

One Night with the Alpha King by Nina Soelian c 1

Aurora's POV

I was completely drunk. The room spun in doubles, and I could barely hold my head up as I finished the last drop of alcohol in my glass.

The tavern pulsed with music and laughter. Wolves celebrated the full moon, their joy infectious to everyone but me. I hadn't come to celebrate anything. I came to forget.

Tomorrow, I was supposed to become Ethan's mate. Five years of courtship, five years of believing he loved me, and it was all supposed to culminate in the mating ceremony under the moon goddess's blessing.

But there would be no ceremony.

The memory played again in my mind, vivid and cruel. *"Oh goddess, yes, Ethan! Mark me, please mark me! I love you!"*

Daisy's voice, my best friend. In bed with my fiancé.

I wiped tears from my face and tried to stand, but my legs wouldn't cooperate. The room tilted dangerously. I needed to get out of here, away from the Northern Territory, away from everyone who would pity me or whisper about the broken engagement.

Through my blurred vision, I saw a tall figure entering one of the private rooms. Something pulled me toward him. Maybe it was the alcohol; maybe it was desperation to feel anything other than heartbreak.

I followed him inside and pressed my back against the door.

"Help me forget," I whispered, though I could barely see his face in the darkness.

He smelled like pine and winter storms. His hands caught me when I stumbled forward, and I kissed him. He hesitated, his body tense, but I didn't stop. I couldn't stop.

I needed this—I needed him.

When I woke, my head pounded like drums. Sunlight filtered through the curtains, too bright, too harsh. I turned my head and saw him beside me, still sleeping.

My stomach dropped. What had I done?! I couldn't see his face clearly in the dim room, but I knew what happened. The soreness between my legs told me everything. *I'd given away my virginity to a stranger in a tavern room.*

I dressed quickly, my hands shaking. On the nightstand, I found some money and left it for him. He was probably a male escort, given how this tavern operated. It was the least I could do.

As I snuck out, I noticed my mother's necklace was missing. The only thing I had left of her. But I couldn't go back, I had to leave.

I went straight to my apartment, but the door wouldn't open. Someone had changed the locks.

My phone buzzed. A message from Ethan.

Don't bother coming back. I changed the locks. Everything inside belongs to me now.

I stared at the words until they blurred. I had nothing: No home. No mate. No future in the Northern Territory .

So I left. I walked away from everything I'd ever known and headed south, to the human territories where no one knew my name.

Two months later, I sat in a clinic waiting for test results. I'd been sick for weeks, unable to keep food down, exhausted all the time. The doctor handed me a paper, and my hands trembled as I read it.

Pregnancy Test: *Positive*

No. This couldn't be happening!

Four Years Later...

"Mummy!" Cody ran to me the moment I walked through the door, his little arms outstretched.

I scooped him up and kissed his dark hair. "I missed you, sweetheart."

He giggled and wrapped his arms around my neck. At three years old, he was my entire world. Those silver eyes, so unusual, so beautiful. Everyone who saw him stopped to stare.

He didn't get those from me. I tucked a loose strand of dark hair behind my ear and studied his face for the hundredth time. My warm eyes, my softer features — none of it had passed to him. Cody was his father's son in every way that showed.

Mrs. Brook, his nanny, gathered her things. "He was perfect today, as always."

"Thank you for everything," I told her.

After she left, I sat on the worn sofa with Cody in my lap. The furniture was secondhand, the apartment small, but it was ours.

"How was your day?" I asked.

He bounced excitedly. "I got all my letters right! The teacher said I'm the smartest in class!"

"That's my brilliant boy." I hugged him tight.

Then I took a breath. "Cody, we're moving back to the Northern Territory tomorrow."

His eyes went wide. "Really? Does that mean I'll meet my daddy?"

My smile froze.

I'd told him once that his daddy lived in the Northern Territory . It seemed easier than explaining I didn't know who his father was, that I'd spent one drunken night with a stranger and never even saw his face.

"Maybe, sweetheart. Maybe."

But I knew the truth—his father was probably some tavern worker, long gone. I'd never see him again.

And that was fine. Cody and I didn't need anyone else.