

Chapter 11 Video Call 1

Calvin's POV

I sat rigidly on her livingroom sofa, maintaining the commanding posture expected of an Alpha.

Cyra prowled restlessly within me, confused by the conflicting emotions: rage at having my son taken, and something deeper that I refused to acknowledge.

Watching my son interact with Evelyn and her daughter created an uncomfortable tightness in my chest.

Rowan looked happier than he usually did at home. His laughter sounded foreign to my ears, had I ever heard him laugh like that in our house?

I focused on Zeon's report, replayed in my mind. "Your former Luna visited the hospital to see Leon Robinson, the newly returned heir of the Brownfur Pack."

The memory of that man standing outside our territory the night before our mating ceremony surfaced unbidden. Leon Robinson, Evelyn's first love, according to Pack gossip.

The thought made Cyra snarl with possessive fury, though I had no right to feel that way. Not anymore.

Back at our Packhouse, I retreated to my bathroom for a shower.

The hot water pounded against my shoulders as I tried to sort through the tangled mess of emotions. Seeing Evelyn again had affected me more than I cared to admit. She was sitting on the swing. When I came, she didn't stand up to show respect. My wolf felt angry about this, but was also very interested in her behavior.

When she'd mentioned Clara, something had shifted inside me. The tears in her eyes, tears I had caused, had momentarily sliced through my carefully maintained facade. But I'd quickly recovered, reinforced my walls. She had no right to criticize my choices after she'd abandoned our family.

Had she abandoned us, though? A traitorous voice whispered in my mind. Or had I driven her away?

Shaking off these unwelcome thoughts, I finished my shower and wrapped a towel around my waist. While drying my hair with another towel, I noticed my phone wasn't on the nightstand. With a frown, I walked toward my bedroom door to look for it in other rooms.

That's when I heard Rowan's excited whispers coming from his room. My enhanced hearing picked up his voice clearly.

"Mom, could you send me the pictures we took together? So I can look at them when Dad lets me use a phone."

I stopped suddenly, the towel still in my hand against my head. Through Rowan's partially open door, I saw my son on his bed, smiling as he talked into my phone. On the screen, Alexis's face was close to the camera as she kept calling him "brother" in her sweet, childish voice.

The pure joy on my son's face hit me hard. In that private moment, he looked like a normal, happy child, something I rarely saw in our home.

"I miss you already," he was saying, his voice small but sincere. "Tell Alexis I'll come see her soon."

Something uncomfortable twisted in my gut. Was this what Evelyn had meant? Was I too busy trying to control everything that I missed seeing how unhappy my son was?

I couldn't move, unwilling to break this special moment between them. Deep inside, Cyra's soft whine told me what I had been avoiding that I had probably failed my family in many ways.

Instead of disturbing them, I quietly went to my study, pushing away the heavy feeling growing in my heart.

Later that evening after finishing my work and returning to the master bedroom, I noticed Rowan's scent lingering near my nightstand. The phone he had secretly borrowed had been returned.

As I prepared to rest, my private phone vibrated briefly.

I opened it and found messages from a profile I didn't know. Looking through the chat history, I saw many photos of Rowan and Alexis together, plus several of Evelyn with both children.

Every picture showed Evelyn with that warm look I used to know so well. Alexis was always smiling brightly, and Rowan... he showed a real happiness I rarely saw at home. His smile was open and free, so different from how guarded he was around me.

Something compelled me to play the voice message waiting in the chat.

"Rowan, sweetheart, take care of yourself," Evelyn's voice flowed through the speaker with maternal tenderness. "If you miss your sister, just message me, and I'll arrange a video call with her."

Before I could process my reaction to hearing her voice again, another message arrived, this time Alexis's soft, childish voice. "Good night, big brother."

Something stirred in my chest, leaving me with a feeling I didn't want to understand.

The next morning was Saturday. After moving all the photos to his phone overnight, I gave it back to Rowan. I saw him searching quickly for Evelyn's account, eager to call his sister, but he found nothing.

"Dad, do friends sometimes just vanish?" he asked quietly, careful not to make me angry by talking about his mother.

"Sometimes the system glitches," I replied simply, offering no explanation about the account now securely stored only in my private phone. As Alpha of the Bloodbane Pack, I couldn't show weakness, especially not because of my former Luna who had chosen to leave.

Later at Wolfe Haven International headquarters, my phone vibrated on my desk. The same account again. I answered the video call without thinking and suddenly Alexis's adorable face filled my screen, her childish voice calling out "Big brother!" with such joy.

When she saw who I was, her face changed instantly and she dropped the phone in fear. Through the fallen device, I could just make out Evelyn's silhouette approaching.

"Sweetie, what's wrong?" Evelyn's concerned voice came through. "Didn't your brother answer?"

I watched as Alexis clung to her mother's legs, shaking her head.

"Scary," Alexis whispered, her fear of me like a dagger between my ribs.

Evelyn quickly picked up Alexis, forgetting about the phone. Even through the screen, I could tell her was protecting Alexis who was upset. After she calmed Alexis down and played with her for a while, Evelyn finally looked at her phone.

I ended the call just before she picked it up, but stayed in the chat. She sent a new photo: Alexis with two cute pigtails, looking smaller than when I last saw her at Viremont, playing with her doll.

I couldn't help but stare at the picture. In the background mirror, I could see Evelyn's slim fingers holding the phone.

I exited the chat abruptly, my expression hardening.

Evelyn's POV

I couldn't understand why Alexis was suddenly so upset after trying to video call her brother. My little girl clung to me tightly, her small body trembling slightly as I lifted her into my arms.

"It's okay, baby," I whispered, nuzzling her hair. My protective instincts surged, wondering what could have frightened her.

After almost thirty minutes of distraction with her favorite toys, Alexis finally relaxed again, her sweet smile returning. Only then did I remember the phone I'd abandoned on the sofa. When I checked, the video call had ended just moments before, showing a ten-minute duration.

I hesitated before sending a picture of Alexis playing with her doll. Perhaps Rowan had seen something that upset his sister? When no reply came, I focused on getting Alexis ready for her nap, pushing aside the familiar ache that thoughts of my older children always brought.

The next morning Alexis insisted on trying to video call her brother again. This was something Rowan had taught her before leaving.

When the call connected, I heard my daughter's disappointed voice from the living room.

"I want big brother," she declared firmly, followed by the sound of her hanging up.

That evening after her bath, Alexis was particularly determined. Wearing her pale blue onesie pajamas with her damp hair still fluffy from the dryer, she lay on her bed with my phone propped against her pillow, calling Rowan yet again.

I was in the bathroom washing my hair when I heard her little knuckles rapping on the door.

"Mommy, brother," she called through the door.

"Sweetie, Mommy's in the shower," I called back, unable to open my eyes through the shampoo. "Talk to your brother for now."

Alexis was going through a clingy phase lately, not even letting me shower in peace. I'd set up a special little chair outside the bathroom door so she could sit near me when she needed reassurance, a solution that worked well for both of us.

Later, as I toweled off, I could hear her frustrated voice demanding her brother repeatedly. Strange, Rowan was normally so attentive during their calls. I made a mental note to check if he was having trouble with his phone.

