

Fated To Not Just One, But Three #Chapter 651: Let Me Help - Read Fated To Not Just One, But Three Chapter 651: Let Me Help

Chapter 651: Let Me Help

Olivia's POV

The dream was so vivid I could taste the graveyard dirt and smell the lilies. I was standing in the pack cemetery. Louis and Levi were kneeling by a fresh grave, their howls of grief so loud they shattered the silence of the woods. I looked down at the headstone, and the name carved in cold granite was Lennox.

I woke up gasping, my nightgown clinging to my skin with cold sweat. My heart wasn't just beating; it was thundering a warning. I didn't think. I didn't walk. I pulled on every ounce of my remaining power and teleported.

The air shimmered, and a second later, I was standing in the middle of Lennox's darkened suite.

The machines were humming their rhythmic, mechanical song. On the bed, Lennox was propped up against the pillows. Elena was asleep in the chair by the window, her head lolling to the side. Lennox was awake, staring out at the moonlight, his face looking like a skeletal mask in the silver light.

He flinched when I appeared, his hand flying to the oxygen mask resting on his chest.

"Olivia?" he rasped, his voice sounding like dry leaves skittering over pavement. "What... what are you doing here? I told you to stay out."

"I saw you," I whispered, my voice trembling as I moved toward the bed. "I saw them burying you, Lennox. I saw the stone."

He tried to harden his gaze, seeking that cold Alpha steel he'd been using to keep me away, but he looked too exhausted to maintain the lie. "It was a dream. Go back to sleep."

"No," I said, reaching the edge of the bed. I didn't care about Elena. I didn't care about the 'mate' he claimed to have. I only cared about the man who was fading before my eyes. "Lennox, please. Just let me check you. Let me touch you. My wolf... she's screaming. She says you're cold. Let me help. If you won't let me heal her, at least let me give you some of my strength so you can breathe."

I reached out, my fingers inches from his forehead. I could feel the heat radiating off him—the fever of a body that was burning itself out.

"No!" he snapped, recoiling as if my touch were poison. He let out a sharp, ragged cough and pressed the oxygen mask to his face, taking a deep, desperate draw. "Stay... back. I don't want your help. I have a mate for that. I have doctors."

"She's asleep, Lennox!" I cried, gesturing toward Elena. "She's not even looking at you! How can you choose a stranger who sleeps while you suffer over the woman who would burn the world down to keep you warm?"

"Because she is my future," he spat, his eyes glassy and unfocused as he fought for breath. "And you are my past. Now... get out. Before I call the guards to drag you to the guest wing."

I stood there, my heart breaking all over again. The rejection was a physical pain, but the fear was worse. I looked at the monitor. His heart rate was erratic.

"You're going to die just to prove a point," I whispered.

He didn't answer. He just turned his head away, staring out the window.

I stood in the silence of his room for another heartbeat, watching the rhythmic rise and fall of his shoulders. He wouldn't even look at me. The man who once lived for my touch now treated it like acid.

"Fine," I whispered, the word thick with tears. "If you want to die alone with a stranger, I won't stop you."

I teleported out, but I didn't go to my room. I appeared in the center of Levi's bedroom. He bolted upright in bed, his eyes wide and wild until they landed on me.

"Olivia? What—"

"Something is wrong, Levi," I sobbed, clutching my arms. "I saw him. He's gray. He's burning up. He says it's the bond with her, but I don't feel her soul in that room. I feel death. You have to do something."

Levi's face softened into that same mask of pained pity I'd seen earlier. He ran a hand through his hair, sighing deeply. "I'll call more healers, Olivia. I'll get a second opinion from the city. I promise. Just... go try to sleep."

I teleported back to my room, but I didn't sleep.

The next morning, the atmosphere was unexpectedly different. Lennox actually made it down to the breakfast table. The boys' faces lit up like stars.

"Dad!" Leon chirped, though he paused halfway through his cereal. "Why is your face so white? You look like a ghost."

Lennox forced a smile—a thin, brittle thing that didn't reach his hollow eyes. "I'm just a bit sick, Leon. A stubborn bug. But I'll be fine. Eat your breakfast."

The boys were hesitant, their young instincts telling them his "fine" was a lie. We practically had to drag them to the door to go to school. Once the door clicked shut and the house was silent again, the mask fell. Lennox slumped in his chair, his hand trembling as he reached for a glass of water.

"Lennox," I said, my voice steady despite the storm inside me. "We are not enemies. Fine—you found her. You have a new mate. I accept it. But let me check you. I am not just any healer; you know my power. You know I can see things others can't."

Lennox didn't even look up. He just stared at the water. "No. I heard what the healers said. Your magic will only hurt me now. Stay away, Olivia."

The rejection, the coldness, and the sheer exhaustion of the last forty-eight hours finally boiled over. My vision tunneled with rage.

"You know what? Fine!" I screamed, slamming my hands onto the table. "You want to be a martyr? You want to shut me out while you waste away for some woman who doesn't even know how you take your coffee? Then die, Lennox! Just die and get out of our lives so we can stop wondering when the clock is going to run out!"

The words hung in the air like a poisonous fog. My heart stopped the moment they left my lips. I wanted to reach out and pull them back, to scream that I didn't mean it, that I was just frustrated.

But Lennox didn't flinch. He didn't get angry. He didn't even look hurt. He slowly stood up, leaning heavily on his cane, and looked at me with a calm, vacant expression that was more terrifying than any shout.

"If that's what you wish, Olivia," he said quietly.

Then he turned and walked away.

Chapter 652: Reject Him

Olivia's POV

I stood in the living room, my hands still shaking from the venomous words I'd hurled at him. I was about to go after him, to beg for forgiveness, when the front doors burst open.

Three doctors I'd never seen before—human specialists—sprinted past me toward the stairs, carrying heavy medical bags and a portable defibrillator. The silence of the mansion was shattered by the frantic pounding of feet and the shouted commands of Martha from the landing.

Chaos erupted. Levi and Louis appeared from the hallway, their faces filled with pure terror. They didn't even look at me as they followed the doctors into the wing Lennox had forbidden me to enter.

"What is happening?!" I screamed, but no one answered. The door to his suite slammed shut.

I didn't wait. I focused on the space behind that door and teleported.

The smell of ozone and burnt hair hit me first. Lennox was shirtless on the bed, his skin so translucent I could see the dark, spiderwebbing veins beneath. One of the doctors was holding the paddles of a defibrillator.

"Clear!"

Lennox's body jerked violently off the mattress, his back arching in a silent, horrific spasm. I let out a choked sob, but the doctors didn't even flinch. They were watching the monitor.

"Again! Two hundred joules! Clear!"

Thump. Another jerk.

"No... no, Lennox!" I rushed forward.

"Olivia, stay back!" Levi tried to grab my waist, but I didn't have time for his pity. I flared my energy, a wave of kinetic force pushing him backward into the wall.

I reached the bed and shoved one of the nurses aside. I slammed my hands onto Lennox's sweat-soaked forehead and closed my eyes, sinking my consciousness into his body.

"Stop her! She'll worsen the shock!" a doctor yelled, but their voices became distant echoes.

I felt it. It was like stepping into a house that was being consumed by a silent, invisible fire. His heart was a stuttering, dying bird, but beneath that... there was a darkness. A rot. I could feel his organs—his lungs, his kidneys—flickering like dying lightbulbs, shutting down one by one. This wasn't a "mate bond" reaction. This was a system failure.

I poured everything I had into him, my wolf howling, forcing my own life force into his chest to kickstart his rhythm. I felt his heart catch, then roll, and finally settle into a weak, steady thump... thump... thump...

The monitor steadied. The doctors gasped, stepping back.

I opened my eyes, gasping for air, but I didn't let go. I tried to probe deeper, to see why he was rotting, but suddenly, a weak hand came up and shoved my wrists away with a surge of desperate strength.

Lennox was looking at me, his eyes bloodshot and unfocused, but full of a terrifying, stubborn resolve. He couldn't speak, but the rejection in his shove was louder than any shout.

I stumbled back, my breath hitching. I turned my head, my gaze landing on Elena. She was standing by the window, looking perfectly healthy, her face pale only from the shock of the scene.

The rage returned, hotter than before. I lunged at her, grabbing her by the shoulders and shaking her.

"What kind of sickness is this?!" I screamed in her face. "Why are you standing there glowing with health while he is jerking on a bed? What kind of bond is this, Elena? Answer me!"

"Olivia... stop..." Lennox's voice was a ghostly whisper from the bed.

"No!" I roared, turning back to Elena. "If you love him, if you are truly his mate, then you see he is dying because of this connection! If you want him to live, you'll end it! Reject him, Elena! Reject Lennox and let him be free of this agony! Do it now!"

Elena looked at me, her lips trembling, her eyes darting to Lennox in a silent plea for help.

"Reject him now!" I screamed, my fingers digging into Elena's shoulders. My power was rolling off me in waves, vibrating the glass in the windows. "If you have a shred of mercy in your soul, you will break this bond! Can't you see he's dying for you? REJECT HIM!"

"Olivia, stop! You're out of control!" Levi shouted, lunging forward to grab my waist.

"Get off me!" I snarled, sending a pulse of energy that forced both him and Louis back a step. I didn't care about their rules or their "protection" anymore. "She is rejecting him! I won't let her kill him just so she can play the role of a mate!"

I turned back to Elena, whose face was a mask of pure terror. She looked like she was about to snap. "Say the words, Elena! Say you reject Lennox! Save his life!"

"I—I can't—" she stammered, her eyes darting to the bed.

"Stop it, Olivia!"

The voice was weak, but it carried the weight of an Alpha's command. I spun around.

Lennox had forced himself up, his chest heaving, the white bandages across his torso stained with fresh blood from the strain. He was trembling so violently the bed frame rattled, yet his eyes were burning with a desperate, freezing anger. He reached out a shaking hand, grabbing the oxygen mask and tossing it aside just to speak.

"You have... no right," he gasped, each word a battle against the fluid in his lungs. "She is... my mate. My choice. You are... nothing to me now but the mother of my children."

"Lennox, you just died!" I sobbed, the rage vanishing into a puddle of raw grief. "Your heart stopped! I felt your organs failing! If this bond is doing this to you, it's a curse, not a gift!"

"It doesn't... matter," he wheezed, his head lolling back for a second before he snapped it forward again. His gaze was cruel, meant to wound, meant to drive me away. "I would rather die... connected to her..."

The room went deathly silent. Even the doctors stopped moving.

"Lennox, please," I whispered, reaching out a hand.

"Please... leave," he repeated, his voice dropping to a jagged, broken whisper. "If you ever... truly loved me... you will walk out of this door... and let me have... my peace. Leave us, Olivia."

He turned his face toward Elena, reaching out his hand to her. "Elena... come here."

The lady hesitated, then walked past me, her head down. She took his hand, and Lennox closed his eyes, leaning his forehead against her arm as if she were his only anchor in a storm.

Louis stepped up beside me, his hand gentle on my elbow. "Olivia... come on. Let the doctors work. You've stabilized him. Let's go."

I looked at Lennox—the man I had just pulled back from the brink of the afterlife—and saw him seeking comfort in the arms of a stranger. I felt the last of my strength leave me.

"Fine," I whispered, my voice dead. "At least I tried my best. If you're so determined to die for her, then do it. When you die, I'll cry for a day, and then I'll move on. After all, we

aren't mated anymore. I'm a young woman, I have my wolf, and I have a whole life ahead of me once you're gone."

Louis gasped. "Olivia, you don't mean that."

"Don't I?" I snapped, my eyes flashing gold as I looked at the brothers. "He's the one who threw me away. He's the one who found a 'third chance.' Why should I waste my life grieving a man who couldn't wait to replace me?"

I glared at him, waiting to get his reaction, but he wasn't paying attention to me. Angrily, I teleported away.

Chapter 653: The Truth

Lennox's POV

The moment Olivia teleported, my hand, which had been clutching Elena, went limp. I pushed her away and slumped back into the pillows, a hollow, rattling sound echoing in my chest. I'll move on. Her words played over and over in my head like a death sentence. It was exactly what I wanted. It was exactly what I'd planned for.

So why did it feel like she'd reached into my chest and finished what the cancer started?

"Lennox..." Louis stepped toward the bed, his face twisted in pure horror. "This is wrong. This is so fundamentally wrong. You heard her. She's cold, Lennox. You're turning the woman who worshipped you into a stranger. She's going to hate us forever for helping you do this."

"Let her," I wheezed, closing my eyes against the stinging behind my lids. "If she hates you... she won't... she won't die with me. Levi, tell the doctors... to get out. I need... silence."

Levi didn't move. He stood at the foot of the bed. "I can't do this anymore, Lennox. I can't watch you die while she's down the hall wishing for it to be over. This isn't protection. It's torture."

"Go," I barked, a fresh wave of pain lancing through my brain, making the room spin. "Both of you. Now."

They lingered for a moment, the tension thick enough to choke on, before they finally turned and walked out. The silence that followed was heavy, broken only by the steady, clinical hiss of the oxygen and the faint beep of the monitor.

Elena moved quietly, adjusting the IV drip.

"Alpha Lennox," she said softly, her voice echoing in the empty room. "This is not right. I've seen people pass in anger, and I've seen them pass in love. Believe me, the anger doesn't make the end any easier for the ones left behind. It just leaves them with questions that have no answers."

I didn't open my eyes. "She... she said she'd move on. That's the goal."

"She said it because she's bleeding, and she wanted to hurt you back," Elena countered, leaning over me to check my pupils. "Let her know the truth. Cherish your last moments. Hold your children without a lie between you. You're wasting the only thing you have left—time."

"I am an Alpha," I whispered, the words tasting like ash. "My last act... must be to ensure the survival of my others. If she stays bonded... if she stays in love... the Moon Goddess will take her when I go. I won't... I won't let my sons be without a mother."

"And what happens when she finds out later?" Elena asked, her voice dropping to a whisper. "When she realizes you spent your final days making her believe you were a monster? She won't just move on, Lennox. She'll break in a way that can never be fixed."

I didn't answer. I couldn't. I just pulled the oxygen mask over my face and turned my head toward the window, watching the sun begin to set over the territory I wouldn't be leading for much longer.

I was a monster. I had to be. Because a monster is easier to forget than a hero.

Hours later!

I could hear the frantic rhythm of the monitor, that persistent, high-pitched ping-ping-ping that warned everyone in the room my time was measured in minutes, not hours.

"Lennox! Stay with us, damn it!" Levi's voice was a roar from somewhere far away, thick with a sob he was trying to hide. "It's too early! You can't leave them like this! Fight, you stubborn bastard!"

"His blood pressure is bottoming out!" a doctor yelled, his voice sounding like it was underwater. "Inject the epinephrine now! Elena, get the paddles ready!"

I wanted to tell them to stop. I wanted to tell them to let the tide take me. I was so incredibly tired of the lies, the pain, and the mask. But my tongue was lead, and the darkness was pulling me under, heavy and cold.

Then, the air in the room didn't just shift—it shattered.

The familiar, electric hum of teleportation buzzed through the room, and the scent of honey, nutmeg, and home—her scent—hit me like a physical blow to the chest. It was the only thing that could have reached me in that abyss.

"What is happening?!" Olivia's voice was sharp, a blade of light cutting through the medical jargon.

"We're losing him!" Elena shouted. The professional nurse was gone; she was just a woman watching a man die. "His heart is failing, Luna! He's flatlining!"

I felt the bed dip violently. Suddenly, two palms slammed onto my bare chest. They weren't cold like the doctors' hands; they were burning. It was a violent, beautiful intrusion of life. Even without my wolf, my soul screamed in recognition.

"Get back!" she snarled at the doctors who tried to pull her away.

She began to pour her energy into me. It wasn't the gentle healing I was used to; it was a desperate, raw command for my body to obey her. I felt the surge of her power hit my heart like a bolt of lightning, stitching together my frayed nerves, forcing my lungs to expand against the weight of the fluid, demanding that my system restart.

Thump. My heart rolled. Thump-thump. It caught the rhythm.

The monitor's frantic, flat tone broke, evening out into a weak, fragile pulse. I opened my eyes, my vision swimming, to see Olivia hovering over me. Her hair was wild, her eyes glowing with a terrifying, piercing look. She wasn't looking at me with the "hate" I had tried so hard to build. She was looking at me like she was dissecting my very soul.

She let go of my chest, her breath coming in ragged gasps, and slowly stood up. She didn't look at the doctors. She didn't look at Louis or Levi, who were frozen in the corner.

She turned toward Elena.

In one fluid, predatory motion, Olivia moved across the room. She grabbed Elena by the front of her scrub top and slammed her against the wall with enough force to rattle the windowpanes.

"Olivia, no." Louis cried out, but a flick of her wrist sent a wave of kinetic energy that pinned him to the opposite wall.

Olivia ignored him. She slammed her glowing hand onto Elena's forehead, her fingers splaying across the nurse's skin. I watched, paralyzed and wheezing, as Olivia's eyes closed for a split second. She wasn't just checking for a pulse; she was searching for the bond. She was searching for the "illness" I claimed we shared.

Her eyes snapped open, blazing with a golden fire I hadn't seen in years.

"You aren't sick," Olivia whispered, her voice a low, dangerous growl that vibrated in the floorboards. "Your cells are perfect. Your blood is clean. Your heart is strong."

She turned her head slowly, her gaze traveling from the medical machines—which were all tubed and wired into me—to the handkerchief soaked in my blood on the nightstand, and finally back to my pale, sweating face.

The silence in the room was deafening.

"If she isn't the one dying..." Olivia paused, the words catching in her throat as the horrifying truth finally broke through my wall of lies. Her hand dropped from Elena's head, and she looked at me with a face so full of soul-crushing realization it hurt more than the cancer.

"Does that mean... there is no third-chance mate?"

She walked back to my bedside, her eyes landing on an IV bag that had Oncology printed in bold, black letters—something I had fought so hard to hide.

"There is no bond killing you, Lennox," she whispered, her voice trembling with a mix of agony and fury. "It's you. You're the one who's sick."

Chapter 654: Betrayed

Olivia's POV

The air in the room felt heavy, like it was made of lead. I looked from the machines to the oncology bags, and then back to the man on the bed, who looked like a hollowed-out version of the man I loved. The "Third-Chance Mate." The "Soul-Pull." It was all a curated, cruel performance.

"Tell me the truth," I whispered, my voice shaking so hard it felt like my teeth might shatter. "Lennox... tell me the damn truth."

Lennox closed his eyes, a single tear escaping the corner of his lid and disappearing into the gray skin of his temple. "I'm dying, Olivia," he rasped, the words finally breaking free. "Stage four. It's in my lungs... my bones. There is no mate. There is only death."

I felt like the floor had been yanked out from under me. My vision blurred, a high-pitched ringing filling my ears. I felt like I was going insane. Every memory of the last few days—his coldness, the way he let me beg on my knees, the way he brought that woman into our bed—it all flashed before me like a sick, twisted joke.

I slowly turned my head toward Levi and Louis. They were standing by the door, their heads bowed, their faces etched with a guilt so profound it was sickening.

"You two knew," I said. It wasn't a question.

"Olivia, we—" Louis started, his voice cracking.

"You knew!" I screamed, the sound tearing from my throat.

In two blurred strides, I was in front of them. My hand moved before I could even think.

SLAP.

The sound of my palm hitting Louis's cheek echoed like a gunshot. I didn't stop. I turned to Levi, whose eyes were already brimming with tears, and I swung again.

SLAP.

"How could you?!" I shrieked, hitting Levi's chest with my fists. "How could you watch me break? How could you let me believe he hated me? How could you let me say those things to him? I told him to die! I told him to die and get out of our lives because I thought he was betraying us!"

"He made us swear, Olivia!" Levi choked out, catching my wrists, though he didn't fight back. "He said if you were in love with him when he passed, the bond would pull your soul out with his! He was trying to save your life!"

"By destroying my soul while I'm still breathing?!" I pushed him away with a burst of power that sent him stumbling. I turned back to the bed, my heart hemorrhaging.

Lennox was watching me, his expression one of pure, raw defeat. The "Alpha" was gone. There was just a man who had tried to play God with my heart and lost.

"You let me spend our last days hating you," I whispered, walking back to him, my legs feeling like they were made of glass. "You took our memories and poisoned them. You made our sons think their father didn't want them. How could you be so cruel, Lennox? How could you think I'd want a life bought with that kind of lie?"

"What gave you the right?" I whispered, my voice trembling with a fury so cold it felt like ice in my veins. "What makes you think I would die if I were still in love with you?"

I stepped closer to the bed, looming over him as he stared at me with those hollow, sunken eyes.

"I have lost you twice, Lennox!" I screamed, the sound raw and jagged. "You died before, and I survived. You left, and I stayed standing. I have proven a thousand times

over that I am strong enough to carry your memory without following you into the dirt! So what makes you think the Moon Goddess would take me now? Do you have so little faith in me? In my strength?"

Lennox tried to speak, his chest heaving as he reached for my hand, but I flinched back as if he were a leper.

"How could you?" I sobbed, the anger finally giving way to a crushing, agonizing betrayal. "These were the moments we were supposed to cherish. These were the days we were supposed to spend holding each other, saying the things that needed to be said, making sure our sons knew how much their father loved them. Instead, you turned our home into a house of horrors. You turned yourself into a villain so I wouldn't have to be a widow? You didn't save me, Lennox. You murdered the last of our peace."

The room was silent, save for the pathetic, mechanical hum of the machines and the sound of my own shattered breathing. Lennox looked like he wanted to disappear into the mattress. He looked small. He looked like a coward.

"Fine," I said, wiping the tears from my face with a brutal, final motion. "You wanted me to move on? You wanted me to hate you? Congratulations. You got exactly what you wanted."

I straightened my back, pulling my dignity around me like a shroud.

"I am not stepping foot in this room again," I declared, my voice flat and dead. "You can spend your remaining time with your 'nurse' and your lies. You can die in this sterile, dishonest room if that's the 'peace' you fought so hard for."

I turned my freezing gaze toward Levi and Louis, who were standing there like broken children, their faces red where my palm had struck them.

"And as for you two," I hissed, "don't you dare come close to me. Don't speak to me, don't look at me, and don't you dare try to apologize. You chose him over me. You chose a lie over my heart. You are dead to me, just like he is."

I didn't wait for a response. I didn't look back at the man who was gasping for air, his eyes wide with the realization that he had actually succeeded in destroying us.

I walked out of the room, slamming the door behind me.

I stumbled down the hallway, my vision blurred by a thick veil of tears. I didn't teleport. I needed to feel the ground beneath my feet, even if it felt like the earth was splitting open to swallow me whole. My chest felt hollow, as if Lennox hadn't just lied about a mate, but had reached inside and physically carved out my heart.

I pushed open the door to the boys' room.

They were sitting on the floor, surrounded by toy soldiers and half-finished drawings, but they weren't playing. They were sitting in a heavy, expectant silence, their ears tuned to the sounds of the house—the sounds of the chaos they weren't allowed to see.

"Mommy?" Liam stood up first, his small face etched with a worry no child should ever carry.

I didn't say a word. I couldn't. I collapsed onto the rug beside them and pulled them both into my arms. I gripped them so tight it probably hurt, burying my face in the crooks of their necks.

Then, I broke.

The sobs came in violent, racking waves that shook my entire frame. I wailed into their small shoulders, a raw, primal sound of a mate who had been betrayed by the one soul she trusted most. I cried for the time we had lost. I cried for the hateful words I had screamed at a dying man. I cried because I was now truly alone, even with them in my arms.

"Mommy, why are you crying?" Leon whispered, his little hands patting my hair, his own voice beginning to wobble. "Is Daddy okay? Is he still sick?"

"He's... he's going away, babies," I gasped out, my voice sounding like it was being dragged through gravel. "He's very, very sick."

Chapter 655: Decision

Olivia's POV

The moment I blurted out what I said, I regretted it. I wasn't supposed to let the kids know of Lennox's condition, but out of pain and desperation, I spilled it out.

Liam was the first to look up at me with tears in his eyes. "Sick? Is he dying again?" he asked, his body already trembling.

"No... baby..." I choked on regret... "He is not dying... we will not let it happen... I promise."

"You promise?" Leon asked, wanting to get an assurance from me.

I nodded. "Yes, baby... we are not letting him go," I promised.

Once again, they hugged me tightly while I tried to be strong. After a moment, I pulled away, telling them I had to go somewhere, and left them with their nannies.

Stepping out of their room, I met Levi and Louis leaning on the wall as if they were waiting for me.

I ignored them and made my way to my room. I stepped in and they followed me, shutting the door behind us.

"Olivia... please..."

"I want a rejection," I blurted out.

The silence in my bedroom was suffocating, like a blade held to a throat. I stood with my back to them, staring at my reflection in the vanity mirror, but I didn't recognize the woman looking back. Her eyes were hollow, her skin sallow with the exhaustion of a thousand lifetimes lived in forty-eight hours.

"Olivia... please," Louis whispered behind me. His voice was thick, clogged with guilt and fear. "You don't know what you're saying."

I scoffed in anger and turned to face them, my anger-filled eyes fixed on them. "I want a rejection, Levi and Louis... I don't want to be your mate anymore." The moment those words left my lips, Louis and Levi went on their knees, shaking their heads.

"Please, Olivia... please, no," Louis choked out, reaching for the hem of my robe. "Don't do this."

"No!" I screamed, the sound vibrating with a raw, jagged power that shattered a vase on the nightstand. "Don't you two dare beg me! We sat in this very room and promised that no matter what, we would be truthful. We promised we would be an anchor for each other. But you two? You chose to lie with him. You chose his lie. You watched me bleed out emotionally for days and you smiled to my face!"

"Olivia, we were trying to save you—" Levi tried to interject, his voice breaking.

"You were deceiving me!" I spat. "Levi, Louis... I, Olivia, reject you both as my mates. Please, if you have any respect left for me, accept my rejection and let me go."

"No! Never!" Levi roared, his eyes bloodshot. "We won't accept it! We can't!"

Before the argument could escalate, the bedroom door flew open. A maid stood there, her face full of pure terror, her chest heaving.

"Alpha Levi! Alpha Louis! It's Alpha Lennox! His monitors... he's seizing! The doctors say his heart can't take the strain anymore!"

The two of them didn't even look back at me. The bond with their brother screamed louder than my rejection ever could. They scrambled to their feet and sprinted down the hallway, their footsteps fading into the distance.

I stayed.

I sank onto the edge of my bed, my hands pressed against my ears. I had said I wouldn't step foot in that room again. I had told him to die. My pride was a wall, thick and high, but behind it, my wolf was howling, clawing at my insides to get to him. I was terrified. If I went in there, I'd have to face the reality that he was truly leaving. If I stayed here, I might never say goodbye.

I couldn't handle the silence. I stood up, teleported, and began to pace the hallway outside his wing. I wouldn't go in—I couldn't—but I couldn't stay away either.

Through the heavy oak doors, I heard the chaos. I heard the mechanical whine of the defibrillator charging. I heard Levi's voice, raw and broken, screaming, "Please stay! Lennox, don't you dare leave us! Fight!"

I leaned my forehead against the cold wall, tears streaming down my face in silent rivers. I'm sorry, I whispered to the wood. I didn't mean it. Please don't die.

Then, suddenly, the shouting stopped. The monitors went quiet. The silence was so sudden it felt like a physical blow. My heart stopped. Was he dead? Was this the end?

The door clicked open. A nurse rushed out, her face flushed, moving toward the supply closet. I intercepted her, grabbing her arm with a desperate, bruising grip.

"Please," I whispered, my voice barely audible. "Tell me he's... tell me he's okay."

She looked at me, her eyes wide with exhaustion, but she gave a small, shaky nod. "We were able to stabilize him, Luna. The crisis has passed. He is out of danger for the moment. He's sleeping."

I let go of her arm, my knees finally giving out. I slid down the wall, burying my face in my hands. He was alive... Lennox was still alive.

Taking a deep breath, I stood up and walked away so no one would notice I was there.

I went back to my room and stood on the balcony, the cold evening air biting at my skin.

I heard the door creak open. I didn't have to turn around to know who it was. The scent of him and grief followed him in.

"He's awake," Louis said, his voice barely a whisper, sounding as shredded as my heart. "He's weak, Olivia, but he's asking for you. He's... he's requesting to see you."

I gripped the cold stone railing tightly. My wolf whimpered, pacing, begging to go to him, but the woman—whom he had humiliated and deceived—refused to move.

"Tell him I'm not coming," I said, my voice flat and devoid of warmth.

"Olivia, please," Louis stepped closer. "He almost died. He knows the lie is over. He just wants to speak to you."

"He had days to speak to me, Louis," I snapped, finally turning to face him. My eyes were hard and full of anger. "He had every second of the last forty-eight hours to be with me. Instead, he chose to be a martyr. He chose to make me feel like trash so he could feel like a hero. I told him I wouldn't step foot in that room again, and I meant it."

"You're going to regret this if he doesn't make it to morning," Louis warned, a tear finally sliding down his face. "Is your pride worth more than a final goodbye?"

"My pride?" I let out a sharp, bitter laugh. "He's the one who threw away our goodbye the moment he brought Elena into this house. He made his bed, Louis. Let him sleep in it. Tell him that if he wants to see me, he can find the strength to walk to my room himself—just like he found the strength to walk away from me at breakfast."

Louis stared at me, his mouth opening as if to argue, but the sheer coldness in my gaze stopped him. He looked at me like I was a stranger, and maybe I was. The Olivia who would have died for Lennox had been buried under his lies.

"Tell him I am not coming," I said, turning away from him. "Now, get out."

Chapter 656: Can't Forgive You

Lennox's POV

The door to my room opened slowly.

For a second, my heart jumped.

I hoped it was her.

But it was only Louis.

He walked in quietly, his head down. He didn't need to say anything. The silence said it all. My chest felt tight, like something heavy was pressing on it.

"She's not coming," I whispered. It wasn't a question.

Louis looked at me with pain in his eyes.

"She said she won't come into this room again," he said softly. "She said if you want to see her, you should come to her room yourself."

He paused, then added, "She's cold, Lennox. I've never seen her like this."

I closed my eyes. The oxygen mask on my face felt like it was choking me.

This was my fault.

I had done this.

I had pushed her again and again, thinking I was making her strong. I thought if she hated me, she would survive without me. But now that she had finally walked away, the pain was worse than anything I had imagined.

"I asked for this," I whispered. "I pushed her so hard. I can't be surprised she's gone."

"You pushed too far," Levi said from the corner. His voice was hard. "You didn't just push her away. You destroyed the way she looked at you. You turned her love into anger. Was it worth it?"

I didn't answer.

I looked down at my hands. They were thin and shaking. Tubes were connected to my arm, holding me in place. I felt trapped in my own body.

If I died tonight, her last memory of me would be pain. Anger. Hurt.

Something sharp burned inside my chest.

"Help me up," I said.

Louis stepped closer, shocked.

"What? Lennox, you can't even sit up properly. Your heart—"

"Help me up," I said again, stronger this time.

"She said if I want to see her, I have to walk," I said. "I'm going to her."

"You'll collapse," Levi said, rushing to my side. "You might die."

"Then I'll die trying," I said, my voice shaking. "Not hiding in this bed like a coward."

I pushed the blankets away and slowly moved my legs over the edge of the bed. The room spun. My heart beat too fast. The machine beside me started beeping loudly.

"Turn it off," I said weakly. "I don't want to hear it."

They helped me stand.

Louis was on one side, Levi on the other, holding me up like my body didn't belong to me anymore.

My arms were over their shoulders as they half-dragged me down the hallway. My feet scraped the carpet. My chest burned. My breathing was slow and painful, like my lungs were full of sand. My heart beat wrong—too fast, then too slow—like it might stop at any moment.

"Lennox, stop," Louis cried. His voice was shaking. "You're turning blue. Please, let us call her back."

"No," I breathed. The word barely came out. "She... said... walk."

By the time we reached her door, sweat was running down my neck and my heart was slamming so hard I thought it might burst. Levi raised his hand to knock for me, but I stopped him.

"I'll do it," I said.

My hand trembled as I knocked.

Once.

Twice.

There was silence.

Then her voice came through the door.

"What?"

"It's me," I said, swallowing hard. "Lennox."

There was a pause.

"Don't come in," she replied flatly. "Say what you have to say from there."

My chest tightened.

"I understand," I whispered. "I won't come in."

I leaned my forehead lightly against the door, closing my eyes.

"I'm sorry, Olivia."

The words felt small compared to what I had done, but they were all I had.

"I'm sorry for pushing you," I continued, my voice shaking. "For thinking pain would make you stronger. For thinking I knew what was best for you."

My breathing came out uneven.

"I was wrong."

Silence.

"I thought if you hated me, you'd survive without me," I said quietly. "I didn't think about what it would cost you. Or what it would cost us."

My heart ached so badly it felt physical.

"I never meant to hurt you," I whispered. "But I did."

Still, she didn't answer.

"I know sorry isn't enough," I said. "I know I don't deserve forgiveness. But I need you to know this—hurting you is the biggest mistake of my life."

My voice cracked.

"I love you. I never stopped. I don't know how to exist without you anymore."

There was movement behind the door.

I straightened slightly, hope flickering in my chest.

Then she spoke.

"I can't forgive you, Lennox."

Her voice was steady. Not angry. Just tired.

"I can't," she repeated softly. "Not now. Maybe not ever."

Each word landed like a knife.

"Olivia—"

"No!" she choked out. "Go back to your room. I mean it. I don't want to be the cause of your death tonight. I don't want your blood on my hands because you decided to be a martyr one last time. Go back."

I stood there for a second, my hand still hanging in the empty air. Then, the last of my strength simply evaporated. My legs gave out completely.

"Lennox!" Levi screamed as they caught me, lowering me to the floor as the darkness finally rushed in to claim me.

When I woke again, I was back in my bed.

Voices murmured nearby.

I forced my eyes open and saw Levi, Louis, and my specialist standing in the corner of the room.

"We need to move him to the hospital," the specialist said quietly. "His condition is worsening. Even with intensive care, I doubt he has more than a month."

Tears burned my eyes.

I blinked them back—but it was too late because they noticed.

"Lex," Levi said urgently, rushing to my side. "You're awake."

I forced a weak smile.

It had been a long time since anyone had called me that.

Slowly, I tried to sit up. My body protested, but they helped me—Louis adjusting the pillows carefully behind my back.

I lifted a shaky hand and ran it through my hair. A large clump came away in my fingers.

I stared at it.

Strands of my own hair lay tangled in my palm.

Chapter 657: Shave off

Lennox's POV

I sat there, frozen, staring at the dark strands tangled between my fingers. It shouldn't have come as a shock. The doctors had warned me about the side effects of the aggressive treatments, but seeing it—holding a piece of my own fading life in my hand—made the reality of my death unavoidable.

"Lennox, let us..." Louis started, his voice thick with emotion. He didn't finish the sentence. He didn't have to.

I simply nodded, my gaze fixed on a spot on the wall. I felt like a statue, cold and carved from stone, while the world moved in a frantic blur around me.

Levi brought over a chair and a pair of clippers. The sound of the hum was loud in the silent room, a mechanical buzz that felt like it was vibrating through my very skull. I didn't move as they began to shave what was left.

"We should have informed Olivia before doing this," Levi muttered, his hands shaking as he worked.

"I don't want her to see this," I whispered. My voice was a ghost of what it used to be. "I wanted her to remember the Alpha. The man who could protect her. Not... this."

"She doesn't see an Alpha or a weak man, Lex," Louis said, kneeling beside the bed so he could look me in the eye. "She just sees the man she loves. And right now, you're breaking her heart twice over by keeping her out."

I looked down at the floor. A carpet of my own hair surrounded the bed. I felt lighter, but not in a way that brought relief. I felt diminished. Exposed.

"The specialist says a month," I said, changing the subject because the thought of Olivia's face was more painful than the cancer. "Is that the final word?"

The room went silent. Levi stopped the clippers, the sudden absence of the noise making my ears ring.

"Unless there's a miracle," the specialist said from the doorway, his tone professional yet tinged with a heavy pity. "Your heart is too weak for the more experimental surgeries now. The stress of tonight... it took a toll we can't reverse."

I leaned my head back against the pillow, feeling the cool air on my newly shorn scalp. A month. Thirty days before I disappear again... this time for good.

"I need to see my sons," I whispered. "Bring Leon, Leo, and Liam."

Louis nodded and left to fetch them.

The door opened, and the heavy, sterile silence of the room was punctured by the sound of small, hurried footsteps. My heart, as weak as it was, gave a painful thud against my ribs.

Leon, Leo, and Liam burst in, their faces bright with that desperate childhood hope—until they reached the edge of the bed. They stopped dead. The carpet of dark hair on the floor was impossible to ignore, but it was my face, now gaunt and framed by a bare, shorn scalp, that anchored them to the floor.

"Daddy?" Liam whispered, his lower lip trembling.

"Hey, guys," I said, my voice cracking. I tried to reach out, but my arm felt like it weighed a thousand pounds.

Leon was the first to break. A sob tore from his throat as he lunged forward, burying his face in the mattress near my hip. Within seconds, all three of them were a tangle of shaking shoulders and muffled cries, clutching at my blankets as if they could physically hold me onto this earth.

"Why is your hair gone?" Leo wailed, his eyes wide and wet. "You look... you look different. You look like you're leaving."

"Shh, listen to me," I rasped, placing a shaky hand on Leo's head. "I need you to be strong. You are the sons of an Alpha. You have the blood of the moon in your veins. You have to be brave for your mother."

"No!" Liam screamed, clenching his fists in my sheets. "I don't want to be brave! I want you to be better! Mommy said you weren't going to go! She promised!"

The guilt sliced through me. Olivia had promised them a miracle I couldn't give.

"I'm not leaving this second," I lied, my heart breaking. "But I need you to remember what I taught you. Look after each other. Protect the pack. Love your mother with everything you have."

"We're staying here," Leon sobbed, his small fingers locking around my wrist. "We aren't going to sleep. We're staying right here."

They refused to move. For an hour, they clung to me, their tears wetting my gown, their small bodies radiating a warmth I was losing. I held them until my muscles burned and my breath grew too shallow to speak.

Finally, I caught Levi's eye. I couldn't do this anymore. The monitor was beginning to spike, and the exhaustion was dragging me toward sleep.

"Take them," I whispered, closing my eyes.

"No! Daddy, no!"

The room erupted in chaos as Levi and Louis stepped forward. They had to physically peel the boys away from the bed. It was a chorus of screams and kicking legs.

"Let go! I want my dad!" Liam shrieked, his voice fading as Louis carried him and Leo into the hall.

Levi stayed for a moment, holding a sobbing Leon in his arms. The boy was reaching back toward me with both hands, his small fingers stretching as if he could still grab hold of me and keep me here.

"Daddy... please," Leon cried, his voice breaking.

My chest burned, but my body wouldn't move. I didn't have the strength to lift my arms anymore.

"I've got them, Lex," Levi said softly, though his voice was shaking. Tears streamed down his face as he tightened his hold on Leon. "I've got them. Just rest now. Please... just rest."

Leon kept crying, calling my name, fighting against Levi's grip until the sound of his sobs slowly faded down the hallway.

Then the door closed.

The sound was soft. Final.

The silence that followed was crushing. It pressed down on my ears, my chest, and my soul. No voices. No footsteps. Just the steady, unforgiving beep of the machine beside me, reminding me that time was running out.

I lay there, staring at the ceiling, unable to blink.

Closing my eyes, I knew it.

This time, there would be no miracle.

No sudden cure.

No last-minute hope.

No one coming to save me.

I had reached the end of the road.

There were no more plans to make. No more fights to win. No more cards left to play.
Only death—waiting quietly for me to accept it.

Chapter 658: In The Next Life

Olivia's POV

The morning air felt suffocating, heavy in my lungs like it had no right to be breathed. I had barely slept. The night had passed in a dull haze of exhaustion, the kind that numbs the body but leaves the mind screaming. When the sound of muffled crying finally reached me, it didn't surprise me—it only confirmed the dread sitting in my chest.

I followed the sound to the boys' room.

They were huddled together on the bed, three small bodies shaking as one. Leon had his arms wrapped tightly around Leo, while Liam pressed his face into the pillow, his sobs broken and uneven. The sight nearly dropped me to my knees.

"Mommy," Liam cried the moment he saw me. "Daddy is dying."

The words hit like a blade.

Through their tears and hiccupping breaths, they told me everything. They had seen him. Father Lennox. They said he looked like a ghost. Pale. Thin. Different. They said he looked like he was dying.

Each word tightened something around my heart, squeezing until it hurt to breathe.

Anger flared—sharp and sudden—burning through the fear.

He was supposed to let me handle the children.

He was supposed to let me protect them from this. From the machines. From the sickness. From the slow, terrifying way their father was disappearing. Instead, he had let them see him at his weakest, had branded that image into their young minds.

He had traumatized them.

I gathered them into my arms, rocking them, murmuring promises I wasn't sure I could keep. I told them Daddy was strong. That he loved them. That everything would be okay—even as my own voice trembled.

When the nannies arrived, I handed the boys over with reluctance, brushing tears from their cheeks and kissing their foreheads.

I left the nannies to comfort the boys and marched downstairs, my anger acting as a shield against the grief. I found him in the dining room.

The sight of him nearly stopped my heart. He was sitting at the table with Levi and Louis, picking at a plate of food he clearly couldn't taste. He was wearing a soft, knit head-warmer, and his face... it looked hollowed out, the skin stretched tight over his cheekbones like parchment.

I sat down heavily across from him. "You weren't supposed to let the children see you like that, Lennox," I said, my voice sharper than I intended. "They are terrified."

Lennox looked up, his eyes glassy and recessed. "I'm sorry, Olivia," he whispered, the words barely reaching me. "I just... I needed to see them. I didn't think."

I stared at him, my brow furrowing. Something was fundamentally wrong. The way he sat, the way he breathed—it was like he was a puppet being held up by invisible strings. Why was he wearing that hat?

Why did his face look so thin... so drained of life?

"Olivia," he said softly, his voice trembling as he leaned toward me. "I am so sorry. For hiding my sickness... for the lies. I hope one day you find it in your heart to forgive me."

My chest tightened.

Before I could speak, he continued, his eyes fixed on mine as if he was afraid to look away.

"I love you," he said quietly. "You have always been the only woman I've ever loved. There was never anyone else. Never."

My breath caught.

"I am happy," he went on, forcing a weak smile, "that in this lifetime, I met you. That I loved you. That I got to be your mate."

His voice cracked. "And I hope... in another lifetime... I will be better to you. Stronger. Healthier. I hope I won't hurt you the way I did in this one."

Tears burned my eyes, but I couldn't move.

Slowly, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small velvet box. His hands were shaking badly now.

"This came yesterday," he said. "It's for you."

He opened the box, revealing a delicate necklace that caught the light. He stretched his hand toward me, waiting.

I didn't take it.

My hands stayed frozen on my lap. Fear wrapped tightly around my heart, whispering that this felt too much like goodbye.

For a second, his hand hovered there. Then his fingers trembled, and he gently set the box down on the table instead.

"I understand," he murmured.

He pushed his chair back and tried to stand, his hands shaking as he gripped the edge of the mahogany table. His knees buckled immediately. Levi and Louis moved like lightning, catching him before his head hit the table, their faces etched with a panic they couldn't hide. They practically carried him up the stairs, his feet dragging uselessly on the steps.

I stayed in my chair, staring at the empty staircase. My chest felt like it was being crushed. What am I doing? I asked myself. He's dying. He's right there, and he's dying, and I'm sitting here nursing my pride.

I forced myself to pick up a fork, to take a bite of food, but I couldn't swallow. Suddenly, the silence of the house was shattered.

"Get the oxygen! Now!"

"Where is the specialist? He's not responding!"

The shouting was coming from upstairs. I heard the frantic thumping of feet—doctors and healers who had been on standby were rushing toward Lennox's suite. I sat still for a second, telling myself it was just another small crisis, another spike in his erratic vitals. But I couldn't stay away.

I focused on the space in his room and teleported.

The scene was pure chaos. I appeared to find Levi and Louis collapsed against each other by the window, sobbing openly. The doctors were hovering over the bed, but they weren't using the paddles this time. They were simply checking his pupils, their faces grim.

"What is it?" I screamed, rushing to the bed. "What's happening?"

The lead specialist looked at me, his eyes full of a heavy sorrow. "The effort of coming downstairs... it was too much for his heart, Luna. Alpha Lennox has fallen into a deep, coma-like sleep. His systems are shutting down."

He took a step back, folding his hands.

"It's time to say goodbye, Luna Olivia. He isn't coming back from this one."

Chapter 659: Back

Olivia's POV

"No!"

I rushed to the bed, shoving a nurse aside with a burst of frantic energy. My hands slammed onto Lennox's chest, and I let my power surge. "Wake up! Lennox, wake up right now!"

"Luna, please," the specialist said, his voice reaching out to me through the fog of my panic. "His organs are too far gone. The cellular decay is too advanced. Your healing... it won't work. You're only draining yourself."

"Shut up!" I hissed, my eyes glowing a fierce, desperate gold. "He is my mate! He doesn't get to leave me like this!"

I poured everything I had into him. I channeled every bit of my light, my life force, and my love into his cold, still body. I could feel my own strength wavering, my vision blurring at the edges as I pushed past my limits.

Nothing.

The golden light flickered against his skin and died out. I tried again, my hands shaking so hard I could barely keep them on his chest. Again, nothing. His body was like a vessel with a hole in the bottom; no matter how much life I poured in, it just vanished into the dark.

"Please," I sobbed, the anger finally breaking into a million pieces. I collapsed forward, draping my body over his, my face pressed against his neck. "Lennox, please come back. I have so much to say. I didn't mean those things. I'm not ready. The boys aren't ready. Please... don't leave us."

The room filled with my sobs and the steady, terrifying sound of the machine beside him.

Beep.

Beep.

Beep.

I shook my head, refusing to accept defeat as I channeled my abilities into him again. What is the essence of being called a Special One? What is the essence of having this ability if I can't bring back the man I love from the brink of death?

"Olivia, stop," someone pleaded behind me. "You're hurting yourself."

I didn't care.

"I forgive you," I choked. "Do you hear me? I forgive you for everything. For the lies. For the pain. For all of it. Just—just open your eyes."

Still nothing. My power flickered, then failed completely. My hands went cold.

"No..." I whispered, my forehead dropping to his chest. "No... please."

I crawled onto the bed, wrapping myself around him, clinging as if I could anchor him to this world with my body alone.

"You can't go," I cried into his shirt. "I still have so much to say. I still need you. Our children need you. I need you."

My tears soaked into his shirt as I shook. "I love you," I sobbed. "I never stopped. I was just scared. Please don't punish me like this. I can't bear it."

Suddenly, the machine beside us began to slow.

Beep...

Beep...

A sharp alarm sounded.

"Luna, you need to step back—" the doctor shouted.

And then—the machine spiked.

Beep. Beep. Beep. Faster. Louder.

"Wait—" the specialist said sharply, rushing forward. "Check his vitals!"

I lifted my head slowly, my breath caught painfully in my throat. Lennox's fingers twitched. My heart stopped.

"Lennox?" I whispered.

Lennox's eyelids fluttered. It looked like an immense struggle, as if he were dragging himself up from the bottom of a deep, dark ocean. Finally, they opened. His eyes were glazed and incredibly weak, but they found me. They always found me.

"O-Olivia..." he wheezed, the sound so faint it was almost a ghost.

"A miracle," the doctor whispered, checking Lennox's pulse with trembling fingers. "He's regained consciousness. I don't know how, but he's back."

I didn't care about the 'how.' I sank to my knees beside the bed, my hands framing his face as I showered him with desperate, tearful kisses. I kissed his forehead, his cheeks, and his sunken eyes.

"Thank you," I whispered against his skin, my voice thick with relief. "Thank you for not leaving. Not yet. Thank you for staying with me, Lennox."

He couldn't speak, but his hand moved fractionally, his fingers grazing my wrist.

The doctor placed the mask on him while I sat beside him. He was just staring at me but didn't speak. I asked, "Can you hear me?" and he batted his eyes. I frowned, sensing something was wrong.

The specialist came forward and checked him; he sighed, then spoke to Lennox. "Alpha Lennox, can you move?"

Lennox batted his eyes, but he didn't move. Not a muscle. Not even a twitch of the shoulder.

The doctor sighed as if knowing what was wrong. He asked, "You can't move your body, right? Bat your eyes if I'm right."

Lennox did.

A single, heavy bat of his eyelashes. He was staring at me with a look of absolute terror. He was awake, he was alive, but he was trapped inside a body that refused to obey him.

"He's paralyzed," I whispered, the realization hitting me like a physical blow. "He's conscious, but his body is gone."

I swallowed hard and looked at the specialist. "Is this permanent?" I asked, my voice trembling.

The doctor turned away, his face filled with grim professional sympathy. He wouldn't look me in the eye, and that terrified me more than the silence coming from the man in the bed.

"Luna," he began, his voice low and cautious. "I need you to understand the gravity of this. This isn't a temporary numbness. The cancer has invaded the spinal column, and the shock of the cardiac arrest has effectively severed the communication between his brain and his nervous system. It's not likely that he will move again... in fact, it's highly unlikely he ever will."

"No," I snapped, my voice cracking. "He just woke up. You said it was a miracle. Miracles don't come in halves."

"He is breathing because of the machines and the sheer strength of his will," the doctor continued, stepping closer to me. "But his body is spent. You should... you should prepare yourself. He is awake, yes, but he is 'locked in.' He can see you, he can hear you, but he is a prisoner."

Chapter 660: Why Him?

Levi's POV

I couldn't breathe. The air in that room was thick with the scent of antiseptic, despair, and the slow, agonizing rot of a life I was powerless to save. I watched my brother's eyes—the only part of him left alive—and I felt my own soul shattering.

I turned and bolted.

I didn't care that I was an Alpha. I didn't care that the pack needed to see me strong. I dashed out of the suite, my lungs burning as I sprinted to my own room and slammed the door shut. I collapsed against the wood, sliding down until my knees hit the floor, and I started crying. Not the quiet, dignified weeping of a mourning brother, but raw, jagged sobs that tore at my throat.

"Why?" I screamed at the ceiling, my voice echoing off the empty walls. "Why must it be Lennox?! Why always him?!"

I balled my fists and struck the floor, the vibration rattling my bones. "Moon Goddess, answer me! We are three brothers! We share the same blood, the same legacy! Why must Lennox always be the one to suffer? Why don't you let us suffer too?!"

My mind raced through the cruelty of his life. It was a cycle of torture that never seemed to end.

He spent four years in a coma while the world moved on. He woke up crippled, his wolf—his very identity—ripped away from him. Then he died. We buried him. And when the Goddess saw fit to bring him back, was it for peace? No. It was for this. A slow, eating cancer. And now... now he is 'locked in.' A vegetable. A king trapped in a tomb made of his own skin.

"What did he ever do to you?!" I roared, my eyes flashing with a mix of grief and heresy. "Is he your toy? Is his pain your entertainment? To be conscious but unable to touch the woman he loves? To see his sons but unable to hold them? That isn't a miracle! That's a curse!"

I crawled toward the small altar in the corner of my room, my hands trembling. I put my forehead against the cold stone, whispering through the snot and tears.

"Please," I begged, my voice breaking. "Transfer this to me. I'm not the leader he is. I'm not the father he is. If anyone deserves to die, it's me. Not Lennox. He is the perfect mate. He is the perfect brother. He has given everything to this pack, to Olivia, to us."

"Take my health," I whispered into the dark. "Take my legs. Take my life. Just let him move again. Let him be the man he was supposed to be. Please... don't do this to him."

But the Moon Goddess was silent. The only sound in the room was the ragged gasp of my own breath.

For hours, I stayed on that cold floor. I stayed until my throat was raw and my eyes felt like they had been rubbed with glass. I waited for a sign, a whisper from the Goddess, a warmth in my chest—anything to tell me that my plea had been heard. But there was only the silence of my room and the fading sunlight stretching across the carpet.

Eventually, the numbness took over. I stood up, my legs stiff and my head throbbing. I washed my face, staring at the stranger in the mirror with bloodshot eyes, and realized I couldn't stay in my room forever. I was his brother. If he was trapped in that bed, the least I could do was stand guard.

I walked back to Lennox's wing, my footsteps heavy. The hallway was quiet now; the frantic bustle of doctors had settled into a somber, steady watch. As I reached the door to his suite, I paused. It was cracked open just a little.

I didn't mean to eavesdrop, but the sound of Olivia's voice stopped me. It wasn't the voice of the angry, betrayed woman from yesterday. It was the voice of a lover—soft, unbreakable, and fiercely protective.

I peered through the gap. Olivia was leaning over him, her face inches from his, their noses almost touching. She was holding his limp hand against her cheek, her eyes locked onto his with an intensity that made my heart ache.

"I know you can hear me," I heard her whisper, her voice vibrating with a strange kind of strength. "And I know what you're thinking. You're thinking this is the end. You're thinking you're a burden."

I saw Lennox's eyes shift, a flash of undeniable pain crossing them as he stared up at her. He couldn't shake his head to deny it, but the way his pupils dilated told us everything. He felt like a weight around our necks.

"You are not a vegetable, Lennox," Olivia continued, her voice growing firmer. "You are my heart. You are the father of my children. And if I have to spend the rest of my life reading your eyes, then that's what I'll do. We aren't giving up. I don't care if the doctors call it a miracle or a curse—you are here, and as long as you are here, I am satisfied."

She leaned down and pressed a long, lingering kiss to his forehead.

She pulled away and stared right into his eyes. "I love you, Lennox," she confessed and placed a peck on his lips; then she looked him straight in the eyes. "Do you love me?"

Lennox didn't hesitate to bat his eyelashes.

A big, bright smile spread across her face. "Then let's fight this together, okay?"

Lennox bat his lashes.

Olivia smiled and hugged him, her head on his chest as she wrapped her arms around him. Lennox couldn't move, but I could see how eager he was to hug her back.

"I'm not letting death take you this time, Lennox," Olivia whispered on his chest. "Death will have to go through me first." She declared those words as a vow.