

Astor’s Pov

The drive to the packhouse was heavy with silence and tension.

Faith sat beside me quietly and distantly, her eyes fixed on the trees outside the window. I felt her anger radiating o her like heat, and it le me confused. What did I do? The party was... a party. Nothing was out of the ordinary, at least not from my perspective.

“Are you okay?” I asked her. It's pretty much clear she isn't, but I want to hear it from her.

“Do you care?” She snapped, and she isn’t usually like this, so it surprised me.

“Of course. You seem upset.”

“Upset?” She sco ed. “Is that what you call it, Astor? Just upset? You paraded Alice around as if I were invisible, nothing more than furniture in your own home. Did you even see me tonight?"

“What are you talking about?” I asked because it gets harder and harder to understand Faith because she doesn't say anything. It frustrates me. Her silences longer, her thoughts locked away where I couldn't reach them.

"Why did you let Alice stay at the packhouse?" Faith’s voice was sharp, her glare cutting deeper than her words. "Why invite me at all if you just wanted to humiliate me?"

The accusation hit like a blindside strike. I stared at her, trying to trace the logic in her anger, trying to understand when a simple gathering had twisted into this. I hadn’t meant to make her feel anything.

“I don't understand what you’re implying because you have to be there at events like this as the luna of the pack.” I said, because her presence is required, whether the pack is hosting a party or a small celebration. And to be honest, she is always on top of things, and I don't know why she feels o ended about this.

“Tell me, Astor. Be honest, just once. If Alpha Xander hadn’t commanded it, if it wasn’t some pre-destined agreement between our pack years ago, would you have chosen me as your Luna?” She asked suddenly, making me freeze.

3 years ago, if I had heard that question, I would have hesitated to say no. But she is truly the kindest person that I know now, and she cares about everything and everybody.

I was caught up in my thoughts, and I couldn't find the right word.

“Of course you won't answer my questions because you know as well as I do Alice was always your number one pick, and I just came in the way.” Faith's voice snapped me from my thoughts. Before I could respond, she turned away, her profile etched against the window glass, her silence louder than any words. I saw her shoulders slump and something close to disappointment pass in her eyes.

I clenched my jaw. This wasn't how conversations between an Alpha and his... whatever Faith was to me... should go.

We don't have a conventional mating story, but Alice has never been a problem for me. She spent her childhood with me. She's been away from the Eclipse Pack and the Eternal Night Pack for almost three years, and now that she's returning for my upcoming Alpha Succession Ceremony. I appreciate that gesture, and the only reason I decided to host her at our place is that she's her sister.

It was a temporary arrangement for somebody I consider close family to both of us. When Alpha's succession is over, I'll be sending her back to the Eclipse Pack.

I have never looked at Alice as anything other than my little sister. I grew up with her, and I care about her. But Faith's aversion to Alice is ba ling. It reminds me of the day Alice le 3 years ago.

That day, with the rain lashing against the windows as Alice spoke through tears, her voice breaking as she confessed how Faith had rejected every attempt at reconciliation.

"I wanted to make amends for my mother's sins," she whispered, "but Faith wouldn't hear it. The words she said to me... were vulgar. She even ordered me out of the Eclipse Pack."

"I'll do that. I'm returning everything to Faith - Alpha Connor, Luna Lila, all of it." The resignation in her voice cut deeper than the thunder outside. She was so fragile and filled with guilt for what her biological mother's actions of swapping her and Faith at birth, because she stole Faith's life and gave it to her.

As bad as it is, it was never Alice's fault because she was just a baby when everything happened, but Faith didn't see it that way. She shut down every gesture Alice made for reconciliation between the two of them, and constantly taunted and insulted her, which made me angry because Alice was just trying to right a terrible wrong.

Then Alice le the Eclipse Pack. Alone.

I was Furious with my father when he arranged our marriage because I wanted nothing but to reject her. However, I had to honour our mate bond for the sake of my father and my pack. But still, I found a loophole. A small delay to buy me time.

3 years. I promised to mark her on my alpha ceremony, but my father forced me to get engaged to her in the meantime, and I agreed.

The time was just to avoid the inevitable because Alpha Xander would never change his mind. My father is just and fair, but he didn't care what I wanted.

Yet a lot has changed in these 3 years. It wasn't hard for me to see Faith. Truly see her. I watched her in the shadows. Witnessed her grow into someone I didn't think she was.

She worked hard and contributed to the Pack in ways that I didn't expect. She was fierce when she needed to be and protective of everybody around the pack, whether they were high-ranking or low-ranking. She spends most of her time in the orphanage with the pups, comforting them and trying to fill the void of the absence of parents. She understands them more than anybody, even though she has two sets of parents.

Never misses a pack meeting, and she is always insightful and helpful. I can leave this pack for days, and when I come back, everything will still be in order.

I've never come to understand her because from what I've seen in the past 3 years, she is the kindest person I've ever met, and she goes all out for people.

I've also come to the understanding that having Faith as the Luna of the Eternal Pack is not bad. She is strong and very capable. A suitable choice in my opinion. A perfect Luna even.

However, the contradiction has always haunted me. Because she was di erent from what Alice described. Was Faith playing a perfect Luna, or was Alice deceiving me?