.”

Liam sighed but nodded, respecting my decision. He got out and opened my door.

I stepped onto the dirt road, feeling the sun hot on my face. Liam and Kimberly flanked me as we walked toward the imposing gate. The security wolves opened it slowly, scraping metal on pavement.

My new pack was waiting.

There were maybe fifteen wolves lined up just past the entrance, all in regular clothes, looking solemn and serious. They were the welcoming committee, the leaders assigned to introduce me.

I held my head high, activating my Alpha aura, making sure my white wolf energy pulsed clearly. I was the Alpha. I was powerful. I was here.

I scanned their faces, ready to face their resentment, ready to stand my ground. I was ready to face anyone.

But then I saw the man at the front of the line. The one expected to greet me, the one who was clearly the group's leader.

My jaw dropped. My carefully constructed Alpha mask shattered.

It couldn't be.

Standing there, tall and serious, waiting to welcome me to the Crescent Pack, was Chase.

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The sight of him was an unwelcome punch to the gut. His face was older, harder, but there was no mistaking the man who had torn Kimberly's heart out and bullied me for years.

I heard a sharp, painful intake of air right behind me. Kimberly.

Chase's eyes were locked on her, not me. He took a single, slow step forward, his hand lifting slightly as if to reach for her.

Kimberly gasped again, broken and she immediately took a huge step towards me, pressing herself against my side. I felt her whole body tense, ready to run or fight.

For a flashing second, I saw it in Chase's eyes genuine regret. A deep, sick sadness that made him look like the boy Kimberly used to love. A tiny, stupid part of me almost felt sorry for him, seeing that pain.

But then I saw Kimberly's face, pale and set hard as rock. I remembered everything he had done. He chose Alice over her by disrespecting me to make her.

The feeling of pity vanished. It was replaced by ice.

I stepped slightly in front of Kimberly, my eyes narrow. "What are you doing here, Chase?" I asked. My voice was low and dangerous.

Chase slowly lowered his raised hand, finally tearing his gaze away from Kimberly to look at me. He squared his shoulders, trying to look like the man in charge.

"I am the Beta of the Crescent Pack," he stated, his voice flat.

I nodded slowly, putting the pieces together. “Of course. What better way to learn everything about the pack you want to attack than to have their former Gamma on your side?” I mocked.

I didn’t care about the past, not right now. I was focused on the present.

“Well, I wasn’t expecting to see you,” I continued, my voice gaining strength. “But it doesn’t matter. I am here because I am the new Alpha of this pack.”

A flicker of something, disbelief mixed with caution crossed his face.

“We know,” he said. “We received the news soon after Alpha Kyle passed.”

“Good,” I said simply. “So are you going to let me in willingly, or do we have a problem?”

Chase paused, gathering his words carefully. He was trying to sound respectful, but I could feel his guard up.

“Alpha,” he started, his use of the title sounding forced. “On behalf of everyone here, we truly feel bad about what happened to our former Alpha. None of it should have happened.”

I waited. I knew there was a ‘but’ coming.

“But the truth is, the pack was heading into a fire we didn’t want,” Chase continued, his voice dropping. “There was no way to stop him except his death.”

I was genuinely surprised. So they knew Kyle was bad news? They were happy I saved them, even if I killed their leader?

But Chase wasn’t done.

“The fact that you killed Kyle doesn’t mean you automatically become our Alpha,” he stated, firming his grip on his authority. “That is something that has to be earned, not just taken.”

The nerve of him. An overwhelming wave of power rushed through me. I pushed my wolf power out a physical force that hit Chase like a wall.

Chase gasped and stumbled back a step. His knees tried to buckle.

“Do you think,” I growled, my voice dropping and filled with the roar of my wolf, “that killing Kyle, something everybody here seemingly failed to do doesn’t earn the respect I deserve?”

He was struggling to breathe now, bowing slightly under the invisible weight I had placed on his shoulders.

“I—I don’t have a problem with you,” he managed to choke out, his eyes wide with surprise at the sheer force of my power. “But not everyone in the pack is happy about sudden changes.”

I pushed harder. Chase dropped to one knee, clutching his chest.

“They will deal with it,” I stated, my voice ringing with finality. “I am here to stay. I will lead this Pack as the Alpha. Now, as the Beta, will you set an example and accept me, or will you challenge me?”

He didn’t hesitate this time. His face was pale, his submission absolute. He lowered his head until his forehead brushed the dirt.

“Alpha,” he whispered.

I released the pressure. The air returned to normal, but the silence remained.

“Good,” I said, feeling my own heart pound from the quick, violent display of dominance. “Now, lead the way inside.”

Chase got up quickly and started walking ahead of us. As we entered the main pack grounds, I looked around in surprise.

The last time I was here, I was held captive. I never actually got to see the place. It was beautiful. The buildings were made of smooth, warm gray stone, and everything was perfectly kept. There were large, well-tended gardens even this late in the year. The pack house itself was a huge, magnificent structure at the top of a small rise.

But something was wrong. It was too quiet. Eerily quiet.

“Where is everybody?” I asked, stopping on the path. The silence was unsettling. It felt like the entire pack was hiding.

“They are keeping to themselves, Alpha,” Chase said, still walking stiffly.

I shook my head. “No. I need to see them. I need to address them.”

I turned to Chase. “Mind-link everybody. Tell them to meet me in the pack hall immediately. Do you have one?”

“Yes, Alpha. We do.”

“Lead me there, then.”

The pack hall was just as impressive as the outside. At the front of the room, on a raised platform, was a massive throne-like chair. It was clearly meant for Kyle.

I walked straight to it and sat down.

The chair felt huge and solid beneath me, a symbol of the power I now held. I closed my eyes for just a moment. I didn't want to look weak or nervous. I needed to project total control. I let my wolf take over in my mind, smoothing out any last edges of human doubt, making my posture rigid and unyielding.

I waited.

One by one, they started to arrive.

They filed in, hundreds of them. Most of them were glaring at the ground or staring at the walls, refusing to meet my eyes. They looked awkward, uncomfortable, and definitely unhappy that I was sitting on their Alpha's throne.

I was used to it. People hated me for being different, for being strong, for being unexpected. Their discomfort didn't matter. They didn't know me, and their hate couldn't hurt me.

The pack hall slowly filled up. I felt a wave of dizziness at the sheer number of people now depending on me, now under my rule.

I quickly reined in the feeling, refusing to look overwhelmed.

When the last person shuffled in, I straightened my spine. The great hall was silent, filled only with the sound of collective breathing.

I opened my eyes and looked over the mass of hostile, uncertain faces. I spoke, my voice calm, clear, and loud enough to fill the space.

"My name is Faith."

I paused, letting the simple name settle. Then I began to list my titles, each one a hammer blow of authority and lineage.

"I am the daughter of Luna Wendy and Alpha Connor of the Eclipse Pack."

A few whispers broke out, quickly silenced by a glare from Chase, who was standing stiffly to the side.

"I am the biological daughter of Alpha Benjamin of the Fallen Pack."

More tension built up. My bloodlines were complicated, messy, and undeniable.

"I am the Luna of the Eternal Pack, and the mate of Alpha Astor."

That one got a reaction. The Eternal Pack was powerful. They knew that.

I took a deep breath, letting the full weight of the final title settle before I spoke the last, most difficult part of the introduction.

“I am also the half–sister of Kyle, your former Alpha.”

I leaned forward slightly, planting my hands on the arms of the throne I now occupied. I looked directly into the uncertain eyes of my new pack.

“And I am now your Alpha.”

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I let the title settle over them. I had earned their respect but I knew that in the pack world, nothing was truly earned until you proved you could keep it.

“Is there anyone here who believes they are stronger? Is there anyone who wishes to challenge me for the position of Alpha?” I looked slowly from face to face, my eyes locking onto the older, more hardened wolves, the ones who usually led the defiance.

The silence that followed was suffocating. It was heavier than any shout or challenge could have been.

Nobody stepped forward. Not a single person broke ranks.

I tried to stop the sigh of relief that wanted to escape, but I felt a confusing mix of victory and discomfort. They weren’t bowing in respect; they were frozen in fear. I could practically smell their apprehension.

I finally understood why. They knew. They must know I was a White Wolf. It was the only explanation for this absolute terror. They weren’t afraid of me as a leader; they were afraid of what ancient, unpredictable power I might possess. They were afraid of what I might do.

Good. Let them be afraid. Fear was a better tool than shaky loyalty right now.

I let the silence hang for a minute longer, establishing my dominance simply by waiting.

“Since no one thinks they are worthy,” I said, the corners of my mouth tightening, “we will initiate the ceremony.”

I pointed to Chase.

“Chase, step forward.”

He walked steadily towards me, holding a ceremonial silver knife. We faced each other. This was the moment where the bond was officially sealed, not just through words, but through blood.

Chase took the knife and sliced a clean, deep line across his left palm. The blood welled up quickly, dark and rich. I looked him straight in the eye and then did the same to my own hand. The sharp sting was a welcome distraction from the nerves.

“With my blood, I pledge my loyalty and service to you, Alpha Faith,” Chase recited, his voice low and serious.

We joined our hands, palm to palm. Our blood mixed, the contact sent a strange surge of energy through me, like snapping a circuit into place.

Chase immediately dropped to one knee and bowed his head low, touching his forehead to the dirt. “My Alpha.”

Next came Thomas, the Gamma. He was younger, leaner, and looked far more stressed by the whole event. He performed the exact same ritual, cutting his hand and joining it with mine.

As Thomas bowed down, joining Chase in the dirt, the true power hit me.

Suddenly, I felt everything. It was as though a thousand mental doors had been thrown open directly into my consciousness. I could feel the faint, distant hum of the entire pack—their anxieties, their relief that the chaos was over, the sharp, terrified loyalty from Chase and Thomas, and the deep, abiding fear from the wolves standing far away in the shadows.

It was overwhelming. The sheer volume of emotional noise rushed into my head, making me feel dizzy and slightly nauseous.

This connection was the true Alpha power, the ability to join minds with the pack. I had never done anything like this before. It was too vast, too personal, too much control.

I wanted to gasp, to clutch my head and demand they all shut up. But I couldn't show weakness.

Not now, not ever.

I took a slow, deep breath, pulling my inner shields up hard. I focused on the ground beneath my feet, fighting the urge to shake. I filtered the noise, pushing the flood back into an easily managed current.

I managed a curt, commanding nod. “Rise, Beta. Rise, Gamma,”

Every single wolf in the hole immediately dropped into a low, formal bow. The ground was littered with bent heads. The fear was still there, but now it was mixed with awe.

I felt the rush of power again, stronger this time, mixed with the strange thrill of total control. I was their Alpha.

“Thomas,” I commanded, keeping my voice level, though my hands were still faintly tingling from the ceremony. “Lead me to the Alpha house.”

We started walking out of the gathering hole and back toward the central pack lands. Liam was immediately beside me. I didn’t have to ask; he grabbed both of the twins, holding their hands. He kept his eyes sweeping constantly past the bowing wolves, into the surrounding forest, checking every shadow.

I was immensely grateful for his presence. He was the only person here I truly trusted. In a place where everyone feared me, I feared them right back.

We arrived at the structure that had belonged to Kyle. It was a massive, dark wooden house.

Thomas pointed proudly. “This is the Alpha residence, Alpha. It has everything you need.”

I stopped dead in my tracks and looked at the house, then back at Thomas. The thought of sleeping where Kyle had slept, of my children touching things he had touched, made my stomach turn.

“No,” I told Thomas flatly.

“I want it thoroughly cleaned. No, on second thought, I want everything inside burned. Every piece of furniture, every rug, every curtain. Then, I want the house scrubbed top to bottom. After that, I want everything new. New furniture, new linen. I will not live in his filth.”

Thomas swallowed hard, clearly speechless at the expense and effort, but he snapped into action.

“Understood, Alpha. I will organize the cleaning immediately.”

“Good. Now lets go to the packhouse we will stay there until this house is sanitary.”

I added quickly, before he could leave: “And Thomas, tomorrow morning, I expect a meeting. I want every single high-ranking pack member present. I need to know everything about this pack’s dealings, its history, and its finances. I have a lot of things I need to know.”

Thomas bowed again, much quicker this time. “Yes, Alpha. I will arrange it.”

We walked away from the dark, silent Alpha house and toward the busy, slightly chaotic environment of the main Pack House.

The Pack House was noisy, but in a comforting, lived-in way. We secured a quiet, unoccupied room. It was small, but clean.

The journey and the ceremony had been too much for the twins. They were cranky and exhausted.

I quickly drew a bath and tucked them into the bed and they were asleep instantly.

Once they were settled, the weight of the day crashed down on me. I needed to call Astor. I needed to hear his voice.

I stepped into the tiny bathroom, closed the door, and dialed his number. It rang just once before he picked up, his voice tight with worry.

“Faith? Oh, thank God. I’ve been waiting.”

Hearing his voice felt like finding solid ground after being tossed about by a storm.

“Hey,” I whispered, leaning against the cold tile wall. “We’re fine. The kids are asleep.”

Astor let out a long, shaky breath. “I was worried sick. The idea of you walking into that kind of “We’re okay, honey. There’s nothing to worry about now. The ceremony is done. I’m the Alpha.”

“The house is empty, Faith,” he confessed, his voice sounding hollow. “It’s too quiet. I didn’t think this distance thing would be so bad when we talked about it, but now that you’re gone... I don’t know. I just want you and the kids to come home.”

My heart ached for him. “I miss you too, Astor.”

My own wolf hasn’t said a word since we left Astor, but I didn’t need her voice to know that this place felt wrong. The fear in the pack, the immediate need to burn Kyle’s house, it all told me that something was deeply broken here.

“I think I’m going to be very busy here,” I told him honestly. “I feel like this pack is carrying a lot of secrets and a lot of bad history. Something just doesn’t feel right, and I need to fix it.”

I heard him smile a little, even through the sadness. “They are very lucky to have you, the people of the Crescent Pack.”

We kept talking, moving away from the heavy topics of pack politics and distance. We talked about stupid, funny things, things we hadn’t really done in months, not since the stress of the war started.

That easy, loving conversation made me realize something. Maybe this distance wouldn't destroy us. Maybe, just maybe, it was exactly what we needed. It made us miss the easy laughter. It made the comfort of his voice feel powerful again.

I hung up the phone feeling firm and strong, knowing that no matter how much chaos the Crescent

Pack threw at me, I had Astor waiting for me, and that was all the strength I needed.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 166

Kimberly's Pov

The cheers were deafening, but they sounded far away, like noise heard underwater. Faith had just announced herself as the new Alpha of the Crescent Pack. My whole body was shaking, but not from excitement. I gripped the arm of the chair until my knuckles turned white.

Because I saw him.

Chase.

He stood near the edge of the crowd, looking exactly the same, maybe even handsomer, which was totally unfair. Six years. Six long years since he was banished from the Eternal Pack, and six years since I had even heard his voice.

The shock hit me like a physical blow. My wolf, who had been completely silent, numb and sleeping inside my head for all that time, suddenly roared. It was a high, desperate sound, full of pain and immediate joy, and it made my entire nervous system go haywire. Mate. Mate. He's here.

I couldn't stay. I didn't want him to see me fall apart.

I didn't say anything to anyone. I pushed through the packed hall, moving fast, my feet carrying me blindly. I ran until I found a hallway I didn't recognize in the depths of the large Pack House. I found a small, dusty bathroom at the end of it.

I slammed the latch home, a small, weak click of false security. I slid down onto the cold tile floor, pulling my knees up to my chest. I buried my face in my arms, trying desperately to slow my breathing. It felt like my chest was too tight, too small, to hold all the sudden pain and anger that rushed through me.

I was here, sitting on a dirty floor, trying to stop crying over a man who didn't care enough to send a single note for five years.

There was a heavy thud, followed by a loud, splintering crash.

I shot my head up just as the bathroom door exploded inward. The cheap wood frame shattered, and pieces flew across the room. Standing in the broken doorway, framed by dust, was Chase.

He looked exactly like my memories, strong, determined, and terrifyingly handsome. His eyes found mine instantly, and the look he gave me was the same one he always had, possessive, loving, and completely devoted. It ripped my heart out.

He crossed the distance in two giant strides. I didn't even have time to stand up before he pulled me off the floor. His arms wrapped around me, crushing me against his familiar chest.

This was the moment I had replayed maybe a thousand times in the past six years. I always thought I would slap him, yell at him, or maybe just walk away with pride. But right now, held against the only man who ever felt like home, smelling the scent that I loved more than anything, I was just overwhelmed. I felt numb and totally confused.

A choked sob escaped me, and then the tears came, hot and messy. I cried because he was real. I cried because he was here. And I cried because everything he represented was a lie.

"Let go," I whispered, my voice thick with tears.

His arms only tightened. "No. I just found you, Kimberly. I am never letting you go again. I missed you so much."

I shoved him with all my strength. He stepped back, surprised.

"Stay away from me!" I yelled, the sound echoing in the tiny room. "Just like you did for the last six years!"

"Kim, please. Let me explain everything," he begged, reaching out for me again.

I stepped back, shaking my head violently. "There is nothing to explain! You chose. You sacrificed everything—us, our future, our relationship—just to protect Alice. What could you possibly say that will fix that? There's nothing!" My voice cracked. "If I had known you were here, I swear, I would never have come with Faith."

He pulled me into another hug before I could stop him, holding me so tight I couldn't move.

"I can explain. I have changed," he muttered into my hair.

"I don't want to hear it!" I screamed, struggling against his solid body. "I have been through hell, Chase. Because of you! I don't want your words"

But every time he touched me, every time his skin brushed mine, my wolf went absolutely crazy. She was howling with joy and relief, making me feel alive for the first time in years. It was a cruel feeling, a sharp, terrible reminder of everything he had sabotaged.

I pushed away with one final burst of anger, wiping my cheek with the back of my hand.

I laughed then, a sharp, ugly sound that didn't sound like me. "You know what makes all of this even worse? You didn't even care! You didn't care about me, about your family, about how much your banishment destroyed all of us!"

I stared him down. "You kept quiet. Six years. Not a card, not a letter, not a single message. If you wanted to explain, you should have explained then. You just kept silent, and you left me alone to deal with the wreckage."

My eyes narrowed into a fierce glare. The tears were gone, replaced by pure, cold resolve. This was the chance to show him the woman six years of hell had created.

"Listen to me now, Chase," I said, my voice low and dangerous. "I came here with Faith. I am loyal to her. If anything, and I mean anything, happens to her here, I will kill you myself. I will protect her with everything I have. And I don't care what happens to you."

He just looked at me, his face full of disbelief and sorrow. "You've changed," he said softly.

"Yes. I have changed," I confirmed, standing taller than I felt. "And you know why? Because my mate was satisfied to be banished for some other woman instead of staying with me. There was no one there to protect me."

"I had to fend for myself through everything. The cruel questions people threw at me, the taunts about being the mate of a banished traitor, the pity in my family's eyes. I survived all of that because I had to. I did it alone."

I took a final step back, putting distance between us. "But I did survive. And the only person who has truly stood by me through all that garbage is Faith. I will not let anything or anyone do anything to her. And that includes you."

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 167

The first week in the Crescent Pack was like walking on glass, every step had to be careful, measured. I held my head high, shoulders straight, but inside, my nerves were a tangled mess.

The wolves here bowed their heads when I passed, their eyes flickering with respect, but also something else, curiosity, maybe even wariness. To them, I was the Alpha who came out of nowhere.

I was a stranger and I had to build a bridge between us and it was very difficult.

I moved through the days like a shadow, my presence acknowledged but not truly welcomed.

Every smile I gave was welcomed with a fake and robotic one, every word I spoke was taken seriously but I didn't want to be a dictator. I wanted to be taken seriously and to be able to work with them so that we can make our pack very successful and make everybody happy. I had spent my whole life invisible and here, I was just... tolerated.

Only Chase broke the pattern.

I expected hostility. I was honestly looking forward to being his worst nightmare because he only knows weak me but the new me does not tolerate nonsense but it turns out he was loyal to Kimberly.

I'm not sure why he keeps on hoping that she'll forgive him and maybe she will but the way she looks at him is an indicator that they just so much heard and anger hidden underneath the end I'm afraid he might never be able to get rid of it.

And to be honest I love this Kimberly because she reminds me of me and maybe we share the same fate of going back to the same man who will always make that one mistake that will tear everything apart.

But Astor recently was my anchor.

Every evening, without fail, his voice would come through the phone, deep and steady. We talked about everything, the kids, the pack, the little things that made the distance between us feel smaller. Hearing him laugh made my chest tighten in the best way.

We were sharing Memories over the phone and it just felt like we were next to each other.

Two Months In

Slowly, the Crescent Pack stopped feeling like a cage. The children played in the halls, their laughter chasing away the lingering coldness.

I think they're mostly the reason why everybody has just accepted me because the kids refused to be sidelined by anybody. They made their presence failed and everybody has just started to refer to Isabella has be a future alpha because it's quite clear that she will be the alpha of this pack because Marco is destined to be the alpha of the Eternal pack.

And I'm not sure if they'll want to separate in the future but I know my daughter can do it and who says girls can't.

They missed their father, of course, asking about him every day. Liam took them to visit the Eternal Pack, and they returned full of stories about how Astor had taken them running under the full moon, how he had let them help train the younger wolves.

For the first time in a long time, I felt hope. Maybe this could work. Maybe we could rebuild, not just our packs, but us.

Four Months In

Then, the silence came.

Astor's calls became shorter. More rushed. Then, they stopped altogether.

I tried reaching him through the mind link, only to hit an unseen wall, blocked. His texts were short, cold. Only about the kids. Never about me.

I thought I could handle it at some point but it was just becoming too much.

"Is everything okay?" I'd ask.

"Fine," he'd reply.

Nothing more.

This is not how I imagined the distance going and my wolf was just going crazy because we need that connection with our mate.

Five Months In

The kids were gone again, visiting the Eternal Pack. The halls of the Crescent mansion were too big, too empty. At night, I curled into myself, pressing my face into the pillow just to muffle the sound of my own breathing.

I wanted to go back. More than anything, I wanted to run to him, to demand answers, to scream, to cry but something held me in place. Fear? Pride? I didn't know.

All I knew was the gnawing ache in my chest, growing larger with every passing day.

This time he actually demanded that he kept the kids longer which is the whole month and he sent that message through Liam like I was some sort of stranger that he couldn't even talk to properly.

I wanted to say no but I can't keep my kids from their father and I promised him that our distance should never come between our relationship with our children so I had no right but I was hurting and I was angry.

Six Months In

Now, standing here, I finally understand.

The Crescent Pack gave me shelter. It gave me time. But it also forced me to see the truth, my place wasn't here. It was never here.

It was with him.

I made a lot of memories in this place I made friends and I need family and to be honest it's actually the first pack that accepted me wholeheartedly.

when I walk around here I feel loved I feel respected and it is the best kind of feeling in the world which is something I never got anyway.

But this place didn't give me the love that I desperately craved the most which is his. I tried to ask Liam who was constantly back and forth between the packs what was going on and he didn't have the answers that I needed.

Liam and I have actually become friends in the short while and because of that I really believe that he wouldn't lie to me or hide something bad could potentially harm me but I'm not oblivious to the change and neither is he.

Something is going on and I need to find out what it is.

And I wouldn't wait any longer.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 168

I stood in the grand hall, my hand brushing over the carved wood of the fireplace. Today, it felt like a mirror reflecting all the love I'd found and all the heartache I left behind.

The children found me there, their small faces were full of confusion and tears. Lila, the fierce little fiery angel who also happens to be Isabella's best friend, clung to my leg, her eyes wide with a question she couldn't voice. "Will you come back?" she whispered breaking my heart.

I knelt down pulling her into my arms, her scent vanilla and wildflowers suddenly too precious to let go. "Always, my angel. This place will always be my home and you guys will always be my family so I will come constantly to check when you guys and if you want to visit me then you can come anytime as well" I promised, even as my voice cracked.

I think she misses Isabella even more especially because the kids haven't come back from their visit with their father so they couldn't be here to say goodbye but I'm also happy about that because I'm going to surprise everybody.

"I'll never stop being your alpha." Her brother, Benny Jr., thrust a crumpled paper into my hand which was drawing of me, the Crescent Pack, and them holding my hand "For you to always remember us" he said gruffly, then bolted. He is so shy that it's adorable and I got a lot of drawings from all the children and some of them got me flowers from the pack garden even though I warned them not to pluck them but today was the only exception.

I will always have a soft spot for children and they've also helped me heal and come to terms with my miscarriage

Because at the end of the day Astor and I lost a child and maybe I'm always going to feel the pain a lot more as the mother but that doesn't mean that he feels any less because it was his child as well and I took away his chance to grieve properly by constantly blaming it on him.

By noon, the pack had gathered in the courtyard. I'd told them I needed to leave, but none of them could mask their sadness. Even the elders, who'd once watched me like hawks, stepped forward to touch my hands, to press tokens into my palm, a silver pendant, a dried sprig of lavender, a carved wolf tooth. "You're our Alpha," an older woman said, her voice trembling. "Even when you leave, you'll always be ours."

Then came Chase.

He stood apart from the others, his shoulders stiff, eyes shadowed. We'd never been close, but in the past six months, something had shifted.

The hostility had faded, replaced by a quiet understanding. I'd chosen him to lead the Crescent Pack not just because he was strong, but because he'd earned it.

I saw the change in him and how willing he was to work on Kimberley's forgiveness and to be honest he earned mine.

I'm probably never going to forget and I think he expected me to remove him from his position as the beta but I believe that if something is not bothering you so why change it and the reason why I'm leaving him in charge is because he and Isabella share a really good and funny relationship so I know that in the future he will be the best person to help her take over her position.

“I know why you’re doing this,” he said, his voice low. “But if you need anything... any of it, you come back.” He handed me a small, leather-bound journal. “From the kids in the orphanage” I looked down -For Mama Faith.

My throat tightened.

“Thank you, Chase. I’ll never forget what you’ve done.” He nodded, but his eyes held so much more, regret, maybe even a plea for forgiveness.

Then Kimberly arrived.

She’d been avoiding me since I announced my decision, and now she stood in the doorway, her face pale. “Faith,” she began, her voice shaking.

She turned to me, her face a mask of pain and determination. “You remember when you told me we were the same? The same broken people chasing a man who always screws up? I thought I was right. But I was wrong. I’ve spent years blaming him, him... but I haven’t once asked myself what I wanted. I want him. My mate, the love of my life—I want to fight for him. Even if it breaks me.”

I know that she thinks that I’m angry or disappointed in her first staying but I don’t think I’ve ever been prouder of her and the woman that she has become and she has proved to be an exceptional beta female.

“You’re a better woman than me because maybe I should have done the same thing but I’m finally going to be brave enough to face everything.”

She nodded, wiping her tears. “Then go, Faith. Go get your happy ending.”

By sunset, I was at the gates, my bag packed, my heart heavier than it should’ve been. The kids had insisted on walking me to the car, their small hands clutching at my jacket. “Take the picture,” Lila begged, handing me a framed photo of us, me, Chase, Kimberly, the children, most of the Pack members who came to Say Goodbye side by side. I pressed a kiss to her forehead. “I’ll keep it close.”

As my car pulled away, I watched the mansion shrink in the rearview mirror. The pack had given me everything—love, respect, a second chance. But they hadn’t given me him.

I always knew that me staying here was temporary and it was time to go home but what I will find there is either going to make me or break me.

Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 169

The moment I crossed the threshold into the Eternal Pack's territory, the air felt like a physical weight on my chest. It wasn't just the cold though the wind bit through my coat like claws, it was the silence.

Not the peaceful kind, but the heavy and suffocating kind that made my teeth ache and my wolf whine in protest and it was also warning me that there was something in the air.

Six months have passed since I walked these lands. It may have been everything but the most important thing is that it felt like home.

The air, the land, the soil and everything was just calming and it felt right.

The pack's scent hit me first. Familiar, yet wrong. Like Astor's cologne mixed with something sharp and metallic, like rust or fear.

My wolf bristled.

Astor's here, I thought, my pulse quickening. I could feel his presence through my senses, but I don't understand why he's blocked me out of his mind.

"Mommy!" A movement tackled my legs, and stumbled into a hug so fierce it knocked the air out of me.

Marco's arms were around my waist, his hair wild and unorganised and it's quite clear they were playing.

Isabella latched onto my arm next, her tiny hands gripping my sleeve like she might disappear if she let go. I squeezed them both, my eyes stinging. "You're back!" Marco said, grinning, but his voice wavered like he was holding back tears. Isabella just stared up at me, her dark eyes searching mine as if trying to decide if I was real.

"I'm here," I whispered, crouching to hug them both properly. Marco's laughter, so like Astor's, made my heart split open.

I don't know why they didn't come back if they missed me this because I thought the reason why they wouldn't come back was because they were quite happy here.

I wanted to see them more than anything but the one person that I haven't seen in 6 months was nowhere to be seen and if the kids saw me then he must have felt my presence already.

Where is he, I wanted to scream. Instead, I kissed her forehead, my fingers brushing against her cheek. "I missed you guys just as much."

But the moment unraveled when the kids pulled me towards the house chatting about their day, and I realized that the problem wasn't only that Astor didn't come to meet me but also.

Pack members were strangers to me now, their hollow and polite eyes watched as I passed.

What have you done to them? I thought, my wolf snarling at the pack's unnatural stillness.

I get that we still had a long way to go in in terms of building relationship but nobody seemed live in particularly happy to see their Luna.

"Where's Astor?" I asked Marco, who marched ahead like a general.

"Daddy's busy," he said, not looking at me.

Isabella tugged his sleeve. "he's in the forest with the others," she said.

Others? My stomach clenched. "What others?"

Marco shrugged, but his forehead wrinkled. "auntie Anna, auntie Alice, Georgy and grandmother." he said making my heart stop beating for a few seconds because I could have sworn he said Alice.

Alice was free and she was roaming around with him somewhere in the pack and he did an even find it necessary to come and welcome me.

This honestly sounds like a very bad dream but I hope it's not what I'm thinking because I will not be able to handle it the second time.

The kids who were oblivious to what I was feeling left me at the edge of the house, disappearing when they saw one of their friends in the Pack. I stood there, alone, as a voice started whispering in my ear. You're not welcome here, the silence said. My wolf howled.

The house however despite the fact that everything around here seems to have changed looked exactly as I'd left it. The porch swings hadn't moved.

"You're not welcome here," I thought to myself.

My wolf snarled, a low rumble in my chest, but I pushed it down because she is right.

This was my home. I pushed the heavy oak door open. The air inside was cool, still, and smelled faintly of dust and old wood – but underneath, it was our scent. Mine, faint but stubborn, woven with Astor's, strong and familiar. It was a sanctuary, a familiar shell, yet utterly empty.

I stepped into the living room and the familiarity was a strange comfort, a small anchor in the storm brewing inside me. But it was also unsettling.

I just want to know what's going on between us and what I did wrong. I don't understand why he's ignoring me and it's just driving me crazy.

I didn't feel like doing anything other than sleeping for now because I fear I might just go and look for him wherever he is and confront him which is something I don't need right now.

I made my way to our bedroom. This was the hardest part. The bed was neatly made, but the air here was thick with his scent.

I walked to his closet, my fingers trembling slightly as I pulled open the door. His clothes hung neatly, a silent army of fabrics. My eyes landed on a simple, worn t-shirt.

I pulled it from the hanger, then and buried my face in it. The scent was pure Astor: pine, earth, and something uniquely him, a deep, comforting scent that instantly brought a rush of memories, his laugh, his touch, and just everything about him.

For a moment, the world shrank to just me and this shirt. The longing was a physical ache, so overwhelming it brought tears stinging to my eyes. "Astor, I whispered into the fabric.

I took a much needed shower because I was sweating and honestly I'm tired both emotionally and physically and after that I went to bed.

I told myself that tomorrow, I would get answers. Tomorrow, I will talk to Astor.

Tomorrow, this nightmare would make sense.

With that desperate hope clinging to me, I finally drifted off, the image of Astor's face, and Alice's.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 170

I opened my eyes, expecting to see him there, beside because I don't understand what could be so important that he couldn't even come to welcome me back after 6 months of me away but the bed was empty.

The space beside me was cold just like my heart, which dropped like a stone, shattering into a million pieces.

My wolf let out a deep, mournful whine inside my head. It wasn't just a sound; it was a feeling, a crushing weight of rejection that made my own chest ache.

He's not here, Faith. He didn't come. Her voice was raw with pain, mirroring mine.

I tried to push away the thought, to tell her he was just busy, that he'd any minute. But the silence in the room screamed louder. It felt like a punch to the gut, stealing my breath.

A wave of cold dread washed over me. This wasn't right. This wasn't how it was supposed to be. My wolf whimpered again, curling into a tight ball of hurt, her spirit crashing.

But I couldn't just lie there and let the pain consume us. I have to know. I have to see him. I swung my legs out of bed, the silk sheets feeling strangely heavy against my skin, like a shroud.

"No" I whispered, not just to my wolf, but to the empty room. We won't let this happen. I'm going to him.

I dressed quickly and every step through the packhouse felt heavy, each one dragging me further into an unsettling silence.

The familiar hallways, usually bustling with happy chatter, seemed quiet, almost hushed, as if holding their breath. I passed a few pack members, their heads down, busy with their duties.

"Good morning, Luna." one of them said, a young boy I recognized. He gave a small, polite nod, his eyes not quite meeting mine. Another, an older woman who just offered a quick, almost forced smile. "Welcome back, Luna." Their voices were cordial, yes. Polite. But there was no warmth. No joy. No spark of happiness in their eyes. Nobody seemed genuinely happy to see me. It was like I was a stranger, or worse, a ghost they were obligated to acknowledge.

A cold knot tightened in my stomach, twisting painfully. My wolf was on edge, her senses rising, sensing the strange, unsettling atmosphere. This wasn't my home. This wasn't the pack I remembered. Fear, cold and sharp, began to prickle at my skin, raising goosebumps. What was going on,

I reached the office wing, my heart pounding a frantic rhythm against my ribs.

Astor's office door stood imposing and closed. I hesitated, my hand hovering over the polished wood, my breath catching. Taking a deep, shaky breath, I pushed it open.

He was there. Sitting behind his large desk, his back to the window, the morning light framing his dark hair. He looked up, and my breath caught in my throat. His face was a mask, unreadable. There was no sudden rush, no leap from his chair, no wide smile, no open arms. Nothing. Just a cold, steady gaze that met mine, devoid of any recognition of the joyful reunion I'd dreamed of.

My wolf on the other hand was just growing crazy wanting to touch him and just feel him but I managed to keep her at Bay.

This wasn't the Astor I knew. This wasn't the man who promised me that the distance was never going to separate us, whose eyes would light up like a thousand stars just seeing me across a room.

This wasn't an alpha seeing his Luna after six long, agonizing months apart.

He was a stranger, distant and cold, sitting in the very place where we had once shared so much warmth, so much love.

"Astor?" My voice was barely a whisper, thick with confusion and a growing terror that made my stomach churn.

He didn't move. His eyes, though, they were a different story. They burned with something I couldn't quite place – a flicker of suppressed love, yes, but also a raw, searing agony that mirrored the pain in my own wolf.

It was like looking into a deep, dark fire, hidden beneath a layer of ice, struggling to break free. I wanted to know what secret he was hiding behind them

"Faith," he said, his voice flat, devoid of emotion, a chilling contrast to the fire in his eyes. "You're back."

My heart shattered a little more. "Yes. I'm back. I... I came to see you since you didn't bother showing up."

He finally stood up slowly, deliberately, but he didn't come around the desk. He stayed behind it, a barrier between us. "I'm happy you're back" he said, his gaze unwavering, his words carefully chosen carefully. He paused, and the air in the room grew heavy, thick with unspoken words, with a tension that choked me. "But if you feel like leaving again, you probably will. And this time, I'm not going to beg you for anything."

His words were like daggers, each one twisting deeper into my soul, leaving a gaping wound. My wolf cried out, a silent scream of agony, her spirit bleeding.

“Astor, what are you saying? What’s wrong?” My voice cracked, tears stinging my eyes and threatening to spill over.

I know Astor when he’s being mean and stupid and this is not it. “Please, talk to me. There’s something wrong, I can feel it. Just tell me what’s happening.”

I took a step forward, wanting to bridge the distance between us, to touch him and to feel his warmth and break through the ice.

But he just shook his head stopping me from my tracks.

“Faith” he said, his voice now a low, dangerous rumble, a sound that sent shivers down my spine. “Close the door behind yourself when you leave my office”

The air left my lungs in a ragged gasp. He was dismissing me. Just like that. After six months. After everything. My mate. My Astor.

He didn’t want me. He didn’t want to talk. He just wanted me gone.

My vision blurred with tears, but I refused to let them fall. Not here front of him.

I turned, my legs and stumbled out of his office, the heavy door shut behind me, sealing me out, sealing away the last shred of hope.

I walked blindly, my mind reeling, my wolf howling in despair, a raw, primal grief. I didn’t know where I was going, only that I had to get away from that crushing silence, that icy rejection.

I turned a corner trying to hold myself together and to keep the broken pieces from scattering.

And then I stopped dead.

Standing right in front of me, blocking my path, was a woman.

Ovelia.