

Chapter 7

Astor's Pov

I came back to strange circumstances. Faith was sick while I was gone and she left. She didn't tell anyone where she was going and slapped my Gamma before going, and was apparently rude.

It was a picture that didn't t her at all, and the worst part is that she didn't even think to contact me in order to tell me all of this.

I gave her the benet of the doubt until the days started going by and the house started feeling empty and cold. Her scent is usually so comforting, but it was gone.

The small vase of fresh owers on the hall table looked just as gloomy. Faith always changed them every other day, making sure they were bright and fresh.

I was starting to get some doubts about her returning because she wasn't returning my calls, and everything around me was falling apart.

As the Alpha, I always thought I had everything under control. I was strong. I was capable. But in the last 5 days things had already started to go wrong.

One of the omegas came to me complaining that his food portion was wrong.

Old Mrs. Gable was upset because her roof wasn't xed yet, and it was supposed to be done last week.

And I'd just heard two warrior wolves arguing loudly about patrol routes outside my window, almost coming to blows.

She was the one who saw the small problems and xed them quickly before they grew into big, messy ones that needed my Alpha attention.

I thought I ran the Pack. But she was the one who maintained it. She was the one who kept it together. She was indispensable. And she was gone.

The Pack that was already showing signs of weakness without its Luna, and I was having a hard time functioning as well because she's been a constant feature in my life and without her, I felt incomplete.

I was patient because I was trying to give her as much space as possible, because just like me, she was forced into this relationship, and she has a right to take a few days off, but as days went by, I grew worried.

It got worse when the alpha succession day arrived, and she was still a no-show.

Just yesterday, I'd sent her the dumbest message of my life. A threat. A lie.

I told her that if she didn't rush back, she wouldn't be the Luna anymore. I thought it would make her angry, or even a little scared. Make her come running straight to me. But what did she do? Absolutely nothing. Pure silence. No angry call, no message back, nothing at all. And that quiet was slowly eating me alive.

I'd even said something about someone else, just to needle her, to make her jealous. Still nothing.

What did she want from me? Why was she doing this?

I didn't understand her, not one bit.

I knew she was mad about what happened at the party last week. But that wasn't a big enough reason for her to leave. Not now, knowing how important it was for her to be here today.

My phone buzzed, pulling me from my thoughts. It was Alpha Connor, Faith's father. His voice sounded worried.

"Hello, Astor," he said.

"Alpha Connor," I replied, trying to sound calm. "Is everything alright? I hope you're on your way here."

I said that because I hope they'll be arriving any minute now.

There was a long, heavy quiet on the other end. "Astor, I'm so sorry about Faith. She arrived here a few days ago, and we've been trying to gure things out."

He said she felt too much pressure, that being the Luna, especially with the Alpha crowning coming, was just too much for her. She felt overwhelmed.

I know that can't be true, and even if it was, it wasn't a problem for her to talk to me and to tell me all of this, because I happily would have supported her if she wanted to go and visit her parents, because she's entitled to that.

I have a problem with her leaving without telling me and also ignoring my calls, and I have a bone to pick with her parents as well. Because I've been expecting this call for a few days now. Because I've been confused and I still am. I know our relationship isn't their business, and they don't owe me anything. But for the sake of our alliance, I thought they would have advised her to come back in order to prepare for the ceremony. Instead, they let her stay back knowing how important it was for her to be here for the last couple of days.

"We can talk about all of that when you guys get here. I'm guessing you guys are already on the way?" I asked.

"We are going to be there before the ceremony starts." He said, and I hung up. I have a lot to say, but he's not the person that I want to confront, so I'll keep it in until she gets here.

I made my way downstairs when I felt my parents' presence. I've only seen them a handful of times in the last couple of months because of their traveling. Being the only child, I am very close to my parents. My dad was a very hard man, because he had to be as an Alpha, but my mom happens to be the sweetest soul in the world.

My relationship with my father suffered a bit because he forced Faith down my throat, and I have resented him a lot for the last 3 years. But for some reason, I'm not angry at him anymore. He may have done this not knowing what kind of person she was, but she's turning out to be exactly what this Pack needs.

My mom smothered me into a big hug, and god bless her soul, because she doesn't care how big I get and how scary I turn out and she's me like her little boy.

My dad and I exchanged a nod at each other. And obviously, they looked around me and noticed that I was standing Alone.

"Where is Faith?" My mom asked, but before I could come up with some kind of excuse, she answered again. "She must be making sure that everything is ready for tonight."

"I know I say it quite a lot, but I'm proud of you. You're going to be the best Alpha this pack has ever seen, and the best part is that you have a capable and dedicated woman by your side." My dad said, and maybe a year back, I would have been offended that he mentioned her, but I couldn't help but grin from ear to ear.

I sat down with my parents for a little bit to get them up to speed with everything that has been happening around the Pack, and I had to lie to them that Faith went to her parents' pack and I knew.

I made it sound like it wasn't a big deal, and luckily they didn't press for more details until I went to my room to get ready.

The Alpha ceremony was in an hour. Faith would be here. She simply had to be.

I kept checking my phone, expecting a message from Faith saying she was here, or almost here. But it stayed dark. Still, I pushed the worry down. She was just making an entrance, and her father reassured me that they would be here.

Soon, I was standing in the packed Great Hall of the Eternal Pack. Everyone was there. My pack members, the wise old elders, Alphas from other packs who had come to witness this moment. The air buzzed with excitement and anticipation. They were here for me, for us.

The Elder Alpha, a kind, wise old wolf named Lyra, stood at the front. She began the old words, the ancient chant of our pack. The moment felt huge. This was my destiny, our destiny together. Then came the part where I was to be ocially crowned Alpha.

I stood tall with pride.

I was born for this.

And then, it was time for Faith.

Elder Lyra paused, her eyes scanning the crowd. The space beside me, where Faith should have been standing ready, was empty.

My heart hammered against my ribs. Any moment now, I told myself. She's just running late. She'll walk through that door, beautiful as ever.

I looked towards the main entrance, a smile ready on my face, waiting for her. The seconds stretched into an eternity. People shifted in their seats. Heads turned, searching.

I cannot explain the relief that I felt when I saw her parents enter, only to look into their eyes.

I didn't need to be told what was going on because I could see it.

She wasn't there.