

# Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 61

Faith's Pov

The sharp, brutal cold hit me first, followed by the burning sting of pine needles against my skin. Slowly I shifted back making me dizzy and shivering. I blinked, my vision blurring, trying to make sense of the world.

And then I saw him.

Astor.

My mate. The love of my life.

He had aged well. Life had been good to him and he looked good.

He was standing maybe ten feet away, towering, his body rigid and coiled like a struck snake. His pack warriors were scattered around him, faces I hadn't seen in six years, frozen in shock and awe.

But none of that mattered. All that mattered was Astor, and the way he was looking at me.

The mate bond, only recently awakened inside me along with my wolf, screamed a song of joy and homecoming. It rushed through my veins, making my heart beat so hard I could barely breathe.

Mine. We are home. We are safe.

But the look in his eyes drowned out the happiness.

They were steel grey and colder than the current winter. There was no love, no recognition, and certainly no joy. Just a deep, crushing intensity the kind you reserve for an enemy that has insulted your very existence.

I didn't need him to speak. I knew, instantly and absolutely, that I was unwanted.

I realized I was naked. I was frantically trying to cover myself, the embarrassment a burning tide across my cheeks. The pack warriors were still staring, their mouths slightly open. They had never seen me shift.

I heard a sharp collective inhale from the crowd. I didn't get to see my wolf form the last time I shifted, but I knew now why they were staring. The memory of thick, heavy fur, pure as fresh snow, resonated in my mind. A white wolf. The rarest wolf.

A cheap, worn-out t-shirt landed on my head.

“Put this on,” Astor’s voice was low, flat, and hard. It held no emotion, yet it was the most terrifying sound I had ever heard.

My fingers trembled as I pulled the rough cotton over my head. It smelled faintly of him pine and earth and danger and the scent sent a confused wave of longing and dread through me.

I missed him so much it was a physical ache, magnified tenfold because I wasn’t a wolf when I left. The human part of me had already been in love with him but the wolf part was suddenly hit with the full, devastating force of the bond. I loved him with a terrifying, crushing intensity.

Astor finally moved. He took a predatory step forward, the shift in his stance making the surrounding pack members flinch.

“Faith,” he said. My name, just my name, sounded like a curse.

I reached out my hand toward him, needing to touch him, needing to bridge the six years that had ripped us apart.

“Astor, I-”

He grabbed my wrist roughly, tightening his grip instantly. It hurt, but the physical pain was nothing compared to the shock.

“Go back to the pack house,” he commanded the small crowd, his voice carrying the authority of an Alpha. “Now.”

They obeyed, murmuring in confusion as they retreated, leaving us alone in the sudden silence of the forest clearing.

Now it was just us. Six years of missing him, six years of pain, swelling up and bursting inside me. We were finally here, the two of us, under the watchful trees. I had never thought I would come back and I didn’t want to either. But I had. And here he was.

I looked into his eyes, searching desperately for the man who told me he loved me.

But I could see his disappointment. It was palpable, heavy in the air.

“What are you doing back here?” he demanded. He let go of my wrist, but only to cross his arms, closing himself off completely.

My throat tightened. This was it. The moment of explanation.

“Can we talk properly?” I asked, gesturing vaguely around the clearing. “I’m half-naked in a borrowed shirt, and we are in the middle of nowhere, I need to explain everything.”

He laughed, a short, ugly sound entirely devoid of humor.

“Proper conversation?” he snarled, taking another step closer. “Where was that proper conversation six years ago, Faith? When I woke up to find you gone. Did you have a proper conversation then?”

Tears welled up, spilling hot and fast down my face. The sheer devastation in his eyes was mirroring the devastation in my heart.

“I had to run! You know why I had to run! You weren’t letting me leave” I pleaded, my voice cracking.

“Don’t. Don’t you dare cry,” he warned, his voice like grinding stone. “You won’t make yourself the victim here, Faith. Especially not after you cheated on me.”

The accusation hit me like a physical punch, knocking the air right out of my lungs.

“What?” I gasped, shaking my head violently. “Astor, no! I never, ever cheated on you! What are you talking about?”

“Shut up.”

The command was so sharp, so loud, that I instantly recoiled.

Before I could form another contradictory word, he grabbed my arm again, his fingers digging into my muscle this time. He was no longer holding me; he was dragging me.

“Astor, stop! Please! Let go! We need to talk! You have to listen to me!” I screamed, pulling and stumbling as he started dragging me back toward the direction of the pack house and the main road.

He didn’t answer. He just moved, fast and furious, forcing me to keep pace or fall.

My feet slipped on the wet earth. I was crying uncontrollably now, begging and pleading, but he was deaf to it all.

The forest gave way to the open grounds of the pack house. I tried to brace myself, but it was too late. He was making a spectacle of me.

The entire pack poured out of the house. Elders, warriors, mothers—they all stood frozen on the porch, watching their Alpha drag his half-dressed, screaming, former-mate through the mud. Humiliation dried the tears on my face for a moment, replacing them with utter terror.

He didn’t stop at the main entrance. He dragged me past the kitchen, past the sleeping quarters, and down a hidden flight of stairs that led into the cold, damp rock beneath the house.

The dungeon.

The air smelled of dirt, loneliness, and iron.

“You left on your own terms. Now you stay on mine,” he hissed, his face inches from mine, his eyes burning with pure, distilled rage.

He shoved me roughly through the doorway. I stumbled onto the rough, cold stone floor. Before I could even push myself up, before I could beg one last time, the heavy metal door slammed shut, the sound echoing through the darkness.

Then came the heavy, grinding thud of the lock turning.

I was locked in. Alone. And my mate, the man I loved more than anything hated me enough to throw me in a cage.

I dissolved into broken sobs, hitting the cold stone until my knuckles bled, the sound trapped within the walls of my new prison.

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The cold, damp stone of the dungeon floor had become my only friend through the long, endless night. My throat was raw from all the screaming and crying I'd done, but it had also given me time. Time to think, really think, about everything that happened.

Six years. Six long years since I last saw him, my mate, Astor. And what a reunion it had been. Not the one I'd dreamed of, not in a million years. But deep down, a part of me, the part that knew Astor's stubborn heart and had expected something like this.

The worst part? He accused me of cheating. Me. The woman who loved him more than life itself, who would never, ever, even think of another man. The sheer unfairness of it burned hotter than any silver. How could he? How could he believe such a lie?

My body ached. The air in here felt heavy, thick with sorrow and the metallic scent of my own fear. I'd been near the silver chains for too long, my strength draining with every passing hour.

It was almost a relief when I heard footsteps approaching, echoing loudly in the quiet space. The clinking of keys. A sliver of light appeared, cutting through the darkness. It had to be morning.

The heavy door creaked open, and a figure stood there, framed by the faint light. My heart, already a bruised mess, dropped further. Alice. Of course, it was Alice.

Her eyes, usually fake with soft and kind illusion, were hard like stones as she stared at me. “Well, well, well,” she said, her voice dripping with ice. “Look who decided to come back.” She stepped closer, her shadow falling over me. “Why are you back, Faith? Why can’t you ever just let us be happy?”

A wave of weakness washed over me. The silver chains were close, and their energy sapped every bit of my strength. But hearing her words, her accusation, something snapped inside me. It reminded me of the taunts and insults I ran away from.

I pushed myself up, slowly and painfully, my knees trembling. Each movement felt like an effort, every muscle screaming in protest. My head spun, but I forced myself to stand tall, to meet her gaze.

“Get out,” I rasped, my voice hoarse and broken, but full of a fire I didn’t know I had left. “I don’t have time for you.”

Alice scoffed, a bitter sound. “You don’t have time for me? After all this? Astor and I, we’ve built a family. I don’t understand why you’re back to ruin it.”

My laugh was dry, brittle. It hurt my throat, but I couldn’t stop it. “A family?” I scoffed back, my eyes narrowing. “I don’t have to explain anything to you, Alice. You mean nothing to me.” The words stung my own tongue, but the anger was too strong to hold back. “I let you get away with so much when I was here. I felt sorry for you. Your whole life got turned upside down, and I felt bad.” My voice grew stronger, each word a punch. “But you didn’t feel sorry for me, did you? You slept with my mate, Alice. My mate!” My chest burned. “You are the very last person to talk about destroying someone’s family.”

Alice’s face went white. She took a step back, clearly taken aback. Her mouth opened, then closed. She looked completely shocked. Good. Let her feel it.

Before she could recover, I twisted the knife further. “And if you had really ‘built a family,’” I said, my voice dripping with fake sweetness, “Astor would have marked you. Or at least married you. But I don’t see a ring on your finger, Alice. So what family are you talking about?”

That hit her hard. Her eyes flashed with fresh anger. “We have a daughter!” she snapped, the words like a physical blow.

My breath caught in my throat. A daughter. Astor and Alice. A daughter. The sweet angel I spoke to. My vision blurred for a second, my heart shattering into a thousand pieces inside my chest. It was salt to my physical wound. But I couldn’t let her see it. I wouldn’t.

I forced a smile, a cruel, fake thing. “A daughter? My, my. Well, congratulations, Alice. I’m truly… happy for you both.” My voice was flat, empty.

Alice's face contorted in frustration. "Just leave us alone, Faith! Like you did six years ago!"

I spread my hands, a sarcastic shrug. Even that small movement sent a jolt of pain through my weakened body. "That would be very difficult, wouldn't it?" I said, looking around the grimy dungeon. "Seeing as I'm locked in this lovely little room. So, if you want me gone so badly, Alice, you'll have to talk to Astor. Tell him to let me go."

Her jaw clenched. She stared at me for another long moment, her anger warring with something else I couldn't quite name. Then, without another word, she turned and stormed out, the heavy door slamming shut behind her, plunging me back into darkness.

The silence that followed was deafening. My fake smile dropped. My legs gave out, and I crumpled back onto the cold, hard floor. Tears, fresh and hot, streamed down my face. A daughter. Astor, Alice, and their daughter. The image wouldn't leave my mind. He had moved on. He had forgotten me. He had a new life, a new family, and I was just a ghost from the past, an inconvenient memory.

The double standards of it all. He was the one who cheated. He was the one who moved on with someone else. Yet, he was the one who hated me, who thought I had cheated. Something I would never, ever do.

It broke my heart into pieces. He would never listen to me. He would never understand how I felt.

Every time, always, something happened, and he assumed it was my fault. And I had to bear the punishment. Six years later, nothing had changed.

And now... now, I had to tell him he had a son. My son. Our son. The thought of his reaction, his anger, his disbelief, made a cold dread settle deep in my stomach. How would he ever believe me when he refused to believe anything else? How could I tell him my secret when he hated me so much? The weight of it was crushing.

I can't tell him.

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Astor's Pov

I was trembling, and it had nothing to do with the cold air seeping through the old windows of the packhouse office. I was shaking because of the crushing weight of shock.

Faith.

Six years. Six long, empty, agonizing years I had spent tearing her memory out of my mind, piece by bloody piece. It was impossible to fully cancel her out of my heart, but I had done everything I could do to forget she ever existed.

Everything.

Only for her to show up, not just back in our territory but standing there, glowing like a luna goddess, in the form of a magnificent, massive white wolf.

I didn't even want to allow my brain to process the fact that she was truly my fated mate. None of the magic or the fate could take away the sharp, searing ache that felt like a permanent hole ripped right through my chest.

I felt like I was drowning. Drowning in the sudden rush of her scent, in the flooding memories of our past, in the bitter contrast between what could have easily been ours and the messy disaster that my life actually was now.

I am the Alpha of this pack. The strongest person in this pack right now, tasked with protecting every single soul within these borders. Yet, I was paralyzed, slumped in my worn leather chair, having a silent panic attack because of one woman. A woman who had walked away and destroyed me.

But the most frustrating part? My wolf was back.

I could feel him stronger and more alive than he had been since the day she left and utterly shattered his spirit. And funny enough, the only thing my damn beast wanted was to be close to her, to lick her wounds, despite the unforgivable damage she had inflicted on both of us.

I had spent the night right here, alone in my office, using the flimsy excuse of paperwork. The truth was, I couldn't stand the thought of going home and leaving her here, unconscious in the dungeon. I guess they are right when they say love is foolish, because my heart, even now, was aching for the person who broke it.

A sound on the door pulled me from the dark spiral.

"I knew I would find you like this," a smooth, annoyingly self-satisfied voice said.

It was only a matter of time before Alice came running, eager to rub salt into my painful wounds or whatever twisted reason she had for being here.

“I guess kudos to you,” I mumbled, dropping the papers I was pretending to read onto the desk. I honestly didn’t know what else to say to dismiss her faster.

“Can you talk to me?” she asked, walking into the room and immediately making herself comfortable in the seat opposite me.

I pulled my chair back slightly, leaning away from her, and looked her dead in the eyes. I was exhausted, and my patience was thinner than a sheet of ice.

“Alice, I think I’ve made it more than clear that I don’t explain myself to you or anybody else,” I stated, my voice low and flat. “If you want to talk about your adopted sister coming back, then you can go take it up with her. I don’t have anything to tell you about that situation.”

I paused, letting the silence hang heavy.

“But if you want to talk about my feelings and my relationship with Faith, then unfortunately, I am not going to help you, because it is none of your business.”

That was likely the most I had talked about Faith since the day she left six years ago. Just saying her name out loud was like ripping a stitch out of an old, barely healed wound.

Alice raised a perfectly sculpted eyebrow, her expression hardening. “So, you still want to be with her?”

The audacity of her question, like I owed her some sort of explanation, made my jaw clench.

“Listen,” I said, rubbing the heel of my hand against my eyes. “I’m really tired. I had one hell of a night, and I don’t want to get into whatever this is today. I need you to leave my office, now.”

She didn’t move. Instead, she leaned forward, her voice dropping to a dangerous, manipulative whisper that she probably thought sounded caring.

“I don’t know what you’re planning to do, Astor, but if you bring that girl back into our lives, if you try to replace me, I’m sorry, but it will be the last time you see our daughter.” Her eyes were cold, calculated. “It will completely break Isabella’s heart to see you choose someone else, and I won’t stand by and let that happen. For her sake, you need to send Faith away.”

Manipulative. b\*\*\*h.

She could threaten me, she could belittle me, but she would never use my child as a weapon.

I stood up slowly, the scraping noise of my chair echoing in the sudden quiet room. I walked around the desk, stopping right in front of the door, and opened it wide. The message was clear: leave.



Alice stood up to leave, gathering her false composure, but I wasn't finished. There was something I needed to say, something I wanted to etch into her memory forever.

I slammed the door shut again, not enough to scare her, but enough to make her freeze. I turned, letting my Alpha aura flood the small space.

"I don't know who you think you are, but you better take that back," I snarled, looking deep into her eyes. My pupils were thinning to slits, my inner beast pressing against the surface. "You are never going to take my daughter from me. And I dare you to try it, Alice. I absolutely dare you."

The pure power of my activated wolf, the dominance of my Alpha wolf hit her hard. Her perfect posture collapsed slightly, her head tilting just enough. She had no choice but to bow, a tiny, involuntary submission to my command, even though her ego hated it.

She glared at me one last time, an attitude seething beneath the surface, before she opened the door and walked out.

As the scent of Alice's footsteps faded. I collapsed back into my chair, suddenly breathless again.

My heart was pounding like a drum.

'Mine' a deep, resonant voice echoed in my head.

'No, not yours. Don't start this' I silently snapped back at my wolf.

Rage, my wolf insisted, his presence flooding my mind with warmth and desperate joy. 'She is here. She is our mate. She is home.'

The happiness radiating from my wolf was so strong it driving me crazy. I could feel his tail wagging, figuratively speaking. It was maddening.

'She almost destroyed us. We spent six years broken because of her choice! Do you think I can just forget that because of the mate bond?'

'You have spent six years trying to bury the love you feel, Stop lying to yourself. We will not lose her again.'

I couldn't dispute him. That was the worst part. Six years had done absolutely nothing to remove the love I felt for Faith from my heart. It was still there, a massive, vibrant anchor I couldn't cut free.

And then the mate bond, which had snapped back to life the moment she crossed our borders, hit me with a wave of emotion that wasn't mine.

Pain. Confusion. Fear.

I could feel a lot of what she was feeling right now, lying up there in the dungeon, somewhere below this floor. She was hurting, and feeling her agony in my own chest made me feel physically ill.

How was I supposed to navigate this? My mind was screaming for self-preservation, demanding that I keep her at arm's length to avoid being broken again. My wolf was demanding that I run to her, claim her, and repair the damage we both carried.

And then there was Isabella, my daughter, stuck in the middle of something she doesn't even know.

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The cold stone floor was still biting at my skin, but Alice's footsteps had long faded. I took a deep, shaky breath, pushing back the tears. There was no point in crying, no use in being weak. I had learned that lesson fast in the human world. Tears didn't fix anything; they just showed your enemies where to aim.

I was not weak. And I would not let Alice, or anything else, bring back those old insecurities.

But I guess I spoke too soon.

The heavy door to the dungeon opened again. My heart, a traitorous thing, instantly understood who it was. It didn't just beat; it leapt. It came alive, thumping hard against my ribs, a wild drum telling me he was near. The mate bond wrapped around me like a warm blanket.

"It's good of you to show up," I said, my voice trying to be sharp, trying to hide the tremor of my weak state. It was meant to be sarcastic, a shield against the rush of feelings.

He didn't say anything. He just walked closer, his eyes dark and unreadable. Then, he reached out and unlocked the heavy iron bars of my cell.

The moment he touched me, a jolt shot through my body. Butterflies exploded in my stomach, chills ran down my arms, and sparks, bright and hot, burned right through my skin. I could deal with that, the raw, powerful connection of our bond. But what I couldn't deal with was how gentle he was.

I expected him to be rough, to drag me out, to treat me like the prisoner I was. Instead, he held me like I was something precious, something he was afraid he might break. And the worst part?

He lifted me bridal style. My legs immediately kicked, and a scream tore from my throat, but it was weak, raspy. I tried to hit him, to push away, but the lingering effects of the silver around the cell had stolen my strength. I was too weak to really fight. He carried me easily, as if I weighed nothing.

He carried me out of the dungeon, upstairs, and into the pack house. The air was different here, cleaner, warmer, but the feeling of being trapped was still heavy. He took me to a quiet room with a soft bed and a window looking out onto a dark forest. He set me down on my feet, but his hands stayed on my arms for a moment longer than needed.

“Go take a shower,” he said, his voice flat and cold. He still didn’t look at me fully.

I stared at him, confused. What was this? Why the sudden change from prisoner to... what? I didn’t understand him. But I was tired and dirty so I walked towards the bathroom, not fighting him. It felt like the easiest thing to do right now.

The shower helped wash away the grime and the cold, but not the confusion. I came out wrapped in a simple white gown he had left in the bathroom. He was still there, standing by the window, his back to me.

“What happens now?” I asked, my voice softer than I intended. “You can’t keep me as a prisoner, or whatever this is. Sooner or later, we have to talk.”

He turned then, his eyes finally meeting mine. They were full of a deep, painful anger that made my breath catch. “If you want to talk,” he said, his voice rough, “start with telling me why you’re back. Everything was fine when you were gone.”

His words hit me like a punch to the gut. Everything was fine while I was gone. It was a cruel, sharp rejection. My heart ached, a deep, familiar pain. But I had learned to hide my pain. I took a breath, forcing a smile that felt brittle and fake. It was hard to keep it there.

When I didn’t answer, he walked towards me. He took my hands in his, and again, those sparks shot through me, hot and dizzying. We both ignored them.

“Look at me,” he commanded and I did because for some reason he has the ability to control my wolf even though I’m not a member of his pack or at least I think I’m not. “Now,” he continued, his voice low, “try to see through my mind.”

I blinked, confused. “What? How?”

“Do it!” he snapped, his patience wearing thin.

I flinched at his sharpness. I tried, closing my eyes, concentrating, but it was like trying to catch smoke. “I can’t,” I whispered, opening my eyes. “I haven’t managed to control my wolf, not really.”

This is too hard.”

He sighed, a frustrated sound. “Just relax,” he said, his grip on my hands firm but not hurting. “Try to concentrate on me. Just me.”

He guided me, pushing something gentle but strong into my mind. I focused, pushing past my own fears and confusion. Slowly, like a blurry picture coming into focus, I began to see.

It wasn’t a memory, not exactly. It was a feeling. A raw, gaping wound of emotion. The world through his eyes when I left. The emptiness. The betrayal. The absolute, crushing weight of loneliness. It was a pain so deep, so consuming, that it stole my breath. It was pure heartbreak. The kind of heartbreak that made your legs give out. I crumpled, letting go of his hands, falling to my knees. Hot tears streamed down my face, real tears this time, not held back. I sobbed, a sound ripped from my very soul.

He knelt in front of me, his face still hard, but his eyes... his eyes held a flicker of something I couldn’t quite name. “Now,” he said, his voice low and raspy, “we can finally have a conversation.

Because now you know how I feel. You know how I felt when you left.”

I nodded, still sobbing, barely able to speak. “I get it,” I choked out. “You weren’t the only one who got hurt. I still feel it too.”

His jaw tightened. “I don’t want to hear one more lie from you,” he growled. “Not one. The last time I listened to you, I ended up betrayed. You ran away without an explanation, just a letter that said you were a cheat.”

My head snapped up, my tears momentarily forgotten. “A cheat?” I asked, my voice disbelieving. “What are you talking about? I’ve never cheated on you! You, of all people, should know that!”

“I don’t want to listen to anything that comes out of your mouth,” he said, turning away from me. His words were like daggers, each one twisting in the wound he had just opened.

“Then what do you want from me?” I cried, frustration mixing with my pain. “You don’t want me to explain anything. Maybe coming back was a bad idea.”

“I agree,” he said, his voice cold and distant.

Each word from him felt like a physical blow, a fresh rejection. My mate, the other half of my soul, was saying he wished I hadn’t come back. The pain was unbearable, a crushing weight in my chest. I loved him.

I had heard enough. More than enough. The pain was too much. I thought of my son, safe at home, far from this place, far from this agony. He didn’t know about our son. But I did. And he

was the reason I needed to be strong. The pain of this bond, this constant rejection, would poison me, and I couldn't let it.

A sudden, desperate clarity washed over me. There was only one way to stop the pain, to break free from this endless cycle of hurt. I had to reject him. To sever the bond. The words formed on my tongue, ready to be spoken, to rip us apart completely.

"I, Faith," I began, my voice trembling but firm, "reject you, As—"

Before I could finish, before the words could fully break free, he launched himself at me.

"No!" he roared, cutting me off. "It will not be that easy!"

And then, before I could even understand what was happening, his fangs sank into my neck. A searing, agonizing pain, followed by a rush of heat and power that stole my breath away.

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My head felt like two different things were trying to occupy the same space when I woke up.

I groaned, squeezing my eyelids shut, but that just made the throbbing worse. It wasn't just a regular headache; it was a noise, a constant, roaring static inside my skull.

Then the feeling came. Waves of feelings that weren't mine.

My eyes snapped open. I tried to focus on the ceiling, but the room was spinning. What was this? It felt like my mind was suddenly flooded with somebody else's life, somebody else's burdens. It was overwhelming, terrifying, and I couldn't push it back.

"Astor," I whispered.

He was sitting in the armchair beside the bed, watching me. He looked tired, but his posture was rigid, like he was waiting for a bomb to go off.

I pressed the heels of my hands into my temples, trying to clear the noise, trying to find the quiet space in my own mind.

"Make it stop," I mumbled. "Whatever this is, make it stop."

Astor didn't move. He just watched, his heavy brows slightly knotted.

I lowered my hands slowly. The memories, these echoes of another person's mind, were getting stronger. They had a rhythm, a certainty, a depth of emotion that was completely foreign to me, yet

I felt them as if it was my own pain.

But then I figured it out.

It wasn't just a headache. It was the bond slamming into place.

My hand flew up to my neck, searching. My fingers skimmed the skin just above my collarbone, and there it was, a faint, tender ache, a heat that pulsed in time with the roaring in my skull.

He had marked me.

Astor had done it. While I was vulnerable and unaware, he had claimed me again.

The air rushed out of my lungs, leaving me empty and cold. All the noise, all the alien memories, suddenly formed into one horrifying realization.

I was trapped. Again.

I stared at him, my vision blurry. Not with sleepiness, but with sheer devastation.

My voice was thick with betrayal. "How?"

Astor finally shifted, leaning forward. "Faith, let me explain-"

"No!" I tried to sit up, but the movement only intensified the noise in my head. "How could you do this to me, Astor? How could you mark me? That too without my consent."

The weight of it was crushing. Six years. Six years I spent building myself back up, brick by painful brick in New York. Six years of freedom, of deciding my own future, of knowing I was safe from him and this life.

I only came back because I was I had to but I seemingly came back to experience my doom.

Because this wasn't the fix I came back for. This was a shackle.

Tears, hot and immediate, streamed down my face. I didn't bother wiping them away. I looked at the man I had once loved more than air, the man who had always insisted he loved me and who had now proven that his love was just ownership.

I waited for the explanation. I waited for him to plead, to beg, to give me one reason that wasn't just selfish possessiveness.

He met my gaze, but his eyes were hard, locked down.

That was it. He wouldn't even give me words. He wouldn't give me the respect of an explanation. He just stood there, unapologetic in his destruction of my life.

The last sliver of hope inside me shriveled and died.

A cold dread washed over me. This was the worst consequence. Soon, he wouldn't just be able to keep tabs on me physically; he would be in my head. He would know every thought, every fear, every memory I had built separate from him. More importantly my biggest secret.

I can't let him in.

With a sudden, fierce determination fueled by panic, I slammed mental barriers into place. I pictured thick stone walls, cold, impenetrable metal, anything to stop the slow, insidious leak of his being into mine. It took agonizing effort because it was my first time doing it.

He shifted, frowning slightly, sensing the immediate retreat of my presence.

"Go," I said, my voice flat, empty of any warmth.

He didn't move and I couldn't handle his presence at this moment.

"I said go." I pushed myself back until my shoulders hit the headboard. The pain, both physical and mental, was blinding. Seeing him, standing there, so after intentionally ruining my life was unbearable.

My control snapped.

"Get out!" I screamed, the sound tearing up from my chest. "Get out of here right now! I hate you!"

Just leave me alone!"

The force of my demand, coupled with the unfiltered, raw spike of my pain, must have finally pierced his reserve. He flinched, his jaw tightening. Without another word, he turned sharply and walked out, closing the door softly behind him as if the room weren't filled with the echoes of my shattered future.

The instant the latch clicked, I slid off the bed and down to the floor, my muscles giving out completely. I pulled my knees to my chest and buried my face sobbing harshly.

Why?

The question scraped against the inside of my heart until it bled. Why, why, why?

All I wanted was to get better so that I could be there for my son but now everything is destroyed.

There was no distance great enough to escape a mark. The distance would cause an endless, pulling pain until I returned to his side. He had ensured that I could never escape again.

And the worst part? The final, horrifying inevitability of being a marked mate?

Sooner or later, the bond would demand completion. Sooner or later, I would have to mark him back, cementing the relationship forever.

I was back in the cage. I was back where he wanted me. I couldn't live through it again. not with my son. I know that I'm being selfish in keeping him away from me as father but he is all I have and if Astor finds out about him then it will give him a big enough reason to hate me and cause even more problems in my life.

## Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 66

Astor's Pov

The door shut behind me with a quiet click, but the silence didn't last even a second. I knew what was waiting for me. I could feel Alice's anger like a heatwave even before I saw her but I just didn't need it.

Not today certainly not now.

"How dare you, Astor?" she yelled, stepping out of the shadows in the hallway. Her face was tight with fury. "How dare you do something like that?"

I took a deep breath ready for the fight. "Keep it down, Alice. Our daughter is in the house. I don't want her to hear us fighting." I don't mind her running her mouth because it's all she seems to know but I don't want our daughter to be affected.

That only made her angrier. Her eyes got wide. "Oh, now you'll finally decided to think about Isabella"

"Yes, I do and I've always done that" I told her. I didn't blink. "She is my priority."



She stepped closer, her voice dropping to a harsh whisper, but it sounded worse than the yelling. “In all these years, Astor, did you ever feel anything for me? I stayed. I helped you heal. I was there for you through everything.”

I just stared at her because interrupting and telling her that I haven’t healed wasn’t going to help either “I never asked you to stay, Alice. And the reason you stayed was because of Isabella. Don’t try to make it something it’s not.”

Her breath hitched. She straightened up, hardening her voice. “Fine. If that’s how you feel, then I’m leaving. And I’m taking Isabella with me.” of course I expected this because she’s already hinted at it.

“You want to leave? Go ahead. I won’t stop you,” I said flatly. “You heal, you want to live your own life, do it. But Isabella is not going anywhere.”

Alice looked desperate. “Why? Why was I never enough for you? I’ve tried to go above and beyond! To be the best life partner. the best luna and most of all I loved you”

I was tired of the performance. I was tired of her constant blame. It was time to end it, even if it meant saying things we promised never to say again.

“You already knew the truth, Alice,” I said, my voice low and dangerous. “You knew my fated mate was Faith. I was going to build a life with her before you pinned your pregnancy on me.”

She froze. The shock on her face was total. We never mentioned that. Never, especially not for Isabella’s sake.

“Don’t act so high and mighty,” I pushed on. “I have raised Isabella since the day she was born, knowing quite well that she is not biologically my daughter. I have never treated her any less. I have never told anybody the truth either so don’t test me.”

She looked at me, truly betrayed, like I was the one who broke the biggest promise.

“It was supposed to be something we never talked about again” she whispered looking at me like she couldn’t believe what I just did and I can’t believe it either but some things are better said than ignored and she was getting too comfortable in her lie.

“Well, I’m mentioning it now, because I’m tired,” I told her. “I’m tired of you always trying to paint me in a bad light. I am a good father. But that doesn’t make me stupid or weak. If you want to leave, do it. But if you stay, then you shut your mouth and let me take decisions about my life.”

I didn’t wait for her to reply. I just left her standing there, heartbroken or angry—I didn’t care which one anymore.

I went straight to Isabella’s room. She was already up, sitting on the floor playing with blocks.

“Daddy!” she chirped, running towards me.

I picked her up and hugged her tight. “Hi, sweetie.”

I never wanted to be mine when I found out that Alice was pregnant because I thought it was the worst insult to my relationship with Faith but on the day she was born I wanted something to hold on to so bad that I thought I was finally going to have something of my own only to be disappointed.

Wolves don’t need a DNA test to know and I knew she wasn’t mine when I caught her scent.

“Why didn’t you come home last night?” she asked, tilting her head.

“Daddy had some work to do,” I explained, easily lying. “But I’m here now. We are going to have breakfast together, just the two of us.”

Her face lit up. That smile was everything. I put her down and told her I needed a minute to wash up.

I walked into my own room and closed the door, letting out a breath I didn’t know I was holding.

I leaned against the sink, the adrenaline slowly leaving my system, and regret hit me hard. I shouldn’t have mentioned Isabella’s paternity. What if she had overheard me? What if she heard just a small part of that fight? That is the last thing I ever want.

I love Isabella with everything I have. She is mine. I never want to lose her because of a fight with Alice.

My mind shifted to Faith. How was she feeling? I couldn’t reach her, she had blocked me completely out of her mind after what I did. I hated myself for marking her without her consent.

I hate her for leaving me and I don’t know how I will be able to let go of the resentment that I feel. But I also know I can’t lose her again. I won’t survive it this time. I need her back. I just hope I haven’t messed things up with her completely.

## Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 67

Faith’s Pov

I was hungry. It had been a day or so since I'd last eaten. The hunger wasn't just a little rumble anymore; it was a deep, clawing ache, a constant demand from my newly awakened wolf. And it was worse, much worse than normal hunger.

Fear kept me glued to the bed. The pack house kitchen felt miles away.

Six years ago, they'd loved to taunt me, to make me feel small and worthless, like a speck of dust. I was met with sneers and whispers at every turn. It had almost broken me. But I wasn't that girl anymore.

I had found my strength, my self-worth but even then the idea of facing them, of hearing their hurtful words, made my hands tremble.

"No," I whispered to myself, pressing a hand to my aching stomach. "I can't stay here." The growl from deep within me was more than hunger; it was my wolf's desperate plea.

More than that, it was the thought of my son, my little man. If I starve myself and die, who will take care of him? That thought was a jolt of ice water, clearing my head. My son needed me. He was my world, and I would face a hundred taunting pack members for him.

Taking a deep, shaky breath, I pushed myself off the bed. My legs felt heavy, but I forced myself to move. One foot in front of the other. The doorknob felt cold under my hand. I twisted it, pushing the door open a crack, peering out into the silent hallway.

The moment I stepped out, a tall man in the hallway, someone I vaguely recognized from years ago, turned and saw me. My heart leaped into my throat. He normally would have ignored me, or worse, scoffed. But instead, he offered a low bow, his eyes wide with... respect? "Luna," he murmured, a strange reverence in his voice.

I blinked. "Oh. Uh, thank you," I managed, utterly thrown off. This was completely new. Six years ago, no one would have even looked in my direction. Nodding stiffly, I hurried past him, my mind buzzing with confusion.

The journey to the kitchen was even stranger. People I passed in the hallways, men and women, all stopped what they were doing. They bowed their heads, some even saying "Luna" softly as I walked by. My jaw felt tight. What was going on?

Was this some elaborate, cruel joke? Was Chase behind this? My wolf rumbled, confused and on edge.

Finally, I reached, pushing open the kitchen door, I stepped inside.

The large kitchen was bustling with activity. Several women were chopping vegetables, stirring pots, and laughing. But the moment I entered, the laughter died. All heads turned to me. The knives stopped chopping, the spoons stopped stirring. And then, as one, every single woman turned, faced me, and bowed their heads low. Deep, respectful bows.

“Welcome back, Luna,” they chorused, their voices soft and genuinely warm.

My mind reeled. This was beyond anything I could have imagined. My voice came out a little shaky. “Thank you,” I said, trying to sound calm. “I... I was wondering if I could just make something to eat.”

A middle-aged woman, who I remembered as always having a glare for me, stepped forward. Her face was now gentle. “Oh, Luna, no! Please, you don’t have to touch a thing. Tell us what you desire,

and we shall prepare it for you.” The others nodded eagerly.

This was completely out of the ordinary. Way, way out of line. I remembered how they used to watch me like a hawk, making sure I didn’t take an extra piece of bread. Now they were offering to cook anything for me? It had to be a trick. A prank. They were probably waiting for me to relax, to let my guard down, then they’d spring their trap.

“Alright,” I said slowly, my eyes narrowed slightly. “Then... I’ll just sit.” I chose a seat at a large wooden table, keeping my back to the wall, watching them carefully. They seemed genuinely happy, bustling around to get me food. A plate piled high with eggs, bacon, toast, and fruit was placed in front of me. They even brought a glass of fresh juice. They served me in silence, not a single one speaking, just making sure I had everything I needed.

My wolf practically purred as I ate, devouring the food quickly, but still cautiously. No one said a word. No one made a snide remark. It was... unsettling. Once finished, feeling a little more grounded, I stood up. “Thank you,” I said again, perhaps a little less skeptically this time.

“Of course, Luna,” they murmured, bowing again.

I needed air, I needed to figure out what was happening. This whole situation felt unstable. I couldn't stay here forever. My son needed me, and I needed to be safe for him. Gently, I pushed the kitchen door open and stepped out into the hallway, still reeling.

As I walked, lost in thought, I rounded a corner and bumped squarely into someone. "Oh!" I gasped, almost losing my balance.

"Faith!" a familiar voice exclaimed.

I looked up and froze. Kimberly. Chase's mate. The last time she'd spoken to me, six years ago, she had spat venom, accusing me of being the reason her husband was banished, of ruining her life. I braced myself for the verbal assault.

But Kimberly's face was bright, a genuine smile on her lips. "Faith! It's so good to see you! How are you?" She even reached out as if to touch my arm, but thought better of it.

I had had enough. My patience, already thin from the day's strange events, snapped. "What's your deal, Kimberly?" I asked, my voice sharp. "What do you want from me? Six years ago, you couldn't stand the sight of me. You called me every name under the sun, blamed me for everything. And now you want to make small talk?"

Kimberly's smile faltered slightly, but she didn't look angry, only a little sad. "Faith, things have changed. A lot has changed in six years. A lot of us... we realized. We realized you were never the villain. We were wrong."

My wolf snarled softly inside me, a rumble that vibrated through my bones. I stared at her, my eyes blazing. "Is that supposed to make up for it?" My voice rose, cutting through the air. "Is that supposed to erase the years you spent making my life a living hell? Making me question my sanity, wonder if I was truly as worthless as you all made me feel?"

The air around us seemed to thicken. Astor's mark on me, the bond we shared, was more than just a feeling; it gave me power. Even without a ceremony, I was the Luna, and my wolf's command, even in a raised voice, carried weight. Kimberly flinched, her eyes widening, taking a step back.

"We can't bring back the years, Faith," she said, her voice small now, almost a whisper. "We can't change how we treated you. But the least we can do is apologize. I am truly sorry, Faith. We were all blind."

My jaw tightened. An apology. After all this time. “No,” I said, my voice firm, unwavering. “I am not going to accept your apology. But it’s good that you came to your senses.”

## **Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 68**

The noise and his scent was what pulled me away from where I was sitting. It wasn’t the loud, angry sounds of wolves arguing, which I had learned to ignore in my time here.

This was happy noise bright shouts and high-pitched laughter coming from the open grounds behind the pack house. This noise was always there and I could recognize it from anyway as a parent myself but somehow this felt familiar.

I tried to stay where I was. I really did. But the sound felt like a magnet, and I ended up walking toward the field.

When I got close, I hid behind a thick oak tree so nobody would see me. I peeked out.

There was a group of people there, but I only saw two of them.

It was Astor. And next to him was a small girl, maybe five years old, with bright blonde hair bouncing around her sunny face. She was trying to kick a bright red soccer ball, stumbling more than running, but loving every second of it.

Astor was laughing.

I had heard him sound amused, or sarcastic, or even dangerous. But I had never heard him laugh like this. It was a deep, free sound that made his eyes crinkle up at the corners. He looked completely relaxed, like a heavy weight had been lifted off his shoulders.

He looked thrilled and free. He looked like a father.

It was the first time I had met his daughter, although I didn’t actually meet her. I just watched.

They were a perfect pair. They moved together, even when they were far apart. When she fell down on the grass, which she did often, he didn't just tell her to get up. He rushed over so fast, his face full of worry. He helped brush the grass off her tiny knees and kissed her forehead before setting her back on her feet.

She started running again, and she scored a goal against another player. The laugh that burst out of her lit up her entire face. And watching that small, happy moment, Astor's own face lit up too.

The sight hurt my soul. A raw, burning pain started deep in my chest.

I tried to tell myself to stop. Faith, you cannot be jealous of a five-year-old child. But I couldn't help it. What I was jealous of wasn't the girl, it was the feeling. The perfect, simple feeling of a father loving his child openly.

I kept watching. I watched the way they needed each other. She needed his comfort when she fell.

He seemed to need her joy to feel whole.

And then the tears started, quiet and involuntary, sliding down my face before I could stop them.

I had done this to my son.

I had deprived him of this moment. He would never know this feeling. My sweet boy would never know that he had a father who would look at him with that much perfect, unreserved love.

Thank God he had never asked about his father. If he ever did, I would never know what to say.

Because how could I explain that I made a choice that kept him safe, but also kept him permanently missing something this vital?

While I was stuck in this terrible loop of guilt and regret, watching the sun set on the happiest scene I had witnessed in a long time, I felt someone standing right next to me.

I didn't need to turn my head. I knew the sharp scent and the cold presence instantly.

It was Alice.

I wiped my face quickly with the back of my hand and tried to step away. I knew this meant a confrontation, and I was too tired and sad for a fight. I started walking, hoping to get away.

But I wasn't fast enough.

"Look at that," Alice's voice was low and harsh, filled with ice. "Look how happy they are."

I kept moving, trying to ignore her.

She walked alongside me easily. "They were happy before you came back, Faith. Everything was good. That little girl had a home and a mother and a father who weren't fighting all the time."

I stopped and turned to face her. I was done running.

"I didn't come back because I like it here, Alice," I said, keeping my voice flat. "I don't want to be here any more than you want me to be here."

Her lip curled. "Then why are you still here? Leave. Go back to wherever you came from."

That was it. I didn't care anymore about being polite or keeping the peace. I didn't want this conversation. I didn't want her accusation to stick to the terrible guilt I already felt.

"Believe whatever you want," I said, turning my back fully on her. "I am leaving."

I walked fast, heading straight for the back door of the pack house. I needed to be alone. I needed to call someone who could remind me that my life, the one I built away from here, was real.

I wasn't watching where I was going, blinded by the image of Astor and his daughter.

I bumped hard into someone coming around the corner. I almost fell over.

I looked up. It was Kimberly, rubbing her forehead where I had hit her.

"Kimberly, I am so sorry," I mumbled.

She sighed and looked at my face. Her usual friendly expression calmed down into something softer. "Hey. You look like you're about to cry. What happened?"



“Nothing,” I lied quickly. “I just... I need a favor. A very big favor.”

“Okay?” she asked, waiting.

“I need a phone,” I said, putting my hands together like I was praying. “I need to call outside the pack. Can I borrow yours? Just for five minutes?”

Kimberley hesitated for only a second. She reached into her pocket and pulled out her phone. “Just give it back quick. And don’t tell the Alpha I let you use it.”

“Thank you,” I breathed. It felt heavy and unfamiliar in my hand.

I walked to a quiet hallway and quickly typed in the number I knew by heart. It rang twice.

A kind, familiar voice answered the line.

“Hello? Gable residence.”

“Mr. Gable? It’s Faith. Is he okay? Is my son alright?” I whispered into the phone, needing to hear the answer right now.

I felt a presence behind me as soon as those words left my mouth.

“You have a son???”

## **Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 69**

I took a shaky breath and turned around. I knew who was standing there. Even without looking at them, the familiar weight of their judgment pressed down on me.

It was my mother and father. Six years had passed, but they looked exactly the same—tired, and always, always disappointed in me.

Surprisingly it didn’t bother me the way it did back then and seeing them didn’t wake some old feelings or make me feel some type of way.

My mother didn’t waste a second. Her face was set hard, like stone.

I was hoping that maybe she wouldn't insist on asking again but I was wrong.

"Faith," she said, her voice dry and low. Then she asked the question that I knew was coming, the one she had asked Alice. "Do you have a son?"

I tried to keep my face calm, forcing a smile that felt tight and unnatural. I needed to sound polite, to take the high road.

"Well, hello to you too, Mom. And Dad," I said, trying to inject some warmth into the cold air. "It's good to see you. Six years is a very long time, isn't it?"

I know that they overheard me but the fact that they couldn't even be bothered to ask how I am was disappointing to say the least.

My father stepped closer, his jaw tight. He didn't look happy to see me at all.

"Don't start that, Faith," he accused, his voice rough. "You're the one who walked away. You're the one who completely canceled us out of your life. Don't blame us for anything."

The small amount of calm I had built shattered instantly. But before I could argue with him, my mother cut in, her eyes boring into mine.

"We are not here to talk about who called who, or who left who," she said sharply. She lowered her voice slightly, but the intensity didn't lessen. "I asked you a simple question, Faith. Do you have a son?"

I glanced around the busy hallway quickly. I didn't want anyone to hear this conversation, especially not the answer. This secret was not meant for public viewing.

"We need to talk privately," I told them, trying to keep my voice flat. "Come with me."

I guess this conversation was too important for my mother to even argue with me because she followed me without even arguing.

I led them down the hall to the small and empty guest room that I had been using. As soon as we were inside, I closed the door softly and turned the lock.

Before I could even speak, my mother was in my face, ignoring the surroundings completely.

"The truth, Faith. Right now," she demanded. "Do you have a son?"

I looked at her, at the years of worry and hurt and judgment in her eyes. It felt heavy to finally admit it to them, to make it real.

There was no use even trying to pretend like they didn't hear what I said or lying that I didn't have a son because I'm not stupid enough to kid myself into thinking that the truth will not come out sooner or later but the best reason for doing this was to see them squirm with the secret that I've been keeping. because I know them enough to know that they will never tell anybody in order to keep their daughter happy.

"Yes," I said, nodding slowly. "I do."

My mother didn't scream or cry. She did something much colder. She started laughing a sharp, high sound that held zero humor. It was ugly and mocking.

"Oh, Faith," she sneered, shaking her head. "You should be ashamed. Coming back here, showing your face, knowing you cheated on your mate and had a child with someone else."

The words hit me like a physical blow. The fact that she assumed, immediately and completely, that I had failed again, that I had run off and disgraced myself with a stranger, made me dizzy with fury. She didn't even consider any other option.

That was it. That assumption broke the carefully locked box in my mind. The secret I thought I would take to the grave exploded out of me.

"How bold of you, Mom," I spat out, stepping closer to her, my hands shaking. "To assume you know everything, just like always. You want to know who his father is? Because I will tell you."

I paused, letting the silence hang heavy between us.

"My son is Astor's son," I announced, my voice loud and vibrating with anger. "That means your grandson is the future Alpha of this Pack."

For a few seconds, utter silence filled the room. My mother just stared. Her mouth dropped open, and my dad looked completely pale, leaning against the door for support.

The shock didn't last long, though. My mother recovered quickly, her expression twisting into disbelief and anger.

“That’s a lie!” she hissed, her voice low and dangerous. “You couldn’t stand seeing Alice happy, could you? So you came back to ruin things, and now you’re lying to say the child is Astor’s just to cause more trouble.”

I took another step toward her, my protective anger burning hotter than anything I had ever felt before. My voice was tight, but firm.

“Say whatever you want about me,” I warned her. “Call me a failure, call me a disgrace. But you will never talk about my son that way. You will never disrespect him like you always disrespected me.

Not ever again.”

My mother seemed to shrink slightly, but her main goal remained the same.

“Leave this place, Faith. Just leave,” she pleaded, dropping the sharp tone for one of desperate urgency. “Leave Astor and Alice alone. Leave their family alone.”

I smiled, but it was a cold, hard expression. I had come too far for that. I was done running.

“I wish I could, Mom,” I said, leaning in close so she could see the truth in my eyes. “But unfortunately for everyone, Astor already marked me. I’m not going anywhere. Better yet, it’s only a matter of time now before Astor finds out that he has an heir.”

## Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 70

Faith’s Pov

The small room felt tense and uncomfortable, like a quiet before a big storm after the declaration I just made.

Then, the door creaked open.

My heart jumped into my throat. Astor. Just thinking his name sent shivers down my spine. Had he heard? Had he overheard that quiet, desperate thing I’d told my mother earlier? The secret I’d sworn no one would ever know? The secret that was a permanent mark on my future?

I held my breath, staring at the doorway. He stood there, a tall shadow against the dim light from the hallway. He looked... normal. No angry face, no narrowed eyes. Just a slight tilt of his head as he looked at us.

Despite how uncomfortable the situation was I couldn't help the way I reacted just by his mere presence.

"Faith," he said, his voice a low sound that seemed to shake the floor. "I didn't know you had visitors."

My parents flinched, surprised by his voice. Mom especially. She turned even paler, putting her hand to her chest like she was fending off a hit. I could almost see her mind racing, trying to forget what I told her.

"Astor, dear," she managed, her voice a little too high, trying to sound sweet. "What a surprise! We were just... talking."

Astor's eyes glanced at me for a second. It was a quick look, but it held so many feelings I couldn't figure out. Was he amused? Curious? Or something else? I couldn't tell, and not knowing made my heart beat a little faster.

Dad, always the sensible one, stood up and offered his hand. "Astor. Good to see you."

"You too, Alpha Connor," Astor replied, shaking his hand firmly. "I didn't know you were coming."

Mom gave him a shaky smile. "we couldn't stay even for a minute after finding out that our daughter was back." she lied through her teeth.

I just gave a small, innocent smile. It was funny, really. My parents were acting all careful, trying to pretend they knew nothing about the big secret I'd just revealed, while I... I was enjoying it. Every awkward silence, every forced smile, every careful word showed that the secret was real and present between us all.

I enjoyed the fact that they couldn't even endure knowing that I could destroy the perfect life that their daughter had in a second.

"you should have told me and I would have had somebody pick you up from the airport." Astor continued, looking at Mom.

Mom visibly relaxed. "no it's fine. We'd love to see Alice. Is she here?"

Astor's lips curved into a small smile. "She's at home. you can go and see them?"

"Of course!" Mom said quickly, happy to get away from the tense feeling. Dad agreed, clearly relieved too.

I'm clearly not the only one who noticed that he wasn't going along with them because my mother asked if he was coming along. I think her reasoning behind it is probably to keep him away from me so that I don't tell him that he has a son but she doesn't have to worry about that because I've been keeping that secret for 6 years and I have no intention of revealing it.

Astor however didn't seem very keen on answering her question or even being questioned in the first place because he gave her just one look.

Her breath caught and she quickly looked away, her neck turning red. "Oh. Well. Of course."

The door closed, leaving Astor and me in the sudden, quiet room.

I thought he would say something. Ask questions. Demand answers. But he didn't. Instead, he took a slow step towards me. I held my breath again. The air, which had been full of my parents' nervousness, now felt charged with something different. Something strong and exciting.

He reached out and gently lifted my chin. His eyes were intense. Then, he did something that made my stomach flutter. He lowered his head and, with a smooth, almost animal-like movement, he breathed in along the side of my neck.

I closed my eyes. A wave of feelings came over me, a mix of fear and excitement. if I thought His Touch woke up every feeling in me before he marked me this was 10 times worse.

I was achy and wet.

"I am so angry," he whispered, his voice low and rough against my skin. "So incredibly angry."

I couldn't speak. My body felt heavy, but also very alive. Every part of me tingled with him so close.

"But," he continued, pulling back a little. His dark eyes met mine, deep and unreadable. "I can't help myself. I want to see you. I want to feel you. I want to be with you."

And the scary, exciting truth was, I felt it too. The pull was too strong. The longing in his eyes was the same ache in my own heart. He had hurt me, yes, but right then, I wanted him to fix me, even if his touch was what broke me in the first place.

The mate bond just makes things complicated because I hate him as much as I love him.

I don't want to be here but I know that I can't live without him either.

"I missed you," he whispered, his words like a soft touch. "Why did you have to break my heart, Faith?"

A choked sob came out of me. "I... didn't want to."

The air was thick with feelings we couldn't say, with our complicated past and the uncertain future. He leaned closer, his breath warm on my cheek, his eyes searching mine.

And just as I thought things were about to get real, a small, clear voice called out from the hallway.

"Daddy?"