

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 71

How resilient is a heart, really? How much can it endure before it simply stops? Because at that moment, more than anything, I wished it would.

Knowing he had a child was one thing. Seeing it from a distance was a dull ache was another. But experiencing it, witnessing it unfold right before my eyes, was a different kind of devastation. It was like a physical blow, stealing the air from my lungs.

I understood, in that instant, why he looked at her as if she held his entire universe. she looked so fragile and precious and I would guard her with my life too. They say fathers are your first love, your first hero. And watching him, that's exactly what he was to her.

Her eyes, wide and trusting, found mine when he lifted her into his arms. She looked at me with an expectation I couldn't fulfill.

I tried to paint a smile on my face, to reflect her innocent joy, but it was a flimsy mask. It couldn't hold for long. And then, it shattered. Unwanted tears began to fall, blurring my vision.

"Are you okay," Astor asked, his voice laced with concern. I usually find his concern concerning because sometimes his heart and sometimes he's cold but this time I understood why. I was a fortress, always. Vulnerability was a language I never spoke, and certainly never showed, not even to him but this time I let it slip.

I forced the cracked smile back onto my lips, wiping away the hot tears with the back of my hand. My gaze fell on the little girl. She was a mirror, a startling, beautiful reflection of Alice. It was a comfort, in a strange way; she needn't resemble her father. She carried something more profound, something of his very soul, his heart.

"And who is this," I managed to ask, my voice rough, hoping to steer the conversation away from my breakdown, "this little girl?" Kids, though, they have a way of cutting through the pretense.

"Why are you crying?" she piped up, her voice clear and innocent, before Astor could answer.

I swallowed, trying to regain some semblance of composure. "Because," I said, a weak attempt at a lie, "I've never seen anyone as beautiful as you. I just... can't help but cry." I hoped my words, and the silent explanation behind them, would be enough.

"But that shouldn't make anybody cry," she stated, her small voice melting even the hardened edges of my own pain. But inside, my wolf was a hurricane of agony, of grief. I focused on her, on the need to hold myself together, for both of us.

“She’s crying because she’s meeting her niece for the first time,” Astor intervened, his voice a gentle shield, covering my inability to find the right words. I was too overwhelmed to construct anything sustainable.

“Niece?” the little girl repeated, her eyes widening with wonder.

“Yes,” Astor confirmed. “This is your Aunt Faith. Your mother’s sister.” He said it, and I didn’t understand why. I knew, with absolute certainty, that Alice wouldn’t want to be connected to me. But the child... she was pure joy.

“I didn’t know I had an auntie,” she exclaimed, her face alight.

“I couldn’t keep in touch with your mother because I was so far away,” I explained, forcing a warmth into my tone. “But I’m back now. It’s a pleasure to meet you, young lady.” I lied.

After our short, awkward encounter, the little girl, Isabella, insisted. Since her grandparents were already there, she pleaded with her father that I join them for dinner. I tried to make excuses, but she was relentless. Eventually, I agreed.

how am I supposed to look in that house where I spent 3 years of my life hoping I would stay forever knowing that another woman has made it home.

I thought I couldn’t do it but I tend to prove myself wrong on a lot of things that have to do with my love life and my heart because I went there and I sat down on that table without looking around hoping to escape the memories

From the moment we arrived, I could feel the icy glare from my parents. Their disappointment was palpable. It was clear they didn’t want me there. To spite me, Alice asked, loud enough for everyone to hear, “Where have you been for the last six years?”

The question hung in the air, a heavy accusation. I’d wanted to talk to Astor alone, to explain things to him, not to this audience. I couldn’t lie, not if he could sense my racing heartbeat, the tremor in my soul. But I wasn’t ready to confess everything. “I was in New York,” I said, the words feeling hollow even as they left my lips.

Alice wasn’t satisfied. “And what have you been doing there? Do you have a boyfriend?” Her words were a sharp jab, and we all looked at Astor when he released a low rumbling growl.

“Let’s just concentrate on our food,” Astor said, his voice firm, cutting through the tension.

I don’t know what to make of him because I thought he and I were finally going to have the conversation that we needed to have before Isabella interrupted us and he is now back at pretending like I don’t need even exist.

The worst part is that despite the fact that I’ve blocked him out of my mind I can feel like something is up with him and I just can’t put my finger on it.

I tried to let it go and we started eating. But I couldn't escape the image of them, so attentive to their daughter throughout. They looked like a perfect family, a picture of happiness. It was a vision that made my stomach churn. I felt like an alien, an intruder.

I couldn't stand it any longer. "I'm full," I said, pushing my plate away. It was time to leave this painful charade. Time to escape the stark reality of what I had lost, and what Alice had.

I don't care what happens because tomorrow I will leave this place.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 72

The morning came with the same dread it always did. My mind was already racing. Today, I told myself, it has to be today. I have to find a way to leave

I don't even understand how because my wolf can't even stand hearing me talk about leaving Astor.

Every day here was worse than the last, a slow tightening of the rope around my chest. Astor seemed to enjoy watching me struggle, like a cat playing with a mouse it knew couldn't run far.

I was sitting up, pulling the sheet tight around me, when the door burst open. I flinched, expecting one of Astor's guards, or maybe Astor himself, here to start the day's torture.

But it wasn't a guard.

It was a small, fast blur of energy.

"Mommy!"

The single word hit me like a physical blow, knocking the air right out of my lungs.

Marco.

He launched himself across the room, his little body wrapping around me, his arms tight around my neck. The smell of him was so real, so solid, that I forgot everything. I just held him, clutching him tightly, feeling the tears clog my throat.

"Marco, baby, what are you doing here? How...?"

He pulled back just enough to look at me, his eyes wide and worried. “I missed you so much, Mommy! Why did you go away?”

I kissed his forehead, trying to breathe past the sudden, overwhelming joy. For a moment, nothing else mattered. I had my son.

Then, my eyes lifted, moving past Marco’s bright head, and I saw them standing just inside the doorway.

Mr. and Mrs. Gable.

My heart didn’t just sink; it dropped straight into my feet. My arms loosened around Marco in absolute shock.

“Mr. Gable? Mrs. Gable?” I stammered.

Mrs. Gable, sweet and kind as always, rushed forward, looking nervous and tired. “Oh, Faith, thank goodness. We were so worried about you.”

I awkwardly reached out and hugged them both, my mind screaming. This was wrong. This was dangerous. They are human. They shouldn’t be here. This is deep inside the pack grounds. It is unprecedented. It is completely unacceptable unless you are given special clearance.

I pulled back from their embrace, pinching the skin on my arm hard enough to hurt. Yes, I was awake. Marco was real. Mr. and Mrs. Gable were real.

“How did you get here?” I whispered, looking from them to Marco, then back to them. “Who brought you? Nobody knows about you, nobody was supposed to know about Marco!” The panic was a sharp, bitter taste in my mouth. Astor couldn’t know about my history with the Gables. He especially couldn’t know about Marco.

Before I could start yelling about the danger they were in, the silence was broken by a new sound. The slow, confident footsteps of someone who owned the place.

Astor walked in.

He stood by the doorframe, tall and relaxed, looking at the perfect picture of reunion. A taunt played on his lips.

“Faith, my love,” he said, his voice smooth and fake. “I thought you’d be happy.”

I stared at him, my mouth completely dry. “You... what?”

“I called them,” he explained, as if ordering breakfast. “They seemed so distraught about your health that I thought it best to assure them you were safe and invited them to visit.”

Shock turned instantly into heartbreak. My knees felt weak. I looked at Astor, trying to send a thousand silent messages with my eyes: Why? Please, don't do this. Don't take him. I'm sorry.

Astor didn't back down. He gave me a cold, taunting look that promised there was hell coming, and there was no forgiving me.

He pushed off the doorframe and walked closer, moving with that effortless alpha grace until he was kneeling right in front of Marco and me. Marco, totally unaware of the truth in the room, looked up at this man with bright curiosity.

"And who is this handsome young man?" Astor asked warmly, reaching out a finger to gently tap Marco's nose.

"I'm Marco," my son announced proudly, puffing out his chest a little. "And you must be Astor." I don't even know who told him his name but I think I was going through a few minutes of shock because everything was happening and I couldn't completely register it in my mind.

"That I am, Marco," Astor said. He tilted his head, studying Marco's face carefully.

Marco studied him back, then smiled. "You know, we kind of look alike."

The air in the room froze.

Astor's easy smile vanished, replaced by a deep, dark glare directed straight at me. It was a silent dagger, showing me he knew everything and that I had failed to hide the truth.

he has every right to be angry but I also can understand how everything happened. I thought I could hide the secret forever and somehow it's come back to bite me.

I could feel the tears starting, stinging the backs of my eyes, but I swallowed hard. I couldn't cry. I had to be strong. I had to look like everything was normal for Marco.

"We were so worried, Faith," Mr. Gable explained softly, stepping forward. "After you called us using that strange number, the line kept cutting out. We couldn't get back in touch. Then Astor called us. He said that you were safe and that we could come see you to make sure."

I forced the most convincing smile I could manage. It felt stiff, like a mask of plaster.

"I'm okay now," I lied smoothly. I squeezed Mr. Gable's hand, feeling the bone-deep terror of trying to protect these fragile humans in the middle of a wolf pack. "Coming here was a really good idea. Thank you for making the long trip."

I looked at Marco, who was still examining Astor with innocent interest. "Marco, sweetie, why don't you go with Mr. and Mrs. Gable? Get some juice or something in the big kitchen. I just need to have a quick talk with Astor."

I waited until they had all walked out of the room. Marco still chatting happily about his journey, the Gables looking confused but obeying before I turned back to face the man who had just found out he was a father.

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My legs felt like jelly, and I sank onto the edge of the bed, the mattress giving slightly under my weight. My head was pounding, a drumbeat of disbelief and pain. My chest felt tight, like a fist was squeezing my heart.

Every time I think she can break me anymore than she already has she does something better and I don't know how I'm supposed to get through this.

"Why, Faith?" I managed to whisper, my voice rough and broken. It was barely a sound, but it was loaded with everything I felt. "Why did you do this to us? To me? How?"

My mind was a mess. For years I've had these strange feelings. Like little movie clips playing in my head. Of us. That particular night when I was drunk, when she left.

Together, touching, having s*x and I always thought they were just dreams, made up by my lonely mind. Happy endings I wished for. Never, not once, did I think they were real. Never did I think they were actual memories, hidden away, waiting for me to find them.

She moved but I didn't look up. I just stared at my hands, clenched into fists on my lap. Then I felt her presence close, so close I could almost feel her breath. She knelt on the floor in front of me, her head bowed.

"Astor," she began, her voice trembling. "No apology, no explanation can ever change what I did. I know that. But please... I am begging for your forgiveness."

A single tear escaped my eye, then another, hot and stinging paths down my face. My breath hitched. An Alpha crying. It felt wrong, like breaking some ancient rule. But I couldn't stop it. The dam had broken, and all the pain, all the confusion, all the hurt poured out.

My mind replayed the last few hours. The slow, painful puzzle pieces are falling into place. I remember overhearing her parents talking. Something about a son. I froze. My wolf inside me had stirred, a strange mix of fear and familiarity. I tried to push it away, to tell myself it was a misunderstanding, a cruel twist of words. My Faith wouldn't do something like that.

Not to me.

Then Kimberly called. Her voice was hushed, careful. "Astor," she'd said. "There's a couple... they've been calling. They want to talk to Faith. About her son."

About her son.

The world had tilted on its axis then. My stomach had dropped, and a cold dread had spread through me, making my blood turn to ice. It wasn't a misunderstanding. It was real.

I don't remember much of the conversation that I had with them except the fact that they told me that she was only here because she was sick and she needed to be here to get better.

I remember asking them to come here and I made sure that they got the best flights but they were so concerned about her that they didn't even care that I didn't give them time to prepare.

I looked at her now, kneeling at my feet, my eyes bloodshot and full of tears, but also full of a burning disbelief. "You kept him from me," I choked out, the words raw, tearing at my throat. "You kept my son from me!"

The tears stopped. Replaced by a cold, hard rage that surged through every fibre of my being. I stood up, abruptly, the bed springs groaning under my sudden movement. I pointed a finger down at her, shaking with fury.

"You are an awful being!" I roared, my voice now a savage growl that echoed off the walls. "You don't deserve my love! I have done nothing but love you! It was always you! But it was never enough, was it?" My voice cracked with the sheer force of my anger. "It wasn't enough for you to stay. It wasn't enough for you to choose me. And it certainly wasn't enough for you to tell me that we were going to have a son!"

Inside me, my wolf howled, a sound of pure agony mixed with a primal rage. I felt Faith's wolf, a faint echo, breaking too. A wave of sorrow, of deep, mournful pain.

But I didn't feel sorry for her. Not a single bit. My own wolf snarled, rejecting her suffering. She deserved this.

Faith finally looked up, her eyes watery, her face pale. "I was tired, Astor," she whispered, her voice barely audible. "I was so tired. I needed to go away. Very, very far from you. And I... I didn't know I was pregnant. Not until a couple of weeks later." She took a shaky breath. "And when I did, I couldn't tell you. Because... because I finally had my own person in the whole wide world who loved me unconditionally. Without any expectations."

Her words hit me like a physical blow. Unconditional love? Without expectations? What did she think my love was? I scoffed, a bitter, hollow sound.

"And what about me?" I demanded, my voice icy now, stripped of all emotion but betrayal. "Didn't I deserve that? Didn't I deserve to be loved by my son? To love my son? You took that away from me, Faith! You stole years from us! Years of first steps, first words, first birthdays! You took my chance to be a father!"

It felt like I swallowed a hot potato because my throat was burning as much as my heart was.

That little boy looks like me. he is exactly how I imagined my child would look like and I missed everything about his life.

He doesn't know me. My son doesn't know that I'm his father and I have done nothing to deserve this.

Maybe I wasn't a good mate or a good fiancée but I am a good father and I deserved that.

She flinched, her shoulders slumping further. "I know," she whispered, tears streaming down her face now. "I know I did. But... what happens next?"

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Faith's Pov

The air in the room felt thick, heavy with unspoken words and the ghosts of a past I desperately wished I could outrun. Astor stood before me, his gaze as sharp as ever, boring into me as if he could see straight through the carefully constructed wall I'd built around my heart.

“I want you gone, Faith,” he said, his voice low and rough, like gravel. “More than anything, I want you out of my life.”

The words landed like icy daggers, each one slicing deeper than the last. My breath hitched, a silent gasp caught in my throat. Gone. He wanted me gone.

But then came the cruelest twist of fate.

“That isn’t going to happen,” he continued, his eyes, those dark, familiar pools, flickered with something I couldn’t quite decipher. “Because... you’re the mother of my child.”

He paused, a beat of agonizing silence stretched between us. “And I marked you,” he added, the confession a stark, undeniable truth that bound us together in a way I loathed and if I were truly honest, secretly yearned for. “But that doesn’t mean we’ll ever be anything again.

Not ever.”

I think he has quite the nerve because he is the one who bound us together I didn’t ask for it but of course that is one of the things that he will blame me for because everything that goes wrong in his life is my fault.

My heart is used to this but it doesn’t stop every time. It splintered into a million tiny pieces, a mosaic of pain that threatened to consume me. The raw agony was almost unbearable, a physical ache that spread through my chest. Tears, hot and stinging, pricked at my eyes, but I blinked them back fiercely. I wouldn’t give him the satisfaction of seeing me break.

My wolf was feeling his rejection so the pain that I was feeling was ten times as much and it was unbearable.

I forced a smile, a brittle, painted-on thing that felt as hollow as I was. “That’s exactly why I stayed away all these years, Astor,” I said, my voice surprisingly steady, though it trembled on the inside. “To give you the peace you deserved. The peace you clearly still crave.”

He scoffed, a bitter sound that mirrored the turmoil in my own soul but I still went on. “And you think you can still stand there and ask why I did what I did?” I said but he challenged, his tone hardening. “Stop acting like you’re the victim, Faith.”

The accusation stung, but it also ignited a fire within me. “If I wanted to be the victim, Astor,” I shot back, my voice rising with a newfound strength, “I wouldn’t have looked you in the eye and told you I don’t have excuses. I know what I did was wrong. But I had reasons. And deep down, I know you know that. You know I made the right decision.”

I think it’s pointless for us to continuously play this game of blaming me because he is equally to blame for me leaving here. he doesn’t get to stand there and pretend like he wasn’t the driving Force for the decision that I took.

I took a shaky breath, trying to regain some semblance of control. “But all that is done,” I stated, my gaze unwavering. “What are you intending to do now?” I think in all of this we’re just not getting anywhere so I need to know what he intends to do.

He didn’t hesitate. “I’m going to stay with my son, obviously.”

A small, almost imperceptible flicker of hope ignited within me, quickly extinguished by the next words that tumbled out. “It’s not going to be that easy, Astor,” I warned, my voice firming. “I’m not going to confuse our son. Some days he wants one thing, some days he wants another. Until you make up your mind, until you decide what you really want, you need to stay away from him.” I really didn’t mean to be rude or mean but this is not about keeping his son away from him but this is about him being able to keep his commitment towards his son.

He bristled, his jaw tightening. “He’s our son, Faith.”

“And he’s mine,” I agreed, but my tone was unyielding. “And when it comes to him, I don’t negotiate and I don’t accept nonsense.”

He looked at me with a flicker of his old arrogance returning. “So, what do you want me to do? Just leave my daughter?”

The mention of his daughter, the innocent child caught in this mess, sent a pang of guilt through me. A part of me, the old me, the one who desperately wanted to be loved and accepted, felt a genuine sorrow for that little girl. But that part of me was buried deep, suffocated by years of hurt.

“A part of me feels sorry for her,” I admitted, my voice softer now, laced with a weary resignation. “But I’m not going to place myself in a position where I’m a pawn in your game. I’m not going to stand by while you break my son’s heart the way you broke mine. The constant back and forth, the uncertainty... he doesn’t deserve that.”

I don’t want my son to leave the way I did in those three years while I was here and I know that he deserves better because he has the mother like me who will make sure that he does.

I took a deep breath, the words feeling heavy on my tongue. “If you choose your family with Alice, Astor, then that’s exactly what you have to do. And I will reject you. Even though rejecting someone when you’re marked... it hurts. It’s dangerous. The chances of survival are slim.” I closed my eyes for a brief moment, the familiar ache resurfacing, but I pushed it down.

“I will fight with every born in my body to make sure that I survive for my little boy so you’re going to have to take a decision.

I’m not saying that it will be an easy decision and I’m not even saying that you should leave your daughter but I want to know what your priorities.

I want to know if you'll show up for my son the way you show up for your daughter. so please make that decision because if you don't then I will make that decision for you."

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I pushed through the kitchen door. And then I saw him.

He was sitting on a tall stool near a counter where three women were braiding dough. His small legs were swinging, and he was laughing at something one of the women had said.

"Marco!"

He turned his head so fast his dark curls bounced. His eyes widened, and he launched himself off that stool before I could even take another step.

"Mommy!"

I bent down just in time, catching his small body and pulling him into a hug. I didn't care. I buried my face in his neck, breathing in the familiar smell of him my baby, my whole world.

He was safe. He was here.

"I missed you, Mommy! The lady gave me cookies!" he mumbled into my sweater.

I tightened my embrace. "Oh, sweetie. I missed you more. So much more." I pulled back just enough to look at his face and kissed his forehead.

When I finally stood up every single woman was staring. They were looking at me with open with curiosity. I could see the questions jumping in their eyes.

A wave of dread washed over me. I was exhausted. If I had to explain myself one more time today, I would simply fall apart.

Luckily, they were respectful.

"Please could you excuse me ladies," I said, trying to keep the strain out of my voice. "Could you excuse us? I just need a few minutes with my family."

They started moving, quietly and quickly, flowing out of the swinging doors and leaving the huge kitchen suddenly empty.

Almost empty.

On the far side of the room, near a small table meant for peeling vegetables, sat Mr. and Mrs. Gable.

They looked like they had been hit by a truck driven by a ghost.

They were sitting side-by-side, holding hands, staring blankly at the wall. Their posture was rigid, their faces pale. They were completely overwhelmed.

I walked towards them, Marco clutching my hand.

“Ma and Pa,” I said softly, crouching down to their level. “Are you two okay? You look incredibly shocked.”

Mrs Gable squeezed her husband’s hand. Her voice was a shaky whisper. “Faith, dear. We are not okay. We have just got the biggest shock of our entire lives.”

Mr. Gable nodded gravely. “It’s like being trapped inside a very weird, very badly written movie, Faith. It doesn’t make sense.”

I waited. I knew what they were going to say, but I needed to hear it from them.

Mrs. Gable leaned in, her eyes wide with fear and wonder. “We’ve seen things, Faith. Things that don’t happen outside of books. We’ve seen people’s eyes change color, just flicking from brown to gold like a light switch. We saw two gigantic men arguing, but their mouths weren’t moving! They were talking inside their heads, like they were telephoning each other without a phone!”

“And the wolves, Faith,” Mr. Gable added, shuddering. “Big, enormous wolves walking around the property like they own the place. And then... then there were the naked people.” He coughed, looking scandalized. “Walking around like they forgot their clothes in the woods.

Right out in the open!”

I sighed. I rubbed my temples, wishing I could lie, but knowing I couldn’t.

“I know it’s crazy,” I told them simply. “And I know you have about a million questions in your heads. But in this place, the only thing you can do is watch and do not ask any questions about what you see.”

Marco, who had been listening with looked up at me, his face glowing.

“I love the wolves, Mommy!” he chirped. “They are like big, fluffy dogs! They were sniffing the bushes!”

A soft smile touched my lips. I kissed the top of his head again. “Of course, you love the wolves, sweet boy. It was quite obvious you were going to love them.”

I didn’t explain why. Not yet.

I turned back to the Gables, my expression turning serious.

“I appreciate you both,” I said, my voice warming with real gratitude. “I appreciate that you dropped everything and came all this way for me. I really do.”

I leaned in closer, dropping my voice to a firm whisper. “But listen to me now. Next time. If a stranger calls you, demanding you get on an airplane, I don’t want you to answer the call. I don’t want you to even think about leaving the house. Promise me that.”

Mr. Gable looked offended. “Faith, dear, please. We are adults. We can take care of ourselves.

”

“You think so?” I challenged gently. “Do you think you are safe answering the phone to people who might want to use you to get to me? No. You are my greatest weakness, and I can’t afford to lose you.”

I stood up and pulled them both out of their chairs, wrapping my arms around both of them in a tight embrace. They were the parents I never had. They were stability, warmth, and quiet love.

“Listen to me,” I whispered into the shoulder of Mrs. Gable’s sweater. “I mean this. You aren’t just my good friends anymore. You are my parents now. And if something happened to either of you because of me, I wouldn’t survive it.”

When I pulled back, their eyes were misty with tears.

“Now, we need to talk about that trip,” I said, changing the subject sharply. “The one you’ve been planning for years. The one where you travel the world, seeing everything you ever wanted?”

“Oh, we can’t, dear,” Mrs. Gable said immediately, wiping her cheek. “We can’t go now. Who will take care of Marco? We were meant to stay with him while you sorted this out.”

“That’s exactly why you need to go,” I insisted, placing my hands firmly on their shoulders.” Look around you. This entire situation is complicated. Very complicated. I need time to fix this mess, and I need to do it without worrying about your safety.”

I crouched down again, looking them both in the eye. “It would be better, safer, if you are very, very far from this place. I know you two. You can’t keep still when you’re alone at home. I would be so happy, knowing that you are out there together, enjoying life and having adventures.”

They looked hesitant. “But, Faith, we used up most of our savings to get you here” Pa confessed nervously. “That trip is just a dream right now.”

I smiled—a genuine, easy smile that felt good on my face.

“Don’t you worry about money for one minute,” I said, squeezing their hands one last time. “I knew you needed this trip, too. you guys had my back when I had nobody so he decided to do something special for you and It’s sitting in my account. Enough money for two years of world travel, first class, wherever you want to go. Don’t worry about anything. Just worry about what continent you want to visit first.”

I saw the fight leave their eyes. They looked at each other with hope and shock.

Go,” I urged. “Please. Go and be safe for me. I’ll call you every day, I promise. But you need distance. I’m going to fix everything here and we are going to be together very soon.”

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Astor’s Pov

It’s crazy how easy it is to blame somebody else for your mistakes and my conversation with Faith proved that.

There is truly a thin line between Love and Hate. what I have been feeling for her is not hate but anger.

Anger for abandoning me, anger for leaving me and it’s driving me to a point where I can’t even see past my own mistakes.

I saw how much she was suffering here. she was withering in front of my eyes and there was nothing I could do because I wanted her to be here with me.

I disregarded her mental state and I put my own feelings about hers.

“Alpha, you need to come here. Now. It’s... it’s bad.”

My head snapped up, the personal worries evaporating in an instant, replaced by a cold alertness. My Beta's distress on the mindlink demanded my full attention. Something was seriously wrong.

"On my way," I thought back, my voice rough even in my own head. I was out of my chair before the thought even finished. My wolf stirred, a primal instinct kicking into high gear, sensing danger.

I have honestly been neglecting the Pack over the last couple of days but this seems very urgent.

George called me to the perimeter on the wilder edge of our territory. The walk there was usually filled with the familiar sounds of our pack, the distant laughter of pups, the low rumble of conversation, the whirl of activity.

Today, though, as I approached the area the air grew heavy. A strange, metallic scent began to prickle my nostrils, growing stronger with every step. It was the smell of death, but not the clean scent of a hunt gone wrong. This was wrong. Foul.

As I rounded the trees, the sight that greeted me stopped me dead in my tracks. A wave of nausea hit me, and a curse ripped from my throat, raw and guttural.

There, spread out unnaturally along the edge of our forest, was a pile of bodies. Not one or two, but a horrifying collection of them. They were still, ghastly figures, pale and lifeless. The smell was overwhelming now, thick and sickening. It was clear these didn't die here. They hadn't fought. They had been dumped. Discarded. gathered like garbage and left here.

My wolf snarled, a deep, dangerous sound in my chest. Anger, hot and blinding, surged through me. Who dared to do this? Who would bring such horror to the doorstep of my pack?

George, my Head Warrior, stood by the gruesome display, his usual stoic face a mask of grim disbelief. this is a man who has seen cruelty face-to-face so if this managed to shock him like this then it is bigger than we can imagine.

Liam, my Beta, was beside him, his shoulders hunched, his gaze fixed on the bodies. They looked up as I approached, their eyes meeting mine with a shared dread.

"What is this?" I demanded, my voice dangerously low. "What happened here?"

George gestured numbly with a gloved hand. "The Patrol team found them when they were patrolling the northern perimeter."

"When were they placed?" I asked, my gaze sweeping over to the bodies even though I didn't want to look there anymore. "How long have they been here?"

Both George and Liam shook their heads, a shared uncertainty passing between them. "We don't know, Alpha," Liam said, his voice strained. "There was no sign of a struggle. No tracks. It's like they just... appeared."

“Do we know who they are?” I pressed, my heart starting to pound a heavy rhythm against my ribs.

George met my gaze, his expression troubled. “No, Alpha. That’s the strangest part. No one has been reported missing from our pack. Not a single soul.”

A chilling realization washed over me. If they weren’t ours, then this was an act of aggression directed at us, but not targeting only our own. It was a declaration of war, carried out with a twisted, symbolic cruelty.

“Make inquiries,” I ordered, my voice firm, cutting through the rising panic. “Reach out to the other packs. All of them. See if anyone is missing anyone. Anyone at all.”

George and Liam nodded but as they prepared to leave, Liam hesitated.

“Alpha,” he said, holding out a hand. “While we were checking the perimeter near, we found this.”

He handed me a crumpled piece of parchment. My fingers trembled slightly as I unfolded it.

“You took something very special from me but I will take everything from me.”

My blood ran cold. Something special? What did I take. I’ve never done anything to anybody unless they deserved it or unless they were a threat to my pack.

I don’t think I can even count the number of enemies I have by hand but this doesn’t seem like somebody who only has an amenity with me but other pack as well.

I don’t like being challenged and on any other day I would be seething and planning my revenge but in this particular case this is not about me alone because this person is definitely going to be coming after my family and my daughter means a lot to me.

And the little boy that I’ve only known for less than a day is somebody I would die for.

I didn’t even need to be told by anybody that he is mine because even before I met him. I felt it. I felt it in my heart and when I finally saw him it was like getting a piece of my heart and soul.

I guess sometimes you need to be pushed into a corner in order to make the right decision and when Faith asked me what I wanted to do. I genuinely didn’t have an answer for her because one is a child that I raised and gave all the love that I have and the other is my blood, my little junior who doesn’t even know that he has a father who would do anything for him.

In order to fully invest in protecting my family and pack, I have to make a decision and unfortunately I will lose either way because I can never make everybody happy.

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 77

Faith's Pov...

A strange shiver went through me, right down to my bones. It wasn't the cold; the air was actually quite mild for this time of year. No, this was something else, something deeper. My wolf felt agitated, a low growl rumbling in the back of my mind.

"What is it?" I asked her. "What's wrong?"

I just could sense that something was happening and sometimes it's hard to distinguish whether the feelings are mine or his.

Her reply made me think that she didn't want to tell me which made me even more worried. You will know soon enough, she simply said, and then settled, leaving me with a heightened sense of unease.

I forced myself to push it down, to focus on the task at hand. Mr. and Mrs. Gable stood before me, their faces bright with excitement for their new adventure, a long-awaited journey they'd dreamed of for years.

And I'm honestly happy for them because they sacrificed 5 years of their lives and all their savings to make sure that I'm the woman that I am today.

Marco, however, wasn't sharing their joy. He clung to my leg, big tears rolling down his cheeks as he watched them.

Even as I said the words, a pang shot through my own heart. I was truly happy for them, for their chance to finally see the world. But a part of me felt heartbroken too. I would miss them terribly, their gentle smiles, their kind words, their wisdom. Still, a chilling thought settled in.

I don't want them to be here for everything that is going to happen from now on. It was a selfish thought, but one born of a deep, protective instinct. We said our final goodbyes, full of hugs and promises to write, and then watched as their car slowly drove out of sight.

I hate goodbyes but I'm pretty sure that they're going to be okay.

The uneasy feeling wouldn't leave me. I walked back towards the pack house, my hand still holding Marco's. As we got closer, I saw a crowd of people gathered outside, their faces etched with worry. My stomach clenched.

"What's going on?" I asked, pulling Marco closer to my side.

A woman nearby turned to me, her eyes wide. "Something happened on the other side of the perimeter. We're not allowed to go there, but... they say it's bad."

My anxiety, which had only just started to calm, spiked. My breath hitched in my throat, and my heart hammered against my ribs. Relax, Faith, I told myself, forcing my shoulders down from where they'd tensed up around my ears. Just breathe.

The first person, I thought about was Astor and how he is but when I reached into my mind I could feel that he was okay so I relaxed a bit.

Just then, he arrived, his usual stern expression even more unyielding. His gaze swept over the worried faces. "Everyone," he commanded, his voice deep and firm, "return to your respective duties and houses. I will take care of everything that is happening."

Without another word, he strode towards the pack house, his presence radiating a kind of dark energy. I felt disappointed and I couldn't stop the rejection from seeping into my soul.

He didn't even stop to look at us and he claims that he wants to be a father to my son.

He went straight to his office and, with a soft click, locked himself inside.

My heart ached with worry for him. I just can't help how I react even though he has no respect for me or us at all. Marco, still a little sniffly, was now distracted by the other children, who had started to gather, curious about the commotion.

"Go on, buddy," I urged gently, giving him a little push towards them. "Go play with the other kids."

He looked at me for a moment, then at the group, his curiosity winning out. Soon enough, I saw him laughing, already getting along, lost in a new game. Only then did I feel I could leave him.

My steps were hesitant as I approached Astor's office door. A thick, dark atmosphere hung around it, a tangible weight that pressed in on me. I pushed the door open slowly, the heavy oak creaking softly. Inside, the light seemed dimmer, swallowed by the gloom emanating from Astor. He was hunched over his desk, his fists clenched, his shoulders rigid. His eyes glowed with a sure sign of the struggle within him.

I think the biggest reason for my anxiety and what I'm feeling right now is because of what he's feeling and most of these emotions that I feel are his.

"Don't come closer," he growled, his voice rough, almost a snarl.

But he was my mate. I knew, deep down, that I was the only one who could truly calm him. Ignoring his warning, I walked towards him, the heavy darkness parting slightly as I approached. I didn't say a word, just climbed onto his lap, turning so I could face him, and pulled his head against my chest, wrapping my arms tightly around him.

“What’s going on?” I whispered, my voice soft against his hair.

He was stiff at first, but slowly, he relaxed into my embrace, his glowing eyes dimming a fraction. “You don’t want to know, Faith,” he murmured, his voice laced with pain.

“Yes, I do,” I insisted, my grip firm. “Tell me.”

He sighed, a shudder running through his powerful frame. “There was… a pile of bodies left on the pack grounds.”

The words hit me like a physical blow. My breath hitched, and my whole body went rigid. Shell-shocked, I could only stare at the wall over his shoulder, the reality of his words forming a horrifying picture in my mind. A pile of bodies. Here.

He followed me. All this time, he followed me.

I whispered the words, a chill spreading through my veins, “He found me.”

Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 78

Faith’s Pov

The words just came out. I couldn’t believe I’d said them. I knew he might hate me even more for it. I really didn’t want things to be tense between us.

luckily he didn’t seem to have heard me since he was completely distracted because he pulled back a little and looked at me. This time, I didn’t see the usual anger or disappointment in his eyes. Instead, I saw something different.

Inside me, my wolf stirred, wanting things I couldn’t give right then. I started to get up from his lap.

I was nervous because of the secret that I’m carrying right now and I thought it would never come to this and I don’t want to be blamed for something else again so I don’t think it’s the right time for me to talk.

“Don’t go,” he said, pulling me back. He was the only one who could make my heart ache and feel whole at the same time.

I sat back on his lap. He started to gently sniff my hair.

"I'll make them pay," he said. "I don't know who they are or what they want, but they will pay." It was hard to keep my heartbeat from showing how scared I was.

"Who was killed?" I asked. It didn't matter if I knew the person or not. I felt like I might have caused someone's death, even if I didn't mean to, and that was a heavy burden to carry.

"We don't know yet," he replied. "But I hope to find out in a few hours. luckily they are not from our pack."

I could see he was worried. He cared a lot about his pack. But I also knew he was burning for revenge. He never let things go, and that made me even more worried. The person he was going against only wanted one thing, and they wouldn't stop until they got it.

"I'll go check on Marco," I said, wanting to escape. The longer I stayed, the more likely I was to be caught in my lie. For now, I couldn't tell him the truth. I'll tell him soon but we have so many misunderstandings that we have to work out.

"I want you to stay," he said before I could reach the door. "I want you guys to stay with me." My heart felt full, but my mind was buzzing with questions I knew he couldn't answer right now.

"What about your daughter?" I asked, turning back to him. His face showed no doubt or regret about what he had said.

"You wanted me to make sure our son gets the love and attention he deserves," he said. "And I will. If I don't, you know you'll run away again and take him from me and I don't want that."

"I think we have to start acting like parents now," he continued. "Everything we do will affect our son. He's going to be the next Alpha of this pack." That got my full attention.

"I want you to give our son your all," I said. "But I don't want him to be angry with his sister. They are both your children. And Marco doesn't have to be the Alpha of this pack. I think that's okay because he doesn't even know about wolves yet." It felt selfish to make him choose between his children, even if I was getting what I wanted. I understood.

"Marco will be the Alpha of this pack," he stated. I don't think it's because she's a girl. I could tell he was hiding something about his daughter, but I decided not to ask. Maybe for peace between me and Alice, we both needed to mind our own business.

"What about us?" I asked. I knew it wasn't the right time or place, but I need to know.

"I don't think you'll like staying in that house after Alice and Isabella even if I get them another place to stay and to be honest that is Isabella's home now," he said. "It wouldn't even be fair to expect you to build a new life with those memories. I'll take you to our new place."

"I'm not sure we can forgive each other," he admitted. "But we are parents now. And most importantly, we worked perfectly as leaders of this pack. I want that back."

“You told me to make a decision,” he said, his voice soft. “And I’ve done that. Now, the ball is in your court.”

“I’m not going to force you to be with me anymore,” he said, his gaze steady. “Every time I try, you just pull away. I’m tired of forcing it. This is me setting you free.”

“I want to be in my son’s life more than anything,” he continued. “But I also know I can’t make him happy if his mother isn’t happy.”

I didn’t know what I was expecting, but it wasn’t this. I had always thought the worst of him. I thought he would just keep me here, in the pack and the life I ran from. Honestly, this time, I was going to stay. I had seen his loving relationship with his daughter, and I wanted that for Marco.

Most importantly, what started as small threats that I thought would never hurt me was turning into something much worse. I realized it was better for us to stay here, where he could protect us.

“I want to stay,” I said. The words came out without me even having to think. My wolf was incredibly happy.

“Good,” he replied. “Because this time, there will be no hiding. If you leave me again, I won’t look for you. I’ll take our son so far away that you won’t even see him again. I’m not threatening you to make you stay. I’m just being a father.”

“As for us,” he continued, “I won’t cheat on you. Believe it or not, I haven’t been with any other woman in the last six years, and I never will. I expect the same from you.”

“I don’t know what will happen when you’re in heat,” he said, his voice thoughtful. “But I’ll try to be respectful. I won’t touch you. I won’t come close to you. But you will be the Luna of this pack and my wife.”

Alpha’s Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 79

Astor’s Pov..

she was hiding something from me but it seems like the more I try with her the more I push her away and I’ll let her come to me with whatever is bothering her if she trust’s me.

I let her think that she was getting away with it but I could see the guilt in her eyes.

I made a decision today that I will never regret but I couldn’t help but feel guilty because of my little girl who didn’t make any mistake. every decision a parent makes will affect their kids and

that's what's going to happen to Isabella and most of this isn't my fault because the problem started the day she was born.

I can't see me to get into my work and make sure that my pack doesn't have any problems if my personal life has this many problems so the first thing I needed to do was sort everything out which is why I went home.

Faith was guilty for keeping my son away from me but so were her parents and I found them sitting in my house relaxing like there was nothing wrong.

My voice was flat, devoid of any warmth. "Were you ever going to tell me?"

Alpha Connor blinked, his brow furrowing in confusion.

They exchanged a quick look, a silent question passing between them. Then, slowly, the confusion melted away, replaced by something I recognized as dawning realization. It was like watching a slow-motion car crash in their eyes.

I repeated my question, my voice a little louder this time, a cold edge creeping into it. "I asked, were you ever going to tell me?"

Alpha Connor cleared his throat, a nervous habit. "Astor, I... I don't understand what you're talking about." His Luna nodded vigorously beside him, too quickly, too eagerly. Their eyes were wide, suddenly innocent. A lie. I wouldn't believe it either if I hadn't had it for myself.

My biggest fear is turning into them. loving one child more than the other and my situation is exact same because one is a child that I raised and the other is my own child.

My control snapped because I hate liars and me and Alpha Connor are allies and we have to trust each other but I can't seem to trust him because it is always one lie after the other. The weariness in my bones gave way to a surge of raw, untamed anger. My voice dropped to a dangerous growl, cold and hard as stone. "Were you ever going to tell me that I am a father? That I have a son?"

The words hung in the air, heavy and suffocating. Alpha Connor flinched as if I'd struck him. His jaw dropped, and he finally seemed to understand the full weight of my rage. "Astor, wait, please, let me explain —"

"Explain what?!" I roared, my voice echoing off the walls. "Explain how you let me live my life, day in and day out, thinking Isabella was my only child, thinking I deserved nothing more? I helped Alice! I raised somebody else's daughter, your daughter, Alice's daughter and never complained, never asked for anything in return. While my own son, my flesh and blood, my son with Faith, was out there somewhere! And the least, the absolute least you could have done, was tell me when you found out he existed!" My chest heaved with every word, the betrayal a bitter taste in my mouth. Years of quiet sacrifice, years of putting others first, all for this. For them to keep this secret.

Just then, a new voice cut through the tension, sharp and accusatory. “Stop talking about your son.”

Alice stood in the doorway leading from the kitchen, her eyes blazing, her face pale. She must have been there the whole time, listening.

My gaze snapped to her, the anger I felt for her parents now extending to her, burning even brighter. “Did you know as well?” I wouldn’t put it past her to hide something like that because she would do anything to get rid of Faith.

She squared her shoulders, a defiant glint in her eyes. “If I did, what would you do? Shout at me like you just shouted at my parents? Throw me out?”

I looked at her, truly looked at her, and felt nothing but an overwhelming exhaustion. The favour I did her and what it cost me as well as the resentment, it had all curdled into a profound weariness. “I am so tired of you, Alice. So incredibly tired. I hope I never have to see you again.”

Her face fell slightly, a flicker of hurt crossing her features before being quickly masked by anger. “Unfortunately, Astor, we live in the same house. And Isabella is your daughter!” She spat the last words like a venomous accusation. “Just a minute ago you were so proud to have a son, did you forget that you have a daughter as well?”

My cold laugh was devoid of humor. “We live in the same pack, Alice and most importantly we share a daughter even though she’s not my blood. Of course we’ll see each other. But it won’t be the way that you think it will happen.”

Her eyes narrowed. “What are you talking about?”

“I’m going to be moving into my new house.”

I started building that house before Faith left and it was supposed to be a surprise because it was a place where we could start afresh and I lost interest in it for a couple of years but I’m glad I decided to continue a year ago.

Her jaw dropped. “The house? It’s over?” She sounded genuinely shocked, almost bewildered.

I gave her another cold, hard look. “It’s been done for a while now. I didn’t want to tell you, because I wasn’t going to be moving in with you.”

The words hit her like a physical blow. Her face went slack, her eyes wide with disbelief. The defiance drained from her, leaving her looking utterly lost. “You’re... you’re leaving? To that house?” She finally managed, her voice barely a whisper. “Are you... are you going there with Faith?”

I met her gaze, unflinching. The answer was simple, direct, and final. “Yes.”

Alpha's Regret: Begging For My Luna Back – Chapter 80

Faith's Pov

The silence of the room was heavy, broken only by the sound of my own shallow breathing. I was still hidden away, tucked into the far corner of the upstairs bedroom, leaning against the window frame like the glass was the only thing holding me upright.

Outside, the world looked normal. Marco was running around the backyard of the packhouse, chasing a ball with a couple of the younger pups. His laughter, faint but clear, was the only thing keeping the terror from consuming me completely.

I watched him, every muscle in my body tense. Let them talk about me. Let them disrespect me, look down on me, or whisper about what a terrible woman I was or am. I could handle being the target. I was used to it. But the second someone came for my son, the second a real threat got close to him, I would turn into something horrifying.

I would never let history repeat itself.

My eyes followed Marco as he stumbled, grabbed the ball, and then looked toward the window, waving. I offered a small, weak smile and waved back.

he was happy and that's the most important thing to me.

The moment my hand dropped, my phone broke the quiet. I don't know why the call scared me before I could even check the caller ID.

The number was private but I didn't need the caller ID to know who it was. The dread hit me instantly, cold and sharp, settling deep in my belly.

My first thought was to let it ring until it died. I was terrified. Truly terrified. The last time I saw and heard from this monster, things ended very badly. But he had already found me, tracked me here. Ignoring him felt like delaying a catastrophe.

Mate. Call our Mate. Tell him now, my wolf insisted.

No, I snapped back mentally. He won't believe us. He won't understand and will reject us. Shut up.

My wolf whined, a sound of absolute despair, but I forced her down. I couldn't risk telling Astor and watching him push me away again. Not when this man was already trying to come at his pack.

My hand trembled as I finally picked up the phone. I didn't speak, just held the device to my ear.

A slow, sickeningly smooth voice drifted through.

"Faith. I honestly didn't think you'd answer," he chuckled, the sound grating. "But you're learning, aren't you? What happens when people try to be clever with me."

My breath hitched. I needed to know. I was scared and a part of me already knew it was him but I wanted to hear it from him.

"Did you kill them?" I asked, my voice barely a cracked whisper. "Did you hurt those people just to send me a message?"

He paused, a calculated silence that was worse than any shout. "I don't know what you are talking about, darling. I have been very busy, catching up on old times."

"I know you," I insisted, finding a sudden surge of angry energy. "I know you that well. You would do something monstrous like that. You would hurt innocent people to teach me a lesson."

"If you understand me that well," he purred, the sound twisting my stomach, "then why are you playing hard to get? You know I will win, Faith. And you know that a lot of people are going to get hurt because of this stubborn little act."

The words were like stones dropped into cold water, sinking immediately and leaving ripples of terror. He was threatening the pack. He was threatening Astor.

"I want nothing to do with you," I hissed, pushing the fear aside for just a moment. "Stay away from me. Stay away from my son."

"Ah, the mother bear comes out," he mocked. "How sweet. But Faith, the more you act stubborn, the more people will die. You have a choice. Come to me, and the games stops. Stay there, and I will start making creative removals."

My hand was shaking so badly the phone almost slipped. Creative removals. He meant slaughter. He meant tearing Astor's world apart, just to get to me. I felt the world tilt. The image of Marco's smiling face in the yard flashed behind my eyes. I couldn't breathe.

I couldn't stand to hear another word. I pressed the end call button with desperate force, cutting the poison off instantly.

I dropped the phone on the thick carpet and stumbled back, collapsing onto the edge of the bed. My head fell into my hands.

What have I done? I brought him here. I brought all my terrifying, bloody problems right to Astor's doorstep. I endangered every single person in this pack.

'He won't stop. He already followed you, Faith. You have to tell Astor. He has to know the truth!' my wolf screamed, thrashing internally.

'No' I argued back instantly, tears stinging my eyes. I will tell him the truth but now is not the right time.

He held me yesterday like nothing ever happened and that just means that he's starting to forgive me and I can't risk it.

My heart was a heavy, dead weight in my chest. I didn't know what to do next. I was stuck, paralyzed by fear and the certainty that no matter what I did, someone would suffer.

Just then, a wave of noise from the main floor of the packhouse, pulling me violently out of my panic.

It wasn't just noise, it was shouting. A high-pitched, hysterical torrent of words that I recognized immediately. Alice.

"She needs to go! Why is she still here? She ruined everything! Everything was fine before she showed up!"

My name, shouted with venom, snapped the delicate thread of my fear. The adrenaline that had been pure terror just seconds ago now turned into white-hot fury.

I stood up, my mind suddenly clear. Alice has been testing my patience since I arrived. She could insult me, but she shouldn't dare scream my name and spew lies when my son was playing just outside the house.

I walked out of the room, my muscles stiff, and descended down the staircase. The commotion was coming from the living room, near the main fireplace.

When I stepped in the conversation stopped abruptly.

Alice was standing in the middle of a small circle of pack members, elders, a few warriors, and some mothers and girls her face red and blotchy.

She thinks because she's the mate, she can just ruin my life and walk around like nothing happened? She should be gone!"

All eyes turned to me. The pack members looked unsure, mostly intimidated by Alice's drama.

I moved forward, slow and deliberate, until I was right in front of her. She was tall, but I felt like I towered over her in that moment.

The mother standing here now didn't have time for nonsense.

The first thing I did was deliver a hard, stinging slap across Alice's cheek.

The crack echoed through the sudden, absolute silence of the living room. Every single person gasped, eyes wide with shock. Alice just stood there, her hand glued to her face, her furious expression replaced by stunned disbelief.

"You will watch your words from now on, Alice," I said, my voice low and steady, vibrating with barely contained rage. "My little boy is outside. I don't want him hearing his mother being called names by a woman who thinks she knows everything."

Alice opened her mouth, ready to scream again, but I didn't let her.

"I warned you," I continued, taking a step closer. "I told you that the girl you pushed around is gone. That girl tolerated your nonsense. This mother, standing right here, does not. I don't care what you think you lost or what you believe you were owed. This pack is mine. The mate is mine."

I looked around the room, making sure every single person heard me, especially Alice.

"I am very grateful to you, Alice, for taking care of the pack and taking care of my mate while I was away," I conceded, forcing a tight smile. "You ran things well. But the arrangement is over. I'm back now. And I'm back for everything that's mine."